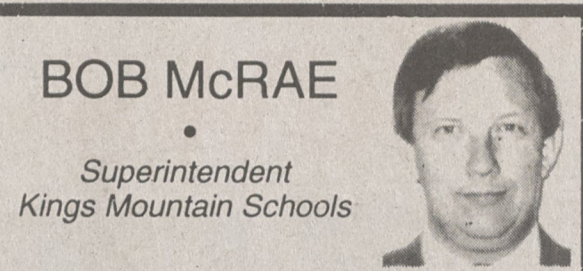


KM teachers do an outstanding job

We celebrated Employee Appreciation Day in our school system last week. Each year our board of education sets aside a day to say thank you to our employees. Board members visit every work site in an effort to personally contact each member of our employee family. I want to add my personal appreciation to our employees for a job very well done.

In today's column I want to spotlight one specific group of employees, the teachers. These dedicated workers are on the front lines of our instructional effort, and their jobs are much more demanding than in the past. I think our school system is fortunate to have good teachers and want to try today to help you better understand the challenges that face them.

Society commonly recognizes the diversity of the students who come to school. That recognition does not make dealing with such diversity a simple matter. Not only do modern teachers have to deal with a wide array of student learning styles - they also see students who come with more varied home backgrounds than before. Teachers literally have to be "everything to everybody." We do still have students who come from the traditional nuclear family unit which offers strong support for school. The number of those has dwindled considerably however, and some of our children come



BOB McRAE
Superintendent
Kings Mountain Schools

from home backgrounds which compound their learning problems.

Teaching today requires new strategies. The need to customize the instructional program for each child is more important. While there are better tools, such as computers, to use, their use places additional demands on teachers. Becoming proficient in the use of new equipment and staying abreast of the latest research on how students learn demands considerable time and effort. Our teachers have their own families and interests that deserve time which often must be given to staff development activities or other work responsibilities.

The diversity of today's student also requires teachers to take on tasks not historically assigned to them. Most of us wish this were not the case, however to ig-

nore the tasks simply leaves them undone. While the schools should primarily be concerned with the educational development of the children, today's world forces a considerable amount of the social development on them as well. Teachers often get pulled in the midst of a variety of social problems facing their students. Therefore, they need to either be experts at assisting with the problem or at finding the appropriate help for whatever the student is facing.

The expectations from teachers have also increased. We adults remember excellent teachers we had in school. I doubt many of us could tell each other what results on achievement tests the students of those teachers had. Today's teacher is being held more accountable for results than in the past. This is not appropriate, but it does add pressure to the already numerous responsibilities. In today's school when students sit down to take end of the year exams the stakes are much higher in terms of what the public will learn and think about results. Even the best teachers are going to have some nervousness about that.

Parents have increased expectations about communication from teachers. Again this is a worthy goal. It does take considerable time on the teachers' schedules if they are to fulfill each parent's desires in this regard.

Today's teacher is expected to meet each of these challenges effectively under detailed scrutiny by the community. Perhaps no other worker in the modern workforce operates under as powerful a microscope as the teacher. There seems to always be someone to question what goes on or have a better way to do it. We should be receptive to ideas and suggestions from community members. Those same community people should never forget that the teacher is the trained expert, and they should have a healthy respect for that expertise. Often that does not seem to be the case.

Tough job? You bet it is. Will one get rich at it? No way! The good news is that today's teachers already knew both of those facts when they signed on board. They are not in it to find easy work or great pay. In the Kings Mountain District Schools I find a dedicated, industrious teacher staff. They constantly amaze me with their efforts, both in terms of time and quality. They may not always please every person individually - but who among us can make that claim? We are very lucky to have such a fine teaching core. Let's value them, support them, and reward them. They certainly deserve our best efforts in return for what they give our children - their very best. Thanks, teachers. It's my privilege to work with you.



TOP AWARDS - Employees of the Kings Mountain District Schools were honored at the recent awards banquet. From left, Sandra Bumgardner, Office Support Employee of the Year; Barbara Jones, Teacher Assistant of the Year; Mary Ellen Davis, retired employee at East School Cafeteria; Annie Mae Berry, Food Service Employee of the Year; back row, from left, Fred Tate, Custodian of the Year; Herman Green, Bus Driver of the Year; and Buddy Ramey, Maintenance Employee of the Year.

Melanie Dixon makes dean's list at Duke

Melanie Heather Dixon, a junior and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dwight Dixon of Kings Mountain, made the dean's list for the 1993-94 academic year at Duke University in Durham.

To make the list, a student must achieve a 3.3 grade point average out of a possible 4.0.

Wilson graduates from East Carolina

Ron Bradley Wilson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie Wilson of Kings Mountain, received Bachelor's degree in Business Administration during the 108th commencement exercise at Campbell University in Buies Creek.

The commencement address was delivered by U.S. Representative Henry J. Hyde. Speaker for the commencement sermon was Dr. James C. Dobson, founder and president of Focus on the Family.

Henson earns degree at Wingate College

Christopher Scott Henson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Scott Henson of Kings Mountain, was among the 227 students receiving degrees during the 98th commencement ceremony at Wingate College.

Henson received a Bachelor of Science in Sports Medicine.

Jack Callahan, Vice-President and Station Manager of WSOC-TV in Charlotte, was the speaker.



VISIT RALEIGH - Students in Mrs. Hawkins, Smith and Harrington's fourth grades at Grover School recently visited the State Capitol in Raleigh. Top photo shows all of the students and teachers. Bottom photo, front row, left to right, are Adonis Mathews, Jonathan Ammay, Edith Lutz, Eric Johnson, Trent Earls, Stuart Heffner and John McGinnis. Back row, Greg Payseur and Wade Capps.

Local students graduate WCU

Kings Mountain and Grover students were among the 1,080 students receiving degrees at the recent spring commencement exercises at Western Carolina University.

They include David Michael Ballard Jr., 1005 Sherwood Lane, marketing; Peggy Belsha, 2125 Brook Forest Drive, English; Jason Randall Dover, 226 Long Branch Road, criminal justice; Stephen

Brett Herndon, 171 Reliance Road, computer information systems; Dustin Eugene Mullinax, 1246 Phifer Road, marketing; and Brian Keith Ramsey, Grover, criminal justice.

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