

Powell

From A1

decided she wanted to go on patrol, and she enrolled in the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) at Martin Community College.

"I worked during the day from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and went to school at Martin Community College from 6 p.m. until whenever class was over. I was hired by the Bertie County Sheriff's Office in September 2007 and graduated BLET in December 2007," she continued.

Powell began with the Bertie County Sheriff's Office on patrol where she made multiple arrests in a variety of criminal activities.

When asked why she wanted to do patrol, she said, while working as a detention officer sometimes she would get help with round-ups in the county

"It made me want to do it more. I found it exciting," Powell said.

She remained on patrol for about a year-and-a-half and then was transferred to the narcotics division.

"The position came available in the schools and Sheriff John Holley asked me to take the position. I was reluctant, but Holley asked me to take the position until someone else was found. I fell in love and never left," Powell said.

"Once I got here I saw the difference made in the children's lives and the difference it made in mine," she added.

Powell is currently housed at Bertie Middle School, but does safety and security at all of the schools. She still assists the sheriff's office with tasks outside of the school system.



LESLIE BEACHBOARD / Bertie Ledger-Advance

Sgt. Bonnie Powell goes over some work while sitting at her desk at Bertie Middle School.

"I provide law enforcement and police services to the schools and investigate allegations of various criminal incidents. I help develop crime and prevention programs and maintain a close partnership with school administrators in order to provide a safe school environment," she said.

She also provides security for all after-school activities.

Powell is the coordinator for the teen court program for Bertie County Schools.

The program provides training for middle and high school students to perform as courtroom personnel, helping them develop the skills needed to defend and prosecute their peers.

Students act as bailiffs, jurors, attorneys and the clerk of court in a trial court setting.

"The program helps train volunteer students interested in the criminal justice system. The students are trained to run the courtroom, just like regular court. The defendant that is referred is judged by his or her peers," said Powell.

Her biggest success has been as the creator and operator of the Phoenix Spa Diversion Program.

Powell's program started from an idea of finding a way to empower the female students at Bertie Middle School.

"The idea came to me at a basketball game and I asked Principal Peele for a classroom for the program," she said.

Powell spent her Christmas break and own resources to transform a basic classroom into a tranquil spa setting for

referred seventh grade girls.

The group meets about every two weeks and spends time meditating, conducting group discussions, writing journal entries and learning appropriate ways to resolve conflict.

Powell also checks in with the eight grade girls who were previous spa members, and occasionally opens the spa to the staff for a time of relaxation and thanks.

She also served as Bertie Middle School's cheerleading coach.

Powell was promoted to sergeant in the Bertie County Sheriff's Office in 2016.

She also continued her education beyond her BLET certification.

"When my daughters graduated high school, I made a promise I would get a degree before them to set an example," she said.

Powell said her father set the example for her to get a degree by graduating with an associate degree from Nash Community College at the age of 70.

"He was my motivator. He was the first in my immediate family to graduate from college," she continued.

Powell graduated in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a minor in homeland security, forensic science and crime scene investigation from Kaplan University. While maintaining a grade point average of 3.3.

In 2014 she graduated with a master of science in leadership and executive management from Kaplan University, while maintaining a 3.2 grade point average.

Powell has also successfully completed law enforcement related training courses

and received certifications including CJLEADS training, police law institute, narcotics investigation, D.A.R.E. officer instructor, intermediate law enforcement certification, school resource officer certification, advanced law enforcement training and CPR instructor certification.

She also received an award in 2017 from the Windsor/Bertie Chamber of Commerce for excellence in a law enforcement officer.

"Bonnie's administrative and law enforcement skills are second-to-none. She shows exceptional attention to detail while maintaining a heavy workload. She is a team player and a consummate professional," said Sheriff Holley.

"I love working in Bertie County. It is the most rewarding. I love working for the sheriff's office. If I had known it would have been this rewarding I would have done it sooner. It is about the joy and satisfaction you can bring to a child," Powell said.

Powell is married to her husband, James, and has three daughters, Starkeisha and twins Kristen and Jasmine.

She also has three grandchildren Benevola, Noah and Eddie Christopher.

Powell said her husband has always been supportive of her career but her daughters were a little nervous at first.

"I came into law enforcement to educate individuals, especially our children on the criminal justice system," she closed.

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Wesson

From A1

tive for eastern North Carolina.

"I want to provide stronger and bolder representation in Raleigh," he said. "I want to be a strong advocate for the citizens, and if elected, I will work with all people."

Wesson said he is the only Democratic candidate to have announced he will seek the office, but he believes there will be others. He said if he were able to win the Democratic nomination, he also knows there will be substan-

tial Republican opposition in November.

The other four members of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners congratulated Wesson on his efforts and wished him well.

Wesson is in the middle of his second four-year term. If he were to win, he would have to vacate his seat on the local board before being sworn in to the state house seat. If he does not win, he will remain on the county commission.

Thadd White can be reached via email at twhite@ncweeklies.com.



Filing

From A1

Vasti James' seat. Both are Democrats.

In addition, Sen. Erica Smith-Ingram's seat will be on the ballot as well as that of State Rep. Bob Steinberg. Steinberg has already announced he will not seek re-election.

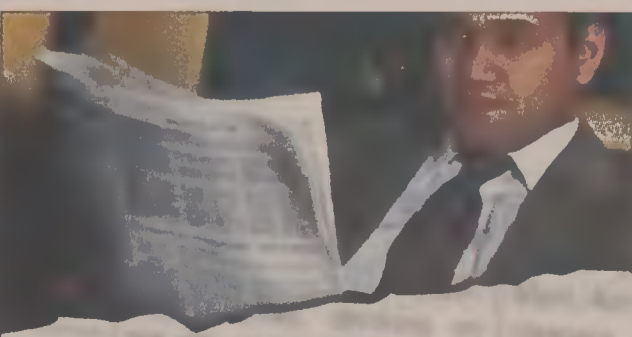
Filing is held at the Bertie County Board of Elections office at

210 West Watson St. in Windsor. The office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2-5 p.m. each week day.

For more information, call the elections office at 252-794-5306.

Additional information is also available at www.ncsbe.gov.

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