



ANNE FAWCETT

Trimming Fat Necessary for Fairer System

North Carolina is not meeting its constitutional duty to educate students most likely to fail, but state leaders aren't willing to sacrifice elective programming to save them.

Judge Howard Manning ruled last week that the state must develop a plan over the next year to ensure that the neediest students in rich and poor school districts are better educated.

The catch is that state and local funds in all districts must be allocated as effectively as possible before the court considers whether to require additional funding.

Yet leaders already are looking past this fundamental part of Manning's ruling. They claim that the judge's mandate is unreasonable, given the schools' current resources and efforts to be the best schools in America.

Apparently, being the best involves programming for the average and elite students instead of the needy.

Manning explicitly states in his ruling that funds should be diverted from other programs, the "frills and whistles" of public schools, including dance programs, multiple foreign language offerings and college preparatory curricula. Frills could even include vocational programs, not just AP courses.

These programs, Manning writes, are not guaranteed by the N.C. Constitution. Instead, the state's constitution guarantees a solid basic education for every student.

This requirement must be met before the schools pay for the extras.

While Manning wants the N.C. General Assembly to reallocate its educational funding priorities to satisfy the basic educational needs for at-risk children, eliminating electives seems to be a foreign concept for North Carolina's educational leaders.

For instance, Neil Pedersen, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools superintendent, says he is concerned about at-risk children, but he seems more worried that students not at risk will flee to private schools if their advanced educations are lessened in favor of programs for needier students.

And despite the ruling, leaders of Wake County schools facing a budget crunch are looking first to eliminate their Accelerated Learning Program, which focuses on helping low-performing students.

At the top, N.C. Superintendent Mike Ward has said the state cannot "carry out our obligations to our most vulnerable children in the system" without additional financial resources.

Meanwhile, Sen. Howard Lee could propose legislation this week that would funnel additional resources to the state's poorest schools. Lee said does not plan to cut equal amounts of educational spending in other areas.

Despite Manning's ruling, it seems that North Carolina's leaders are unwilling or unable to imagine sacrificing the privilege of the elite for the survival of the children who would otherwise drop out.

I was lucky enough to experience the ultimate college-prep curriculum at the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics, but I also spent 11 years in a school district where the dance classes and the elite choral groups could have been sacrificed to ensure that more than half of my ninth-grade civics class graduated.

The arts may be integral to producing well-rounded individuals, but these courses are not components of a strong basic education.

Every school system has fat in its programs. Administrators must prioritize.

Heck, students at NCSSM work in the kitchens, bathrooms and grounds crews to save money that would otherwise be spent on salaries. In return, the state pays for the students to live and study in an advanced educational environment.

It's a matter of trade-offs and sacrifices.

Legislators and educators around the state should buck up. Before they insist that they can't comply with Manning's orders, they should take a honest look at which parts of the curriculum are truly integral to providing a basic education for all students. The rest is just fluff that provides a superior education for a few at the expense of many.

Columnist Anne Fawcett can be reached at fawcetta@hotmail.com.

CEO, Business School Celebrate Community

Jeffrey Swartz, president of Timberland, implemented a literacy program for his Latin American employees.

By SCOTT BRITTAIN
Staff Writer

In the spirit of the Kenan-Flagler Business School's weeklong dedication to public service, the top official of a popular clothing manufacturer shared his company's commitment to community development Tuesday evening.

Jeffrey Swartz, CEO and president of Timberland, spoke to about 200 people in Koury Auditorium as part of the business school's 2001 Dean's Speaker Series.

"This week our school is celebrating community," said Robert Sullivan, dean of the business school. "As part of our

celebration, we are fortunate to have Jeffrey Swartz with us. His work and priorities exemplify many of the ideals that we celebrate this week."

Swartz said his approach to business was not that of a normal chief executive officer. He said most businessmen are more concerned with pleasing the shareholders than worrying about people in the community.

"Anything that traditional business does that doesn't cater to the shareholders is almost immoral," Swartz said.

But he said he can create a better type of business by running his company with more compassion for the consumers and workers.

Swartz has implemented this policy by providing daycare at his corporate headquarters for employees and community members who can't afford private care for their children. He also has initiated a literacy program in several of his Latin American factories to better

the lives of his employees and their families.

Swartz said he left it up to the people at Timberland retail stores across the world to decide what programs and projects to financially and physically support.

"I want the local Timberland people to calibrate what the need and service is," Swartz said. "The localized attention gets our resources where they are most needed."

Swartz pointed to a problem that exists in North Carolina as a prime example of how businesses can improve local conditions.

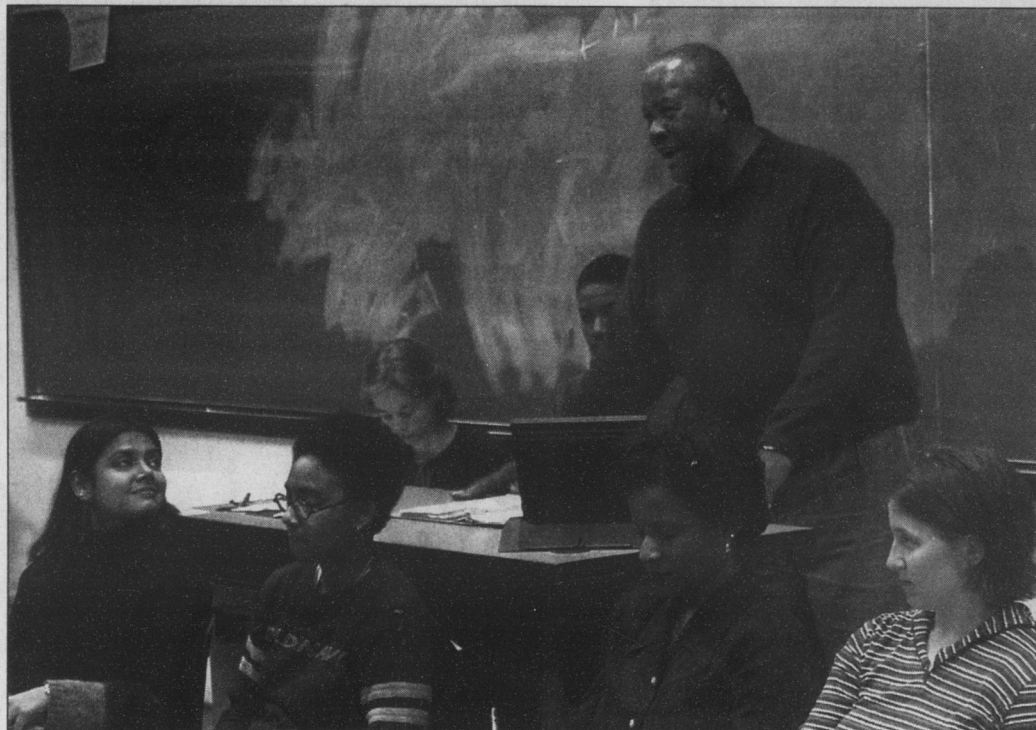
Swartz said more than 400,000 children currently live at or below the poverty level in North Carolina and that this condition could be alleviated if businesses were more caring toward the problems of the area instead of primar-

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DTH/KIMBERLY CRAVEN

Jeffrey Swartz, president of Timberland, speaks Tuesday night about the relationship between a business and its community.



DTH/MARGO KNIGHT

Fred Battle, a local community activist, speaks Tuesday night at a panel discussion about challenging institutional racism at UNC. Battle was the former campaign manager for Jesse Jackson's bid for president. The forum was hosted in part by the Campus Y.

Panel Discusses Institutional Racism

By NOELLE HUTCHINS
Staff Writer

Something different occurred in a regular Gardner classroom Tuesday night — instead of economics, discussion revolved around institutional racism.

UNC's Freedom Legacy Project and the Campus Y sponsored an open panel discussion challenging the issue and its place on campus.

Panelists including student organizer Erica Smiley, community activist Fred Battle, former Black Cultural Center member Michelle Cottman, former Student Congress Speaker Pro Tem Sandi Chapman and women's studies Professor Rashmi Varma assembled to encourage discussion and dialogue about this often

overlooked issue.

"Racism has been plaguing our campus ever since it has been around," said project member Jermain Reeves. "We want to encourage dialogue discussion about (institutional racism)."

Smiley started off the discussion and said that society expects less from people of color and that blacks should fight for justice instead of trying to assimilate into society. "I think this is about liberation because we are reclaiming what we had all along."

Chapman introduced the idea of white privilege. She said white privilege is an unclaimed privilege that whites simply have because of the color of their skin. "White people don't understand that institutional racism and white privilege are mutually perpetuating," she said.

"Being and looking white is privileged."

She also said it is not enough for whites to say they are not racist because as a white person, one benefits from racism. "You have to be anti-racist, not just saying that you have black friends."

Cottman said there is a misconception that the Chapel Hill area is affluent, diverse and tolerant. But she said she had to sacrifice and fight to have the same opportunities that white students had on campus. She encouraged blacks to build a coalition with other organizations outside of the University.

Varma also said the combination of different ethnicities does not equate to diversity on cam-

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Guest Teacher, Author Enlightens Students

By TYLER MALAND
Staff Writer

The enlightening words of internationally renowned spiritual teacher and author Andrew Cohen filled the ears of more than 170 community members and students Tuesday in Venable Hall.

Cohen, author of "Embracing Heaven and Earth" and the founder of "What Is Enlightenment?" magazine, spoke about his personal views of enlightenment and the ways to obtain such a state.

Brad Rolen, president of UNC's Self Knowledge Symposium, which sponsored the event, said the purpose of their group is to give students an outlet to voice ideas and concerns about the meaning of life.

"I think the purpose of (SKS) is pretty individualized," Rolen said. "It is a way to discuss what life is about and how to get more out of life."

Rolen said Cohen's speech was an effort to further inform students and the community about different issues of spirituality.

"The heart of the matter (between Cohen's ideas about enlightenment and

those of SKS) is really the same — you have to figure out what you want and where your interests really lie," Rolen said.

Cohen began his speech by defining enlightenment.

"Enlightenment is not just an inner experience of bliss, peace, joy, mystery and majesty," Cohen said.

He said obtaining such a way of life is to have a true perception of it. "One of the most significant consequences of enlightenment is to see things clearly and to see things as they really are."

"One of the most significant consequences of enlightenment is to see things clearly and to see things as they really are."

ANDREW COHEN
Enlightenment Speaker

Eastern traditions tell us that fears and desires obscure our perceptions and obscure our ability to see," Cohen said.

He also pointed a finger at humans' distracted nature and endless preoccupation with their own lives as a limitation to seeing clearly.

Cohen went on to say that people's skewed perceptions lead to skewed decisions in their daily lives.

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N.C. Filmmaker Earns Acclaim

David Gordon Green, an N.C. School of the Arts graduate, filmed "George Washington" in the Winston-Salem area.

By ASHLEY ATKINSON
Arts & Entertainment Editor

"This is not a movie that's going to make a million bucks," said David Gordon Green, an N.C. School of the Arts graduate, of the movie that he filmed in Winston-Salem in the summer of 1999.

But "George Washington," writer/director Green's first feature-length, has received more acclaim than movies that will earn many times that.

Roger Ebert selected the film as his No. 5 choice for 2000; The New York Times placed it at No. 3, and Time magazine at No. 2. It has won awards at festivals around the world.

"George Washington's" crew was made up of Green's fellow School of the Arts graduates, and the cast was recruited from Winston-Salem's streets, barbecues, churches and teen centers. "This film needed to feel organic from the start. We were not looking for actors, sets or controlled environments," Green said.

The film focuses on George, a young would-be superhero who wears a helmet because the soft spot in his skull never closed. Green based it on a short piece he made while at the School of the Arts. "It was always something I wanted

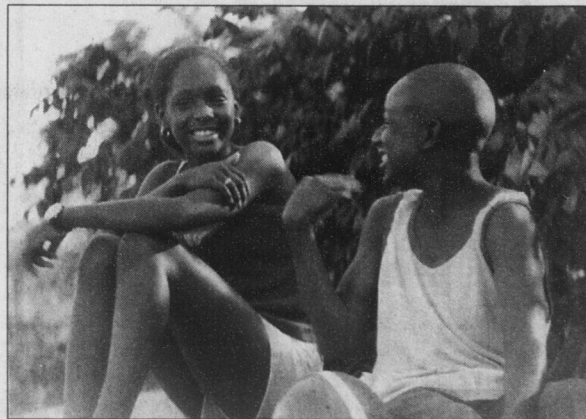


PHOTO COURTESY OF COWBOY BOOKING INTERNATIONAL

Winston-Salem resident Curtis Cotton III stars as Buddy in David Gordon Green's "George Washington."

to expand," he said.

After his 1998 graduation, Green pursue a film industry career in New York and Los Angeles. But he returned to Winston-Salem after only eight months — "Just long enough to realize that I miss the community, the landscape, the environment," he said — to film "George Washington."

He went to learn the industry's ropes, but "I was becoming cynical," he said. "I felt I needed to get away before I became completely soulless like some of the other people out there."

Winston-Salem provided a more lan-

guid lifestyle ("I want to just sit on the porch and/or take a nap on the side of the highway," Green said), as well as the setting for "George Washington's" anonymous Southern town.

"The movie doesn't take place anywhere, just the generic South — timeless, placeless. Our only goal was to make ugly things beautiful," Green said. The city's industrial areas contributed the decaying, yet lush backdrop to the film.

He wanted to make a movie that por-

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