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Freedom at Last: Cannon Released

By **VICTORIA ECKENRODE**
Senior Writer

GREENSBORO - The triumphant smiles and colorful banners filling the small church suggested a festive occasion. For Kwame Cannon, it was a homecoming celebration for his first day of freedom in more than a decade.

Wednesday morning Cannon left the gates of the Randolph Correctional Center behind and, by afternoon, stood among the packed pews of the Faith Community Church to thank those who helped him gain his freedom.

"I would like to give God the credit for giving (Gov. Jim) Hunt the compassion and courage to release me and giving me a second chance at my freedom," he said. "I'm happy to be home."

Cannon, sentenced to two life terms in 1986 for six counts of first-degree burglary, received a commutation from Hunt last week. But before the governor's long-awaited decision came years of grassroots organizing and protesting to demand Cannon's release.

Last April, his supporters organized a march from Greensboro to Raleigh to call attention to his sentence, which they felt was overly harsh and lengthy. "I think it's appropriate and fitting that one year after the Greensboro to Raleigh Survival March, Kwame Cannon is returning to his family and his home," the Rev. Nelson Johnson said.

During the past year, support for Cannon's release escalated to the point

where Greensboro Mayor Carolyn Allen, numerous city officials and more than a thousand community members kept pressure on Hunt to review the contested sentence.

Nelson said the community members succeeded because they pulled together despite varied backgrounds.

"It does take a whole village to raise a child, but we come as living evidence today that over 13 years we have demonstrated it takes a whole village ... to reclaim our children," he said.

Cannon's friends and supporters celebrated his release but said his victory was not the end of the struggle for racial equality in America's courts.

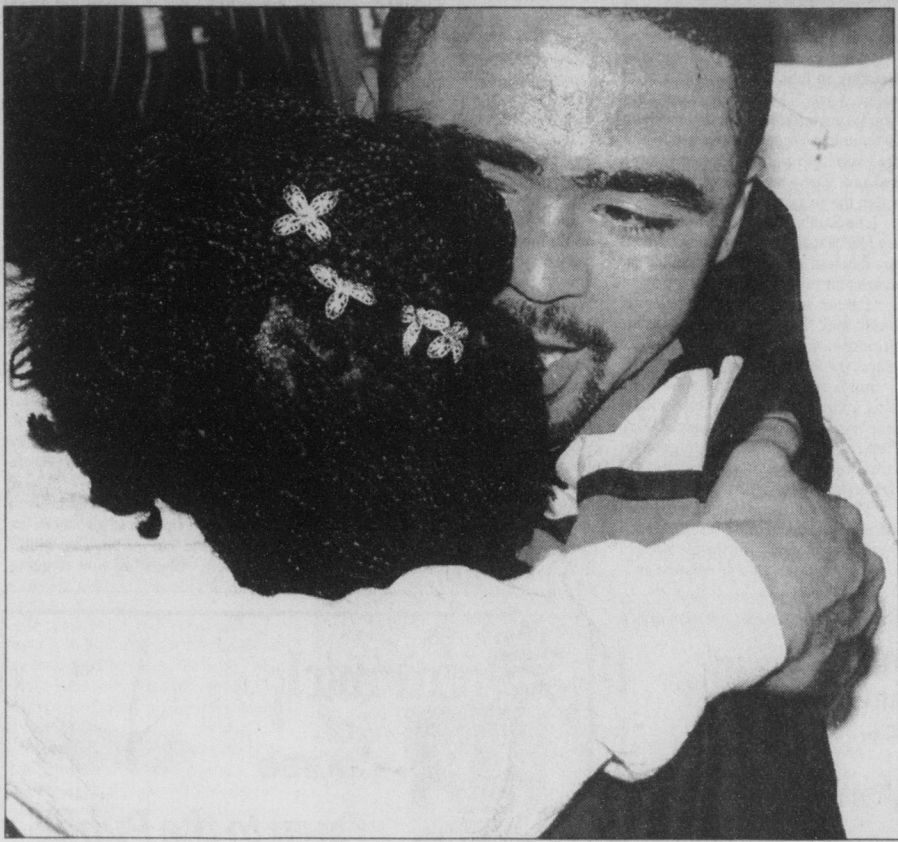
"Kwame has come to symbolize the plight of thousands," Nelson said. "It is clear that while we rejoice, our work is not yet done. We will redouble our efforts to seek justice throughout the entire criminal justice system."

Supporters announced plans to create a Kwame Cannon Celebration and Recommitment Program and a Kwame Cannon Prison Justice Fund to counter racial inequities in the justice system.

Willena Cannon, Kwame Cannon's mother, said she was not ready to end her advocacy. "My son is home, but my fight is not over," she said.

After the speeches, Kwame Cannon circled through the crowd embracing people who swarmed to congratulate him. In the background, a small gospel choir belted out a spiritual hymn.

Slipping away from the spotlight of



DTH/CARA BRICKMAN

Kwame Cannon hugs a friend after his press conference Wednesday afternoon. Gov. Jim Hunt released Cannon from an Asheboro prison after he served 13 years of a double life sentence for burglary.

the media and the excitement of his supporters, Kwame Cannon eventually returned to a simpler setting.

As the crowd filtered out, he found

his way to the church's basketball court, joking with his younger brother about playing a game later that day. "It's most important right now for me is to take my

life slow, to take it one day at a time."

The State & National Editors can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

3 Soldiers Missing in Macedonia

NATO began ground and air searches for the patrol of U.S. troops believed to be kidnapped by Serb forces.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Three U.S. Army soldiers were missing in Macedonia near the Yugoslav border Wednesday night after possibly being captured by members of the Serb military or police while on a reconnaissance mission, the Pentagon and NATO officials said.

An immediate search and rescue mission was launched, involving ground and helicopter teams from several NATO countries and the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps based in the Macedonian capital of Skopje, U.S. officials said. Searchers included 80 to 90 soldiers on U.S. Blackhawk, British, French and Italian helicopters.

The Army team had been on a daytime reconnaissance mission in the Kumanovo area, about three miles from the southern Yugoslav border when they reported "small arms fire and said they were surrounded," according to NATO.

"No more was heard from the patrol," a NATO statement said.

NATO officials did not say who had the soldiers surrounded, but Col. Richard Bridges, a Pentagon spokesman, said it was presumed to be Serb Army, paramilitary units or perhaps special police forces. "Right now there's a ... concentrated ground search," he said.

Searchers were unable to find the missing team's Humvee vehicle, which had been traveling on a civilian road during part of the reconnaissance mission, U.S. officials said.

After more than half a day and half a night of an intensive search effort, the Pentagon said U.S. and NATO forces were facing a difficult terrain.

"The search will continue until we find them or until we have some idea where they are," Bridges said. "It's pretty rough out there."

Asked if captors might have taken the soldiers over the border into the Serbian portion of Yugoslavia, Bridges refused to speculate. But he said U.S. search teams were not expected to enter Yugoslavia, which is under attack.

NCCU Students, Housekeepers Rally for Funding

By **CAITE DOTY**
Assistant State & National Editor

DURHAM - Plagued by a broken microphone and a single crackling amplifier, students and housekeepers at N.C. Central University struggled Wednesday to rally student awareness for the school's funding deficits.

Attendance for Speakout '99, designed to address the underfunding of historically black colleges and universities, left organizers and speakers frustrated, as the bowl-like field surrounded by residence halls remained nearly empty for the duration of the event.

"Where are the students?" said Troy Merritt, the newly-elected student lead-

ership coordinator at NCCU. "It takes more than just one man to get things going."

A scattered group of about 25 students and members of the press gathered in front of a small, rickety stage to address campus issues ranging from housekeeping to crime. Citing a lengthy history of underfunding, Durham City Council member Ty Cox discussed not only structural problems on campus but the need for student activism.

"As long as I have been involved with Central, there has always been an inequity in funding compared to larger UNC-system schools like UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State," said Cox, a 1995 NCCU graduate. "When the roofs on

buildings are leaking, students need to speak out against these problems."

Students complained about the lack of technology and the peeling paint on their broken residence hall windows. But senior Anthony Leake's greatest concern was the burgeoning problem of campus crime.

"There've been three armed robberies this month on campus," Leake said. "We've got slack police who would rather look up girls' skirts than answer emergency calls. They're not trained well, and we need the funding for competent officers."

Leake said that while Chancellor Julius Chambers recently received a new parking space, nine out of 10 library

computers available to students were in need of repair. This, combined with the collapsed roof of a nearby building, he said, emphasized the need for greater funding.

"Our tuition has gone up, but we haven't seen any of it, particularly in the area of technology," Leake said. "We're being robbed at knife-point and robbed by administrators."

NCCU housekeepers, plagued by the continuing debate over privatization of services, spoke out against the lack of money for plant and property services. Sylvester Keech, caretaker for the biology building, said he often paid out of his own pocket for basic supplies like floor wax. "You ain't got nothing to work

with; you do the best with what you got," he said.

And flanked by a falling sign bearing the motto "Truth and Service," one NCCU housekeeper and student expressed his love for the school in contrast to his disdain for the absent members of the faculty and administration.

"Where is Chancellor Chambers?" demanded Ralph Davis, 55, a senior physical education major. "I have been here since 1975, and I think we all need to stick together in our community as a family. But when administrators aren't here, we can't do that."

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N.C. Work First Changes Role Of State's Aid

The program focuses on immediate job placement and providing recipients with skills training designed to last a lifetime.

By **CAITE DOTY**
Assistant State & National Editor

For decades, collecting a monthly welfare check was routine for thousands of impoverished N.C. residents. But Gov. Jim Hunt's welfare reform efforts have made employment the new way of life for welfare recipients.

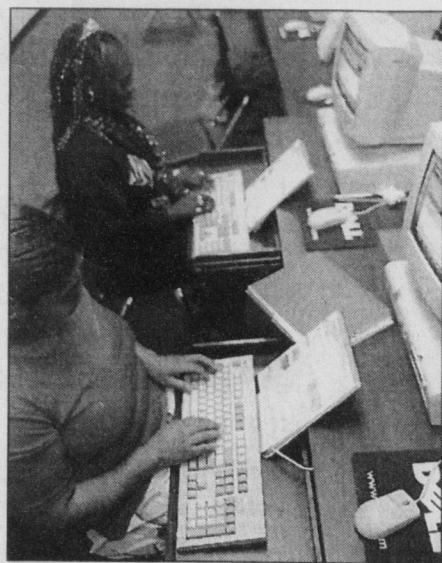
"Welfare should have served as a bridge to self-sufficiency, not a lifestyle," said Lois Neilsen, spokeswoman for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. "It was a check for the poor."

North Carolina's Work First, a state and federally funded program that provides job placement services for welfare clients, was instituted by Hunt in August 1995.

Those receiving benefits have two years from the time they qualify for the program to find a job and get off welfare. The program provides rigorous short-term job training and immediate job placement programs. After two years, welfare recipients have the option to ask for an extension of time and benefits.

The initial effects of the Work First program statewide have been astounding, Neilsen said. Since the program's August 1995 inception, 46 percent of the 113,000 families on welfare in that year have since left the system. As of March 1, there

working on welfare
A four-part series on new developments in government aid to the N.C. underprivileged.



DTH/DAVID SANDLER

Charlene Bethea-Chambers (top) and Stephanie Gattis are students at the Skills Development Center.

were 56,866 families in the Work First program.

Welfare officials say the differences in approaches have made the biggest difference for clients. Work First represented a change from the old welfare programs in its assistance tactics, said Dan Hudgins, director of the Durham County Department of Social Services.

"One major change was that public assistance before Work First was like Social Security - it was an entitlement," Hudgins said. "Now work is an expectation for all households receiving welfare."

Before the Work First reform effort, welfare's focus was on

See **WORK FIRST**, Page 2

Human Rights Week To Focus on Activism

By **AMY ANDERSON**
Staff Writer

While world leaders speak against what they describe as ethnic cleansing atrocities in Kosovo, a set of Campus Y programs next week will talk about human rights concerns closer to home.

Sponsored by the Campus Y, Human Rights Week will feature speakers, discussions and films for students to learn about human rights in the United States and worldwide.

"During Human Rights Week, we are going to focus on student activism," said Jennifer Betowt, chairwoman of Globe, a Campus Y committee that deals with

international issues. "I am hoping through all these programs students will find a niche and then do something."

Other organizations involved in Human Rights Week include Students for Economic Justice, Project Literacy, UNC Baha'is and the Muslim Student Association.

Programs sponsored and organized by these groups include discussions on the bombings in Iraq, the case of death-row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal and the South African Reconciliation Committee. More local issues, such as the UNC Housekeepers' rights and

See **RIGHTS**, Page 2

Week on Rights

Monday, April 5

4 p.m. to 5 p.m.: "Sweat Behind the Label: UNC and the Anti-Sweatshop Movement," film and discussion. Union 211.

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.: "Music For Justice and Peace" featuring Samadhi Manifest, Dave Lippman, The Raging Grammys and David Rovics. Polk Place.

5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.: Dinner discussion with Chai Ling.

7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.: Keynote speaker Chai Ling, commander-in-chief at Tiananmen Square. 100 Hamilton Hall.

9 p.m. to until: Reception with Chai Ling

SOURCE: CAMPUS Y

Tuesday, April 6

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.: International women's issues, panel discussion. Union 212.

5 p.m. to 7 p.m.: "Elderly Abuse in Today's Society" discussion with film and guest speaker. Campus Y basement.

7 p.m. to 9 p.m.: Mariah Darlington will speak about the rights of indigenous Chiapas people of Mexico. Union 226.

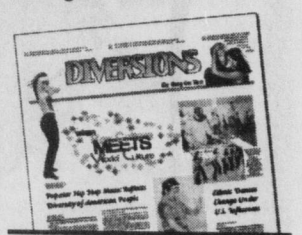
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.: "Issues in Mental Health and Mental Illness Today." 105 Gardner Hall.

7 p.m. to 9 p.m.: Reception with Chai Ling.

INSIDE Thursday

Pop Meets World

What happens when hip hop meets traditional Asian dance? This week's Divisions delves into the assortment of dance troupes on campus. See Page 5.



Congressman Speaks

Former U.S. senator Lauch Faircloth spoke to a packed room of College Republicans and students Wednesday in the Student Union, addressing issues from Kosovo to cancer. See Page 10.

Wildcat Tamers

North Carolina's eighth-ranked baseball team pounded Davidson 11-6 on Wednesday in its final tune-up for this weekend's set with No. 24 N.C. State. See Page 11.

Today's Weather

Rain;
Lower 70s.
Friday: Becoming sunny;
Mid 70s.

Freedom is the right to one's dignity as a man.

Archibald MacLeish