

Carolina partners with the American Indian community to understand breast cancer survival

| By **Bonnie C. Yankaskas**

Professor of Radiology, UNC-Chapel Hill
and

Cherry Beasley

Assistant Professor of Nursing, UNC-Pembroke

Editor's note: For more than 10 years, Carolina researchers have wanted to understand mammography use and outcomes for all populations in North Carolina. In 1993, for example, Bonnie Yankaskas founded the Carolina Mammography Registry (CMR) to gather demographic data about mammography screenings in community practice.

Based on the needs and concerns of the population and of researchers, the initial project evolved into other related research projects and educational offerings. To increase the presence of American Indian women in CMR, Yankaskas joined forces with Cherry Beasley in 1997. Beasley is Lumbee and lives and works in Robeson County at UNC-Pembroke.



These women attended an American Indian Breast Cancer Survivors conference held at UNC-Pembroke. A second conference is planned for July.

Since we started working together, we have recruited women all over the state to participate in the CMR. We worked with women in the community to discuss the realities of getting mammography and found that sharing stories was one of the most effective ways to learn about American Indian women's relationship to their cancer, to medicine and to the health care system. Our partnership has resulted in an effective way to conduct research on screening mammography and breast cancer survivorship in the American Indian community.

Many hours of intimate conversation created the breast cancer survivors' oral history project. To date, 30 women have been interviewed for the project in the Lumbee community. This has been a learning experience for all of us; many of the women talked extensively about their experience with breast cancer for the first time. Women came together, and they learned the benefit of sharing their experiences with other survivors. Our project continues to grow and change as we learn more. The survivors themselves have begun to shape the dialogue and take charge of how they communicate about these issues.

Research indicates that participation in survivor and/or support groups improves quality of life. However, the women indicated that they had selected not to participate in support groups outside the Indian community. As a result, we held an "American Indian Breast Cancer Survivors" conference, and survivors are working with project staff to plan a second conference for July. This is an opportunity for survivors and their caretakers and family members to share their experiences, hopes and dreams with others and to participate in improving the road for future survivors.

It is not unusual for women in the community to ask Beasley questions about breast health, which usually begin, "Are you still working in breast cancer? It is good that we are talking about this and working to do something about it. Let me tell you about my sister..." This project provides

a voice for women in Indian communities and continues to strive to provide data that can be used to empower them to address this need.

The project team has also submitted for publication an article entitled "Faith, Healing, and Faith Healing in Lumbee Experiences of Breast Cancer." An interdisciplinary group of researchers from history, folklore, American Indian Studies and medicine — Sarah Bryan, Jill Hemming, Christy Strickland and us — have authored this account of the dual roles of faith and medical care for Lumbee women facing decisions about breast cancer treatment and healing.

It was resoundingly clear throughout the many hours of interviews that religious faith and conventional biomedicine were considered complementary and interdependent sources of healing and comfort, essential components of the same whole. Blessed with medical pluralism, Lumbee breast cancer patients view their healing to be in equal measure a matter of the worldly and the spiritual.

Another project, the "Breast Health Survey for American Indian Women," was developed by Ursula Tsosie and Jada Locklear, graduate students in the Department of Epidemiology at Carolina. Collaborating with the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, these young women worked closely with a member of each tribe in the state to create a survey that was culturally sensitive and would be distributed according to the wishes of each tribe.

We have encountered challenges with the survey's response rate, but the project is still open for participation. If successful, we will gain good, representative information on the use of mammography by American Indian women in the state and the profile of risk for breast cancer in this community.

We are currently creating a primary-care-based research network in Robeson County. The North Carolina American Indian Study of Clinical Outcomes, if funded, will bring together 15 primary care practices with 54
see Breast cancer survival on page 4

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Carolina wants YOU: A conversation with Robert Shelton, executive vice chancellor and provost

Interview conducted by Kevin Maynor,
Voices Editor



MAYNOR: Dr. Shelton, what does diversity mean to you?

SHELTON: Diversity to me means many things, but at the core it is a very practical issue. To make the best decisions and implement the best actions that we can, I want people involved who have varied life experiences and who will share their ideas. Whatever it is, a board meeting, a group of students or a group of faculty, if everybody is just like me, we are not going to have a very vigorous, stimulating discussion leading to the right decisions. To me that is what diversity means.

MAYNOR: Have any particular personal experiences made you come to believe that diversity is important?

SHELTON: Diverse input makes for sound judgment. I find the times I make bad decisions are usually when I haven't brought enough people together to wrestle with the topic. Diverse groups have a broader

perspective and bring together different backgrounds. That is why we need to have diversity, and we all benefit from it.

MAYNOR: Could you briefly discuss the Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity and its charge?

SHELTON: It was a logical step after we had done the Academic Planning Task Force and the Task Force for a Better Workplace. The Task Force on Diversity is taking the pulse of the University, trying to understand our current strengths and weaknesses with respect to diversity, and taking a historical look to see how we got to where we are. Then with that better understanding, we can set some possibilities for steps to take because universities care a great deal about diversity and rightfully so.

MAYNOR: So, diversity is important not only to Carolina, but to universities in general. Can you relate our interests in diversity to the larger academic environment?

SHELTON: We all would agree that a college education opens up the world to people. I'm not talking only about financial gain, but I am thinking more of the development of the human being. Universities play a critical role in developing people to their fullest potential. Diversity is a strength we have historically drawn on, but we can only draw on that strength when all people feel that they have an opportu-



Robert Shelton

nity, to the best of their ability, for the university experience.

MAYNOR: It seems that we are migrating from an attitude of standardization to a point where we really appreciate differences in people, and this mentality has helped bring about our interest in diversity.

SHELTON: That's right. We are not turning out model Fords here off an assembly line where we want them to all look the same and run the same. That is not our goal here.

MAYNOR: Why do you think it is important that the University pays attention to the Native American population of the state of North Carolina?

SHELTON: The universities in North Carolina are fortunate to have such a rich and diverse set of Indian cultures, which every state does not have. When you think about the kind of values, the ethics, the sense of community, the respect for learning that are just intrinsic to these Indian cultures, the University needs to bring that into the University community. If, in turn, we can enrich the experience of the Native American students who come here, then the University benefits, the individuals benefit; students can bring this additional knowledge and experience back to their communities and the whole state benefits.

MAYNOR: Coming from the western part of the country where Indian identity may be a little more prevalent in everyday life, were you surprised, or were you previously aware that you were coming to a state that has a fairly significant Indian population?

SHELTON: I was aware, although I confess that I had no sense of the great richness and complexities of it. I was born in Phoenix, Ariz., and lived there off and on through ninth grade. The Indian cultures see [Carolina wants YOU](#) on page 9

A message from the editor

By Kevin Maynor

Director of Cost Analysis and Compliance, Office of Sponsored Research, Voices Editor

Welcome to *Voices – News from Carolina's First People*. This third issue features a discussion with our executive vice chancellor and provost, Robert Shelton. We are indeed fortunate that an individual with such vision, sensitivity and command of the relevant issues leads the academic direction of our great University. Read what Shelton has to say to us, and I believe you will agree.

This issue continues to provide information about the many activities and initiatives related to Native American life at Carolina. Read about the work of our graduate students and research faculty, the reflections of two graduating Carolina Indian Circle members, collaborative programs with other campuses and organizations, as well as efforts to expand community outreach to benefit American Indians.

I would like to thank all the contributors for sharing part of their interesting lives with us and for their service to our cause. I would also like to thank the Office of University Development for sponsoring this newsletter and Malinda Maynor for her able assistance in making this spring 2005 issue a reality.

Our mailing list continues to grow, as does the positive

response from our readers. A fund-raising event was held in Lumberton, N.C., last October, and plans call for similar events across the state. Plans are also under way for an annual Native alumni gathering on campus. Stay tuned.

Most of all, thank you, our many Native American alumni and friends. You are responding to our efforts. Last fall, I asked you to show your support of our students and Indian initiatives by working toward 100 percent alumni participation in a University giving designation. I have wonderful news. In this fiscal year (2004-05) for first-time Carolina alumni donors, Native Americans have both the highest giving percentage rate and the highest average amount per gift across all minority groups!

This outstanding performance indicates your great sense of responsibility to ensure a nurturing learning environment for the students following us to Carolina. Please help us keep moving toward the 100 percent objective and do what you can to establish the fact that Carolina's first people are truly first class. A gift in any amount to a giving designation means a great deal to these programs. Keep up the support and enjoy reading *Voices*. 🌟

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The Native American Subcommittee is a part of the Carolina First Minority Alumni Committee chaired by Michael D. Kennedy '79 of Atlanta. Michael serves on the Carolina First Campaign Steering Committee.

For more information about the Minority Alumni Committee and Carolina alumni and friends, contact:

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Sequoyah Fellowship funds groundbreaking student research in literature and biology

By Grace Camblos, Graduate Student Assistant in the Graduate School

Jennifer Taylor, a Ph.D. candidate in biology and a member of the Cherokee Nation, and Lindsey Smith, a Ph.D. candidate in English and a Chickasaw, are pursuing groundbreaking work with support from the Sequoyah Fellowship.

This competitive fellowship is helping Taylor investigate the skeletal support systems of crabs and Smith write her dissertation resituating American Indian voices in American literature.

“The fellowship will be a huge help,” Taylor said. “It will give me the time I need to focus on my research.”

Taylor’s experiments with the support systems of crabs sheds new light on a surprisingly unaddressed issue in arthropod biology: their use of not one, but two skeletal support systems throughout their growth. Unlike vertebrate animals, crabs have hard external skeletons that they must shed to grow larger. After shedding its skeleton, the crab secretes a new one over the course of several days. But while the crab is soft during this time, it can still move and function without its external skeleton.

“This would be comparable to a person suddenly losing all rigidity in their bones and instead of becoming a blob on the floor, still functioning normally,” Taylor said.

Taylor discovered that crabs and other arthropods during this time switch to a different type of skeletal support system, a hydrostatic skeleton. In this system, the fluid inside the animal’s body cavity serves as structural support.

Taylor’s research was published in the Summer 2003 issue of *Science* magazine, and the Sequoyah Fellowship will help her complete her dissertation.

Lindsey Smith first became interested in the representation of American Indians in literature when she noticed that many of the books she read for classes featured American Indian characters who often were overlooked. Her dissertation examines the relationships that American Indian characters have with both white and African American characters and resituates American Indian voices within American literature.

“There are a lot of books where whites and African Americans and American Indians come together, and those encounters are always in the wilderness,” said Smith, who is examining books as wide-ranging as James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* and Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead*. “I think these authors are trying to say that there is a uniquely American sense of how different races and ethnicities come together, and that coming together is tied to our relationship with the environment.”

Both Taylor and Smith have helped improve Native studies at Carolina by helping recruit Native American students to the Graduate School. Their applications so impressed members of the faculty selection committee that rather than choose between them, they recommended that the Graduate School fund both.



Jennifer Taylor
Sequoyah Fellow Jennifer Taylor’s research explores the skeletal support systems of crabs.

Lindsey Smith
Lindsey Smith is a Sequoyah Fellow studying how American Indians are represented in literature.

“The Graduate School has been very supportive of Jennifer and me, and of Native students in general,” Smith said. “This summer I plan to give several lectures at conferences and to be able to focus on my dissertation and enter that scholarly world will really help my professional development.”

The Sequoyah Fellowship is open to both American Indian graduate students doing research on any topic or any graduate student doing research on American Indian topics. This competitive fellowship allows doctoral students to focus on their research and dissertation for an entire academic year. A competitive financial award, the Sequoyah Fellowship includes a stipend, tuition, health insurance and travel funding.

The Sequoyah Fellowship also falls within the Society of Fellows, which supports and nurtures members through the mentoring of senior faculty, interdisciplinary learning and leadership development opportunities.

SUPPORT THE SEQUOYAH FELLOWSHIP

The Graduate School funds the Sequoyah Fellowship through the generous gifts of many private donors and hopes to establish it as an endowed fellowship to ensure that it will always be available to support American Indian graduate student scholars. Please consider using the form at the bottom of this page to designate your next gift to the Sequoyah Fellowship.

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NATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON UNDERGRADUATE LIFE AT CAROLINA

Time here well worth it, despite personal trials

| By **Derek Oxendine**
Class of 2005



* **Editor's note:** These pieces were written shortly before Carolina's May 2005 commencement ceremony.

Throughout my time here at Carolina, I've seen many ups and downs. Most of these were associated with the things that I became involved with over several years.

I became highly active with the Carolina Indian Circle (CIC) and at different points served as the CIC liaison, the recruitment weekend chairperson, the vice-president and, lastly, the president. I also held membership in the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Phi Sigma Nu Fraternity Inc. and the Order of the Golden Fleece. The Office for Minority Affairs also employed me in an administrative position focusing on the recruitment of outstanding Native American high school students from the tribes within North Carolina.

I reached a low point when my first cousin, Jason W. Hunt, passed away from an accidental drowning. I was six months older than he was and from the time we were babies we were inseparable. Not only were we cousins, but also best friends. We always talked about getting married, having kids and where we would build our houses. We promised that we'd raise our families right beside each other. Our children were going to be best friends, too; they had no say so in the matter. Yep, those were our dreams until the Creator decided it was time for Jason to move on.

Between school, homework, jobs and my organizations,

I didn't know if I was coming or going after Jason died. Many times I thought about giving up, dropping out of school and going back home to Robeson County. Everything was a blur to me.

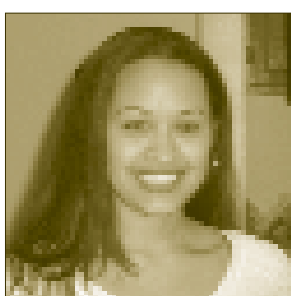
However, even with knowing how things turned out, I wouldn't change any of it. Not one single thing from the past four years. I've realized that college is a time for self-expression: chances to test new waters and figure out who you are. I also realized that as you get older there would be trials that you have to face. You either overcome them or you don't.

One day I realized that Jason wouldn't want me to be a quitter. I thought about how disappointed he would be if I let things get the best of me. In return, I became motivated and turned over a new leaf. All the pain, the sweat, the worries, the stress, the happiness, the smiles, the laughter, the joy and the tears I've experienced while being a Tar Heel have molded me into the person that I shall now and forever be.

I entered as a boy in August 2001 with many uncertainties and not knowing what lay ahead, and on May 15, 2005, at 9:30 a.m. in Kenan Stadium I will leave as a man knowing that my angel beyond those Carolina Blue skies will be looking down, grinning from ear to ear. 🌟

Personal initiative plus Carolina education adds up to success

| By **Sherri Brooks**
Class of 2005



As graduation approaches, there are many things that come to my mind about my time here at Carolina. All I can think is that I would not trade this experience for anything in the world.

The life lessons learned here are far more valuable than anything that I could have ever read in a course book. My activities, school work and summer job experiences have culminated in producing a well-rounded, open-minded, determined graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill.

The main lesson that I take away from my time here at Carolina is that there are endless opportunities that are available, but it is up to me to seek out and secure these opportunities to make them realities. Tenacity and hard work are the biggest components in achieving goals, whether in the classroom or workplace.

Carolina does a great job in training leaders and giving them ample opportunity to be proactive in campus life at the University. Let it not be said that Carolina students do not feel passionately about issues and having a voice in decisions that concern their well-being. From what I have seen, students are always getting involved with some controversial issue or at least fighting the yearly increase of tuition. Power of the people is constantly witnessed through the protesters in the Pit or at the town post office.

I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to take part in some of the positive programs sponsored by the University, programs such as Minority Advising, the Summer Bridge

Program and Project Uplift. I also served on the Campus Y advisory board as a student member.

Last but not least in my never-ending list of campus activities comes my Native American community and groups such as the Carolina Indian Circle, AISES and Alpha Pi Omega Sorority. The Native American unity on this campus far surpasses any other that I have witnessed on other campuses! Such a strong support network and familial relationship among these groups serves to uplift and encourage continued excellence among Native American students at Carolina.

These activities and the focus of my major (psychology) have allowed me to be a successful graduate. Not only was I accepted into a number-two-ranked social work program in St. Louis, but I was also selected for Teach for America, a highly competitive program that allows graduates in all areas to teach all over the country for two years. I have chosen to take part in the Teach for America program, because its goals are so similar to those of the many activities that I participated in at Carolina, and I feel as if I will be able to make a positive difference in the lives of children.

I just want everyone to realize that they have the potential to do great things and achieve all their goals, and Teach for America fosters that kind of commitment to America's youth. So in short, I do not regret any time that I have spent here at Carolina, but I do praise the relationships and connections that I have made! 🌟

continued from *Breast cancer survival* on page 1

providers, including many American Indians, to study the health status of Robeson County. This is a true partnership, bringing together the providers, community members and researchers from Carolina, UNC-Pembroke and the Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

Ronny Bell, a professor from Wake Forest, and Katrina Donahue, a doctor with UNC Family Practice, are joining the research group for this endeavor. The potential to bring research dollars to carry out the work defined by American Indian health care providers in Robeson County is truly exciting. We hope to report

our successes in this endeavor.

These projects have not only addressed our research objectives, they have expanded the research knowledge and health care research expertise in the Indian community. Though Indians are entering the health care professions and role models are available in the Indian community, there are few role models for health service research and few Indians are selecting these areas of study. These projects have modeled the merging of research and cultural expertise to address research needs and to develop researchers. Several of the Indian women who have worked as staff on these projects have

continued their education as a direct result of being given these opportunities. Collaboration shows both the seasoned and future researcher how to provide research that is culturally competent and meets people's health care needs.

Our collaboration has created greater opportunities for personal growth and health research, as well as gathered knowledge to change lives and support breast cancer survivors. Community members, health care providers and researchers have come together to share expertise and resources. All of us are deeply committed to improving health in the American Indian community. 🌟

Tracking down proteins in breast cancer cells

| By **Damon Jacobs**, Department of Cell and Molecular Physiology, School of Medicine

I am an Oglala Lakota (Sioux) from South Dakota, and I grew up on several Indian reservations in the western United States. At Carolina, I am a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Medicine's Department of Cell and Molecular Physiology and am studying biological functions of the human body at the cellular and molecular level.

My research focuses on the functions of proteins called myosins. Myosin proteins interact with actin filament proteins during muscle contraction to generate force, which then allows us to run or jump. The same molecular mechanism facilitates many other processes inside our cells, such as the transport or secretion of small molecules. Myosin motor proteins literally "walk" along actin filaments, which act as "tracks" in our cells. Many motor proteins utilize this elaborate and highly organized network of "tracks" to transport molecules to specific destinations. The U.S. system of roadways provides a nice parallel to the "tracks," with the motor proteins analogous to the cars that follow them.

In my current research I am using cells derived from a breast cancer tumor to study the physiological function of a newly discovered myosin, named myosin 5c. Myosin 5c is abundantly expressed in breast and other cancer cells, which leads researchers to think that it may play an important role in cancer biology. Myosin motor proteins are required for several important cellular functions, including growth, cell division and migration, all of which are "out-of-control" processes in cancer cells. I want to determine the function of myosin 5c in cancer cells.

Breast cancer research is important because it is the most common form of cancer in women and ranks second behind lung cancer for cancer-related mortality. One in eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lives. There are also other important diseases,

it is easy to understand why it is critical to study these important molecular motor proteins.

A natural interest

My interest in performing biomedical research stems from my inherent curiosity with nature and my appreciation for life in its many forms. As kids growing up on the reservation, my five brothers, two sisters and I were creative in finding alternative ways to entertain ourselves. It was always fun for me to run around outdoors exploring new territory and discovering things. Going hunting and fishing with my family and friends built a strong connection with nature early in life. Archery hunting for elk and fly-fishing for trout during the fall in Colorado are still some of my favorite things to do. When I was a kid, I was not aware that medical research at a major university was in my future. It wasn't until much later as an undergraduate student that I realized research opportunities were available to me and that I was capable of taking advantage of them. Many years later, I am now lucky enough to have the tools and knowledge needed to study biology in a much more



Damon Jacobs

Damon Jacobs' research focuses on myosins, proteins that transport molecules to different destinations in the body.

Breast cancer research is important because it is the most common form of cancer in women and ranks second behind lung cancer for cancer-related mortality.

including cystic fibrosis and some variants of Type II diabetes, that are caused by defective transport of specific proteins and molecules. Type II diabetes, as a result of obesity, is becoming very common in the world. The disease seems to afflict certain populations, such as American Indians, more frequently than others. It is also interesting that a higher incidence of obesity correlates with an increased risk of breast cancer, suggesting that obesity, Type II diabetes and breast cancer may somehow be linked. Because of this I want to determine the specific functions of myosin 5c and learn whether it will directly impact treatment of breast cancer or diseases caused by transport defects.

Our lab is also very interested in myosin 10, an additional myosin molecular motor that is found at the tips of long, slender cellular processes called filopodia. Myosin 10 is hypothesized to be essential during development of the brain and other tissues of the body. Migrating cells, such as neurons in the brain or metastasizing cancer cells, may require myosin 10 to help direct them through the body to form a new synapse or colonize another tumor. Evidence suggests that myosin 10 transports signaling molecules to the tips of filopodia to help sense the cellular environment and provide guidance cues. This may be an example of how a cell may use its "fingertips" to "feel" its way through the environment. With this in mind,

detailed manner.

In Richard Cheney's laboratory, where I am carrying out my dissertation research, we use high-magnification and high-resolution microscopy to study the movements of molecular motor proteins.

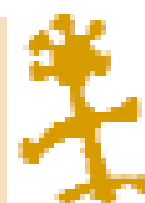
Fluorescence time-lapse imaging allows us to make movies of motor proteins that have a fluorescent tag attached to them. It is extremely exciting and beautiful to visualize for the first time the dynamic movements of a newly discovered protein that is found inside our own bodies. Based on the movements that we observe, we then formulate hypotheses about a protein's cellular and physiological function. The physiology department trains students to study a problem at the cellular and molecular level while also maintaining the whole organism in perspective. As I learn more about natural mechanisms, I also become more fascinated and intrigued.

Fighting fires

My employment and academic history is quite different from the conventional route. In high school, I started working with the Bureau of [see *Tracking down proteins in breast cancer cells* on page 7](#)

NIH and Carolina can help graduate school applicants

There are many programs available through the National Institutes of Health to help minority students prepare for, apply to and enter into a graduate program. The same programs and many graduate schools offer full financial support. For more information, visit www.nigms.nih.gov/training/announcements.html. Here on campus, Susan Gramling, GrantSource librarian in the Office of Information and Communications, can help you identify research-related funding sources for your graduate education. She can be reached at 919-962-7766 / sgramlin@email.unc.edu.



Institute of Outdoor Drama celebrates Native culture and history

| By **Scott J. Parker**, Executive Director, Institute of Outdoor Drama

Do you remember your first experience at a summer outdoor drama? The breeze was cooling and constant in the amphitheater, but the mosquitoes were murder at first. The house lights dimmed, and everyone got quiet — even you quit squirming in your seat. The music rose with the stage lights, and before you knew it, you were swept up in a story of love, betrayal, war and heroism. You forgot all about the mosquitoes, distracted by a story that not only actually happened, but took place where you were sitting at that moment. Chills ran up your spine and maybe, at the end, a tear ran down your cheek. Remember?



Scott Parker

Outdoor drama is a unique experience, and one that was born right here in North Carolina. Most people are familiar with the legend of the Lost Colony — the first English settlement in North America built on North Carolina's coast. But the outdoor drama that recounts the story is perhaps even more legendary than the legend itself. Performed every summer on the Outer Banks, *The Lost Colony* was the first theater production of its kind, written by the genre's founding and most famous



The outdoor drama *Unto These Hills* tells the story of the Cherokee from their encounter with Spanish explorers in 1540 to the tragic Trail of Tears in the 1830s.

dramatist, Paul Green. *The Lost Colony* is also synonymous with North Carolina's history, which makes UNC-Chapel Hill a natural home for the Institute of Outdoor Drama (IOD), a public service agency of the University's College of Arts and Sciences. In all, North Carolina hosts 11 outdoor dramas, eight of which dramatize the state's historical people, places and events.

But, unfortunately, most people's knowledge and artistic appreciation of outdoor drama and of North Carolina history begins and ends with the Lost Colony legend and play. Of course the lost colonists were not the state's first settlers; they were only the first *European* settlers. Visitors and state residents often know little about the Lost Colony's hosts, the Native nations. Two of our state's outdoor dramas — *Strike at the Wind!* and *Unto These Hills* — celebrate North Carolina's Native American history and culture and give visitors and residents a unique understanding of how North Carolina's Native population has contributed to making the state what it is today. Over the years, IOD has played an

important role in supporting these dramas and the Native-run organizations that produce them.

Established in 1963, IOD is the only U.S. organization that provides national leadership in fostering artistic and managerial excellence and expansion of the outdoor drama movement through training, research and advisory programs. A public service agency of UNC-Chapel Hill, IOD also serves as a national clearinghouse for its more than 100 constituent theater companies across the nation. In 1995, Gov. James B. Hunt awarded the institute with the North Carolina Governor's Business Award in the Arts and Humanities. The award is given to those organizations and companies that find "new and innovative ways to enhance our cultural climate and make North Carolina a better place to live for everyone." Such recognition was not only a tribute to the institute's work, but it was an endorsement of the power of outdoor drama to educate Americans and provide economic development opportunities for North Carolinians.

Unto These Hills

Unto These Hills tells the story of the Cherokee from their encounter with Spanish explorers in 1540 to the tragic Trail of Tears in the 1830s. Since opening in 1950, more than 5 million people have seen the drama on the Qualla Boundary in Cherokee, N.C. Cherokee people play many of the drama's most important roles, re-creating the lives of Cherokee leaders such as Sequoyah, Tsali, Junaluska and Drowning Bear. The drama was written by Kermit Hunter, a student of Paul Green, with music composed by Jack F. Kilpatrick and McCrae Hardy. With a cast, crew and staff of more than 200 and thousands of visitors every year, *Unto These Hills* is a major cultural and economic force on the Cherokee reservation and in western North Carolina.

"The drama really helped Cherokee develop economically," said Barry Hipps, general manager of *Unto These Hills*. The Cherokee Historical Association, which manages the drama, also runs the Oconaluftee Village, a living museum located near the theater site. About half of the association's employees are Cherokees, who, according to Hipps, learn about their history and benefit from the seasonal employment the drama offers.

Over the last 20 years, Hipps and his staff have participated in numerous events and opportunities provided by IOD. In particular, the institute hosts a national conference every year that draws leaders in nonprofit theater: managers, artistic directors, board members and consultants who move outdoor drama forward. The IOD also publishes information about outdoor dramas for potential visitors. Finally, the institute offers a critical service for long-running and successful dramas such as *Unto These Hills* — it hosts national auditions every spring, giving North Carolina's outdoor dramas access to the best talent available in the nation.

Strike at the Wind!

While *Unto These Hills* covers the Native story in the Great Smokies, *Strike at the Wind!* shows another side of Native life in North Carolina — that of the Lumbee Indians in the southeastern part of the state. Located just

see [Institute of Outdoor Drama celebrates on page 8](#)

‘Widening the Circle’ at the Office for Student Academic Counseling

By Marcus L. Collins

Assistant Dean, Office of Student Academic Counseling



The Office for Student Academic Counseling (OSAC) offers academic and personal support to all UNC-Chapel Hill students. OSAC has historically sponsored programs and activities that promote academic excellence, increase retention, and improve the campus climate for diversity among American Indian and African American undergraduates.

This academic year, OSAC increased its efforts aimed at retention of American Indian students by developing a series of programs called “Widening the Circle.” These programs support American Indian students in new ways that are attractive to all students.

One effort in particular that has been popular among students and has been a huge success is “Community Ties.” I designed and organized this mentoring program for entering freshmen. The goal is to pair interested incoming freshmen with members of the Carolina community, which include but is not limited to University alumni. Individuals with a sincere desire to see all students succeed, but in particular American Indian students, volunteer their time to serve as support networks for students. For many of the freshmen, this is their first time away from home, and some have traveled long distances, even beyond North Carolina.

Before students arrive on campus, OSAC contacts them and asks if they would like to participate in the program. I work closely with the students and mentors to facilitate pairings according to students’ interests. Mentors represent a range of professions and disciplines with a good mix of recent graduates and more established professionals. The program is an integral partner in creating a sense of community essential to the academic and personal success of American Indian students.

OSAC already provides a mentoring program utilizing upperclassmen, but the office felt

it was also necessary to show students what opportunities and support are available outside of campus. It is important for our students to interact with individuals who have left their home communities and have found successful employment in the Triangle area.

While I am an advocate for returning to our communities and giving back, I feel it is equally important that we return with a skill set that will enable us to give back in an optimal way. Living in more metropolitan areas such as the Triangle provides inherent possibilities and opportunities for better honing such skills. Additionally, those students who do not come from traditional Native communities find there is something in this program for them as well because the mentors provide valuable insight into a profession the student may be considering.

One couple who has really gone above and beyond by participating in “Community Ties” is Robert and Bobbi Stanley. Originally from Lumberton, N.C., Bobbi Stanley has lived in Cary, N.C., since 1992. She completed her undergraduate studies at UNC-Pembroke (formerly Pembroke State University) and attended the UNC School of Dentistry, completing her D.D.S. in 1993. She is in private practice in Cary with Preston Aesthetic Dentistry. At the beginning of this past academic year, Rob and Bobbi hosted all “Community Ties” participants, including mentors and the Carolina Indian Circle, for a pool party and dinner sponsored by OSAC. Throughout the year, mentors were encouraged to maintain contact with their assigned students and offer support and encouragement. Some mentors invited students to their homes for dinner or met with them for dinner at an area restaurant or other location. The year’s activities culminated with a hot dog roast at the Stanley’s, and the students and mentors had a great time.

As the academic year came to a close, OSAC was already making plans to continue and strengthen the “Community Ties” initiative by adding new mentors and mentoring activities. “Community Ties” is a great start to new opportunities and possibilities for American Indian students. It is my hope and vision that this effort will also create a larger voice for our people on the campus and the community. We are making great strides toward increasing alumni involvement, and “Community Ties” is just one of the many initiatives with significant potential to increase the contributions of alumni and the Carolina community in a very positive and meaningful way. There are many ways to give back to Carolina, and no matter how seemingly small or large the contribution, each one has a significant impact on the future of American Indians at Carolina. 🌟

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Indian Affairs Forestry Department as a brush crewmember and obtained my first experiences with wildfires in the forest. These experiences eventually led to my working as a wildland firefighter for 18 years with government agencies, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

For 10 years prior to entering graduate school, I worked as a specialized firefighter known as a “smoke-jumper.” Smokejumpers are a small group of highly trained firefighters who parachute into remote areas to extinguish forest fires. Firefighting and graduate research may seem to have little in common, but my experience standing in front of a packed room of faculty and senior researchers as I prepared to give my first departmental seminar was similar to sitting in the door of a smoke-jumper aircraft waiting to parachute into the burning forest. I think I would have preferred to jump! Cheney, my graduate school advisor who also spent several

seasons as a firefighter, helped me transition into graduate school smoothly. He is a true naturalist from the Mt. Hood area in Oregon and also loves the outdoors. I am extremely lucky to learn from a world expert on molecular motors, who also has similar personal interests.

My education began in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools on the reservation and has taken me to the Ph.D. program at Carolina. I began my college education at Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kan., where I majored in liberal arts. I then completed my undergraduate work at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., with a bachelor’s in cell and molecular biology. My 10 years as a BLM smokejumper and my degree from Fort Lewis College have provided me with the confidence and determination to continue my Ph.D. Through my unconventional path, I was able to gain the experience needed to pursue an advanced degree. I have learned that each individual follows his or her own path to prepare for graduate school, and no two paths are identical.

After I complete my Ph.D., my plans are to obtain a teaching position at a college or university. I would enjoy teaching biology and physiology to undergraduates, providing them with opportunities in a research laboratory. One of my goals will be to increase minority retention rates and increase the number of minority college graduates by providing encouragement to students who may be facing difficult cultural issues. By obtaining advanced degrees in the sciences and health-related fields, American Indians will have greater self-reliance and autonomy and will be able to improve health care in our communities. I am aware of only a few American Indian Ph.D.’s working as biomedical researchers and biology professors at universities around the country. I would like to see more American Indians become involved in education at all levels and serve as mentors and role models for future generations of Natives and non-natives alike. 🌟

Role Models: An interview with Danny Bell

Interview conducted
by Malinda Maynor

* **Editor's note:** The April 2005 issue of Carolina-based Blue & White magazine named Danny Bell, American Indian Studies program assistant, as its "Person of the Year." This is a unique honor, and we are thrilled for Danny and his family. In tribute to his service to the University, we are glad to feature him as our Role Model in this issue of Voices.

Q: Where are you from and with what tribe do you most closely identify?

A: My mother is a Lumbee Indian from the Prospect area of Robeson County, N.C., and my father was Coharie and from the Shiloh and New Bethel Indian communities near Clinton, N.C. I grew up in the New Bethel community and attended the East Carolina Indian High School.

Q: When did you graduate from Carolina?

A: I first came in 1988, after working for 13 years at the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs. At Carolina, I first worked in the Student Aid Office and then in the Study Abroad Program but found my home in the American Studies program in 1998, thanks to the efforts of Professor Townsend Ludington and then-Provost Richard Richardson, who established the American Indian Studies initiative.

Q: How would you describe your everyday life at Carolina?

A: I see myself sometimes as Grand Central Station but most often as a bridge, trying to connect the Indian community with resources here at the University. I want to be a facilitator, to a limited degree, and foster connectedness, but then I want to get out of the way and let there be a direct relationship. Collaboration with Kevin Maynor, Dean Marcus Collins, professors Theda Perdue and Mike Green has been essential to navigating the journey.

I use e-mail, our website (www.americanindianstudies.unc.edu) and personal contact to solicit information from faculty across campus who are teaching courses related to Indian studies. I also try to attend statewide and national events to make materials available about all the opportunities here at UNC-Chapel Hill.

I'm also constantly working to build collaboration with and between various administrative offices, including Student Affairs, the Admissions Office and the Office of Minority Affairs, to make sure we're involving the Indian community in campus decisions that relate to Indian students. That kind of collaboration helps Carolina adjust to the diversity within the Indian community.

Q: How do you characterize Carolina's diversity?

A: We have reservation Indians, we have non-reservation Indians, urban Indians, Jewish Indians, Catholic Indians, people from all over the country, not just North Carolina. We can recruit Indians, but what do they see when they get here? We must build culturally appropriate structures to help them adjust to University life, but it's not a one-way street, just students into the University. The University also has to understand and shape itself around the diversity within the



Danny Bell (left) with a student.

ethnic groups that are here. In American Indian Studies, we want to work with other groups to improve the situation for everybody.

Q: What are some of the highlights of American Indian life at Carolina in the last seven years?

A: The Graduate School's "New Directions" conference and its efforts to use Indian students to work with recruitment and research come to mind. The Provost's Committee on Native American Issues has done some great work. Almost five years ago, we began exploring a Leadership Institute with the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs that began with a grant from Progress Energy and holds tremendous promise.

The Carolina Union Activities Board included Senora Lynch's piece, "The Gift," and that was an incredible and permanent tribute to Indians at Carolina. There's so much happening just over at the Research Labs of Archaeology — several years ago they held a pottery workshop, led by Cherokee potters from the Eastern Band. They are also renovating the basement of Hamilton Hall to appropriately and respectfully house their collections of human remains and prehistoric artifacts.

The innovative Native and contemporary work of Art Professor Kimowan McLain is hanging in the Union and in South Building. We have three active members on the UNC Board of Visitors; our alumni involvement is growing. There's lots of good news.

Q: Finally, what message do you have for our alumni?

A: I hope the alumni will use their experiences as students here, along with the maturity they've gained since leaving, to be a voice in helping Carolina understand who Indian people are and where we are. Alumni can prepare the non-Indian community to recognize Indian students when they leave Carolina and enter professions, whether it's in health, law, education, business, the arts or the sciences — America is not just black and white; there are many other shades that are deserving of recognition. 🌟

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12 miles from Interstate 95, the drama's theater at the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center is an attraction for visitors and local residents. For nearly 30 years, *Strike at the Wind!* has told the Civil War-era story of the Lowry War, one of the most important events in Lumbee and North Carolina history. Henry Berry Lowry, a young Lumbee Indian charged with avenging his father's and brother's murders by Confederate guardsmen, restores freedom to the impoverished of all races, Indian, African American and white. The drama was written by Randolph Umberger, a student of Paul Green and professor at North Carolina Central University. The music was written by Willie French Lowery, a Lumbee composer,

songwriter and performer.

Strike at the Wind! has had a phenomenal impact on the Lumbee people, both culturally and economically," said Malinda Maynor, president of the Board of Directors of the Carolina Arts Network, the nonprofit organization that produces *Strike at the Wind!*. The drama employs more than 70 people seasonally, almost exclusively from the community in and around Pembroke, N.C., home of the Lumbee. "The cast members' dedication to the show has kept it alive all these years," Maynor said. "While it has been a locally driven production in the past, the Institute of Outdoor Drama has helped us prepare to take it to another level of economic impact on our region." For example,

IOD conducts feasibility studies for communities interested in opening or making major changes to their outdoor drama. "We hope to take greater advantage of the institute's offerings in the future," Maynor said.

Take time this summer to visit one of North Carolina's outdoor dramas — it is a unique experience that is well worth the trip. 🌟

Find out more

For more information, visit:
www.unc.edu/depts/outdoor (Institute of Outdoor Drama)
www.untotheshills.com (Unto These Hills)
www.strikeatthewind.com (Strike at the Wind!)

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were very prominent there. Of course, their very large land holdings, reservations and tribal organizations gave me — at least as much as a child can have — an appreciation for some of the uniqueness that exists in these cultures.

In California, where I spent my college years and some of my professional years, I was with the university, and I had a lot to do with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and other legislation because some of the University of California campuses have large holdings and artifacts. We wanted to get those out and assigned to the proper tribes and make them available.

So, through both personal and professional experiences, I have had that exposure. It has enriched me.

MAYNOR: *Can you describe the purpose of the Provost's Committee on Native American Issues?*

SHELTON: Like a lot of groups we organize here, the committee has a huge responsibility. I think Vin Steponaitis did a great job as chair and now Mike Green will also. It is a terrific group of people, and it's a diverse group of people.

First, the committee, of course, keeps me informed, making sure I am aware, not of just issues but opportunities that come up. This is a huge place, and a lot is going on. The committee has helped me seek and respond to opportunities because we may have just a small window in time to actually make a difference.

Equally important is this committee working with students and faculty to make them aware. For example, we need to recruit significantly more Native Americans to our faculty. There are very talented people, but they are few in number, which means they can go wherever they want. The committee has been helpful in the past working with departments and programs to identify and attract more faculty.

One of the things I am so impressed by in the Native American communities here is the support they all provide each other and the great love and sense of community. That's why this committee and our own Native American students are such ambassadors into those communities. Right now they are working, as you know, on advising on an institute, a center where we can bring greater variety in our academic offerings.

MAYNOR: *So, you believe the advisory model created with the provost's committee is helping to facilitate the goals of diversity for the University?*

SHELTON: I really think so. What impresses me most about this committee is they, like I, are committed to this for the long run, not just as something we do for a month or two and then forget.

MAYNOR: *Speaking as a member of the committee, I can say that your experiences and awareness have really helped our work by having a provost who understands the issues important to us. Because of our common interests, it is a fact that you hit the ground running by directing our focus.*

SHELTON: It is kind of you to say that, but I want to give credit here to Danny Bell. If I came informed or even a little bit better informed than I could have, it was Danny who was proactive in sending me material, identifying himself, giving me a sense of the richness of Native Americans on campus and some of the questions and concerns that were being raised.

MAYNOR: *There are a lot of Native American initiatives going on at Carolina.*

SHELTON: Lynda Dykstra and Sandra Hoeflich at the Graduate School have been very active and a number of departments have weighed in.

Everybody likes to have a level of comfort in their lives. Part of that comfort is being in a complex community like Carolina and having kindred spirits here. The real key to bringing more Native Americans into our student body, faculty and staff is to make sure we build an infrastructure that speaks to their interests and supports their needs.

MAYNOR: *By taking the time to have this discussion with Voices and showing your sensitivity to these issues, you, the academic leadership of the University, underscore that message. We are indeed trying to develop such an environment on campus. One that is open for all walks of life, all types of people, in all areas of need.*

SHELTON: *Voices* plays a critical role. I want to express my appreciation to *Voices* for the opportunity to communicate my commitment and interest to diversity overall, but to the Native American community specifically. This is just an enormous asset for us.

MAYNOR: *Having your support means everything to us.*

SHELTON: I appreciate that because the message we need to get out is that Carolina wants YOU. We will nurture you, cherish you and respect and indeed learn from your traditions and your background. If we can bring more Native Americans here, they will be in a position not only to realize their potential, but to give back to their communities in ways that are manifest. I think this is just a terrific opportunity to talk with *Voices*.

MAYNOR: *Please discuss general similarities and contrasts in expectations that an institution has of undergraduates compared to graduate students.*

SHELTON: I know there are some similarities in the sense that everybody wants to belong. There are also some major differences. For example, for undergraduates, it is often their first experience away from home, whether home is on a reservation or a high rise in New York City. At the undergraduate level there is a great need for us to provide infrastructure. Smaller groups and kindred spirits. We have to be very conscious of an undergraduate's need to find support groups.

Graduate students already have one ready-made group of comrades, which is everyone in their research group, regardless of the discipline. The challenge to graduate students is to find time to get outside of that group and sample the fuller University perspective, whereas undergraduates seem to automatically do that.

MAYNOR: *What is your message to prospective students at Carolina?*

SHELTON: The first thing I would say to both student groups is Carolina really wants you. We want you to feel that you are always a part of the Carolina family. For undergraduates it is critical for us to be able to say that there are other people from your community here. There is the

Carolina Indian Circle. There are people here who will make you feel at home and will understand, better than a provost could, what drives and concerns you.

Those at the graduate level who finish their degree at Carolina have a currency that enables them to do great things back in their communities or around the world. It is an asset to their family and community for the rest of their lives.

MAYNOR: *What can we do to help advance awareness of the Native American presence on campus to faculty?*

SHELTON: Publications like *Voices* are critical because somebody can get a better understanding of what is happening and that lures people out to events. Having some regular community-wide activities is critical. If students have a favorite faculty member or two, extend a personal invitation to them. Another example that made a big difference to me was the very first formal activity I went to after starting here in February 2001 was going to the CIC banquet. That meant a lot to me.

MAYNOR: *What is your message to our alumni?*

SHELTON: My message to alumni is come here and meet our students, not all 26,000 of them but come meet one, or two or five. Get to know them, get to know their aspirations, their career goals and what concerns them. Then give them the wisdom of your experiences and your counsel. Sure, it would be great if alumni can offer internships or sponsor students attending conferences, but separate from any financial resources, give some of your time. It is enormously rewarding.

MAYNOR: *Shortly after your arrival on campus, I remember an article in The Daily Tar Heel about a group of students who went to South Building the previous day to protest. You came out, met the students and talked with them about their issues. The chancellor was quoted in the article to the effect that your decisive action that day was indicative of your great qualities as a provost. Put in a situation most people would run from, you met the students at the door and actually talked openly and listened to them. I think of that occasion every time I see you on campus. That is a great legacy.*

SHELTON: Well, thank you. I remember that someone said, "You are not going out there are you?" and I said, "Of course I am going out there — they are our students. I had better figure out what is going on here." Students here get energized over things that concern them, which is good, but they don't just bring up the negative. They say, "How can we fix this? How can we be part of the solution?" I love the students here. They are amazing.

MAYNOR: *I think the students like their provost.*

SHELTON: That is good for me. Thanks so much. I really enjoyed the conversation. 🍷

“When you think about the kind of values, the ethics, the sense of community, the respect for learning that are just intrinsic to these Indian cultures, the University needs to bring that into the University community.”

ROBERT SHELTON

'New Directions' conference returns in October 2005

The Graduate School is once again hosting "New Directions in American Indian Research: A Gathering of Emerging Scholars," a conference focusing on the scholarship of graduate students. Building on the success of the inaugural "New Directions" conference in 2004, this fall's gathering features an expanded roster of speakers and performers, as well as events for those interested in learning more about graduate study at Carolina. The conference will take place Oct. 7-8.

Keynote speakers will be:

- **Amanda Cobb (Chickasaw)**. Professor of English and American Studies and director of the Institute for American Indian Research at the University of New Mexico, Cobb is the author of *Listening to Our Grandmothers' Stories: The Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females, 1885-1949* (2000), which won a 2001 American Book Award.
- **Duane Champagne (Chippewa)**. Professor of sociology at UCLA, Champagne has been director of the American Indian Center at UCLA as well as a member of the board of trustees for the Museum of the American Indian. His current projects include *Native American Studies from the Ground Up: History and Prospects* and *Native American Nationalism: An Introduction to American Indian Studies*.
- **David Burgess (Cherokee)**. Professor of biology at Boston College, Burgess has mentored American Indian students in scientific fields and has published widely in the field of cell biology, specifically cytokinesis.

Other featured speakers are Juliana Sampson (Lumbee), postdoctoral researcher at UC Davis; William Bradford (Chiricahua Apache), professor of law at Indiana University; and Ronny Bell (Lumbee), professor of health sciences at Wake Forest University.

In addition, graduate students and beginning professors from across the country will have a prominent presence, with many opportunities to share their research and socialize with one another both formally and informally. On Friday evening, Tommy Wildcat (Cherokee), renowned American Indian flutist and speaker, will perform at the Cabaret in the Carolina Union, and on Saturday evening, Bo Taylor (E.B. Cherokee), Pura Fe (Tuscarora) and Mark Deese (Tuscarora) will close the conference with music and dancing at the Arts Center in Carrboro.

Graduate and senior-level undergraduate students interested in participating in a conference panel should send a one-page abstract and a one-half-page biography that includes contact information (e-mail, mailing address and phone number) by **June 15** to:

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The Graduate School
CB 4010, 200 Bynum Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-4010
e-mail: nativeconf@unc.edu

For more information about the "New Directions in American Indian Research" conference, please visit www.nativeconf.unc.edu or call 919-843-3494. ☎



Attendees chat at last year's "New Directions in American Indian Research Conference." On Oct. 7-8, the Graduate School will host a second edition that will focus on the scholarship of graduate students.

Join us!

**New Directions
in American Indian Research**

Oct. 7-8, 2005

UNC-Chapel Hill

For more info and to register, go to
www.nativeconf.unc.edu

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