

Tim Harris Retires From RCC After 26 Years



After 26 years of talking with students about their chosen career fields and helping them make decisions or resolve issues, Tim Harris of Wadesboro is retiring from his role as counselor at Richmond Community College. He has worked with the Student Government Association, been an active participant in each registration, and served as the campus poet laureate.

Harris earned his undergraduate and master's degrees in counseling at Appalachian State University. After several years in sales and management, he joined RCC as the evening counselor. After five years, he moved to the day counselor position.

As a new employee, Harris was asked if he could take students to the state Student Government Association conference. He did and thus began his role as SGA advisor for the next 21 years.

"I love the students. Over the last couple of weeks, many have come by to tell me how much my assistance has meant to them. That's always a joy to hear," he said.

As SGA advisor, he encourages students to listen, get all of the facts, and then make informed decisions. He always gives them credit for their accomplishments. He is particularly proud to have been advisor when former students Linda Collins and Birgit Godfrey were nominated and elected SGA Central Division Students of the Year.

"I think our current SGA President Rob McCullough is another student who should be nominated and added to that distinguished list of students. They all were outstanding officers," added Harris.

Like anyone with his years of service, he has seen technology change dramatically. He says he has learned what he needed to know about each new computer program and system to run reports and meet the needs of students.

"You cannot look back over the past few years at RCC without appreciating the tremendous enrollment growth. I am very pleasantly interested in the fact that people want to become involved in clubs again. That gives them another good experience to go along with their coursework," said Harris.

In addition to helping students with placement testing, selecting career paths, and scheduling classes, he has helped students with personal issues. Some involved mental health, some dealt with drug or alcohol abuse, and others involved domestic abuse. He recalled intervening with a student at the request of an instructor. In his quiet way, he talked the student into immediately going with him to seek professional counseling. That was years ago, but the situation easily could be pulled from today's headlines.

Harris has always been a big supporter of the Red Cross bloodmobile drives the SGA has sponsored on campus. He is proud to be a part away from contributing 16 gallons of blood and encourage others to do their part.

A poet, Harris began writing retirement poems for each of RCC's employees over 20 years ago.

"My poems are all personal and tell what the person wants to be said or what someone close to the person thinks should be included. I've done them for presidents, administrators, faculty, and staff. I even did a divorce poem for one lady. I love to be able to write for folks. The English teachers haven't handed them back to me, yet, so I guess I'm doing okay. I'll still write them for you if you give me the ammunition of what goes in them," he smiled.

Vice President for Student Services Sandra Richardson says it has been a great pleasure to work alongside Harris and has watched him in his many roles.

"He has entertained us on a daily basis with his jokes and his lovely poems," said Richardson. "We salute him for his dedication to RCC, and we wish him the greatest of retirements! We will miss him."

RCC President Dr. Dale McInnis hopes Harris will enjoy his retirement.

"Tim's focus has always been on the student, whether it's the SGA or the single person he is helping. He has set a great example of putting students first, and I will miss him, as will everyone here at RCC," said McInnis.

Although Harris is looking forward to more golf games, times with family and friends, and church mission work, he knows he will miss the students and the college.

"You cannot be part of something and care about people without it affecting you emotionally. It's been fun," he said.

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ACCESS Welcomes its New Class

ACCESS (Anson County Community Economic Support Service) started its third class on January 28. ACCESS is a faith-based nonprofit organization that focuses on economic and community revitalization.

ACCESS offers a 3 month program designed to teach life management, professional development, and employability skills. In addition to learning in these areas, each team member is expected to contribute to the improvement of the community, assume roles in the organization and lead fundraising events.

ACCESS is asking the community to encourage ACCESS team members to achieve success and to support its events.

Upcoming Events for 2013 are:

- Fish Fry on March 2: Plates available for purchase beginning at noon at 114 East Wade Street in Wadesboro
- Theatre in the Streets: A Response to the Violence on April 20: Salisbury Street in Wadesboro
- Dance-a-Thon (date & location to be determined)

For more information please call 1-866-472-2212.

Pictured above standing are Raashawn Banks, Cameron Price, Anthony Taylor (graduate/mentor), Pamela Blasi, Eric Pickett, Dimitri Jarrell, Marco Ratliff, Paul Price (administrative coordinator), Cosmos Oliphant, Adrien Walker, Nicole Little (administrative coordinator), Shakira Bennett and Jonathan McCall. Kneeling are Justin Bennett, Michael Henry, Maurice Little, (graduate/mentor), Johnnie Pickett. Not Shown: Aaron Parson, Elizabeth Gillespie and Travis Little. Timothy Williams was not present for the photo.

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