

Christman's service, presence are a part of Wake's history

Chaplain Christman has become more recognizable than the Deacon.

When chaplain Ed Christman's daughter Carolyn was asked one day what her father does, she replied, "He walks around talking to people." He describes himself as being "extroverted to a fault," and can

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often be found walking around the Quad conversing with his "brothers and sisters" of the faculty and student body. There are very few people who have done more for the university than the chaplain, and reflecting on all the friends and memories he has made over the years, he sometimes struggles to fight back the tears.

"The intersection of vocation is a place where your deepest desires meet the world's deepest needs, and I found that here at Wake Forest," he says.

Fifty-six years after he set foot on the old campus as a freshman, Chaplain Ed Christman has decided to retire at the end of this year, leaving shoes too big for anyone to attempt to fill.

Those who have had the pleasure of knowing the chaplain over the years always comment on how approachable he is and have great admiration for what he means to this university. No one at this school knows him better than Senior Vice President Edwin Wilson, who was a classmate of the chaplain on the old campus in 1949. "Whether a student has a personal difficulty or a tragedy in the family, Ed always seems to be where someone needs him."

"What you see is what you get with the chaplain," describes Father Jude DeAngelo. "He is really more of a pastor for the entire school. He has an uncanny ability to touch student's lives no matter what their religion in ways that are really rare."

Becky Hartzog, Associate chaplain, will always remember "his presence and genuine care and concern for everybody on this campus. His door was always open and he really listened to what you had to say." Senior Andrew Canady, an active member of

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campus ministry, jokes, "don't worry how old the chaplain is, you'll still die before he does."

University President Thomas K. Hearn reflects on the chaplain's contributions, "Over the last half century, Ed Christman has rendered outstanding service to Wake Forest University. As chaplain, he has guided and sustained the religious life of the academic community in a manner consistent with our heritage and academic culture, making the position of chaplain central to the life and work of Wake Forest."

Chaplain Christman has been present for every major event in the history of this campus. He was there

on the morning of Oct. 15, 1951, when then-current president Harry S. Truman turned the first spade of dirt on the Reynolda Campus in Winston-Salem. He recalls the first Christmas Lovefeast in Wait Chapel started by one Moravian student that has since become an annual tradition. He was in the audience when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Wake Forest and recalls the university admitting its first black student, Edward Reynolds. The chaplain is one of the people responsible for the success of the annual Pre-School Conference, a program that introduces freshmen to the university and helps them form lasting friendships before orientation begins.

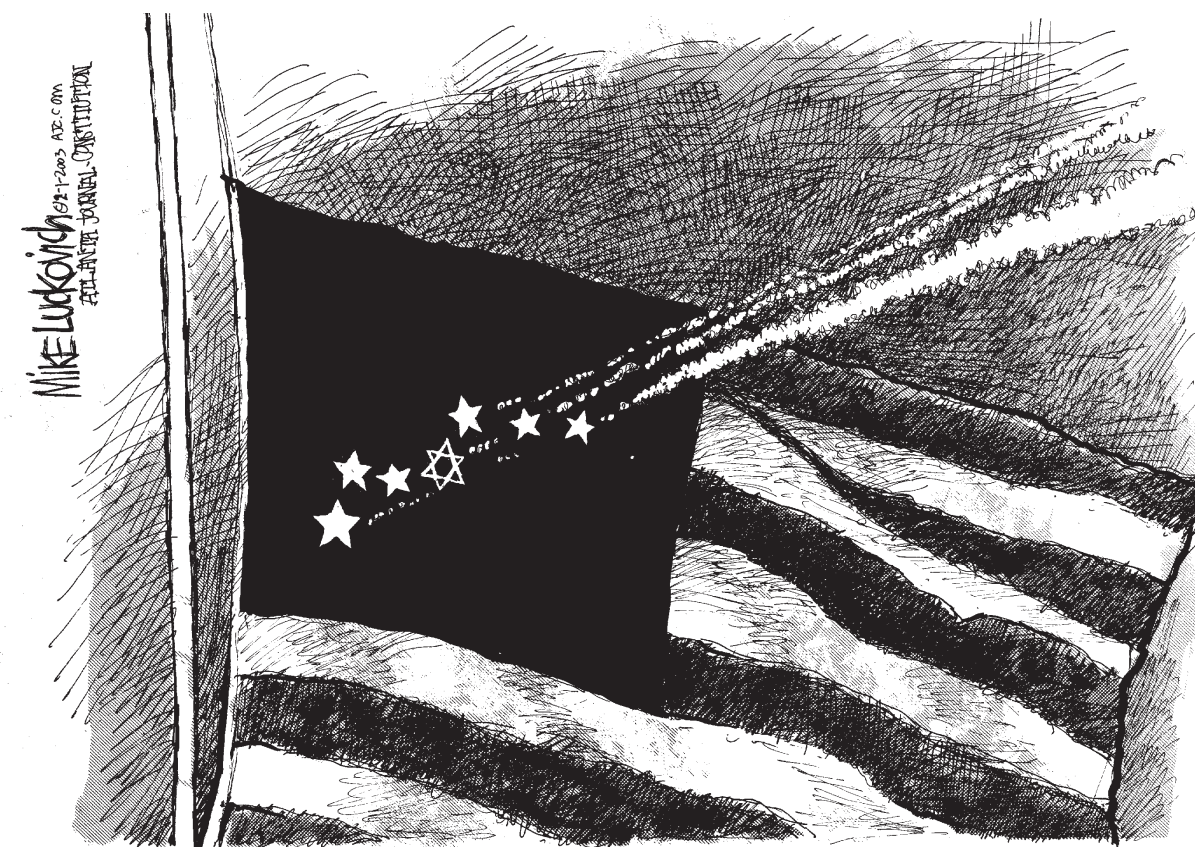
The part of his work the chaplain said was most rewarding is to see students develop from orientation freshman year to the time they receive their degree. "I see students in all stages of that journey. Life is a journey of failures and successes and as human beings, we are much more subject to change as we struggle to find who we are and change directions in life. Some get it now, some get it later, but what is crucial for students to realize is not to come to Wake Forest just to build a

resume, but to build a life."

His biggest concern is keeping alive the traditions of the school and the Christian Baptist heritage that the university was founded on. Chaplain Christman is famous during freshman orientation for dressing up like former university president Samuel Wait and speaking to the new students on the rich history of the university. He also is not afraid to voice his opinion on the politics of the school. The chaplain stands firm in his belief that the university should provide adequate health care to all its staff and retirees with its large endowment fund, but unfortunately his ideas fall on the deaf ears of the board of trustees.

With over 50 years of "letters, prayers and other stuff" to process, the chaplain plans to stay busy in his retirement while visiting art museums with his wife Jean and remaining involved in campus life at Wake Forest. The university is losing a dear friend this year. Chaplain Christman's sermons have touched the lives of many and his service to this school really represents what Wake Forest's motto of Pro Humanitate is really about.

Gerry Smith is a sophomore.



Wake does its best for holidays

Campus is not obligated to appease just Christians.

I am writing in response to Doug Hutton's column "Ambiguity mars religious ties," Jan. 23). I was troubled by several of Mr. Hutton's comments, particularly his compulsion to mention

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repeatedly the "obvious (Christian) majorities that roam campus." While it may be true that the majority of students are Christian, this fact does not mean that campus-wide events should be organized to satisfy only Christians.

Furthermore, it is worth noting here that if any of the specific Christian denominational groups on campus (e.g. Episcopal Student Fellowship, Catholic Community, Baptists, etc.) were to organize an Advent celebration, it would not necessarily be a satisfactory celebration according to the standards of students from other Christian denominations. Not to mention the obvious fact that the lack of diversity in the Wake community, which Mr. Hutton mentions, does not mean that it is acceptable for the university to exclude minority viewpoints

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or religious affiliations merely because they are a minority. Expecting the university to adhere to one specific tradition in a celebration that is meant to be universal is unreasonable.

Another key point I would like to stress is that the Lighting of the Quad, including the Christmas tree – it was not an "Advent" tree explicitly – was intended to be a Christmas celebration for the whole campus community. While the speech part of the celebration may have been religiously eclectic and could use some improvements, the main idea was to found a new tradition that would bring the campus together to celebrate the holiday season.

Yes, the lights around the Quad, the tree, and other decorations were not rich in Christian symbolism because the university was trying to be inclusive. But what is wrong with that? There can be holiday celebrations that are intended for a broader audience, and therefore, to some people will appear to be "watered down" in religious content. It is great to include Christian hymns and traditions, while at the same

time it is great to include other religious traditions and secular songs as well. It is a little bit of home for everyone around the holiday.

Lastly, I would like to add that Mr. Hutton mentioned three services that were "religiously oriented" in the fall semester. While the chaplain traditionally begins convocation with a prayer, the service, like the holiday Quad lighting, has become more secularized in recent years to include more members of the campus community.

The same reasons can be presented for the Sept. 11 services that were held in Wait Chapel. However, there were also services held (and advertised) by specific denominations for Sept. 11, if a student was interested in attending a more traditional Christian service. Interestingly enough, Mr. Hutton left off his list one particular religious event that would have made his holiday season – Lovefeast. While Lovefeast is open to the Wake Forest and larger Winston-Salem community, it is an Advent celebration of the light of Christ and God's gifts and blessings, coffee and a bun shared by all. I would suggest that Mr. Hutton attend Lovefeast next Christmas season. It is an event that is worth attending at least once while a student at Wake Forest.

Jessica Cannon is an alumna from the class of 2000.

Campus life is a culture shock

Students returning from abroad may have forgotten the good, the bad and the ugly of Wake.

Sipping on French red and leaning casually up against a post, she looked the very picture of sophistication. Every so often she lowered her glass to make a witty comment to the crowd of friends around her, followed with a smile that bespoke the pleasure she takes in the quaintness of her surroundings; friends, laughter,

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music – it could not be more perfect.

She had just raised her sparkling glass up to her lips for another slow languorous sip of the ruby liquid when, all of a sudden the charming and clumsy gentleman to her right gestures with his arm, his elbow makes contact with the flimsy stem of the wine glass and sends the glassy rim and a slosh of red wine flying full force at the surprised face of our unfortunate heroine.

Upon impact, she freezes, unable to move while she mentally takes note of how far down on her body she can now feel the dampness of wine soaked silk. The offending glass is taken from her trembling hand and the chagrined gentleman who had made the unfortunate swipe of his arm ushered her off to the powder room to be made right again. As the alarms in her head began to quiet, the stunned and wine-soaked socialite could hear the heartfelt remorse in the young man's voice as over and over he cried: "Oh damn, I am so sorry! Oh damn, you are bleeding! Oh damn, it is all over your dress? Oh damn, I am so sorry!"

And as I used a wad of bulk-commercial dorm toilet paper to sop up the sea of red on my little black dress, it hit me.

Well Jenn. You are back. Back to Benson. Back to beer kegs. Back to your old broken ID card that doesn't swipe. Back to having to drive to Starbucks instead of just walking to the nearest street corner. Back to North Face instead of trench coats. Back to paying parking tickets instead of paying for tube passes. So, the above little fairy tale was my own warped mental vision that I fabricated to help me get through Post-U.K.-traumatic-stress-syndrome.

But standing there, in that grimy boys bathroom with toilet paper stuck to my bleeding lip, I realized that was the only place on earth I wanted to be. Because waiting outside the bathroom was a guy friend who was vowing to Heaven that he would never throw a beer to anyone sitting on a bunk bed ever again.

And before you start calling Student Health and alert them that there is a mental case living on there campus creating alternate realities in her head, let me point out that the situation was, in part, true. It is a rose-colored, poetic version of what most of you would know as a "Rush dance." And I love my little Fratty Daddies with all my heart, but lets face it ... there is nothing cultured or classy about the basement of the Millennium Center. And it is quite one thing to go from – legally – sipping on cocktails at an atmospheric pub or bar to sitting on a lumpy futon and witnessing the evening's third round of drinking hockey. Basically, what I was presented with was a night with the potential for culture shock that results in sweat-gland hyperactivity. No wonder I started creating delusions.

But standing there, in that grimy boys' bathroom with toilet paper stuck to my bleeding lip, I realized that was the only place on earth I wanted to be. Because waiting outside the bathroom was a guy friend who was vowing to Heaven that he would never throw a beer to anyone sitting on a bunk bed ever again. Waiting outside that door for me was a hug that told me that no amount of ocean could change a friendship. Waiting outside that door was a dorm room full of friends that I almost miss more now that there is just a stretch of grassy Quad between us.

A few months from now I may be writing a ranting article about sophomore slump, frustration with a lack of yogurt trends in Sundry or maybe even an emotional gusher about missing the lilting song of British accents. Actually, at the moment I feel compelled to do a scientific exploration piece on why the hell it is so much colder and wetter here than it was over there. But as for now, there is no place I would rather be than back here.

Thank you all for being even better than I remember. Now if you will excuse me, I have to go call my mom and explain my ridiculous dry cleaning bill.

Jenn Thompson is a sophomore.

