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Office of University
Communications

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Randy Capps ('98) Uses Skills as Publisher of Community Magazine

Randy Capps ('98) looks back on the firsthand opportunities he experienced at Gardner-Webb University as the foundation for his successful career in journalism.

He is the publisher of the Four Oaks (N.C.) Journal, a monthly community magazine that focuses on the lighter side of life in southern Johnston County, where he lives with his wife, Shanna, and son, Ethan. Previously, he worked for various newspapers in North Carolina as a sports editor and digital specialist.

"I got so many chances to get hands-on experience at Gardner-Webb," he offered. "From writing for the student newspaper to working in front of and behind the camera in our TV studio to my 12-hour Sunday shifts at WGWG, I was able to soak up valuable real-world experience while still in college."

Capps grew up in Marion, S.C., and almost attended a large university. Visits to Gardner-Webb and the other institution changed his mind.

"My high school English teacher, Ted Whisnant, grew up near Boiling Springs and mentioned Gardner-Webb to me in passing one day early in my senior year," Capps remembered. "I came up for a campus visit in the winter. Even though my scheduled tour was cancelled because of sleet, I still got a chance to look around. I loved it from the start."

The University's family atmosphere and small class sizes made the difference. He also liked that he was given a chance to play on the Gardner-Webb tennis team.

"I wasn't ready to become a number," he said. "My favorite selling point about Gardner-Webb is that when I missed a class, a professor would often call me in my dorm room to ask me why. You don't get that everywhere."

Another advantage of the close-knit GWU community is the ability to form bonds with other students that last a lifetime.

“Gardner-Webb is not just a university. It’s a family,” Capps affirmed. “There were about 20 of us in my major classes, and we did everything together. My roommate, Frank Spurlock, was also a communications studies major. We’re still working together, since he’s designing our magazine. The small class sizes and the hands-on experience are invaluable for preparing you for life beyond school.”

The late Dr. Gayle Bolt Price, chair of the Department of English and later associate provost for graduate and professional studies, was one of his favorite professors.

“I was cocky and a bit arrogant as a writer in those days, but she challenged me to dig deeper and get serious about my craft,” Capps observed. “She was tough as nails, but she was fair. There’s no question she made me better, and I was always anxious to hear her thoughts on anything I ever wrote.”