

taking a look at

some

Chicquor  
*Art*

*Art professor helps shape and mold the lives of students*

By RONY CAMILLE  
ECHO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On a Monday afternoon in the Fine Arts Building and a group of N.C. Central University students are hard at work in the ceramics studio.

As they mold various clay pieces with their hands, their professor, Isabel Chicquor, walks around giving pointers on their projects, which are due the following class period.

"You can trim that a little bit," she says. "Take a look at it from this angle. It needs to be balanced more."

There is never a typical work day for Chicquor.

As she is giving her pointers, she steps out to her

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Harper  
*History*

*Leaving behind a positive legacy is important*

By TRAVIS RUFFIN  
ECHO ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ask a colleague and he will tell you that history assistant professor Jim C. Harper is great at what he does — teaching.

"Dr. Harper is a professor that the students can relate to on a personal level in- and outside of the classroom," said Carlton E. Wilson, chair of the history department at N.C. Central University.

"He's a young and engaging instructor who uses his appeal to promote education. He is a great teacher and scholar. I can honestly say that we are pleased to have him at the University."

His students agree.

"I like Dr. Harper because

■ See **HARPER** Page 4

of  
our  
best  
teachers

JIM HARPER, HISTORY ♦ RODNEY CUNNINGHAM, PSYCHOLOGY ♦ VERNON CLARK, BIOLOGY ♦ ISABEL CHICQUOR, ART ♦ IRVING JOYNER, LAW ♦ MICHELE WARE, ENGLISH

"Teaching is leaving a vestige of one's self in the development of another."

EUGENE P. BERTIN  
▲

"Teaching should be such that what is offered is perceived as a valuable gift and not as a hard duty."

ALBERT EINSTEIN  
▲

"I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

DR. HAIM GINOTT  
▲

"The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn."

JOHN LUBBOCK  
▲

"Teaching is the greatest act of optimism."

COLEEN WILSOX  
▲

# IRVING JOYNER ~ LAW

*Spirituality and enthusiasm work together to motivate one professor*

BY GABI CLAY-WHITE  
ECHO STAFF REPORTER

Many college students find it difficult to relate to their professors. But law student John Astle can't help but disagree.

"Joyner's teaching style has made it easier to understand criminal law," Astle said.

"He communicates all the information needed in a really laid-back style."

Attorney Irving Joyner, a professor of N.C. Central University Law School, is one of the most sought-after professors and lawyers at NCCU.

"When the court of appeals held a trial, I was fascinated to see him take a tough case and make good arguments," said Astle.

Joyner was born in Brooklyn, NY and moved to North Carolina with his grandparents to receive a better education.

Even with his father absent, Joyner found a way to follow the right paths.

"I have no idea where my father is at. He was a rolling stone," said Joyner.

"I was supported by my grandfather and uncles who showed me how to avoid the pitfalls of growing up."

Yet the avoidance could only last so long.

Joyner grew up in a segregated section of North Carolina and encountered many episodes of racism.

"When I was in the second grade, my friends and I would watch the white kids

*"It all comes from God and the enthusiasm of the students who want to learn. It's the needs that exist in low-income and minority communities that make me continue educating."*

IRVING JOYNER

get bussed to school," said Joyner.

"They would shout racial slurs, throw rocks and bottles at us."

Racial injustice wasn't enough to stop Joyner from continuing his education.

Joyner's mother couldn't pay for college tuition; he was a skilled athlete, and knew basketball was his only way to college.

"Basketball was my golden ticket to college," he said.

Joyner received an athletic scholarship to Long Island University in Brooklyn, and obtained his degree in business administration.

During college, Joyner joined the United Church of Christ and was appointed commissioner for racial injustice, in which position he traveled through the South.

While traveling, Joyner had the opportunity to work alongside Malcolm X.

"It was exciting watching him speak to people," said Joyner.

"He helped me to get a philosophical and political



Law professor Irving Joyner speaks with law school student Merium Malik after his lecture.

KENICE MOBLEY/Echo Staff Photographer

perspective of what African Americans need to do to change the way society treated us. He was inspirational."

Joyner continued his education at Rutgers University in New Jersey and received his Juris Doctorate degree in 1977.

Still organizing events during the civil rights movement, watching the injustice African Americans were subjected to made Joyner want

to become a lawyer.

"I remember when my cousin was shot and killed by the police while he was walking home from choir practice," said Joyner.

"Such injustice made me want to help confront the mistreatment of African Americans."

He became a civil rights lawyer, and was asked to teach a course at NCCU, where he taught students to

argue cases in front of the court of appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

From 1985 to 1994, Joyner was associate dean for the NCCU School of Law, where he focused on the business and academic perspectives of student affairs.

Joyner is a legal adviser for the NAACP and a member of Lagrange Frank Alumni Association; he also hosts a radio program on

WNCU every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. called "The Legal Eagle Review," which focuses on law and interacts with local communities.

In his busy life, Joyner realizes where he gets his strength and motivation.

"It all comes from God and the enthusiasm of the students who want to learn," said Joyner.

It's the needs that exist in low-income and minority

# MICHELE WARE ~ ENGLISH

*Award-winning professor admits the difficulty of reaching success as an instructor*

BY SHELBIA BROWN  
ECHO STAFF REPORTER

Michele Ware stands before her English class and administers a quiz on the weekend's reading assignment: "Angels and Insects" by A.S. Byatt.

The class sighs, but Ware pushes on. In fact, she never fails to push her students to the limit in order for them to reach success.

Self-motivation and the need to hold her own as an individual urged Ware to become the excellent instructor she is today.

Over a span of more than 30 years, Ware has received a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, a doctorate degree, conducted research and written a number of literary essays.

As the first person in her family to receive an undergraduate degree, Ware admits that at times the path was narrow.

"It wasn't always easy," she said.

Ware was born in Whittier, California, where her father served in the Navy as a missile systems engineer. After returning from World War II, her father attended California Polytechnic University while her mother studied to become a nurse.

Ware recalls moving to various states. "We moved around about every two years when I was in grade school," she said.

Both Ware's parents dropped out of college and put their educations aside to raise a family after Ware's mother became pregnant. Ware and her twin brother would be the first of five children.

When Ware was 12 years old, something happened that helped mold the rest of her life. While in the yard playing with a friend, Ware turned a back flip and landed the wrong way, breaking her back.

"I remember being frustrated. I've always been active," said Ware. Though there was damage, she never needed operations or braces.

An eight-week bed rest allowed her much time to do something that she loved to do anyway — read.

"Reading was an escape for me," said Ware.

As a young adult, Ware began to realize that her twin brother had a lot more freedom than she did. "My parents never really pushed me to advance. It took me a long time to push myself," said Ware.

Ware eventually realized that she was going to have to motivate herself if she was going to be successful. Ware

*"It wasn't always easy. My parents never really pushed me to advance.*

*It took me a long time to push myself."*

MICHELE WARE

admitted that watching her parents freely support her brother, and not her, crippled her psychologically; it took her a longer time than average to graduate from college.

She soon understood that if she wanted success, she was going to have to obtain it on her own, without her parents' support.

In 1985, Ware graduated from the University of New Orleans with a bachelor of

arts degree in English literature. "Once I figured out what I wanted to do, there was no stopping me," said Ware.

Upon graduating from New Orleans, Ware received her master's and then her doctorate in English literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While in graduate school between 1986 and 1994, Ware taught English literature and composition

courses.

"Getting a doctorate degree is lots of work," said Ware about the six-year process.

Ware taught for the next four years as a visiting assistant professor at Wake Forest University, where she received the Reid-Doyle Prize in 1998 for excellence in teaching.

In 1998, Ware taught the Workshop in Rhetoric at Duke University.

"I'm always pushing students to do more than they think they can do," said Ware.

Ware came to N.C. Central University in 1999, and became a tenured professor in 2006. She also received a teaching award

from NCCU.

Of her awards, Ware admitted that the Students' Undergraduate Teaching Award from UNC was her favorite award.

"I liked that one most because the students chose that one," said Ware.

She admits that her teaching style is unique. Student interaction is a key element in Ware's classes.

"I like for students to disagree with me," said Ware. "It lets me know that they are thinking."

Ware has published more than 12 essays, chapters and entries in well-known books and encyclopedias.

A few of her works include "The Architecture of the Short Story: Edith Wharton's Modernist Practice," "An Identity Seemed to Leap Out Before Me": Muriel Rukeyser's *The Traces of Thomas Harriot* and "Making Fun of the Critics: Edith Wharton's Anticipation of the Postmodern."

Mass communications junior Candice Mitchell knows Ware for expecting a lot from her students.

"She wouldn't ask a lot if she did not think we could do it," said Mitchell. "I respect her for her writing. She doesn't just let you slack off; she raises the bar." Mitchell feels that Ware has the ability to use her skills to better her students. "She believes in our writing abilities," said Mitchell.

Junior English Literature major Joslyn Bloomfield aspires to follow Ware's footsteps. Upon graduating, she plans to advance into graduate studies and become a professor of English literature like Ware.

"She expects you to work hard and do your best all the time with no excuses," said Bloomfield about Ware. "She cares about her students, and she is a teacher that pushes you and makes you better at writing."



Michele Ware lectures on English literature to her class.

BRUCE JOHNSON/Echo Staff Photographer

## NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

# CUNNINGHAM ~ *PSYCHOLOGY*

*NCCU Alumnus shares enthusiasm and excitement with students*

By **NATALIA N. PEARSON-FARRER**  
ECHO STAFF WRITER

**R**odney Cunningham is proof that the environment you're raised in doesn't necessarily dictate the person you will later become.

Growing up in Baltimore, one of the most violent big cities in America, was a challenge for Cunningham.

Involvement in the church and the guidance of a mother and father who stressed education as the "vehicle of success" kept him from getting involved in the negative things some of his friends were doing.

An associate professor in the psychology department at N.C. Central University with a Ph.D., published research, and several awards under his belt, Cunningham feels privileged to be in a position to affect the lives of young people and give back to the school and department that once trained him for his Master's.

Cunningham was recognized his very first year at NCCU with the 2006 College of Arts & Sciences Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award in psychology.

"He brings enthusiasm, energy, and a fresh approach to teaching. His excitement is natural and quite genuine, and I think students resonate to that," said Les Brunson, chair of the psychology department.

In the classroom, Cunningham is described by students as being intellectual but cool.

He takes the upper-level courses he teaches seriously, but makes the content interesting and relevant.

"Dr. Cunningham is passionate about his work and eager for students to learn and know why they're learning," said LaShell Turnbull, a graduate student in

*There's never a dull moment in my office because students typically feel comfortable with me and see that I understand their culture – I can sit down with students and talk about Young Joc and their weekend.*

**RODNEY CUNNINGHAM**

Cunningham's advanced statistics class.

"He likes to play but when it's time to work, he's very professional and he's always about 'respecting the academic process.'"

Cunningham is equally passionate about helping the black community.

Working with low-income black youth in the Greater Baltimore Urban League earned Cunningham an award for community service in 2004.

Through his research on enhancing cognitive abilities in African-American children, Cunningham has found that low-income black children consistently learn at higher levels when certain cultural factors such as music and dance are incorporated into the learning environment.

Low-income black students, and especially males, have historically been more at risk for low academic performance and 4th grade dropout.

Cunningham said that at NCCU he hopes to see a society of black professionals that dedicate themselves to researching and addressing issues within the community.

"There is a big time crisis," he said.

"We need to negotiate the crisis in family structure and issues with drugs and health disparities. I want students to be experts in making change."

In Cunningham's office, you'll typically find a group of students talking about classes and their personal lives. Cunningham listens and laughs often, and won't hesitate to "get on" his students when necessary.

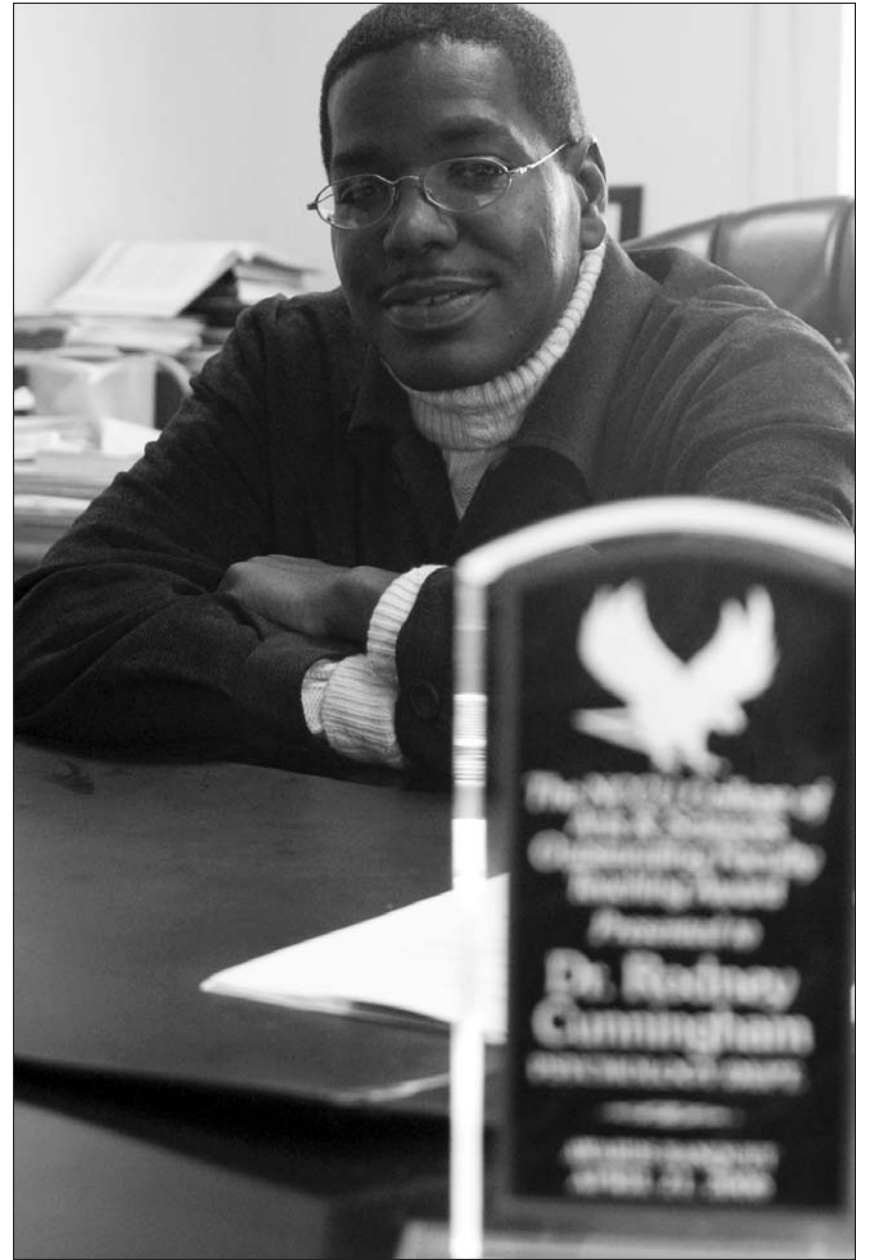
"There's never a dull moment in my office because students typically feel comfortable with me and see that I understand their culture. I can sit down with students and talk about Young Joc and their weekend," he said. "My office is open to any student that is trying to do something with their life."

Cunningham has been married seven years to LaSonja, who teaches middle school in Wake County. They have two young boys, Rodney Jr. and J.T.

Cunningham said though he sometimes feels overworked with the activities he's involved in, he perseveres on a difficult day by remembering where he comes from.

"It helps me to keep going and see how blessed I am when I remember how many of my friends didn't make it. Negotiating those committees is gravy compared to negotiating those streets of Baltimore," he said.

"To be successful in this world, your job has to be a labor of love, not a chore. I love being a professor. It doesn't hurt any day to get up and go to work."



Rodney Cunningham's office is a gathering place for students.

SAVIN JOSEPH/Echo Staff Photographer

# CLARK ~ *BIOLOGY*

*Dedication to students drives professor Clark to keep working*

By **GEOFFREY COOPER**  
ECHO STAFF WRITER

**F**or the past 48 years, Dr. Vernon Clark has imparted much knowledge and has graced many N.C. Central University students with his warm presence.

Biology junior Leigh Barnwell said, "He is a wonderful professor who takes time to get to know students on a personal level."

He challenges his students to achieve at the highest level, which we appreciate at the end of each day."

Clark attributes his achievements to his humble beginnings.

Clark's parents instilled the value of hard work and commitment to family. Clark was the fourth child of nine children growing up in Tarboro, N.C. His father earned \$25 a week as a custodian.

"We all pitched in around the house with chores and made sure that we did well in school," he said.

Clark was valedictorian of his high school class.

He received his B.S. in Biology from Shaw University in 1951, the first in his family to attend college.

Clark enlisted in the U.S. Army, where his Army platoon was segregated.

He recalled one Thanksgiving evening after a football game and formal

*But at this very moment, the preparation of our African-American students' future is very delicate. It requires much attention, so they are able to become successful in life.*

**VERNON CLARK**

at Benedict College in Columbia, S.C.

He was wrongfully arrested and jailed along with 21 of his fellow platoon mates after his friend sat next to a white woman on a city bus.

"Here I am defending my country, and I'm being told I have to sit to the back of the bus," said Clark. "They told us 'all you niggers get off the bus and you white soldiers stay. We're going to lock all you niggers up.'"

Clark came to NCCU in the fall of 1958. That year, he received his M.S. in biology from NCCU.

In 1968, he received his doctorate in cell physiology and biochemistry from UNC-Chapel Hill.

"Folks can't understand why I've been here for this long," Clark said. "When some reach retirement they are gone and glad to go," said Clark.

"But at this very moment, the preparation of our African-American students' future is very delicate. It requires much attention, so they are able to become successful in life. So when they reach that point of success, they can put themselves in a

position to help others, like I'm doing now."

Besides almost five decades of teaching, Clark brought to NCCU a chapter of Beta Kappa Chi, a scientific honor society for minority student scientists.

In 1974, he organized the Pre-Professional Health Society on campus.

This past Saturday at a society banquet in Durham, many health professionals paid homage to Clark's continuing work in allied health sciences.

Dr. James Ewell Graham, Jr., M.D., a retired gynecologic oncologist and 1970 NCCU graduate, was one of Clark's pupils.

In a speech at the banquet, he called Clark "the pinnacle of mentors," and said, "he saw in me what I didn't see in myself."

In honor of Clark's impeccable legacy, the Dr. Vernon Clark Endowed Scholarship has been established. Graham and his wife Sadie D. Graham, M.P.H., were principal donors to the fund.

Clark's motto in inspiring his current and former students to achieve their goals is, "Science holds the golden key to the royal palace of knowledge."



Vernon Clark is seen with a model of the human digestive system.

SAVIN JOSEPH/Echo Staff Photographer

## NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

## HARPER

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he is so down to earth," said mass communication freshman Roger Harris. "He tells us all the time that we can be anything that we choose to be."

"I consider him to be a role model because he's real, and I can relate to him. He has taught me so much, and I will never forget him."

Business junior Antea Green likes the advice Harper gives her and says he's "credible."

"In class, he tells us that when you open your mouth, you need to know what you are talking about. I like the fact that when he says something, he can back it up with real facts," said Green.

"Harper is an intelligent black man who loves to read, and that's always good to see."

It has been said that if you want to truly understand someone, you have to know where they came from.

History assistant professor Jim C. Harper II was born on January 7, 1967 in Mount Olive, the "Pickle Capital of the South."

He says his mother, orphaned at the age of three, and his father, a sharecropper, laid out the blueprint for his life.

"My mother and father stressed the importance of hard work, education, common sense, integrity, dignity and the family unit," said Harper.

"Those things were extremely important to the both of them."

After graduating from Southern Wayne High School in 1985, Harper joined the U.S. Marines Corps.

"The Marines taught me the importance of disci-

pline, and I feel that discipline is something that every man should have," said Harper.

"The U.S. Marine Corps basically enhanced the principles that my father raised me with."

"My parents taught me everything that I needed to know in order to become a real man, but the Marines just took it a step further."

After four years in the

*"Years from now, I want my students to remember me as a person who believed in them when they did not believe in themselves."*

JIM HARPER

Marines, Harper came to NCCU and earned his undergraduate and master's degrees in history.

"My professors were tough on me, but I appreciate them for that because they prepared me for the Ph.D. program at Howard," Harper said. "I learned so much from them."

In 2004, while already teaching at NCCU, he received his Ph.D. in African history from Howard University.

Harper said receiving his doctorate was a moment he will never forget.

Harper decided to teach at NCCU because of the influence of his NCCU professors.

"I had a lot of great professors who I looked up to when I was an undergraduate at NCCU — Dr. Freddie



Harper shares a laugh with his students, while keeping them informed about their history.

KAI CHRISTOPHER/Echo Staff Photographer

Parker, Dr. Sylvia Jacobs, Dr. Lydia Lindsey, Dr. Percy Murray and Dr. J. Rinaldo Lawson.

"They saw things in me that I did not see in myself at the time. They really believed in me, and I will always respect them for that."

Harper's book, "Western-Educated Elites in Kenya, 1900-1963: The African American Factor," was published just one year after he got his doctorate from Howard.

Harper traveled to Kenya where he received counsel from various Kenyan scholars. With their help, he was able to explore the history of American-educated Kenyan elites and their involvement in the nationalist movement. He also studied the similarities between Kenyans and African-Americans in their fight for equality and independence.

In addition to teaching, Harper is adviser to the C.A. Jones History Club, the NCCU Think Tank, and

NCCU's chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., a fraternity that he joined in 1996.

"I am a proud member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity," said Harper.

"The organization helped me broaden my service and my connection to my community."

Harper said he would like to see more active participation among NCCU students.

"I wish that the students were more involved on campus. They need to take part

in more activities," he said.

"I wish they would join more organizations. It teaches you character, leadership, and responsibility."

"Years from now, I want my students to remember me as a person who believed in them when they did not believe in themselves," he said.

"I want to be the person who showed them through my hard work, determination and critical reading and writing skills that all things are possible."

## CHICQUOR

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*"If you don't treat [students] with respect not much will happen ... I see them as individuals. I challenge them and they respect me for that."*

ISABEL CHICQUOR

office to make arrangements for an upcoming study-abroad trip for her students.

Since her arrival at NCCU's Department of Art in 1977, Chicquor has spent endless hours molding a ceramics program unique among HBCUs.

In addition to teaching ceramics and various other studio classes, Chicquor also coordinates the art major curriculum at NCCU.

However, it is not the endless hours of teaching and coordinating an art program that make her one of our best teachers; it is the feedback she receives from her student mentees.

"She's a mom away from moms," said Carla Aaron-Lopez, a NCCU alumna and a graduate student at the Savannah College of Art and Design. "She makes you feel you can do better ... bringing out the best quality."

According to Aaron-Lopez, it was Chicquor who encouraged her to get into photography.

"She knew I had the aesthetic for it but not the technical knowledge," said Aaron-Lopez.

Chicquor wants to make sure that all her students appreciate the value of art.

This includes hands-on interaction with the world outside the art classroom.

Since 1997, she has taken students on many field trips, including visits to New York City museums and African-



Chicquor demonstrates the effects of a special glaze used for ceramics.

DANA WOMACK/Echo Staff Photographer

American-owned ad agencies.

In 2001, she took a student group to Cuba to study the African roots of Cuban culture; this summer she will accompany a group of NCCU students to the Dominican Republic to study the arts in the African diaspora.

Chicquor believes trips into the city and elsewhere are critical because they expose students to new things. "It makes them better individuals their eyes light

up when they see the work they are studying," she said after coming back from a NYC with students recently.

Chicquor, who grew up in the New York City borough of the Bronx and was exposed to art at a young age and earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees in ceramics design from SUNY College of Ceramics at Alfred University.

When she arrived at NCCU, the ceramics program was non-existent.

"I built it from the ground up with a few things," Chicquor said.

By 1980, the administration was pleased with her work and wanted to bring the art department to a professional level.

They granted financial support for supplies, including a glaze kiln for pottery.

According to Aaron Daye, a NCCU 2005 alum, he credits Chicquor for his art skills.

"She has helped me bring out the best of my ability,"

Daye said.

Daye, a photographer for The Gainesville Sun in Florida, recalls Chicquor critiquing his work when he first started in photography.

Chicquor's philosophy is to allow each of her students to be a real person.

"If you don't treat them with respect not much will happen," she said.

When she first came to NCCU she was nervous to speak in front of a group of students.

Not because her students are black and she's white; it made it a little tougher but according to Chicquor, that didn't last long.

"I see them as individuals; I challenge them and they respect me for that."

After teaching at NCCU for 28 years, Chicquor will retire in August.

She will continue work on several projects including photography.

An interest she developed when teaching.