

# Tragedy prompts probe

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — An incident in which a man used stolen vehicles to run down five pedestrians, killing one, highlights recent concerns about North Carolina's mental health system.

Abdullah El-Amin Shareef, 25, was charged with first-degree murder and other charges after investigators say he went out of his way to strike five pedestrians in three counties Wednesday.

Family and friends say they tried to get mental health treatment for Shareef, but could not. Their claims echo those made after a pair of fatal assaults earlier this month in western North Carolina, in which concerned family members were not able to get help for alleged assailants before tragedy struck.

"We need more stronger programs, because there's a lot of time bombs walking around here," said Wadi Abdul-Halem, a Shareef family friend who said he spent recent weeks searching fruitlessly for a nearby program that would admit Shareef for treatment.

Authorities say that Shareef, dressed only in boxer shorts and a white T-shirt, stole a Fayetteville city-owned van, then a truck, and drove across three counties seeking pedestrians to run down Wednesday. He was being held without bond at Dorothea Dix Hospital, a state mental hospital in Raleigh.

Lonel Bearl Bass, 56, of Linden, died after he was hit by the van. His funeral is scheduled for Saturday at Skinner & Smith Funeral Home in Dunn.

Gary Lee Weller, 55, remained in critical condition Thursday at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill. Three other men attacked in the rampage were treated for lesser injuries.

Earlier this month, Buncombe Sheriff's Sgt. Jeff Hewitt was shot and killed after he and two other deputies were called to the home of Eddie Cassada. Cassada's wife had signed an affidavit seeking his involuntary commitment. Cassada later killed himself.

That shooting came two days after a man allegedly enraged over

being told he was ineligible for certain unemployment benefits shot and killed the head of the Employment Security Commission office in Hendersonville. William Franklin Case, 30, of Hendersonville, is charged with killing Letcher Beatty and wounding another office worker.

Case's family had tried a week earlier to have him involuntarily committed because they were afraid he might hurt himself or someone else. Sheriff's deputies had been unable to find him.

Shareef's father, Abdullah Shareef, 70, said Thursday that his son was using the drug Ecstasy, suffered from mental illness and was troubled by his mother's death and a separation from his college-sweetheart wife.

The younger Shareef lived in Winston-Salem with his wife and three children until December, when the couple split up, the father said. The father said his son was admitted to the Dix facility in mid-December, but was released after a few days.

## DENTAL SCHOOL

FROM PAGE 3

Carolina.

Soon after the North Carolina legislature passed the bill to create the first dental school in the state, UNC's dental school opened its doors, though without proper facilities, in 1950.

Lineberger's son, Dr. Henry Lineberger Jr., a member of the first graduating class, said he was happy to follow in his father's footsteps in the dental field.

The original building contained new dental chairs, a dental clinic and all new dental tools so students could begin work on patients, Biddell said.

"It was beautiful. It was like the Taj Mahal with what we'd been through," the younger Lineberger said.

Dr. Albert Cline, one of Biddell's classmates, said it was great to be the first class to use the new equipment. "Everyone was excited that we were the first ones in there."

Many of the school's first students who had recently returned from World War II were able to go to college and then to professional school because of the GI Bill. The bill allocated money to war veterans to pay for higher education.

"If I hadn't been in the service, I would not have ever considered college," Dr. L. P. Megginson said. "I learned a lot in the service and realized that the opportunity for education is very valuable."

Members of the class of 1954 became extremely close to each other as well as their professors because they were all new to the field. All but five of the 40 students had just left the military service, and more than half of them were married. The ties created a common bond among the students.

The school's faculty nurtured the students to ensure their success after graduation.

"It was very supportive," said Biddell. "They gave us training and taught us how to get a practice started. Then you could call on the dental school for advice."

During the past 50 years the dental school has evolved and changed with technology. The school has expanded its building, class size, faculty and its research department.

"Everything has increased significantly for the better," said Ted Roberson, a professor in the school.

Dental technology has advanced almost all of the school's procedures, making it possible to perform tasks such as implanting prosthesis into oral cavities, Roberson said.

"The basic teachings are the same, but they can do so many more things, and the treatments are so much better," Lineberger said. "It has advanced greatly. Research has played an important part in North Carolina dentistry."

Prior to 1954, there weren't any dental graduates from North Carolina, and in 2004, almost 70 percent of dental graduates in North Carolina attended UNC, said Dr. John Stamm, dean of the dental school.

The school received the reputation of excellence early in its existence, and this acclaim has carried through to today.

"Now, it is still excellent at that same level," said Stamm. "There has been every effort made to maintain our high quality of first class dental care to the public."

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

## NEW MINORS

FROM PAGE 3

tant," McNeil said.

The introduction of the sexuality studies minor marks a growing trend to include multidisciplinary programs in the arts and sciences curriculum.

A year after the Jewish studies minor was established, the program is flourishing, said Jonathan Hess, director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

"This year we have had about 840 students take Jewish studies courses and enrollments for the fall alone already look like there are at least 600," Hess said.

Minors in Latino-Latina studies and writing for the screen and stage also will be available next fall.

Darryl Gless, senior associate dean of fine arts and humanities, said these new minors appeal to many students who don't belong to those demographic groups. "The crucial driving force is increasing interest in interdisciplinary study."

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## SPENDING

FROM PAGE 3

Both candidates now must turn to the main fund-raising sources within their respective parties.

Burr's ties to high-level Republicans in the Bush administration provide him with a significant source of campaign funds.

Bowles, a former chief of staff for President Clinton, can turn to relationships he has built in the banking industry.

"Because it's an open Senate

seat, both parties are going to funnel a disproportionate amount of money to this race to secure the seat," Taylor said.

The candidates also will not have the advantage of incumbency. Incumbents usually benefit because political action committees and other campaign contributors usually drift toward established candidates, Guillory said.

"The fact that it's an open seat removes the tilt toward the incumbent," he said. "But both are incumbent-like in that they are

well-known figures and have been in Washington."

In a high-stakes election, in which none of the usual political advantages seem relevant, the race between Burr and Bowles might be too close to call until November.

"Neither Republicans or Democrats have an assured advantage," he said. "This race is going to be exceptionally close."

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## SPENCER

FROM PAGE 3

Spencer added that if he is offered the position of vice chancellor at UNC, it still would be a difficult decision to leave Blacksburg, Va., where he and his family have lived for more than 20 years.

"If I were the finalist, it would be a tough commitment," he said. "This would be the next logical move in my professional career."

Spencer received his undergraduate degree in psychology from the

University of Rochester in 1967. After graduating, he went to medical school but soon dropped out after deciding to pursue a career in higher education.

"What my heart was telling me was that I really wanted to work with students," he said.

He went on to get his master's degree in student personnel administration in higher education from Syracuse University in 1970. In 1981, Spencer received his doctoral degree in social psychology from the University of Delaware.

The search committee for the vice chancellor position became interested in Spencer because of his extensive experience in student affairs, committee chairman Steve Matson said.

"In the telephone interview, he seemed to have a real sense of how student affairs fits into the whole of the University," Matson said. "We got a sense he would have a great rapport with students."

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