

EDUCATOR PROFILE

Kathryn Blanton Is Second Generation Teacher

BY MARTY HOHMANN
 Of the Herald Staff

Kathryn Blanton is excited about education. Her mother was a teacher and that had a powerful influence on herself and her three sisters. As a result, all four earned degrees in education and three are currently teaching in the Kings Mountain School District.

Blanton is an energetic teacher who strives to pass on her love of learning to the first graders she teaches at North Elementary School. After 13 years teaching, it hasn't gotten old to her, just more interesting.

For a while she taught kindergarten and after earning a master's degree in reading, she was in charge of the reading lab. The work was enjoyable, but Blanton wanted more.

"I had the need for my own children," she said. That need was fulfilled in a first grade classroom setting, where she could teach a broad range of subjects to her own group of students. She hasn't forgotten the importance of reading, though, and that without it, children can go no further in their education. Teaching reading is what she feels she does best.

"Reading would probably be my gift," she said. But Blanton has many gifts, just in the way she understands children and their needs. She is concerned about children and the amount of pressure put on them at this early age to achieve.

"We have higher expectations of children, educationally and socially," she said. "Children are required to sit longer instead of having short teaching sessions."

Realizing that accepting those changes is part of her job, Blanton tempers them with a bit of good judgment.



KATHRYN BLANTON

And she has high praises for the curriculum and teaching techniques stressed at North.

North Elementary participates in the open court system of teaching, in which subjects are integrated to show how one affects another. This helps the child to see the relevance of what he is learning and it makes the material more understandable.

Part of that system is the composition cycle. Blanton explained that the idea is to have students

write compositions and summaries, and then spend time correcting their own mistakes. That, she feels, helps them to learn more than simply having a teacher return a corrected paper to them.

"We teach from their work," she said. "I think children learn more from one another. We can all help each other."

In addition, Blanton stresses that first graders need to do a lot of writing to help them understand subject/verb agreement and sentence structure. Students also have a time set aside to work with the classroom computers.

In addition, first graders have classes in art, music, language, media skills and physical education as part of the Basic Education Plan implemented by the state of North Carolina to supplement the curriculum.

"With the BEP North Carolina has implemented, you see more extracurricular subjects. I think these areas have enhanced the curriculum," said Blanton.

But all of the curriculum structuring and planning doesn't mean anything without support from the home, an issue of great importance to Blanton.

"I think a strong school program has the support of the home," she said. "We're fortunate at North. We have parents who are there and who care."

And, she noted, children respond to the amount of importance parents attach to their education. They begin to realize that what they are learning is important because their parents feel it is important enough to take an interest.

It is when a parent is not taking an interest that Blanton faces her biggest challenge. For it is in those

times that she must make up for the lack of stimulation at home.

"Dealing with a child without parental support is the most challenging part of my job," she said. Blanton says she sees the results when "someone is not there to call out those spelling words to the child every night."

Another challenge, she said, is the child who has the capacity to do well but simply has no motivation. Her job, then becomes getting that child excited about education.

"Most of the children in first grade are highly motivated because they can read," she said.

Mastering that skill always brings a sense of excitement because it opens a new world for the child to explore, Blanton noted. And the child begins to realize that he can do things for himself now that he can read.

"I think that's what education is all about is helping them to realize they can do it themselves. If I can lay a foundation here, it will allow the child to be independent and master anything in life."

The enthusiasm she exudes and the manner in which she deals with her students has recently earned her the honor of being Kings Mountain's Teacher of the Year for 1989. As a result, she will be attending a seminar with the Open Court Summer Institute at Meredith College to learn more about the program and what she can do to make it a success.

"You can always learn new things," she said. Blanton wants to learn new things because she plans to be around a lot longer in the teaching profession. In fact, she can't imagine doing anything else.

"I want to stay on the front lines," she said.

Each Phase Of Program Prepares Students For Job

(This is eleventh in a series of twelve articles spotlighting opportunities in each of the Vocational Education programs offered in Kings Mountain)

The Trade and Industrial Vocational Curriculum at Kings Mountain Senior High School is unique in that each segment of the program prepares students for a particular skill area by the time a student completes either drafting, auto mechanics, cosmetology, carpentry or welding, he/she has the option of entering the work force with a skill, or may continue his/her education to enhance those skills. Each program has a common goal, to prepare students for the high-tech jobs of the future. There will be large demands for the skills of these students. Statistics state that over a million new carpenters will be needed by the year 2000. Over 2 million auto mechanics will be needed nationwide. In addition, the demand for skilled workers in the areas of welding, drafting and cosmetology are great.

To introduce readers to each of the skills programs, a brief paragraph describing each program follows:

Drafting is one of the trade and industrial programs offered in the vocational program at Kings Mountain Senior High School. In the Drafting I program students are introduced to the nature of, and employment opportunities in drafting. The first year also familiarizes students with the terms and tools of the drafting trade. They also receive instruction in the use of Computer Assisted Drafting.

The second year is advanced training and development of skills

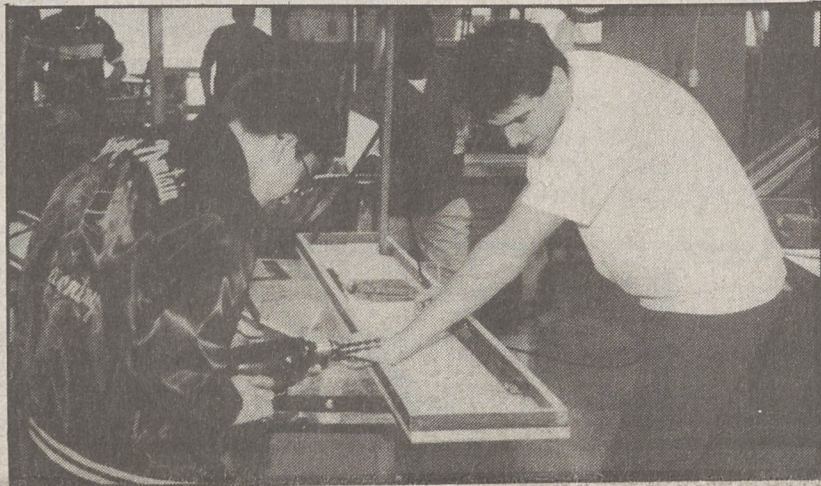
on basic machine drafting, sectional drawings, auxiliary views and interpretation of drafting standards utilizing CAD.

Third year drafting is devoted to architectural drawing including symbols and methods used in house plans. Students learn to scale and develop a complete set of house plans. Lists of materials and cost of construction is learned.

Cosmetology is another class offered in the Trade and Industrial Vocational Program. Mrs. Lillian Whitworth states cosmetology isn't what it used to be. She remembers when training in Beauty Colleges consisted of croquignole heat perms, setting lotions were extremely thick solutions made from flax seed, pin curls were made and secured by interlocking hair pins or anchored by a bobby pin and the results of hair dyes were shaded of color that never existed?

Training today is exciting, she states. New methods and techniques makes training interesting. The length of the course enables the student to graduate with expertise in many areas of the beauty business. Apprentice trainees graduate with 1200 hours of training. The cosmetologist trainee graduates with 1500 hours of training. Students are eligible for the State Board Exam upon graduating from high school and go directly into the work force.

Carpentry is another Trade and Industrial Program offered at Kings Mountain. Wayne Thompson, teacher, states that the building industry is one of the largest industries in the country. Housing is basic need, he further states, and the



Eric Simpson and Kent Goodson, Carpentry students of Wayne Thompson, complete a project in the advanced Carpentry class.

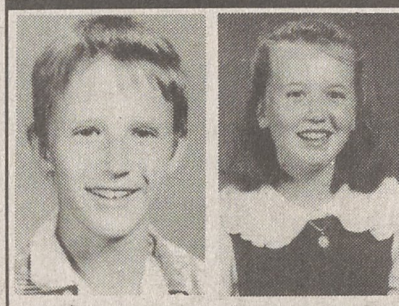
continuously increasing number and expanding activities of the industrial and business world also make steady demands on construction. The rising volume of construction causes an increasing need for carpenters. In an effort to meet the needs of today's work force, the carpentry program at KMSHS strives to give each student sound training in basic carpentry skills. Among the skills students must acquire are the ability to use hand tools and common woodworking machines, be familiar with cutting, shaping and assembling a wide range of materials and have knowledge of a great number of new products which reach the market continually.

As students enter the workforce, it is hope that they will view carpentry as a career that will provide an interesting livelihood, one that will be diverse, challenging, amply rewarding financially, and afford opportunities for the growth of the individual.

Welding is a trade and industrial program at Kings Mountain Senior

High School that gives students hands on experiences in industrial and construction welding, with an overview of the nature of and opportunities in the welding trade. Students receive instruction in the theory and practice of oxy-acetylene cutting and welding, soldering and brazing, arc welding, nomenclature of the equipment and assembly of units, trade terminology, shop mathematics, codes and specifications, estimating, and safety. The advanced course introduces students to MIG and TIG welding.

Auto Technology is one of the five trade and industrial programs offered at Kings Mountain Senior High School. The introductory course places emphasis on the nature of and job opportunities in the auto repair industry. Specific instruction is given in engine operating principles, engine unit functions, troubleshooting, and use of testing equipment. Instruction in safety and leadership development is included. The advanced course places emphasis on the development of skills introduced in automotive Technology I.



West School

By BECKY TAYLOR and JACOB MOSCHLER

West School Fifth Graders Enjoy Trip To Washington, D.C.

On April 18, our fifth grade went to Washington, D.C. We boarded the Amtrak train at 12:30 a.m. We were on the train for about eight hours. When we got off the train, we got on a tour bus and went straight to Ford's Theater. (Some of us got a few hours of sleep on the train). Inside, we took pictures of the box where Lincoln was shot. Afterwards, we went across the street to the Peterson House. There we saw the pillow with Lincoln's blood on it. Back outside, we were able to purchase souvenir items from sidewalk vendors.

Next, we were off to the Capital Building. There, we saw the new Senate Chamber which was very interesting. Then, we went to the Library of Congress, and ate lunch on the sixth floor of the Madison Building. Later, we took pictures from the front yard of the White House, George Bush's home.

Following that, we went to the Vietnam Memorial which had the names of 58,000 people that died or were reported as missing in action during that conflict.

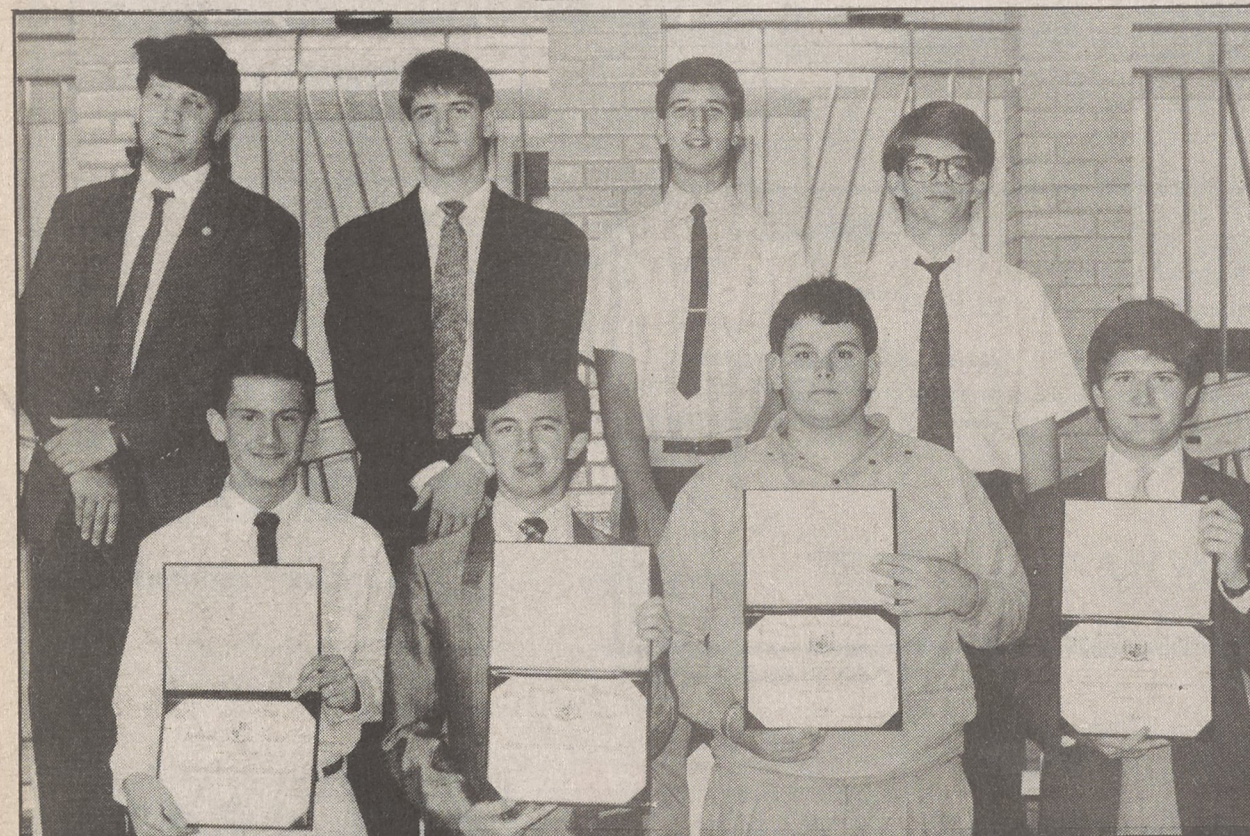
Next, we checked into our hotel, the Arlington Hyatt. We had 30 minutes to freshen up and be back at the tour bus. From there, we went to the Old Post Office for dinner. There, we could choose from various food vendors.

After dinner, we visited the Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Kennedy Center. After we had seen all those places, we went back to our hotel for a good and much needed night's sleep.

The next day, we had breakfast at McDonalds about 8:15. Then we were off to the zoo. After that, we saw Arlington National Cemetery. At Arlington Cemetery, four of our students participated in a wreath laying ceremony. These four were selected for having the highest overall academic averages. They were, Jacob Moschler, Becky Taylor, John Sizemore, and Autumn Edsall. We also got to see the military ceremony of the changing of the guard.

Around noon, we had a picnic lunch and then went to see Mount Vernon. We also had a chance to visit a gift shop and purchase other souvenirs. The next thing, we knew we were on our way home. We left Washington about 6:50 p.m., aboard Amtrak. We arrived in Gastonia approximately 3:20 a.m.

Many thanks to our teachers, parents, and others who made this trip possible.



JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC WINNERS-Pictured are junior students honored for academic achievement and present at the annual Academic Awards banquet at Kings Mountain Senior High School. Front row, from left, Tracy Shane Sullens, John Edward Heath, Michael Donovan Paysour, and Ashley Paul Dover. Back row, from left, Joseph Thomas Champion, Scott Darrell Belcher, David Ronald DiSabato, and Joseph Rivers Smith.



SCHOLASTIC HONORS FOR SOPHOMORES-These 10th graders were present and honored for academic achievement at KMSHS Awards banquet recently. Front row, from left, Susie Lelia Hardin, Marcus Anthony Byers, Heather Ruth Caveny, Kelly Marie Herndon, Angela Marie Patterson, and Angela Yvonne Whitaker. Back row, from left, Susan Crosland Hendricks, Mathew Frederick Bunch, Charity Nicole Jackson, and Sharon Elaine Horton.