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Irby trying to get involved in campus

Project to serve Durham youth

BY LAURA HOXWORTH
STAFF WRITER

For Kennetra Irby, just being a student at UNC is the realization of a dream she's had since the fifth grade.

It all started with a postcard she received from her father, a former professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

One look at the postcard sparked her interest.

But it was when she took a tour of campus that her decision was made.

Irby's attraction to UNC included academics and the variety of opportunities to get involved on campus, but the deciding factor was something less tangible.

"There was just a feeling I got from being on campus," she said. "This is where I belong."

A senior Spanish major and medical anthropology minor from St. Petersburg, Fla., Irby has attained her goal of being a UNC student.

But Irby said she's not stopping there.

Now, she has her sights set on another position — that of Homecoming queen.

The Essentials

Irby said she decided to run for Homecoming queen as a way to get more involved with campus life.

"What first sparked my interest was just the opportunity to meet so many people at Carolina," she said.

"I was thinking of a way to reach out to a lot of organizations, people that I might not normally interact with or get the chance to know."

But Irby also hopes her election would allow her to give back to the school she loves so much.

With the position, Irby hopes to support smaller campus organizations that tend to fall through the cracks.

"I feel like there are a lot of smaller organizations on campus that can be overlooked at times," she said.



UNC senior Kennetra Irby is one of four candidates for 2008 Homecoming queen.

If elected, Irby plans to make sure that the voices of every organization on campus are heard. But she is also aware that she will be representing the entire University as a whole at the same time.

"I want to be Miss UNC because I want to uphold that feeling of excellence that this university has," she said. "I want to keep striving for excellence."

The Project

Irby said another reason she chose to run for Homecoming queen was the opportunity to design and carry out a service project in a way that could get a lot of people excited and involved.

For her service project, Irby would create a program to involve student organizations with the Durham County youth home, a juvenile detention center in Durham.

"There are so many youths in the Durham/Chapel Hill community who need a positive role model," Irby said.

The program would bring members of campus organizations to workshops about positive self-esteem and positive decision-making.

The second phase of the project would allow participants to share what they learned at the workshops with children at the youth home.

Every Saturday, at least one member from each participating organization would volunteer at the youth home for about two hours.

The program would aim to connect UNC with the surrounding community while also helping underprivileged youth in the area.

With this service project, Irby wants to help UNC students get more involved with the community.

Out of the many community organizations she could have chosen, Irby picked the Durham County youth home because she

Durham County youth outreach

> UNC student organizations would get involved with the Durham County youth home.

> Organizations would promote self-esteem and positive decision-making.

> The program would connect UNC with the community and help underprivileged youth.

Vote between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Wednesday on campus or online.

believes that helping underprivileged children is the best way to impact our future.

"This project gives back to kids and generations who are coming after us," she said.

The Campaign

Irby plans to campaign using flyers, posters and stickers and "just talking to people."

One way that her campaign will try to persuade students is by educating them about her service project.

As advice for other UNC students, Irby emphasized the importance of service, a part of the University's mission.

"We need to uphold the University's mission and lead personally satisfying, productive and responsible lives," she said.

"Find your niche, and make sure that you work within it in order to create the change we need to build a positive tomorrow," she said.

The campaign also includes signs with fun, catchy pictures and slogans so that people will remember her.

Irby said she hopes students will vote for her because she will represent the University well while carrying out a service project that will impact our future.

"People should vote for me if they want a well-rounded candidate," Irby said. "Someone who is involved in academics, on campus, and is really invested in changing the future."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.