TRANSFORMATION
CSU TRANSFORMING LIVES ON AND OFF CAMPUS

WARREN PEPE
CLASS OF 1974
VOICE OF THE
LOWCOUNTRY

News 2
Another successful academic year is drawing to a close. The University continues to expand in all areas as we promote Academic Excellence in a Christian Environment. Our faculty, staff and coaches have been busy preparing students and transforming lives. We are excited about the positive impact our graduates will make in society.

Highlights this year include: a record enrollment of 3,135 students; an increase of 200 percent in our MBA program over the last three years; the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmed Charleston Southern's accreditation at its meeting Dec. 11, 2006; more than 100 students, faculty and staff have traveled to 14 countries for ministry and missions; renovations to Norris and Wingo Halls, the cafeteria, and the Strom Thurmond Center entrance; a winning football season; and, the men's basketball team claimed the City Championship for the second year in a row, after defeating the College of Charleston and The Citadel!

Inside this issue of CSU Magazine are inspiring stories about alumni, students, faculty and staff who have experienced life transformations.

- Miss CSU, Chicora Heyward, and her determination to succeed against all odds
- CSU’s Chief Information Officer, Rusty Bruns, and his brave victory over leukemia
- Alumnus Preston West and his family travel to Central America to share the Gospel, despite danger and homesickness
- Business professor Mike Zigarelli and the moment that changed his career direction
- Educators nearing retirement, and the dreams they are chasing
- Alumnus broadcaster Warren Peper and his reflections on 30 years in television
- M.B.A. alumnus Marcie Wessinger and the class project she turned into a thriving business

Through these stories, we will share with you a few of the significant happenings at Charleston Southern. God continues to bless us as we strive to educate the minds and hearts of our students. We're witnessing dreams come true through growth in people's lives.

Thank you for your continued support for Charleston Southern University.
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Web site earns “A”
by Allie Osman

The University’s Web site was ranked in the top five percent of all college Web sites in the nation by Enrollment Power Index (EPI), a program funded by the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA).

Of the more than 3,000 Web sites evaluated, Charleston Southern was one of only 157 schools to earn an “A” for the 2006-2007 grading period.

According to the NRCCUA, high school students from across the United States scored every college Web site in the country, considering key features such as the ability to apply online and the ability to find tuition, financial aid information and contact information to set up a campus visit. They also evaluated the sites’ ease of navigation. After evaluation, the students gave each college Web site a grade ranging from “A” to “F.”

Jerusalem Comes to Charleston Southern
by Allie Osman

Now students can go to the library to visit Jerusalem, or at least a one-inch-to-300-foot scale model of the city.

Barry Behling of Columbia, S.C., constructed and donated the model to Charleston Southern University’s L. Mendel Rivers Library. The model represents Jerusalem during three periods of history: at the time of capture by King David, after development by David and Solomon, and following the building program of Herod during the life of Jesus.

“Its accuracy is remarkable and I believe it will be a valuable addition to our resource support, especially for the religion curriculum,” said David Mash, library director.

“I concentrated on the evolution of the city,” said Behling, whose impetus in building the scale model was his visit to the Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Fla.

Student Rides Bike to Campus
By Stephanie Brigman

Senior Julie Glover had never imagined she would be riding her bicycle to campus. About a year and a half ago, many community bus lines were cut due to funding issues, leaving many citizens without any means of transportation. She now had to use her bicycle as a means of transportation to campus three days a week.

“I would have to leave the house at 5:30 a.m., so there was hardly any traffic,” she said.

The journey to school each morning took as long as three to four hours, and riding on the road was a main concern. Glover’s route included a bridge built with a median and the only space that she was allotted to ride upon was about six inches between the median and oncoming traffic. Weather was also something that needed to be considered.

“It didn’t rain. I was lucky in that department,” she said.

Thankfully, the bus lines have now returned to regularly scheduled routes, and Grover is able to ride the bus to school.
Students Raise $4,600 for Girl and Her Service Dog
by Allie Osman

Students raised $4,600 during fall semester to help pay for 9-year-old Abigayle Williams' trained service dog.

After reading about Abigayle's story in The Post and Courier, Panhellenic President Stephanie Odom decided to raise money to help pay for the dog that is able to sense the girl's seizures sometimes up to an hour before they occur. Katya, the service dog, alerts Abigayle's caregivers, positions itself to break her fall and lies atop her to prevent injuries during seizures. The seizures are a result of neurofibromatosis.

Knowing that there was a little girl who had a need that the campus body could help meet, Odom brought the situation to the attention of campus groups that organized a variety of fundraising events to meet that need.

“Christ has instructed us to speak for those who can’t speak for themselves and provide for those who can’t provide for themselves,” said Odom.

December Grads Stepping Out
by Allie Osman

While recent graduates are looking to new horizons, some have already stepped out into new fields and new experiences.

One cutting-edge student is Carrie Sanders Vassey of York, S.C. Vassey is a music therapy major who took part in an internship at Trident hospital. She is only the third intern to participate in the internship program.

According to Vassey, music therapy is successful in modifying behavior, development, pain management and improving emotional states of patients.

“One of my very first clinicals that really inspired me to stay with music therapy was in a medically fragile classroom, which is children that have multiple disabilities, and most of them were in wheelchairs and couldn’t do too much for themselves. It was very exciting to see how they responded to music, [doing] things they’ve never done before using instruments. There was one student who had behavior issues, and we were able to decrease her aggression and pinching, biting and spitting,” said Vassey.

Vassey recently lectured at Converse College in Spartanburg where the new music therapy degree program was a declared major for the first time in the fall. She first worked with the introduction to music therapy class and then presented her original case study about a patient with Burkitts Lymphoma.

In a special year-end issue of Campus Technology, Charleston Southern is credited with accomplishing one of the 101 Best Practices in Administrative IT.

In order to correct a situation of a small percentage of users taking up a large percentage of bandwidth, the University installed Packeteer. According to Campus Technology, Packeteer is an appliance that monitors network traffic and allows individual access points to be controlled, and file-swapping network activities are restricted.

“We had about 550 users, and just 40 of them ate up the whole bandwidth,” said Rusty Bruns, chief information officer. However, the use of Packeteer helped eliminate the demands that were bogging down the network.

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“Music therapy was used with this individual to allow him to explore his emotions and assisted him to come to terms with his illness while finding healthy coping skills,” said Vassey.

A college education is not a given for all students leaving high school. Graduate Tonya Ritter of Eutawville, S.C., is well aware of that fact. Ritter, a psychology major and dental assistant in the Army Reserve, is the first person in her family to attend college.

“I’m the first. My mom was born in the 50s, still sharecropping at that time, and she was unable to even complete high school. She came from a family of 15. I decided that was my motivation, and I wanted to make her proud,” said Ritter. “I wanted to do what she never got a chance to do.”

Ritter plans to explore social work.

A total of 248 students graduated Dec. 16 during two ceremonies held in the Lightsey Chapel Auditorium: 97 graduate program and evening college students and 151 undergraduates.

Speakers were Lexington County Sheriff and scholarship sponsor James R. Metts at the 10 a.m. ceremony and Mayor R. Keith Summey ’69 of North Charleston at the 1:30 p.m. ceremony.

Renovations to Norris and Wingo halls, the Strom Thurmond Center entrance and the cafeteria were completed in the fall.

L. Mendel Rivers Library Rededicated

Board of Trustees member Gloria Thiem, President Jairy Hunter Jr., Marion Rivers Cato and husband Wayland, Margaret Rivers Eastman, Sissy Hunter and Dorothy Anderson pose with a rendering of future plans for the L. Mendel Rivers Library, during a luncheon following the L. Mendel Rivers Library Rededication Ceremony in November. Guests of the ceremony enjoyed remarks by Mayor Joseph Riley of Charleston, Congressman Arthur Ravenel Jr., Mayor Keith Summey of North Charleston, Congressman Thomas Hartnett, Congressman Mendel Davis, and the Rivers daughters, Marion and Margaret.
International Experience Influences Wyeth’s Teaching

Allie Osman, director of university relations, recently interviewed Dr. Mela Wyeth, chair of the department of business and economics and associate professor of business administration/finance, about her extensive international experiences.

Q. What led you to move overseas after graduating college?
A. After finishing my undergraduate degree in Soviet and East European Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, I worked as a Russian-English/English-Russian translator for an engineering company that produced high-temperature molding and tempering ovens for the Russian automobile industry. That was the first time my parents believed I might be able to earn a living after what they thought was four years of reading Tolstoy in dank cafes! (In reality, my emphasis was in economics.)

Soon thereafter I went to work for the U.S. Department of State and was sent on special temporary assignment to the Soviet Union. The Iron Curtain was just lifting then, and it soon became clear that there were interesting opportunities in private industry. I settled in what was then the frontier city, Vienna, Austria, to work for a series of U.S. corporations and European engineering firms. I was blessed to meet my husband, Herbert Boehm, while working in Moscow. We made his hometown, Vienna, our base from which we traveled all over the world.

Q. Was your subsequent European university experience uniquely different than a typical university experience in the U.S. or surprisingly similar?
A. I went back to school as quite a mature student and had more of an age-culture rather than a foreign-culture shock. I feel great empathy for students coming back into the academic rhythm and for all the sacrifices they have to make to get an MBA. As with many of our MBA students, I realized that I needed a better formal understanding of business to move forward and to survive changes in the professional environment. Our company went through some very difficult transitions: the Berlin Wall was continued on page 8 > > >
brought down, the Soviet Union fell apart, and we had to rethink our entire business existence. If I were to name the one single thing that impressed me the most about my academic experiences abroad, it would have to be the level of societal commitment to education.

I submitted my MBA research thesis on the privatization process in Russia and was invited to present it in Moscow. I was subsequently invited to lecture at the Moscow Institute for Law, Economics and Political Science. This was a real turning point in my life, and an exciting time to be in the classroom. The students were entering a very transitional world. They had finished very rigorous Soviet high schools and were extremely disciplined and conscientious. They had been accustomed to a very structured teaching style that would have prepared them to flourish in a command economy but were now getting mixed signals from the emerging market economy: astronomical prices for previously subsidized goods and services, possible unemployment, freedom to travel abroad, but no money to travel. As the economy and society were going through seismic upheavals, the students started to question everything that they had been taught before and everything that was put before them. We had very impassioned discussions, and I was constantly impressed by their math competencies and how broadly informed they were.

I had the privilege to work with some very supportive colleagues and administrators. They convinced me that I should study further and defend a doctoral thesis. It was a very puzzling process, because not too many Western foreigners had ever been invited to submit doctoral research. No one could really outline the process for me, but having said I would do it, I was too much the coward to back down. I was so fortunate to have my family 100 percent behind me, and generous-hearted friends in Moscow who encouraged me to keep going when I was tired and frustrated.

Q. What personal experiences did you gain living abroad that you have been able to share with your students to help them grow?
A. There are so many, but the biggest realization that I made early on is that in many places I worked or traveled, I was the first or only American that many people would ever see, and that everything I did or said would reflect on my country and family culture.

In many places, the family name and parental approbation are still very, very important. One’s performance in school, dress and behavior are part of a bigger picture, and I think there is a bit more of a moral instance guiding young people.

I also realized early on that learning foreign languages is crucial to business and social success, and so enriching. Knowing a foreign language opens whole new worlds.

Q. Is there a specific experience that you had in international business that stands out in your mind as pivotal or ground-breaking?
A. Yes. I lost a huge contract because I focused exclusively on the technical and engineering parameters and could not defend the financial side of the contract. It was a stinging humiliation, which cost our company dearly. When we are going through difficult times, it is hard to imagine what good could possibly come out of the hardship, but the loss of that contract led to many wonderful changes in my life. That lost business opportunity, along with the changes in the political environment in the then Soviet Union, forced me to reinvent myself, pursue an MBA and later a doctoral degree.

Q. What brought you to Charleston and Charleston Southern University?
A. Our son Mathias chose a career in the U.S. Marine Corps and attended The Citadel. My husband and I fell in love with Charleston and bought a house with the very sensible plan of renting it out until we retired. We decided we did not want to wait until retirement to enjoy our new home, and I inquired after a teaching position at Charleston Southern. Through happy coincidence, the University posted an opening for a finance professor the very day I inquired. I’ve been with Charleston Southern since August 2000 and cannot imagine a more humanly rewarding, satisfying career. Finance can be applied everywhere — there is not a profession or calling that cannot be enhanced by an understanding of finance.

Fun Facts

Universities attended: STI, Moscow, Russia
Webster University, Vienna, Austria
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Degrees earned: Ph. D. (Economics), MBA, MA (Finance), BA (Soviet and East European Affairs)

Business experience: 20+ years in industrial project management, technology transfer, engineering management, international relations and market development in the former Soviet Union and Western Europe.

Places you have lived or worked: Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, Russia, Hong Kong, India, Africa

Other professional accomplishments:
Trilingual: English, German, Russian

Hobbies: Reading, music, art, trail hiking in the Austrian mountains, bicycle tours
The Arts

TOP (2): The Lyric Theatre's five-night run of Show Boat featured crowd-pleasing favorites including "O' Man River." Photos by Brandon Washington

MIDDLE LEFT: Theatre students surprised motorists on University Boulevard by becoming part of the nativity scene on campus before Christmas. Photo by Heather Koziel

MIDDLE RIGHT: The opening this fall of the Black Box Theatre in the renovated band room in the Lightsey Music Building gave theatre students their own venue for the first time in the history of the program. Photo by Brandon Washington

BOTTOM: Theatre students presented Sleeping Beauty as their spring production. Photo by Sherry Atkinson
This is the story, or really stories, of five Christian educators and the ways that they found their lives transformed when they least expected it.

I was still an assistant professor trying to teach and publish my way to tenure when my dean did a crazy thing. She resigned her position as a tenured, full professor and dean and took off to West Africa to teach in a university exchange program, spending most of her time at the village school, where it was not uncommon for a goat or two to stop by for a visit.

Then, a decade or so later, when my friend was back from Africa and teaching down the hall, I began to see something similar happening among other women around me. I decided to ask Dr. Patricia Bower, professor in the School of Education, why she had gone to Africa at 50.

Janis Anderson, Becky Dingle, Bernadette Chilcote, author Linda Karges-Bone, Claudia Cordray and Pat Bower.

Photo by Sherry Atkinson
I loved turning 50 because for me it was clearly a time when I began to find my true self. Like others, I always wanted more, but the terms changed at 50. More did not mean more money, responsibility or power. More meant finding authentic ways to use my talents and gifts as an expression of my deepest values. It wasn't that I didn't like my work; fortunately, I have always found my work quite satisfying. But, at 50 I wanted to find my work more than satisfying. I felt a much deeper tug to take stock of things and through several means - attending a couple of spiritual retreats, reading several articles and books related to framing our work in meaningful ways, and many discussions with good friends - I made a list. On one side I listed "This is what gives me life" and on the other "This is what kills my spirit." From the lists, I knew that being creative, challenging myself, engaging others, and promoting social justice all give me life. I also was struck by two similar and powerful passages. In A Gradual Awakening, Stephen Levine says: "If thinking brought us to the truth, we would be great sages by now because we've done all the thinking we can stand." I felt that way. I didn't want to think about what I wanted to do with the rest of my life any longer. I wanted to do it. Similarly, philosopher Joseph Campbell suggests that a part of ourselves remains hidden (not alive) when we feel confident and secure. According to Campbell, we all seek to "feel alive" and that usually comes from leaving our comfort zones and becoming more responsive to needs beyond ourselves. I decided that at 50 I was ready to leave my comfort zone.

I was a 60s college student and, as such, I always had a yearning to join the Peace Corps. But, as many of my peers, I got married, started teaching, raised a family, and so forth. But, between my 50th and 51st year, I found the perfect place for me - serving as a Visiting Lecturer through the IFESH Foundation in Cape Coast, Ghana. I went into an ambiguous world where I felt challenged, imaginative, and humbled. I felt alive. I was assigned to Cape Coast University; I was "called" to Tuowfoho-Holly Village School where I continue to have an established relationship that grows every year. The treasure, I believe, is in knowing when to make the decision to leave the familiar and embark on the next challenge.

Bernadette Chilcote, an adjunct faculty member, gave up her position as a lead teacher in a beautiful, award-winning arts-magnet school in an upper-class neighborhood to work with struggling teachers in an inner-city school. What life changes compelled Bernadette to reinvent herself in her early 40s?

Bernadette Chilcote's Walk of Faith

When I suddenly became a widow at 43, I was forced to reevaluate EVERYTHING in my life, both personally and professionally. It was, and continues to be, an overwhelming task. After many months of being in the anger stage, I finally said, "Okay, God. I don't understand why this had to happen, but I trust You with my life." I began to pray for grace to live each day in such a way as to be a blessing to someone because I needed to stop focusing on MYSELF. Not long after, I was approached by an area superintendent who asked me point-blank if I would work as a teacher coach in a Title 1 school that has a poverty index of 100 percent. Given that I had remarked to my grief counselor one day, "If God would just tell me what He wants me to do with my life, I would do it." I concluded that He had spoken, so I accepted the offer. (Be careful what you say to God.) The challenging nature of working in this new role sometimes leaves me exhausted, mentally and physically. But I believe that the progress a child makes is directly related to the quality and dedication of his teacher, so I stay - for now. Where will I be in a year or five years? I can't say; I can only continue to pray for grace for the day I am living, knowing that I may or may not have tomorrow, and I want today to count for something bigger than myself.
For years I felt like everything I’d done and was doing in life was preparing me for a new mission. I remember telling my husband a few years earlier as I left home late in the evening to take yet another class, “I don’t know what I’m preparing for, but it’s something that I feel like I’ve got to do. I think I’m just packing my bag for something.” Just a few years later, I was asking him to consider that I quit my teaching job after 19 years. We had one child in college and another due to attend in just four years. But I was sure this was the IT I’d been preparing for. I’d learned a better, different, smarter way to teach children to read. And it wasn’t enough to teach one class of children a year. I kept thinking, “If this were a class of 25 teachers, how many children could learn to read from these teachers?” Now, I don’t usually let math enter into my decision-making, but I couldn’t argue with it.

I could safely stay in my classroom and teach 20 to 25 kids a year, or listen to this still small voice that kept urging me to REALLY follow what I’d come to believe was God’s plan for me. You see, I came to know Jesus because I could read. I had a great and love-filled childhood, but not a religious one. But I read early and widely, and I met God through books. I met kids every day who couldn’t read well enough to read the newspaper, much less the Bible. I taught Bible school and encountered a 15-year-old who couldn’t read a word. A child in my school class asked me one day at “winter holiday” time, “Who is this Jesus guy and what does he have to do with Christmas anyhow?” I started out on this exciting and terrifying journey because I had to. I made daily plans based on prayer and feelings. And I’ve not regretted a minute. Every day is new, full of potential, and I have a terrific Boss.

Claudia’s

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Claudia Cordray, an adjunct faculty member, reached a crisis point in which her faith and values directed career choices. She was a respected faculty member at a school that had won every award from “National Blue Ribbon School” to “Redbook’s Top 100 Schools in the Country.” Why did she shift gears at a time when she could retire and play with adorable grandchildren to create a business that trained teachers to use phonics and to teach undergraduates as a clinical faculty member?

Janis Anderson, an adjunct faculty member, had established credibility as a district-level administrator in special education. With just a few years to retirement, she could probably sail through her tasks with one eye shut. Why in the world did she shift gears and sign up to teach troubled youngsters in a locked facility group home for teens?

As I look back on my career, many of those 24 years are simply a blur. I realize now that I worked my way through every phase of life imaginable: the death of my mother, the birth of my two older children, divorce after 10 years of marriage, remarriage, and the birth of my youngest child at the age of 35. My turning point came 11 years later when my youngest child was finishing elementary school and preparing to go to middle school. I had never felt peaceful about all the juggling that I had to do when my older children spent so much of their time at camps or with my ex-husband while I worked in the summer, so when my youngest child expressed the desire to be at home in the summer and told me that she was not comfortable being alone, I began my soul-searching for what needed to be the priority in my life.

A parallel issue to the need to be at home was the fact that my current job was no longer enriching my life. In fact, I found it to be draining the energy from me so that there wasn’t much left to share with my family when I got home in the evenings. Even the simplest things such as homework, cooking and cleaning were not getting done

continued on page 14 > > >
Finding one's place at midlife is part journey, part adventure, and part awakening.

“Listening to yourself,” said Cordray, “is absolutely crucial.”
What came first, The Grout Medic of Charleston or the business plan that Marcie Wessinger wrote for her capstone MBA course? A bit of both, you’ll see.

Marcie earned her MBA in May of 2006 after receiving her bachelor’s degree from Charleston Southern in 2002. She handles the financial aspects of the company, taking care of all the bookkeeping and accounting. Her husband, Mark, is the owner and runs the overall operation of the franchise, to include estimations, sales, advertising, scheduling, customer service and leading their four other employees.

The couple launched their business at the end of September and already they have more business than they expected.

“Most of the time, we have three jobs going per day,” said Mark.

Mark inspired Marcie to write her capstone business plan for The Grout Medic of Charleston.

“We knew that we wanted to be in business for ourselves,” said Marcie.

“Still, they learned through the process of launching their company. They learned that they would need to spend more on advertising than on any other aspect of their business. Advertising during the start-up phase cost them more than human resources, materials or overhead.

“Advertising was anywhere from 25 to 30 percent of our income,” explained Marcie. “In the beginning, it’s high for the first couple of months because we’re doing all this advertising to see which ones work and which ones we like. It was a lot higher in the first couple of months than what I had originally planned in the business plan.”

All that advertising paid off, though.

“The response we got from the first direct mail ad was insane. I was calling people back on my lunch break, and he was calling people back all day just to keep up with all the phone calls that were coming in,” said Marcie.

The Grout Medic performs tile and grout repair and maintenance. That includes the ability to clean and seal grout; stain grout to change the color; re-grout counter tops, floors, showers and bathtub areas; repair broken and cracked tile and grout; replace water-damaged tile and replace caulk. The Grout Medic of Charleston covers the entire tri-county area and has first right of refusal in Myrtle Beach.

“I’m grateful for the class and for that project because he came up with the idea, and I was skeptical about everything. It solidified that this was a great idea, that this is something that’s needed. When I presented it to the class, every response in that class from every student was, ‘I need that’ or ‘I know someone who needs that.’

There is also a rewarding aspect to this business that their four employees see.

Mark said, “There is a wow factor. In the morning they go in and the shower is moldy with mildew and the wife has been trying to clean it for years and by the end of the day their shower is brand new again. There is a personal satisfaction that for a couple hundred dollars the homeowner got almost a brand new shower. I have guys calling me all the time, just thanking me.”
Warren Peper walked Interstate 91 along the Gulf Coast, stepping his way through the rubble: a rain-soaked shoe, a mutilated street sign, a tree ripped from earth lying across an intersection, a child’s brown-and-white teddy bear, muddy and flattened to the street curb, a washing machine, sucked from a kitchen, lying atop fragments of what was once someone’s home - the residue of Hurricane Katrina’s deed.
As he weaved in and out of the debris and surveyed the wreckage, memories of Hurricane Hugo came flooding back. The sights and sounds gave way to an emotional ambush.

"It was heartbreaking. They lost everything," remembers Peper. "I still have very vivid memories of what our community went through after Hugo, and we didn't have anything close to what these poor people went through.

Peper, a 1974 alumnus, has seen a lot in his career, but nothing this devastating. Covering Katrina was Peper's first assignment at WCBD (Channel 2) since returning to television, 14 months after he was dismissed by WCSC (Live 5 News) in August 2004. The veteran reporter had a renewed ambition. He left Charleston for the Gulf Coast with an adrenaline rush and returned numb from what he saw.

"I happened upon a minister at a church that wasn't there any more, all that was left was the cinder block steps and nothing else," recalled Peper. "I pulled the minister aside and said, for someone who's in the business as you are, where do you find God in all of this?

"He said, where you're going to find God in this, is how we react after the fact, that's how God's going to make Himself known."

Seeing Katrina's crushing natural disaster on television is nothing like seeing the hurricane's demolition firsthand. The images are branded in Peper's memory. When prompted, Peper, dressed a striped silk tie over his crisp, starched white shirt, takes a deep breath and begins sharing the experience, in a seemingly cathartic way.

"I ran into a Catholic priest and asked him the same question later that day," Peper said. "He told me a story about a small fishing village where a minister had gotten in front of the congregation to talk about a small town where every single child had lost every pair of shoes they had.

"At the end of the service, every teen and every child in that church walked forward and left their shoes at the altar and walked back to their seats. He said, if you can't find God's presence and His hand in that, then you'll never be able to see it."

Katrina is fresh in Peper's memory, but it scarcely scratches the surface of a 33-year body of work as a journalist, an evolution that formed scantily scratches the surface of a 33-year body of work as a journalist, an evolution that formed an immediate dividend.

In May 1974, in less than one 24-hour period, Peper accepted his diploma (a BA in speech and drama with a minor in English) in a ceremony at the Gaillard Auditorium, celebrated, went to bed, woke up the following morning and clocked in at WCSC as a full-time reporter, where he would spend the next 30 years.

"The story that I got the most recognition for early on was a feature I did on horse diapers," recounts Peper with a sheepish grin. "The carriage horses in downtown Charleston were mandated to wear some type of covering because some were getting upset about the droppings on the street. So I went down on The Battery and effectively talked to a couple of the different horses about how they felt about this decision."

But his days of interviewing horses were short-lived. Peper, the athlete at heart, gravitated toward the sports department, where he eventually landed the sports director position in 1977, a title he held for the next 27 years, covering the World Series, The Masters and just about every major sporting event in between.

Now, after 30 years in front of the camera at one station, the television veteran faced his greatest personal and professional challenge yet: being let go.

On a summer day in August 2004, he arrived at the station only to learn his fate. A corporate representative from Jefferson Pilot, the parent company of WCSC, greeted Peper, informing him his contract was not going to be renewed. "I was just told … I could come back at a later date to pick up my stuff," remembers Peper. "It was just done surgically, and I was escorted to the parking lot."

Just like that, Peper was gone. "It was very tough personally," Peper said, looking back on the situation. "It was also very tough because it was so public. It happened in a town, where it's the only place you'd ever worked … and you're on television. So you're on TV, now everyone knows you're not on TV and you don't really know why."

Peper was gone, but not forgotten. As the news broke, the public responded in overwhelming fashion. The Post and Courier received the first editorial in the days after Peper's release. Then, a couple more letters, then more and more. Before long, the editorial page of the daily paper morphed into a Warren Peper support group.

"What I got out of that was a very real understanding of how people felt about me," he said. "And I didn't even know that – or appreciate it. It was terribly humbling."

Peper struggled to find clarity - and his faith was clearly being tested - in the months following his dismissal. "I will admit to this, when I went through this situation, losing my job in a very public way, not knowing it was coming, it took me a little while to understand that I needed to get out of the way in order to let things happen," recalls Peper. "I was trying to fix it myself; I was trying to figure out how to make ends meet with mortgages and kids in college and all the normal stuff you deal with, and it wasn't until I just got out of the way and let Him take charge. He helped me a lot of years..."
“I’ve never had any qualms with standing up in front of people and talking. If I’ve been given nothing else, it’s the ability to communicate on certain levels.”
before that, but then when things went south, I tried to fix it. We all think we’re capable; we don’t need anybody else.”

It was in his free time that Peper had a flash-back, his mother Audrey’s favorite Bible scripture washed over him. “I had a Scripture verse from Proverbs 3:5-6 that my mother used to quote as her favorite,” Peper said. “It just washed over me one day during that period, and I thought, ‘Good gosh, just get out of the way bud. This thing will take care of itself.’ Doggone it, the moment I step out of the way, things start coming in, and I end up on my feet.”

Even after returning in the fall of 2005 with WCBD, Peper still struggled to grasp the public’s reaction. He wasn’t quite sure why people reacted so positively about him.

For years, he unknowingly was building a relationship with the audience; he reported, the audience listened. But Peper never saw an audience, he never heard an audience, he just looked at the camera and delivered the news. It became a one-way street, no interaction. This existence left Peper indifferent about the impact he had on the community. Then, during a happenstance meeting, Peper had an awakening.

In December 2005, Peper, his wife Judy and their three children took a family vacation to New York. Peper took his seat next to Pastor Thomas Riley of World Overcomers Ministries in North Charleston.

Not long after the wheels were up, Peper and Riley began to talk. “My wife is sitting across the aisle and she can’t hear a lot of the conversation, but she notices it’s just nonstop,” Peper said. “Ordinarily on a plane, I like to sit back and sleep.”

Riley shared how happy he was to see Peper back on television. “It’s been very humbling,” Peper told him. “I don’t even know how to respond to the people in this community who have been so kind to me.”

Riley asked if he was familiar with the biblical adage of “reaping what you sow.” Peper said he was familiar with it but admitted he looked at that concept in terms of stewardship and tithing.

Riley told him, “all that you gave this community and the way you treated people, the different things you were supplying people with – and didn’t even know it at times – when you needed it, it came back to you, didn’t it? It’s as genuine and heartfelt on their end. You should be proud of that and understand that your 30 years hadn’t been in vain.”

There’s something different about Warren Peper. It’s not something you can put your finger on at first, but it’s recognizable. It’s an intangible quality. A personality trait, a “safety net” if you will, that separates him from the pack. In the world of Christianity it’s called faith.

“I always feel that I have a safety net that a nonbeliever doesn’t have,” said Peper. “I don’t mean that casually, saying I take more chances. There’s a certain grace that protects me. I don’t worry about some of the petty stuff.”

You see it everyday in Peper’s smooth performance at WCBD. Between the technical bugs and bad news, there he is, cool as the other side of the pillow, delivering the day’s events in a time when news is dominated by war, crime and corruption.

“I continue to tell people in a sports analogy that you are often defined by how you react when you do get dusted off,” Peper continued. “Do you get back in the batter’s box and keep taking your swings, or do you just walk off saying I guess nobody wants me? You are far more defined by how you respond when stuff does happen, because that’s life. I don’t know if there are ever any assurances that you’re safe from that stuff, but you are saved. So that’s where I get my inner strength from, my hope.”

The Channel 2 newsroom is alive, full of kinetic energy. The hungry, young 20-something reporters are coming and going, meanwhile Peper dials up his radar, parsing the day’s events. This is all new and invigorating to a veteran like Peper. For him, it means fresh faces, fresh attitudes and a new role in the newsroom.

“There is a deference given to me, because of my experience and my knowledge of the community,” Peper says while glancing beyond the conference room glass at the staff in action. “I’m very flattered ... I sometimes feel like a coach, trying to affect the culture, develop a winning attitude.”

It’s an odd – and sometimes awkward - situation for Peper. He is now surrounded by a team of reporters, most of them half his age who grew up watching him on television. They walk by his desk, sometimes just to catch a glimpse, maybe pick up a nugget of wisdom.

“There’s a lot of respect given to me here that sometimes I feel a little uncomfortable with, because when it’s all said and done, you put on makeup and you read out loud.”
As Preston “Bubba” West replays his life journey, it begins to sound like a movie script; a script revealing staggering events threatening his very life.

“At first I didn’t know for sure if I was called to missions,” West shares, his words still curled by a telltale Southern accent. “I just knew the things that convicted me the most were about missions and that started at Charleston Southern with professors like Dr. Tom Pratt and Dr. S. M. Mayo. The message they spoke convicted me about the great need of the world and that those of us who do know Christ must take it to the nations who don’t know.”

By Sherry Atkinson
After graduating in 1983, West’s compassion for “the nations who don’t know” led him to enroll at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. While there he met Brenda Williams whose heart was promised to missions at age 12. They married and after graduation served for three years as church planters in Indiana. They “fell in love with the pastorate” and wound up in Woodridge Church in North Augusta, S.C. Under the Wests’ leadership, the church became involved in partnership missions with Mexico. “That prompted us to think that God could call us into missions,” West remembers. “We were 35ish at the time, not such a good age to learn a new language, so we wanted to make sure God had the right Preston and Brenda.” After a series of answered prayers, the Wests knew God was calling their names.

In 1997, after a year of language school and skill training in Costa Rica, their family was assigned to Honduras. Candi was 9; Andrew was 8; and Karis, their youngest, was 6 at the time. A month before leaving for Honduras, Mitch, a category V hurricane, wreaked havoc over Honduras, taking 5,000 lives and destroying Honduras’s infrastructure. But amid the devastating destruction, the hurricane prepared peoples hearts to hear the Gospel. “We know that out of hard times, Christianity thrives and for us, that’s exciting,” Brenda shared. “It became a time where the mission work was wide open for church planting, and we got to be a part of all that.”

During their time in Honduras, a medical missions team visited bringing much needed supplies. Preston and Brenda met the team and after dropping them off at their hotel headed home. They drove up to their gate to pay the guard for house watching, when out of nowhere, three men jumped Brenda and the guard while two other men abducted Preston and threw him into their car and sped away. The guard pleaded with the men to let Brenda go, and finally they released her and raced off. The two vehicles drove away in opposite directions. Then the guard told Brenda he had heard a gunshot. Her heart sank.

In the backseat of the car with a shotgun shoved against his cheek, Preston watched as the driver sped down a riverbank road through extremely rough neighborhoods. In the backseat, Preston’s young captor ripped through his wallet, taking the $600, which was to pay for the visiting team’s expenses. He also confiscated personal items, including his wedding ring. All the while, the driver repeatedly interrogated Preston: "Who are you? Why are you here? What’s in those boxes?" Preston answered him, "I am a missionary. God sent me and my family here. The boxes are full of medicine for the children in the mountains where we are starting a new church."

Without warning, the car stopped next to the river, and the driver got out ordering Preston to do the same. He pulled his pistol from his belt. “We had read about this sort of thing all the time,” Preston said, “so I knew when we were pulling off that I was probably done for.” Suddenly, the guy in the back seat told the driver, “We have enough money. We don’t need to do that; he isn’t going to tell anyone.” Then he unexpectedly pulled $5 from the wad of money and putting it in Preston’s hand told him to follow the road, and he could eventually get a cab.

Preston didn’t hesitate; he took off the way they had come. “The community was a nightmare,” Preston remembers. “The people were drunk and screaming; wild dogs were chasing me. There were people yelling at me, ‘Hey gringo, come here.’” He finally reached a more civilized area, but he looked so bad no taxis would stop for him. He walked to an area he recognized and then sprinted two more miles home.

“The equivalent of the FBI, the police and everybody else was at the house,” Preston recalls. When Preston was kidnapped, Brenda had immediately contacted the International Mission Board. “As soon as Preston was kidnapped, a counselor was there,” Brenda explains. “The IMB (International Mission Board) took us out. They took care of us and made sure our kids were okay.” Brenda has no doubt that the prayers lifted for them during that time saved Preston’s life.

After serving four years in Honduras, the West family was sent to El Salvador. “Because the IMB has a countrywide strategy, we walk in with an entrance strategy and leave with an exit strategy. While there, we are responsible and accountable for the things we do; that makes...
me feel good about all of our Southern Baptist missionaries as a whole,” explained West. While in El Salvador, West was a strategy coordinator, which includes researching areas where there is the greatest need for churches and to send church planting teams into those areas.

After serving in El Salvador, God led them into Nicaragua where they have served for the past two years. The population of nearly 6 million people is mostly poor, the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

The Wests admit it is difficult seeing the people struggle financially. “Our hearts would love to see the people have ‘stuff,’” Brenda admitted, “but we decided a Santa Claus kind of ministry would only bring them back more dependent. But when we teach them a skill, and they can realize that when stuff like that happens, even if you’re used to ‘it’s hard to know what to do and what not to do,’” says Candi, currently a sophomore at Charleston Southern. One of Andrew’s biggest challenges came behind the wheel when he met and conquered the driver’s test.

Both brother and sister are active on campus. Clark Carter, campus minister, shares that Candi is “outgoing and passionate with a contagious attitude that encourages others to be involved.” She can be found working with Campus Crusade for Christ, Baptist Collegiate Ministry, Elevate and is especially interested in off-campus ministry and mission projects. This past Christmas, Candi joined three other students on a two-week mission trip to China. She readily admits she is called to missions and that she “wants to share her life story with people.”

Andrew, a freshman, works in the Enrollment Services Office and participates in Campus Crusade for Christ as well as helping with mission endeavors. “Andrew is a reserved and extremely compassionate guy,” Carter says. He remembers on the fall mission trip to the Bethea Retirement Community how Andrew connected with one of the residents and “took the time to really listen to him.” He is a mature young man who is pursuing an engineering degree.

The West family is extremely close. “Growing up on the mission field, we really listen to him.” He is a mature young man who is pursuing an engineering degree.

Preston West fell ill with dengue hemorrhagic fever, a life-threatening, mosquito-borne illness similar to encephalitis. West spent five grueling days in the local hospital while supporters around the world prayed for his recovery.

Brenda called Candi, then a freshman at CSU, about the gravity of her dad’s condition. But Candi was unable to receive updates as the electricity went out in Nicaragua, and Brenda was unable to reach her for three days. “I was a wreck,” Candi admits, “but everyone here at college was so supportive and prayed for me and my dad.” Candi says her tendency is to worry but quickly adds, “Sometimes when things happen to friends and family, you wonder what would have happened if you weren’t there (on the mission field), but I think that’s putting doubt on God’s calling. You have to realize that when stuff like that happens, even if people die, that it obviously is for a greater plan than we have in mind.”

God’s plan for West continues to unfold as he returns to Nicaragua after completing a six-month stateside assignment. Preston, Brenda and Karis left for Nicaragua in January. They face the return of the socialist leader, Daniel Ortega, who was voted into the presidency in November 2006. Previously, while in power in the 1980s, Ortega forced the missionaries out of the country and exiled many of the local pastors or put them in jail. The Wests’ future in Nicaragua is uncertain at best.

With the uncertainty, disasters and dangers the West family has faced and will continue to confront, what keeps the family going back? Preston West doesn’t hesitate, “The call has been enough to get us back... our first call.”

Candi and Andrew
Adjusting to Life at CSU

By Sherry Atkinson

Adjusting to life in the United States has its up and downs for Candi and Andrew West. Central air-conditioning, clean water and Target are definitely positives. But the laws and customs are so different from what they’re used to “it’s hard to know what to do and what not to do,” says Candi, currently a sophomore at Charleston Southern. One of Andrew’s biggest challenges came behind the wheel when he met and conquered the driver’s test.

Both brother and sister are active on campus. Clark Carter, campus minister, shares that Candi is “outgoing and passionate with a contagious attitude that encourages others to be involved.” She can be found working with Campus Crusade for Christ, Baptist Collegiate Ministry, Elevate and is especially interested in off-campus ministry and mission projects. This past Christmas, Candi joined three other students on a two-week mission trip to China. She readily admits she is called to missions and that she “wants to share her life story with people.”

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The West family is extremely close. “Growing up on the mission field, we moved a lot,” says Candi, “but my family was always there. My best friends were my brother and sister.” There will be adjustments on both sides as Candi and Andrew continue to navigate life in the United States and as Preston, Brenda and Karis adjust to the empty spaces left by these two gifted young people, following their own calls.
LAUGH

Photo by Franny Garrett
Following a long weekend of uncertainty and inconclusive tests, Bruns’ doctor diagnosed him with Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia (A.L.L.), a fast-acting form of cancer found predominantly in children that “without treatment, can (kill you) in eight weeks,” according to Bruns.

It was 1991. Bruns was 29 years old.

The previous 72 hours were surreal. After starting his Friday with a morning jog, Bruns began experiencing chest pain.

“I went up a flight of stairs and my pulse went to 180, and it was at that point that I went to see a doctor,” he said. “I thought something was wrong with my heart. I felt like my chest was going to explode.”

Doctors immediately identified “immature cells” during a routine blood test, a sign something was wrong. Test results were ambiguous, so erring on the side of caution doctors admitted Bruns to the hospital.

Just six weeks earlier, Bruns underwent a full physical and was given a clean bill of health. “They caught it within six weeks,” he said. “Actually if I hadn’t been running, it may have been another four weeks before they found it. Which at that point the (blood) counts would have been significantly low and it would be very dangerous.”

Enter Laverne Puckett, a 30-something staff nurse at Tripler. She has been through this scenario with patients more often than she’d like to consider. It’s more than the diagnosis – Leukemia - it’s the psychological effects. Puckett spoke honestly about an illness that reportedly took the lives of 22,280 Americans in 2006, posing a candid question to Bruns.

“She sat down and talked to me about what I was going to do with my life, if this was the end of my life.” Bruns said.

“In the Face of Leukemia”

By John Strubel
Photos by Franny Garrett

It was late February in Honolulu, Hawaii, 70 degrees, sunshine, blue skies, and Rusty Bruns was thinking about buying a DeLorean. Life is good, right? Not really.

Bruns, a Navy supply officer was lying in a hospital bed on the eighth floor of Tripler Army Medical Center, the largest military hospital in the Pacific Rim, juggling his thoughts.

“...and that’s the way I want it to be.”

- Rusty Bruns
"I think I’m going to buy a DeLorean," he told her without hesitation. "I always thought those were pretty cool." 

Two weeks later Puckett was back in Bruns’ hospital room with a framed picture of a DeLorean. "She brought that in to me and said, 'this is for when you get out of the hospital, here's your DeLorean,'" he said.

A LONG WINTER

Winter turned to spring as Bruns watched the seasons of his own life shift counterclockwise, from spring to winter. Doctors, nurses, friends and family came and went as 40 days of chemotherapy dragged on. Bruns physically withered from 188 to 148 pounds, 40 pounds in 40 days.

Then, it got worse.

"I got out of the hospital after 40 days of treatment," Bruns said, "but before my next round of treatment I got an infection in my mouth (and throat) and couldn't eat. My face swelled up to almost twice the size. So I was back in the hospital, and they fed me through IV's." The prognosis turned dire.

A healthy human has an average blood platelet count ranging from 250,000-400,000. Platelets play a vital role in blood clotting. At 20,000, far below the norm, the human body is in danger of experiencing a cerebral hemorrhage. Bruns' platelet count had plunged to 2,000.

Talks of a DeLorean were soon replaced with prayer and the hope of survival. "The infection had really taken; they told me I was going to die," said Bruns.

"I look back on my life ... (long pause) ... I've done a lot that other people have never had the opportunity to do," he said. "I was satisfied with what I was able to do. If that was the time that God wanted me to go, then I was going to go. The fear really didn’t set in. I was miserable. I felt horrible. I was having trouble breathing, my body was cramping up."

But Bruns rallied. Nine days later, the IV’s were removed, his blood count returned to normal and the infection that spread through his mouth and throat had healed.

SUMMER VACATION

Bruns hangs up his phone and smiles. His eyes are glossy, his character mustache bends as his smile widens and his cheeks inflate. In his mind, he’s already in Alaska. He has just finished booking arrangements for his summer vacation, and the chief information officer at Charleston Southern couldn’t be happier. It’s been on his “to do” list for a while.

"It’s been 15 years and change since he was told, “you’re gonna die,” but it’s never far from his mind. If he forgets, his body reminds him.

At one point Bruns was swallowing 24 pills a day, mostly to control pain. "It’s a balancing act to be functional and the medication making you tired," said Bruns, who admits he still takes 16 pills a day.

"One of the drugs I took - Vinchristine - its job was to kill nerve cells," Bruns remembers. "Chemotherapy drugs were made to kill cells, good cells, bad cells, didn’t matter, it killed cells. Both my arms, my hands were completely numb - and from my knees down, completely numb. Usually after chemo those cells regenerate, mine did not. So when I retired out of the military the V.A. assigned to me a disability of 90 percent. That's because of the nerve damage."

In a pure, honest and seemingly twisted way, you get the sense Bruns is enjoying the memories. Or, maybe it’s just the fact that he’s here to tell them that keeps him smiling. Either way, talk of his illness kicks off a verbal assembly line of experiences and stories from before, during and after.

"I was in a wheelchair for four weeks until they could find a drug that deadened the pain I was in," he says. "The pain in my feet ... you take a step it was like, what it would feel like to have 50 needles going through your foot. So when I walked I had to walk on the sides of my feet, the outside of my feet, which looked stupid but it was the only way I could tolerate the pain."

Bruns’ treatment started with 40 consecutive days of chemotherapy. "Chemo has three phases to it," added Bruns. "I started chemo in February of '91, and the chemo was completed in July of '95.

During the life of his treatment, Bruns had 38 spinal taps. "They messed up on five," he continues. "When I say they messed it up, I mean they hit my sciatic nerve trying to get in there. That’s an incredible amount of pain. I can’t even describe it ... it feels like they just ripped your leg off. That’s a massive amount of pain. Those are the biggies."

ANGELA’S STORY

In times of need, most people will turn to the wise, the experienced, to get perspective, hoping they will ease the desperation with words of hope and encouragement. For Bruns it was Angela, a 13-year-old Leukemia patient, who spoke to his heart while attending his first cancer group.

"She knew she was going to die," Bruns remembers, the smile now gone. ‘They already told her they had done everything they could and they just can't keep things going. So she told her mom, 'I think I’m gonna stop taking math.' She was in grade school and she told her mom she was going to stop taking math now because she didn’t think it was going to be very important to have a math background in Heaven.”

Bruns thought about Angela’s decision for a long time. It floored him. He had a new perspective.

"Here’s a little girl who's 13 years old, who's not really experienced anything in her life, she was diagnosed with Leukemia five years before ... so here’s a little girl, with all she’s been through and her big decision at the end of her life was not to take math.”

Angela passed away four weeks later, a victim of Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia (A.L.L.), the same illness Bruns was diagnosed with.

The remarkable part of Bruns’ story is in the numbers. Over his four-and-a-half years of chemotherapy and regular cancer group meetings from Hawaii to South Carolina, Bruns became acquainted with 19 people battling A.L.L. Today, only three are still alive, including Bruns.

He is part of a small group of survivors, something Bruns doesn’t take for granted. "It makes you realize what you’re going through is nothing compared to what some of these people are going through ... advanced breast cancer, what women have to go through is unbelievable, cervical cancer too ..."

ATTITUDE

My friends are puzzled when I tell them I’m speaking to cancer survivors about humor. “How can you laugh at cancer? There’s nothing funny about getting cancer,” they say. And, of course, they’re right. There’s never anything funny about the fact that one has cancer. But learning to find a light side of things that happen as a result of your cancer, and keeping your sense of humor about the everyday things that have nothing to do with cancer, give you a powerful tool in coping with all the tough days you face. Your sense of humor also helps bring back some joy into your life.

- Dr. Paul E. McGhee

Bruns has learned to live – and laugh – about his illness.

In 1992, Bruns was transferred to Charleston and continued his chemotherapy treatments at Eisenhower Medical Center at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia.

“When I got to Charleston my wife ran a preschool,” he said. “I was helping her out by doing all her maintenance for the building. I went over there when I was in the middle of going bald – I went bald eight times. Being bald and going bald because you are ill are two completely different looks ... and four-year-olds are incredibly honest.”
Child: What's wrong with your head?
Rusty: I just had to take some medicine.

“This is not a two-minute conversation, this is a half-hour, 45-minute conversation, because then you have other four-year-olds saying, 'What did you say about your head?’”

And, the games begin ...

Bruns is again picking up momentum. His illness is now comedic in some ways.

“I woke up one morning and my entire body was covered in acne. I thought, ‘Hey look, just like Job,’” he says smiling. “It was a reaction from the chemo. You go to bed looking normal and you wake up, and your face looks like it has boils on it. It’s not very attractive, especially for a 29-year old. Any arrogance going in, it disappeared pretty quick.

“The first time I went bald, I was in the hospital at Tripler and I was in the shower. It was one of those showers with the hand-held shower head ... So I am showering, I rinse off and I turn around and the whole back of the shower is hair, because the water pressure just blew it all off.

“I think one of the keys to longevity if you’ve been sick is attitude,” he said. “I know so many people who got angry and mean about it and it didn’t help them at all.

“There’s a lot of hate. Why me? Why not somebody else? If you watch the people who have so much hate and anger that go through this, it was not only unpleasant for them, it was unpleasant for all the people trying to help them. When someone is told, ‘you have a pretty good chance of dying,’ it’s difficult to be mean to them, so those attitudes were allowed. It was unfortunate.”

Rediscovering Faith

Bruns’ illness signifies a marking post for his faith. "My faith was not very strong when I was diagnosed," Bruns admitted, "but from the onset, my walk became much closer. I had just re-established a relationship that I had lost for a while. You look at people who are in trouble, who is the first person they reach out to? God. They pray.

“I do think faith and praying and your relationship with Christ is very important in this process; however, using the thing between your ears to help you, to motivate you and help you feel better and make other people around you feel better is important.”

No Tomorrows

There’s no DeLorean in Bruns’ driveway today, but there is a huge, framed picture of one hanging above his desk in his home office.

Now 44, Bruns appears healthy. "If no one knows there is something wrong with me, they would never know something was wrong with me, and that’s the way I want it to be,” he says. Bruns has been cancer-free since April 1991. No relapse, not one.

“I’ve changed,” said Bruns. “I kind of live everyday like it’s my last. I get home, if there’s something I want to do, I go do it because I might not wake up tomorrow.”
When Heyward tells her story, she holds nothing back. “When I first enrolled here, my mother was in prison, and my father was battling a drug addiction,” Heyward admits. “The day I moved in I felt like everyone was looking at me. Here were all these students with their parents helping them move into their rooms, and I didn’t even have my mom and dad to kiss me good-bye or to tell me, ‘It’s okay. We’ll be at home if you need us.’” The truth was Heyward had no home.

She grew up in Beaufort, S.C., with her younger twin brothers and her mom, while her father wandered in and out of their lives. She was a good student and was one of the track team captains at Beaufort High School. Heyward’s mother was a big part of her life. She provided a stable factor and a “Christian environment where everything was about God and church.” But when Heyward was 16, her mother made some mistakes, was arrested and sent to prison. Heyward’s father stayed with the children for a while but soon disappeared, leaving them on their own.

Devastated, Heyward recalls, “At that point, everything in my life started crumbling, unraveling.” She had no one. She considered joining the military where at least she would have housing, but she was too young, and she knew college would be a struggle financially. Some family members took her and her siblings in, but the family “had a totally different way of life,” and soon Heyward left to live with a friend.

In August 2003 when Chicora Heyward entered Charleston Southern, she brought everything she owned in garbage bags, unable even to afford a suitcase. Three years later, in November 2006, she stood before a cheering audience, accepting the title and crown of Miss CSU.

**HAS A STORY TO TELL**

Chicora Heyward receives the Miss CSU crown in November.
Heyward doesn’t hesitate to admit that prayer was the only thing that pulled her through those bleak days. “I prayed a whole lot,” she said. “And I kept asking, ‘God, why? Why are you taking me through this?’”

As the months passed, God showed her step-by-step the plan He had for her. Even with the blow of her best friend leaving school, she remained on the course He had set before her. During that first semester, Heyward met Brian Berry, a 2003 graduate of CSU. Heyward giggles as she recalls the first time they met. She remembers thinking, “Ooooo, I like him.” And as the months went by she found more and more about him to like. Their relationship grew, and soon Heyward felt safe enough to share with him the secrets of her past. Berry became a “positive role model” in her life. He completed his master of counseling, advanced in his career at the Carolina Youth Development Center, and is currently working on his MBA.

With her newfound support through her relationship with Berry, her friends at school, and the Charleston Southern community, Heyward stepped out and became involved in many campus activities. “People were embracing me and encouraging me as a role model. Freshmen would come up to me and tell me how much I had meant to them; and hearing that meant so much. The more time passed the more I realized it wasn’t about me.”

Heyward changed her major from communication to psychology. She firmly believes she is to help others who may be going through the same things she endured, and after graduating in May plans to attend USC in Columbia to get her master of social work.

She shares her passion for helping others, barely stopping to catch her breath. “I am a living example that you can come out of where you are; you do not have to be a product of your environment. I’ve got to help the children; the ones who fall between the cracks. I want to help them see they can be comfortable in their own skin, to be their best selves, and to learn that other people will love and respect them for it,” she continues. “There is so much peer pressure and media pressure to look a certain way, and I want to tell them, ‘You don’t have to look like that.’” She adds laughing, “I don’t look like that. I know I am not the most beautiful person you will ever meet, but I am beautiful inside… and that means so much more.”

Heyward’s beauty radiated the night she was crowned. The judges recognized that beauty; the crowd raised the roof in agreement, and Heyward’s father celebrated as part of the cheering audience. Heyward says she constantly reminds her father of how much she needs him. “I keep encouraging him to get into that good way of life. I tell him, ‘Daddy, I need you. I need your support.’”

Reflecting on that stunning evening when she was crowned Miss CSU, Heyward muses, wise-beyond-years, “Just when you think God has given up on you, He does something that shows you are just where He wants you to be. Just when you get tired and want to give up He says, ‘Here my child, here is a little something.’” In Heyward’s life, the “little something” now is an opportunity to share her story and inspire others as Miss CSU.
It was 1996. November 3, 1996, to be exact. That is how precisely Dr. Michael Zigarelli recalls the day his manner of thinking began to shift from a secular to a biblical worldview.

On that day, Zigarelli's father-in-law, John Cummings, passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack. At the age of 60, Cummings was a professor of anatomy at Cornell University and was leading a research team that studied the similarities of an equine motor neuron disease to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease, in humans, to find a cure.

“The moment was tragic beyond words, and in the pain of the moment I reflected deeply on John's professional life, juxtaposing it with the trajectory of my own,” said Zigarelli. “I was a mainstream management professor at the time. I looked at my likely contribution to this world in the shadow of John's and then, somewhat uncharacteristically for me at the time, I sought God's perspective on what I should do. I was a relatively nominal Christian in 1996, so when I received back from God that I should begin to research and teach the connections between the Christian faith, work and management, I was ambivalent, even worried. I could see that this sort of work would be far more contributory than what I was doing, but I also knew the difficulty in doing interdisciplinary research, especially with little formal training in theology.”

Nonetheless, he tried to conform to God's will. As expected, the work proved frustrating at times, as he tried hard to produce subject matter worthy of God's work.

“Sometimes it took me a whole day to write five sentences about how some Christian principle applied to a workplace or business situation. It was awful. But in wrestling through that, God taught me many important things about the nexus of faith and business,” he said.

Also as expected, the work was personally trying at times, as he learned lessons about persevering through persecution when some of his colleagues at secular schools rejected him for pursuing “that superstitious, anti-intellectual stuff.”
“Through those refining fires, I gained more of an understanding of what it means to have a biblically correct worldview, as well as a little about the consequences of that worldview—the cost of discipleship and the enormous profit of it,” he said.

Zigarelli is now associate professor of management in the School of Business. His previous academic positions include serving as dean of the Regent University School of Business and as associate professor of management at the Fairfield University School of Business.

He is the author of several books including The Minister’s MBA; Cultivating Christian Character; Ordinary People, Extraordinary Leaders; Faith at Work; and Management by Proverbs.

Zigarelli attended several secular schools in pursuit of his academic degrees that include: a B.A. in economics and history from Lafayette College, an M.A. in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University, and a Ph.D. in employee management from Rutgers University. Those experiences, in addition to the three Christian universities where he has been employed, have afforded him some valuable perspective about what contributes to student transformation. Overall, he’s noticed that undergraduate students are shaped and developed by similar forces at both categories of schools: peers, professors and curriculum.

“First and foremost, students are more significantly influenced by their peers than by anything else. I think. Despite their nonconformist pretenses, students—and we older adults alike, for that matter—are remarkably conformist when it comes to adopting the values of those around them. The way they dress, the way they speak, their sense of right and wrong, how hard they work and for what purposes, their view of God. In college, all of these things are more a function of student culture than of anything that goes on in the classroom,” said Zigarelli.

Although the development drivers are similar at Christian and secular schools, Zigarelli has noticed that they often produce graduates with vastly different worldviews.

“At today’s secular school, it’s not uncommon for students to be graduated as relativists, or at best pluralists, no matter what they believed upon entry. At today’s Christian college, by contrast, the notion of absolute truth is at least given a fair hearing, and undergrads receive their diploma having been exposed to a biblical worldview. Ideally, they should also love God and neighbor more than when they started, and at the most effective Christian schools they do. Sadly, at many other Christian schools, from what I’ve seen, the faculty, the curriculum, and the recruitment standards have drifted, and consequently, so do the students as they traverse their four years,” Zigarelli explained.

One of Zigarelli’s foci is integrating faith in education, but rather than holding to specific standards or principles, he tries to just teach from who he is.

“The closer I grow to God, the more likely I am to talk about God things wherever I am. That includes the classroom. When I managed faculty as a dean, I can tell you unequivocally that those faculty who did faith integration exceptionally well were those who had truly surrendered their lives to God and were in a close relationship with Him. In the same way, those who did faith integration poorly or who resisted it were, without exception, people who were just going through the motions of their faith or were simply too busy for God,” he said. “Faith integration flows primarily from who we are, not from our curricular design.”

In order to fulfill his second focus, promoting biblical practices in business, Zigarelli emphasizes the principles of servanthood and stewardship.

Warning of imbalance, however, he explains that “if we, as managers, go too far in one direction, we get people who love us, but a lousy bottom line; if we go too far in the other direction, we get a decent bottom line, but nobody who sees Jesus in us. So, balancing the virtues of servanthood and stewardship is my current framework.”

He is also careful to point out the underlying principle of all these standards, which is humility. He clarifies, saying, “There’s an antecedent, though; a foundation for both of these virtues. It’s humility. I believe the faithful business person is one who is humble enough to be led by God and humble enough to have compassion for people.”

Defining a Christian leader may be difficult. Explaining it may even be a paradox. But, in the end, the definition may be as simple and direct as the fact that a Christian leader emulates Christ. Zigarelli referenced Matthew 20:26-28 when defining who a Christian leader is and what he does. The verses state, “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life for a ransom for many.”

Zigarelli’s answer to the question of what makes a leader a Christian leader follows suit.

“A leader is a person who has followers, and a Christian is a person who is a follower of Jesus. So, a Christian leader, then, is one who excels at leadership by first being an authentic follower—a follower of the greatest leader of all time.”

Zigarelli recognizes that there is a lot of information out there about how to work for God in all we do and how to lead and manage God’s way. So, he compiled a lot of that information into a free, online resource center for living out our faith in the workplace. His goal in creating the Web site is to support those whose ministry is the workplace. Through www.Christianity9to5.net, one can research the articles library, case studies, self-assessment tools, a personal development plan, and Christianity 9 to 5 Magazine.

“Workplace ministry is especially important because the workplace is where Christians have so many close relationships with nonbelievers and nominal believers. It’s a strategic position that our pastors simply don’t have, a personal ministry that each one of us can embrace as ambassadors of the faith. It’s my hope and prayer that many will be blessed by this Web site and that they’ll use it to teach and encourage those God has entrusted to them.”
“Evangelist to Intellectuals” Speaks on Biblical Manhood

by Allie Osman

Voddie Baucham Jr., sometimes called “Evangelist to intellectuals,” spoke about biblical manhood at convocation.

Baucham, whose academic emphasis is cultural apologetics, is a graduate of Southwestern and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminaries and has completed additional postgraduate study at the University of Oxford in England. He is an author, Bible teacher, professor, pastor, husband and father.

According to Baucham, families are falling apart, men think it is inappropriate to engage in worship, and women are either disappointed or lower their standards in marriage because our culture has lost its sense of biblical manhood.

In speaking of his fatherly responsibility to his daughter, Baucham said, “I am responsible for being her priest, prophet, provider and protector. I cannot and I will not turn her over to another man unless and until I discover that that man is capable of replacing me in all four of those areas.”

Biblical manhood also describes the role of a man in his relationship with his wife, both before and during marriage.

Likening marriage to Christ’s relationship with His church, Baucham read from Ephesians 5:25-33.

“In this text, we get a picture of biblical manhood. Not that every man, in order to be a biblical man, must be married, but marriage is not some strange, isolated category of manhood,” Baucham clarified. “We’re talking about you exemplifying these things before you can be qualified to be married.”

According to Baucham, a biblical man must lead in biblical love, lead in the Word, lead in righteousness, lead in selflessness and lead in intimacy.

“Biblical love is an act of the will, accompanied by emotion, that leads to action on behalf of its object,” said Baucham.

Describing a biblical man’s responsibility to lead in the Word, Baucham told the ladies present, “Until you find a man who is spiritually mature enough to disciple you, you haven’t found a man who is worthy to be your husband.

“Biblical manhood will not dishonor you,” said Baucham. “Biblical manhood desires to protect your purity and to protect your righteousness.”

Reflecting on his own role as father and husband as he leads his family in selflessness, Baucham said, “I had to come to a place where I understood that if anybody in my home was going to go without something, Dad needed to be first.

If anybody in my home was going to sacrifice something, Dad needed to be first. If anybody in my home was going to have to go the extra mile to see to it that we were provided for, Dad was going to have to be first.”

Baucham defined intimacy for his audience, “Intimacy happens when I let you into a place in my life that is not readily available to everybody else. Until we are ready to leave and cleave, we are not ready to be one flesh.”

“All of these [leadership styles] are references to the way that Christ loves the church, the way that Christ leads the church, the way that Christ nourishes the church,” said Baucham.

CLAYTON KING
LIVE ON CAMPUS

by Sherry Atkinson

Speaking on Romans 10:9, a familiar verse to many, King stated, “In order for us today to understand what it means to state that ‘Jesus Christ is Lord’, ... we must understand what it meant to the people in Rome.” In the Roman Empire, Caesar was considered the lord and by law demanded he be addressed as such. Those who refused were punished, jailed or killed.

Rather than deny their allegiance to Jesus Christ, many Christians chose death. King powerfully demonstrated their commitment when he turned his back to the audience, raised his arms and loudly declared, “Jesus is Lord!” He stated that at that moment the guards would have immediately drawn their swords and beheaded the Christian who had so boldly denied Caesar as lord.

King encouraged the audience to have the same fervor the early Christians demonstrated. He stated that God desires more than words; He wants our actions and attitudes to reflect that Jesus is Lord. He continued by stating that just because students say all the right words, attend all the right concerts, and even attend a Christian school, it does not mean that Jesus is Lord of their lives. “God wants to see inner change,” King said.

King is the founder and director of Crossroads Worldwide and speaks to more than 200,000 people annually on college campuses.
Behind Ally Baker’s infectious smile and petite frame is a young lady full of energy and vision. Last year she pumped up crowds of enthusiastic Buccaneer fans; but as much as she enjoyed cheering, she chose not to this year. As the Baptist Collegiate Ministries director of service ministries she felt God moving her in a different direction.

Always on the lookout for service opportunities she was excited when in August she heard about a community “that needed a little extra love.” She recalls the day she approached the neighborhood of small homes, trailers and campers. “God immediately gave me a vision for a block party in a field near a small church,” Baker said. That vision became a reality Nov. 5, as 60 to 70 children and adults flocked to the large field where food, face painting, a jump castle, giveaways and lots of fun awaited them.

The success of the block party came after months of building relationships with the residents through Thursday afternoon play dates with the children, enabling the Charleston Southern students to also meet parents. Baker knows that prayer is essential in reaching the community. She consistently prayer walks throughout the neighborhood and meets with other students to pray for specific needs. “There is so much there that is corrupt,” Baker said. “And after we got to know the people, we could pray for them by name and for their specific situation, even when their stories are hard to hear.”

As an early childhood education major, Baker is especially drawn to the children and is thrilled that she now takes six children to church on Sundays. “The kids are responding and changing; that’s where the reward is!” said Baker. She shared that the children are comfortable enough to ask questions like, “Why don’t you cuss?” and “Why don’t you live with your boyfriend?”

The questions create opportunities for the students to share what they believe and why.

The block party opened a door for the group to be able to go back later in November for a Thanksgiving project, Turkey Outreach. The ministry team partnered with Northwood Assembly’s Genesis Ministry to deliver 55 Thanksgiving meals to the community. Baker says, “It opened doors for us to actually go into people’s homes.” Baker continues, “There were a lot of families who could not afford a special Thanksgiving meal, and they were ecstatic.” Because of the collaborative effort that day a total of 1,008 Thanksgiving meals were distributed in 10 Charleston communities.

In December, the ministry team launched Operation Bundle Up. Hundreds of letters were sent to local schools and churches requesting coats for the community residents and with the help of Peace Presbyterian Church in Goose Creek, they collected 400. After a “sorting and cleaning party” 150 were passed out in the community with plans to distribute the remaining coats in other communities with needs.

Baker has her finger on the pulse of the community and recognizes the need for fun, instruction and healing ministries. Plans are being laid for a ropes course day, Water Wars day and a soccer camp over the next few months. In the meantime, the ministry team continues to prayer walk and to spend time with the residents, showing them what a relationship with Christ is all about.
Ministers Support Network Establishes Scholarship

In 2006 the Ministers Support Network established a ministerial scholarship to assist a student going into full-time Christian work. Of the $20,000 needed to fund the scholarship, $6,875 has been raised to date. Ministers and churches have contributed to the scholarship.

Scholarship donors attending the most recent MSN meeting: Back row: Rev. Ted Robertson, chair of the MSN Scholarship campaign and a retired director of missions; Rev. Johnny Muller, staff member, Lexington Baptist Association, retired pastor; Rev. Daniel Inabinet ’84, pastor, MSN chairman, church has contributed to the scholarship; Rev. Hans Wunch ’94, pastor, vice president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention pastors conference; Front row: Rev. Tom Swelley, pastor, chairman of the SCBC Executive Committee; Rev. Bill Lutes, pastor, MSN secretary; Dr. Richard Porter, pastor, past MSN chairman; and Rev. James “Skip” Owens ’76, CSU director of denominational relations.

Fall Breakers Spruce up Bethea Baptist

By Sherry Atkinson

In four short days, 12 students and campus minister Clark Carter completed a landscaping beautification project at the Bethea Baptist Retirement Community and Health Care Center in Darlington. These students could have chosen from a hundred different activities, including sleep, during their Fall Break, Oct. 14-17. Instead, they leveled a dump truck load of dirt, mixed 90 pounds of compost, tilled several new flowerbeds, and planted 200 trees, azaleas and various other plants.

“We had a great time serving the folks at Bethea,” said Carter. “We are grateful to Johnny and Sandra Ward for financing this project and know we’ll see and enjoy the fruit of our labor growing for years to come!”
Three Buccaneers selected for East Coast Bowl

from CSU Sports Information

Three football players were selected for the East Coast Bowl, Nov. 25 in Petersburg, Va.

Wide receiver Drew Rucks, quarterback Collin Drafts and defensive lineman Phil Jordan represented CSU and had a chance to practice and play in front of professional scouts.

The East Coast Bowl game is an annual small college All-Star football game played on the first Saturday following Thanksgiving in Petersburg. The East Coast Bowl Committee gathers more than 250 nominations, which are narrowed down to the top 70 Division I-AA, II, III and NAIA athletes.

Charleston Champions

from CSU Sports Information

The Buccaneers completed their second-straight “Charleston City Championship” with an 84-80 victory over College of Charleston in the second half of a double-header in November.

With the victory, the Bucs completed the CSU sweep over the Cougars, after the women’s team won the first game 58-53. Second-year head coach Barclay Radebaugh remains undefeated against Charleston teams in his tenure at CSU. It is the first time since the 1985-86 season that the Bucs have won back-to-back games against the Cougars, winning both games during that season. The 1985-86 season was also the last time that the men’s and women’s teams have beaten CoC in the same year.

The men’s team beat The Citadel 72-63 earlier in November to begin their quest for the city championship.

University Honors Student Athlete

By Allie Osman

The Charleston Southern family mourned the passing of senior Josh Williams, a member of the track team, who died in his hometown of Baton Rouge, La., Jan. 13 of heart failure. Williams, 22, was majoring in biology with a minor in business and was to graduate in May.

“Josh was definitely a leader on the track, and a spiritual leader for his team,” said Head Coach Tim Langford. “He started and led the team Bible study. On the track, he was picked second in the conference in the 60-meter dash. We will miss him on the track and as a person. He never complained and is the type of guy that every team needs.”

The University provided transportation for the men’s and women’s track teams to Louisiana for Williams’ funeral, and students collected money to assist the family. An on-campus memorial service was also held.

Price Earns All-American honors

from CSU Sports Information

Junior wide receiver Maurice Price has been named to the Associated Press All-American team, following his record-setting 103 catches during the 2006 season.

Earlier, Price was named to the first-team all-conference team after becoming one of just seven receivers in Division I-AA history to catch more than 100 passes in a season, setting a Big South record with 103. Price finished the season leading the nation in receptions per game, averaging more than 9.3 per game and became the League’s leader in receptions and yardage. Price also holds the single-season record with five games recording at least 10 receptions.

The Bucs had a 14-game winning streak and finished the season at 9-2.

For up-to-date information on all the Buccaneers, log on to www.csusports.com.
The number of former student-athletes in the Athletic Hall of Fame grew to 77 during Hall of Fame/Homecoming Weekend. The men’s and women’s basketball and women’s track and field programs were represented in this year’s class, and each speech shared a common thread: how God used Charleston Southern to help mold each person closer to His image.

“I want to thank Charleston Southern for giving me the ability to play basketball,” Crystal Carpenter-Rhodes ’99 said at her induction. “The platform that sports gives us as Christian athletes is so incredible, and I’m just so glad I had the opportunity to play here.”

“I would like to thank God, because without Him, nothing I’ve done is worth anything,” Tosha Ansley ’99 said. “To CSU, thanks for giving me the opportunity to blossom into the person I am today. If I hadn’t come here, I don’t know where I’d be. CSU was my place of stability.”

“First I’d like to thank God, because without Him, it would not be possible for me to stand up here today and accept this award,” Eric Burks ’96 acknowledged during the ceremony. “It wasn’t me that was out there making those plays; it was Him - Him working through me.”

The contributions of Ansley and Burks did not stop at their graduations: the pair is employed at Charleston Southern today - Ansley as head women’s track and field coach, and Burks as director of recreational services.

Darnell Sneed ’94, men’s basketball, was also inducted into the Hall of Fame but was unable to attend.

“To CSU, thanks for giving me the opportunity to blossom into the person I am today. If I hadn’t come here, I don’t know where I’d be. CSU was my place of stability.”

Tosha Ansley ’99
Support Group Aids University

The Board of Visitors members are important supporters of the University. The group serves as a channel for the involvement and networking of distinguished citizens and leaders who are interested in furthering the University’s mission and providing assistance in the areas of planning, promoting and resource development.

Members serve a four-year term and contribute a minimum of $1,000 annually, which provides direct scholarship support to a deserving student.

Three groups serve at a higher level of involvement. The Leadership Council members serve a four-year term and contribute a minimum gift of $2,500 annually and meet selected outstanding seniors who possess potential as future employees.

Members of the Executive Council serve a three-year term and contribute a minimum gift of $5,000 annually and advise and support a particular college or school of their choice (College of Humanities and Social Science, College of Science and Mathematics, School of Business, School of Education, School of Nursing).

Emory Ware, president of Regions Bank and a member of the Executive Council, said, “Charleston Southern does an excellent job preparing students, not only for successful careers but also equipping them with life skills. Being on the Board of Visitors allows me the opportunity to be a part of that important and exciting work.”

Members of the Presidential Council serve a two-year term and contribute a minimum gift of $10,000 annually and advise and support particular college or school of their choice (College of Humanities and Social Science, College of Science and Mathematics, School of Business, School of Education, School of Nursing).

If you are interested in exploring the different opportunities and levels of the Board of Visitors, contact the development office at 843-863-7513.

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Church provides scholarship money

Stovall Witte, vice president for advancement, accepts a $5,000 check from The French Huguenot Church in Charleston, to be used for student scholarships. Pictured: Renee Marshall, former director of the Huguenot Society; Rev. Phil Bryant ’71, pastor of The French Huguenot Church; Bill Koopman Sr., retired CSU development officer, Stovall Witte and Bob Brinson, a member of the CSU Board of Visitors.

Shopping for Scholars

The annual Charleston Southern Women’s Council annual auction raised more than $22,000 for scholarships. Jan Witte, wife of Stovall Witte, vice president for advancement, and Becky Colman, wife of Jim Colman, vice president for academic affairs, admire auction items.
Message from the CSUAA President

By Dr. Danny Johnson '81

Annual Fund gifts raised during phonathon go directly to where they can have the biggest impact on students - scholarships and campus improvements. Not only do the students benefit from your gift, but high levels of alumni giving also help Charleston Southern earn high ratings in publications such as US News and World Report, which enhances the value of your degree. Other ways to get involved are with our Board of Visitors organization, the Legacy Society and the Alumni Board. Please join me in helping our students and our alma mater continue to achieve success in all areas.

Many of you generously pledged support during our recent Phonathon, and I would like to thank each of you. If you did not receive a call during Phonathon, chances are we do not have an updated phone number for you. Please contact David Weiss at 843-863-7516 or by e-mail at alumni@csuniv.edu to update your information.

Message from the Director of Alumni Affairs

By David Weiss '03

The campus was decked out in blue and gold; the students were painted and ready to cheer on the Bucs, and alumni and their families came out in force. Nearly 4,000 spectators were in attendance at the Homecoming football game against Georgetown, which the Bucs won 24-10. More than 150 alumni updated their information and picked up free gifts at the alumni booth, and many more were among those in attendance at the game.

Mahalia Bowman Campbell '82, an Alumni Association Board Member, said, “It was great to see so many of my classmates and their families.”

Festivities started Thursday, with the annual 5K Fun Run and Walk, when the campus is lit with luminaries. Thursday evening was also opening night for “Show Boat,” a full scale Broadway musical production. Dr. Jennifer Luiken, director of Lyric Theater, said, “I felt there was a strong feeling of family about this show, and the cast members all supported each other. I am continually amazed at our students’ abilities and the remarkable performances they are able to create.”

Other events such as the Athletic Hall of Fame induction, pregame tailgate party, and the parade gave everyone time to mingle and simply be amazed at the progress made on campus.

I challenge those who have not been on campus recently to make plans to attend Homecoming 2007, which will be the weekend of Oct. 6. The classes of 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, and 2002 will be celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2007, and special recognition is planned. Look for more information on the Web site and in your mailbox this summer.
HOMECOMING 2006

Photos by Franny Garrett, Heather Koziel and Maribeth Kellenbenz
Joellen Williams Cook ‘76, is the recently published author of Sardines, Cheese and Soda Crackers: Reflections From a Country Girl. In addition to a busy writing schedule, she is the project supervisor for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative for Lexington Richland School District #5 and lives in Irmo.

Q. What is it like to reveal so much of yourself in your writing?
A. My son, Pierce, said to me several years ago that I really needed to write down all the stories I was telling him...that he knew he would not be able to remember them all. Having decided to write these stories just for my son initially, I didn’t think about the impact beyond his eyes and ears.

Once I realized this would be a published book, I actually made few changes other than to change names to protect the innocent. There are many pages of celebrations and humor in the book. There are also some shocking stories, some I had never planned to share with others verbally, much less in writing, for the world to see.

Writing these true stories allowed me to share myself with others and show that regardless of life’s circumstances, you can make the best of what comes to you, learn from those experiences, and help others see that we are capable of dealing with issues and moving on if we allow ourselves to learn from the events.

It actually has been a very freeing experience for me. I imagine if we knew more about who others really are, like I’ve shared in my book, we would do a much better job of understanding what it’s like to walk in someone else’s shoes. The world might just be a more peaceful place if we could do that.

Q. How have others reacted to your candor?
A. I’ve had some remarkable interactions with people from all over the world. I continue to hear from people who say, “That happened to me” or “I remember some of the same things when I was growing up.” I’ve heard and read many comments like “That has helped me so much. Thanks for writing that.” I’m just amazed that my simple stories are making such a difference in the lives of others.

I have people stopping me when I’m out saying “You’re the lady that wrote that Country Girl book aren’t you?” It’s been interesting to hear that, particularly since my picture is not on the book anywhere.

I am a pen pal for a class of second grade students at Ballentine Elementary School in Columbia. I’ve read many of the stories on my visits with the students. One tale was about “Old Blackie” - my violin. My second grader friends asked me to play it for them next time. I wasn’t even sure I could hold it right...after all, it had been over 30 years since I played in the school orchestra. Old Blackie and I paid them a visit right before Christmas. I played a song, and then they sang it as I played again. Their enthusiasm was remarkable. I am so encouraged by these and the other students I visit. There is a grace in their eyes and voices that makes me know there is goodness and love in the world if we will encourage and nurture it among our young people.

One of the highest compliments I’ve received is from a high school student who asked me to critique his own short story. I met with his class for several hours one day, and he contacted me in hopes I’d read his story. I’m encouraged to see a young person with the passion and talent for writing that he has...and honored that he shared that story with me.

Q. On your Web site, you state that you never considered yourself a writer, and now you have a published book. When did you begin writing and what made you start?
A. I’ve given many talks and presentations in my lifetime. Most have been in the professional realm of education. Others have been in churches working with young people, parents in job transitions, single parents in need of encouragement and support in raising their children, marriage enrichment classes, and devotionals. I also love to sing, so getting in front of a group of people comes natural for me.

When I was the president of my choir several years ago, I was responsible for making sure devotions were arranged. It was hard to get others to commit to doing a devotional. One evening during a practice I said, jokingly, “If we can’t find volunteers, I am going to have to start telling tales and you don’t want me to do that!”

I did tell a few over the next few weeks, always sharing the good word of God’s love and hope during the stories. From then on, no one volunteered. I was working 60 plus hours a week then and the last thing I had time for was to write devotions. So, on my way to choir practice, I would think of something I wanted to tell a story about, jot a few notes down at the stoplights as I headed into town, and give the devotion from my notes. It was no miracle that they came to me with ease. God’s hand was in this, and I knew it.

I love to talk, so sharing that way has been a natural thing for me. I had never taken the time to write stories, so when I sat down to write the first story for my son; I wasn’t sure where to start.

Since I love to tell stories, I just decided to write the way I speak and to make sure I wrote from the heart.

After that, it just came natural. The way my stories are written is the way I talk. I’ve had many friends who know me and have read my book say they can hear me telling them the story when they read each one.

I consider that a compliment.

Q. What advice would you give to others who don’t consider themselves writers?
A. If you want to write there are some things to consider:

Look into your soul to find what you can share with the world. We all have something to say if we will dare to say it. Be bold in sharing the goodness you see each day.

There are so many things going on with this world today that are not encouraging or kind. Consider writing something that will help others be better at who they are.
Tell your story. Sometimes, when we think we have nothing to offer, we can learn that we really do from the lives we’ve lived thus far. As long as you take what has happened and learn from it, it will serve you well. Sharing that good news with others is a good place to start.

Encourage others and find places to make a difference. Your life will be richer and you may just make a positive impact on someone when you least expect it.

Embrace life. When you live life to the fullest is when you find many things worth writing about.

Look for guidance through developing your faith. Everyone may not be led to be a writer, but there are so many other gifts and talents we have to share. Find yours and be passionate about it.

Q. What are some of your favorite college memories?
A. When I walked on campus for the first time, I didn’t know a soul. On my way from Spartanburg that day, I made a commitment to myself that I would meet three new people everyday. By the time student government election time came around, friends encouraged me to run, and I WON! That was an amazing experience.

I went sparking with friends there for the first time. What fun! Now it’s not what you might be thinking, but we had THE best time. I’ve shared “sparking” with many other young people since that day.

I met my first love there. His name was Steve. We both graduated in 1976 and went our separate ways. I married someone else, had several children, experienced the loss of both a son and husband, and raised my now-24-year-old son as a single parent. Several years ago, right after Pierce graduated and moved out on his own - I became reacquainted with my college sweetheart, and we’ve been dating. We love to recall our Baptist College days!

Q. What do you do now for a living?
A. I just retired in July after 28 years in the South Carolina education and state system. Most of my time was spent as a school counselor/guidance director though the last eight years have been as a project director for several federal grants. I work right now as a project supervisor with the Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative. I am also a consultant, motivational speaker and now also find myself spending time daily writing for my Web site www.reflectionsfromacountrygirl.com.

Look into your soul to find what you can share with the world.

We all have something to say if we will dare to say it.

Be bold in sharing the goodness you see each day.
Jim Ruppert ’74, was inducted into the Science Hall of Fame at the annual President’s Club Dinner in October.

In 1984, Ruppert and a business partner formed AquaTreat, a company specializing in the pretreatment of water for industrial boilers. AquaTreat grew to a national company with several million dollars in annual sales. In 2003, Ruppert and his partner sold AquaTreat to NCH Corporation. Ruppert currently serves as a consultant for NCH Corp.

He said, “I give all the credit to Baptist College for giving me the spiritual foundation needed for my adult life and the academic knowledge to be successful.” He credits the late Oliver Yost, music professor, and his wife, Julia, campus nurse, with helping him get on track with God. He cites Romans 5:1-5 as an important passage in his adult life and as he currently battles cancer. “…but we glory in our sufferings, because we know suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3-4) His biggest academic influence was Dr. Clyde Odom.

Ruppert has been a member of the Board of Visitors since 1991 and was a charter member of the Buc Club Board of Directors in 1992.

The Alumni Association honored December graduates at the annual luncheon before commencement rehearsal, Preston West ’83, a church planter in Central America for the last 10 years, challenged students to examine their lives. “What’s the proof God is working in you?” he asked. He also reminded graduates that their fellow alums are their network. “I didn’t leave my network—the people I met at CSU are still partnering with me,” he said.
1971
John A. Larisey is senior vice president and commercial lender for the new branch of Tidelands Bank in the Bluffton/Hilton Head Island area. He has 35 years of experience in the commercial lending business.

1976
Ron Jackson is vice president of student affairs at Spartanburg Community College. He held a similar position at Technical College of the Lowcountry.

1982
Mahalia Bowman Campbell recently passed the Real Estate exam and is working in the Charleston area as an agent. Mahalia is also enrolled at Capella University where she is pursuing her Ph.D. in psychology and serves on the CSU Alumni Board.

Sandra June Kennedy has been selected to participate in a public art display on Tybee Island, Georgia. Her “In-Turtle-National Turtle” is one of 19 turtles on display on the Island in cooperation with the Tybee Art Association and the Marine Science Centers’ Turtle Rescuers. Sandra was the Outstanding Art Student in 1982. She writes, “I am retired from teaching art and live in Springfield, Ga., near seven of my 10 grandchildren.”

1991
Amy Estelle Benton and Derrick Shane Brinson were married Oct. 29, 2006, in Isle of Palms. He is employed by United Parcel Service, and they live in Charleston.

1992
Vicki Sweatman, M.Ed. ’01, has had a novel accepted by Triskelion Publishing which is scheduled for release in December. Vicki writes, “It is a religious love story about a prissy Southern belle who is trapped into working on a motorcycle rally with a ruggedly handsome biker who has lost his faith. They work together to raise money for her Sunday school student who is battling leukemia—until her secret collaboration is discovered by her uberconservative friends, family and coworkers.” She has had numerous poems included in local literary magazines, and her writing is included in A Gathering of Flowers, an anthology of writings from the Summerville Writers Guild (available on Amazon.com) and also writes book reviews for the Charleston Post and Courier. “The English department is wonderful and managed to form me into the writer that I am,” writes Vicki. For more information about Vicki’s publishing career, visit her Web site at http://vickisweatman.com.

1993
Reginald Lindsay is the owner of Global Protective Services, Inc., a security company in Atlanta.

1994

Phillip H. Hatcher and his wife, Faith, announce the birth of their child, a son, Gabriel “Gabe” Phillip, born March 9, 2006 at Palmetto Baptist Hospital in Columbia. Gabe was 7 lbs. 15 ozs. The Hatchers live in Lugoff, and Phillip is an auditor with the S.C. Department of Revenue in Columbia.

1995
Allen Coulter was recently elected to a two-year term as President of South Carolina Association of Healthcare Access Managers. He lives in Cross with his wife of 16 years, Kim, and their two sons, Noah, 8, and Tyler, 6. Allen is education/quality coordinator in patient access services at Medical University of South Carolina.

1997
Allison Sayre Singleton and her husband, Cory, announce the birth of a son, Charleston “Tate,” born Sept. 19, 2006, weighing 10 lbs. and was 22 1/2 inches long. Tate’s big sister, Ava Love, is 3 years old. The Singletons are living in Irmo where Allison is a stay-at-home mom, and Cory is the associate director of youth for the South Carolina Baptist Convention.
Steven D. Steele has been promoted to full assistant principal at Summerville High School in Summerville, currently South Carolina’s largest high school. Steven has more than nine years of experience in the field of secondary education.

Karen Astin Wilson and her husband, Jason, are living in Orange City, Fla., where Jason serves as the worship pastor at First Baptist Church Orange City. They have three children, Allie, 3, and twins Ethan and Anna, who celebrated their first birthday in August.

1998

Rick Asalone and his wife, Kimberly, announce the birth of their daughter, Elloree Kaelan, born Sept. 27, 2006. Rick, Kimberly and Elloree are living in Greenville. Rick is an operations manager at FedEx Express in Spartanburg.


2000

Latasha Lee and Ronald Scott Simmons II were married Oct. 28, 2006, in Charleston. He is an ITV manager at Trident Technical College, and they live in North Charleston.

Daphine Glenn Robinson, M.B.A., has published her first book, Momisms: Mama NEVER Told Me There Would Be Days Like This! Momisms is a collection of true stories about Daphine and her adventures with her two young children. The humorous account was released in September 2006 and is available online at Barnes and Noble, Amazon and Books-A-Million. At press time she had just published her second book, a novel called Brotherly Love & Betrayal. For more information about Daphine and her upcoming projects, visit www.daphine robinson.com. Daphine is a human resource manager at a manufacturing plant in North Carolina.

2001

Sarah Opatsky and Tim Carroll were married Dec. 2, 2006, at Old Fort Baptist Church. Sarah is assistant director of admissions and transfer counselor in CSU’s enrollment services office. The Carrolls live in Summerville.

2002

Laura M. Porter and Robert W. Tyree were married May 6, 2006, in Charleston. Laura is employed by Bluegreen Corporation, and Robert is a mortgage broker. They live in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Melissa Meghan Romagnoli and James “Ja” Silvers were married July 15, 2006, in Charleston. Ja is attending Charleston School of Law, and they live in Charleston.

2003

Lorie Annette Allen and James Michael Honour Jr. were married Jan. 6 in North Charleston. She is a loan officer with Farmers & Merchants Bank of S.C., and they live in North Charleston.

LaTonya S. Durant, M.Ed., received the Miliken Family Foundation National Educator Award and a financial prize in October. LaTonya is a fourth-grade language arts teacher at St. James-Gaillard Elementary School in Eutawville.

2004

Peter Copeland writes, “I recently graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary with a master's of divinity in Christian education, after a whirlwind displacement from Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, and will soon receive my certificate in youth ministry from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in May.” Peter is serving as the church and community ministries missionary in Myrtle Beach, working with the Intracoastal Outreach Missions. He was appointed by the North American Mission Board to serve the Waccamaw Baptist Association. “My vision here is to empower, excite, and equip local churches to do the Great Commission through the Great Commandment in the Myrtle Beach community,” he said.

Alan Smith attended the library and information science program at the University of South Carolina and is reference librarian at the Socastee Public Library in Myrtle Beach. Alan and his wife, Heather, have a one-year-old daughter, Sylvia Violet.
Christin Ann Clarey and Willard Matthew Lee Kinard were married Nov. 10, 2006, in Charleston. Christin is employed by Wes McKenna Insurance Agency, and the Kinards are living in Charleston.

Harvey Hyman, M.B.A., and his wife, Tonya, announce the birth of their second child. Russell Jacob was born Nov. 18, 2006, and weighed 7 lbs. 4 ozs. Harvey writes, “Everyone is happy and healthy.” Harvey is based with the Homeland Security Unit at the U.S. Coast Guard Station on Tybee Island.

Tabitha Mack and Tommie J. Glover were married June 10 in Orangeburg. Tabitha is a third-grade teacher in Kershaw County School District, and Tommie is a school guidance counselor in Richland County School District One. They live in Columbia.

Lindsay Erin Newton and Michael Paul Stover were married Oct. 7, 2006, in Georgetown. Lindsay is a first-grade teacher at Whitesville Elementary School, and they live in North Charleston.

Zach Parnell is a sales associate with The Charleston Angler.

Memorials

Henry Downs Byrd J r. ’68, age 63, of Summerville, died Dec. 5, 2006. He was the owner of Byrd Seed Lawn and Garden.

J. Douglas Donehue, age 78, of Charleston, died Oct. 11, 2006. He was a retired executive with the Evening Post Publishing Company. He taught journalism at CSU for 20 years, and CSU awarded him the honorary doctorate in 1985. In 2005 the Post Courier Foundation endowed the J. Douglas Donehue Community Journalism Scholarship at CSU. Memorials may be made to Charleston Southern University, Development Office, P.O. Box 118087, Charleston, SC 29423.

Dr. Lowell B. Furman, age 74, of Boone, N.C., died Dec. 8, 2006. He was president of Watauga Surgical Group for 34 years, was cofounder of World Medical Missions and was on the Board of Samaritan’s Purse. He was a member of the CSU Board of Visitors.

Michael Wayne Guess ’71, of Lancaster, died Nov. 27, 2006. He was retired from the U.S. Social Security Administration and was a former member of the CSU Board of Trustees. Memorials may be made to the Dr. and Mrs. James H. Storm Family Endowed Scholarship or the Jairy C. Hunter Jr./Lancaster Endowed Scholarship at Charleston Southern University, P.O. Box 118087, Charleston, SC 29423.

Bill Reese ’90, age 39, of Arlington, Texas, died May 29, 2006. He was a teacher at Bowie and Sam Houston high schools and had also taught at Tarrant County College and Dallas Baptist University. A Web site in his memory has been established at http://www.inhiscompany.com/reese/.

Stella Kowalski Shisko ’68, age 83, of Charleston, died Oct. 17, 2006. She was a retired diagnostic prescriptive teacher and travel agent. She and her husband had visited 78 countries and all the major rivers in the world.

Kirk Lamb Smith J r., of Sumter, died Oct. 15, 2006. He was a retired pastor and was awarded an honorary doctorate from CSU.

Ken Willard, age 64, of North Charleston, died Dec. 15, 2006. He was president of Insight Builders and was a member of the CSU Board of Visitors.

We would love to hear about your career and family. In order for your news to be printed in the Summer issue of the magazine, we need to receive your information by April 15, 2007. Photos are welcome and should be 300 dpi and saved as JPEG format.

If you have an alumnus friend who isn’t receiving the magazine, send their address to mperson@csuniv.edu.

>>> WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!
The Super Bowl—the single biggest sports extravaganza in America—was watched by more than 100 million people on television, and a lucky population of 74,916 had a ticket to watch the game at Dolphin Stadium. Out of those nearly 75,000, two Charleston Southern University students scored free tickets to the 41st installment of the Super Bowl.

How were they eligible for such a fantastic prize?

Natalie Caldwell and Jonathon Metzelaars made the trip to Miami on the merits of their fathers. Jim Caldwell is the assistant head coach and quarterbacks coach for the Indianapolis Colts, while Pete Metzelaars serves as the offensive quality control coach for the American Football Conference champions.

So, how unusual is it that Charleston Southern has two students whose fathers are coaching in the Super Bowl—or the same team?

After Colts’ owner and CEO Jim Irsay said while accepting the Lamar Hunt AFC championship trophy, “...as the humble leader of this organization, we’re giving all the glory to God right now,” I tried to recall another instance in my couple decades of following sports where a team spokesman made such a statement. We’ve heard players give credit to God, and maybe an occasional coach or two, but I couldn’t think of a single instance where a team OWNER on national television gave God the glory.

One such statement doesn’t make the Colts a “Christian” organization, nor does it make Irsay or anyone else a Christian. A changed life is evidence of an encounter with Christ. Reacting to negative events in a way that exhibits the fruit of the Spirit is evidence of an encounter with Christ.

Tony Dungy is well-known as a Christian coach and held up as an example by organizations such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes. While I’ve never met Dungy, every account of him leads me to believe that his life is lived in a way that pleases God. I submit to you a pair of examples from last season that show how Christians are to react to negative circumstances.

January 15, 2006: The Steelers come to the RCA Dome and outplay the Colts, yet Indy finds a way to rally from a 21-3 deficit to trail by only three late in the game. When kicker Mike Vanderjagt misses the game-tying field goal with 21 seconds remaining, one of CBS’ cameras is fixed on Dungy. On the replay, you can read Dungy’s lips. His reaction to being ousted from the playoffs in a season where Super Bowl expectations abounded was “He missed it.” That was the extent of it. He didn’t rip off his headset or get in someone’s face. You wouldn’t want to read the lips of most NFL coaches after such a play. Imagine what reaction John Gruden—Dungy’s replacement in Tampa Bay—might have had; I’ve read his lips after an interception, something relatively minor compared to a season-ending missed field goal. It would not be slanderous to say that there’s a good reason the networks do not “wire” or “mic up” Gruden. He has a reputation. Dungy has an equal and opposite reputation.

December 22, 2005: Four days after the San Diego Chargers hand the Colts a loss and end their bid for a perfect season, Dungy is handed a loss that overshadows a football game a million fold: the death of his son James. Colleagues past and present reported that Dungy relied on his faith then, just as he does every other day. While Satan wants to tempt us with the “curse God and die” line of thought when things go wrong, Dungy, like Job of the Old Testament, stayed the course and retained his integrity and testimony.

Jim Caldwell, second in command to Dungy, was the former head coach at Wake Forest, a Baptist university. “He’s a godly man,” says Natalie, shooting guard for the Lady Buccaneers’ basketball team, “and well-respected because of the way he lives his life. [Athletes say] that sometimes a coach is one man when he’s recruiting you, but when you show up there to play he’s a different man. The coach put up a good front to get them there. My dad’s not like that. He’s the same man behind closed doors as he is in public or on the sidelines.”

Pete Metzelaars—who is no stranger to Super Bowls, having played in four of them as a Buffalo Bill in the 1990s—has a good testimony as well. He has served as the offensive coordinator at Charlotte Christian School and one season as an assistant at Wingate University, another Baptist institution. “Dad’s personal philosophy, and what he has taught us, is ‘Whatever you do, you always put God first’: whether it be sports or anything else,” Jonathon relates. Jonathon’s older brother Anthony was a standout athlete at Wingate, quarterbacking the football team and playing intercollegiate golf.

Natalie was recruited to come to Charleston Southern by former head coach Stephanie Yelton. Yelton was an assistant basketball coach at Wake Forest during Jim Caldwell’s tenure with the Demon Deacons. UNC Asheville and Coastal Carolina had both expressed interest in Natalie, but she hadn’t heard of CSU until Yelton contacted Caldwell and asked about Natalie’s college plans.

“I visited and liked the Christian environment and great atmosphere,” Natalie says. “The demands on a college athlete were more than I expected, compared to high school, but CSU is exactly what I thought it would be.” Natalie is having her best season yet in terms of production and health.

Jonathon first encountered CSU on a football visit, having played quarterback at Indian Land High School, but enrolled for nonathletic reasons, falling in love with the University for its academics and Christian environment. Gifted athletically like his brother, Jonathon will try to fill a spot on the golf team next year as a walk-on.

When everything is factored in—the faith found in the Colts’ organization and its coaching staff, the Baptist connections, and the distinctly Christian mission that exemplifies Charleston Southern—it’s not a coincidence at all that two CSU students went to the Super Bowl as a part of their fathers’ allotments of tickets.

It’s more along the lines of God’s providence.
TRANSFORMING CHARLESTON ONE HOME AT A TIME

Photos by Maribeth Kellenbenz
CULTURE FEST

Photo by Maribeth Kellenbenz