



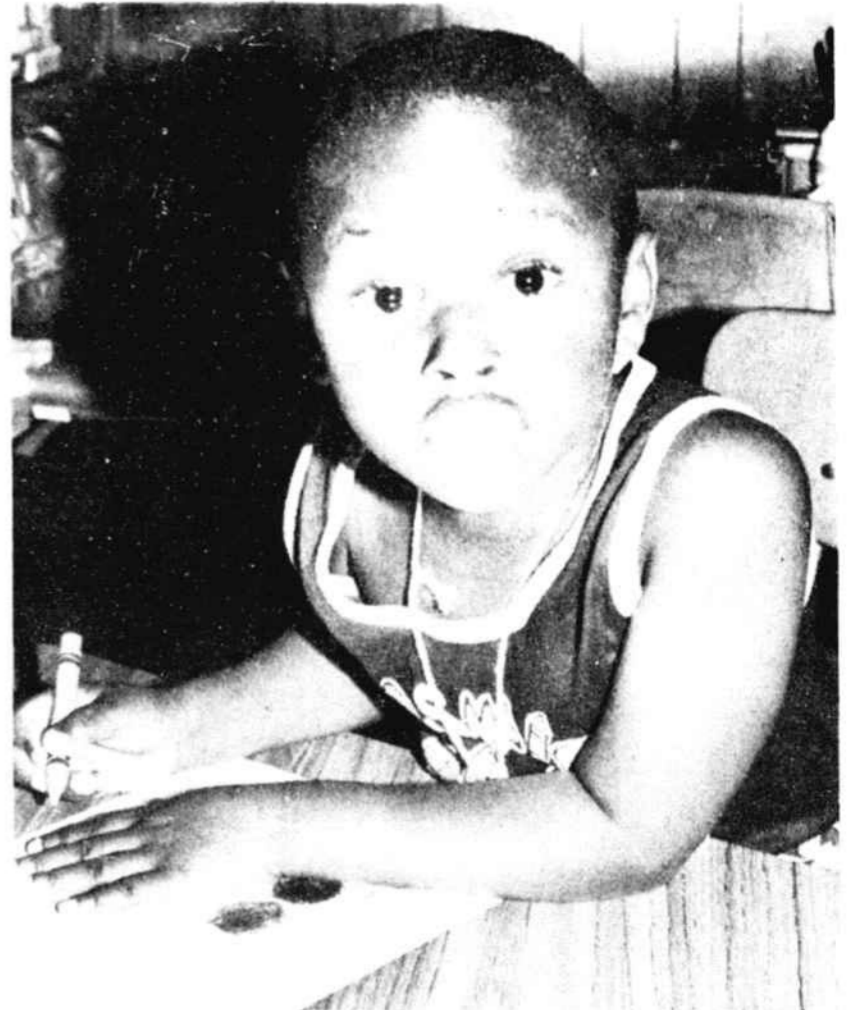
STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER



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SHALLOTTE FOURTH GRADER Tiffany Skaggs (left) creates a bit of privacy at the table cluster she shares with Crystal Moore and two other students in Susan Brown and Eunice Abercrombie's combination class.

COACH/PE TEACHER Richard Hubbard (left) sets groundrules for a new year.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

UNION KINDERGARTNER JAY JENERETTE (right) takes his coloring seriously.

# All Quiet On The Front

All was quiet on the western front Wednesday.

Approximately 8,500 students started a new school year across Brunswick County. At Shallotte area schools, a smooth opening day gave the appearance of being just any other day of the term.

Union Primary kindergartners kissed reluctant moms goodbye and quickly joined new classmates in singing, storytelling and learning about school.

West Brunswick High students fell into the senior high routine quickly, claiming lockers, meeting friends for lunchtime chats, playing handball.

Bulging at the seams with its largest fourth grade ever (nine classes), Shallotte Middle juggled space, squeezing a combination class into a former workshop.

School secretary Marion Tippet couldn't get over how quietly the day had passed.

The only hitch: a major-league morning traffic jam as parents brought their children for the first day of classes. Assistant Principal Clifton Jones added.

"It looks like we're going to have a very good year," Ms. Tippet said with confidence from behind a desk piled high with textbooks and papers before joining a class of fifth-graders for watermelon. "We're off to a good start."



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

LUNCH BREAK at West Brunswick High gives Beverly Brookshire (left) and Jennifer Horne a chance to sit and chat.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

MARGARET COMER joins in a sing-along in Annie Hewell's Union kindergarten class.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

ENJOYING A WATERMELON BREAK at Shallotte Middle before the buses roll are (front, from left) Allison Washington, Tara King, Melissa Leonard; (back) staff member Elaine Wright, Tara Champion Andrew Johnson, Becky Carroll and Crystal Tindal.