Greenlaw Hall (Spring '97)--In
with the new year is the
Creative Writing Program's
new director, Marianne
Ginger, the fourth that the
program has had since Jessie
Rehder formally instituted it in
1947.

Ms. Ginger, author of
Teen Angel and Bobby Rex's
Greatest Hit, has a long
association with creative writing
at UNC, having taught here
since 1975. She has also taught
at Hollins College in Virginia,
and she has read widely and
published in periodicals ranging
from Redbook and The
Southern Review to The New
York Times. Her prizewinning
short fiction has been broadcast
cost-to-coast by National
Public Radio.

In an exclusive interview
with Chapter & Verse,
Marianne Ginger took stock of
the program, its current
situation and needs, and likely
developments in its operation
and offerings in the near future:

C&V: Congratulations.

MG: Thank you.

C&V: Well, what’s

next?

MG: God, that’s a
daunting question. My two
o’clock class. [laughs] Fun.
Oh, gosh, what’s next, let me
think. The continuation and, so
far as is possible, the
improvement of an already first-
class undergraduate writing
program, maybe the biggest and
brightest in the country. I want
to research statistics and prove
that boast.

C&V: You’ve taught
elsewhere . . .

MG: I’ve taught at
Hollins College, at Elon for a
semester, and in summer
programs: Bennington Writers
Workshop, Breadloaf and
Sewanee.

C&V: So you have a
sense of how we’re thought of?

MG: Our faculty is
well-known and respected, but
at Hollins, the whole college
seems to revolve around the
writing program. I was
impressed at Hollins by the
almost instantaneous approval
for new courses, and funding to
bring in visiting writers. Of
course, they offer a highly
visible graduate program, and
we’re concentrating on the
undergraduate at UNC.

It’s not that our
intentions or our goals for
undergraduate students are any
less committed, or less serious,
but the decline in reading across
America and the decline in the
publication of literary fiction
and poetry would make it hard
to encourage people enrolled in
writing courses to consider their
interest as a means to a career,
which is what MFA programs
more or less promise.

C&V: But with
undergraduates?

MG: We know that
we can teach our students to be
better readers, and to be better
writers. But we aren’t
necessarily pushing our students
towards careers in writing. The
truth is that most poets and
fiction writers don’t quit their
day jobs. We’re providing a
nurturing, critical forum for
students to test and develop
their abilities. We’re not
teaching them having in mind
writing careers for all of them.
They might go into some
tangential work, like publishing,
editing, communications,
speechwriting, grantwriting,
film production. Writing as a tool of expressive communication is really what undergirds our program. I find myself telling my students over and over that the purpose of revision is simply to communicate better, which I think is the basic aim of all writing courses.

_C&V:_ New courses?

_MG:_ One of the things I want to do is expand the curriculum. We want to offer students exposure to other types of creative writing. Courses like “Writing for Children” or “Children’s Literature as Written and Read,” and “Creative Nonfiction” are two that spark interest. I’d like our minors to get credit for taking screenwriting and playwriting courses offered in other departments. Michael McFee has talked about teaching a course in the various poetic forms.

_C&V:_ And he is teaching a course right now that he developed as a Chapman Fellow in the Fall of ‘96.

_MG:_ Right, the new course on North Carolina authors. And do we have a passel of’em, mmm! I haven’t known so many authors to dwell on the same patch of land in many a moon pie!

I’m trying to talk Daphne Athas into resurrecting her zany stylistics course. We might open up the program somewhat if we offer courses in summer school, which we have done some in the past, infrequently.

_C&V:_ What changes have you seen since you started here?

_MG:_ We have what appears to be a more stable faculty—it used to be people were hired for one or two years and zipped on elsewhere. Although I would love to find the funding to hire bright young authors as visiting faculty for a semester at a time. Max Steele first hired me to teach when I was in my mid-twenties and had only published short fiction in little magazines. I’d like to pass on that kindness to other writers who are just starting out. We now have a minor, a creative writing minor, and we didn’t in the past. We actually offer more sections, especially more introductory fiction and poetry sections, than formerly. And I think, too, that we’ve come a long way in gaining not only the respect of our colleagues, but also the respect of the University. The program is old enough and proven enough that we have success stories to tell about our graduates . . . Michael Parker, Jill McCorkle, Randall Kenan, Jim Grimsley, Will Blythe, Alane Mason.

_C&V:_ We could go on.

_MG:_ Absolutely.

_C&V:_ Personal goals?

_MG:_ It would be wonderful in the future to have the funding that would help us bring in more visiting writers, allow us to conduct summer workshops that didn’t necessarily use our core faculty, though it could. Link us in some way to the Carolina Publishing Institute. This summer (1997) our Program will co-sponsor [with the NC Writers Network] a writing workshop for high school students called HOT INK. I would like to see a joint effort on the part of students and writing faculty to have readings, together, to get students and faculty involved with reading works in progress. I think a lot of times students don’t realize we’re right there with them, we’re facing deadlines, we’re staring at the blank page, too.

This University is a big place, and one of the attractions of the creative writing program is that, (many students have said this) all of a sudden you’re in a small space, with a small group of people who share your enthusiasm for this discipline, and it’s natural for intimacy and trust to spring up in such an environment. And students are appreciative of the more one-on-one atmosphere of the creative writing class. Small is beautiful—it gets back to that. This is a place where it’s easy to be anonymous—but in a creative writing class, it’s almost impossible to be anonymous. And the students find that it’s sort of thrilling not to be.
Student Literary Awards for ‘96 & ‘97

Robert B. House
Memorial Prize in Poetry: Richard Hallett Ray, Jr. (’97);
Nathan Crane McClintock (’96);
Louis D. Rubin, Jr.
Prize in Creative Writing: Ruth Brooke Calton (’97); James
Matthew Vollmer (’96);
Doris Smith Williams
Prize in Poetry: Derek Stephen
Bevil (’97); Benjamin Scott
Florin (’96);
Max Steele Award in
Creative Writing: Benjamin
Whitton Storey (’97); Patricia
Ann RoseMoon (’96);
George B. Wynne
Award in Creative Writing:
Rebecca Leanne Greene (’97);
Katherine McLaurin Smith
(’96).

RICHARD FORD IS ‘97 MORGAN FAMILY WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

Novelist Richard Ford, Pulitizer Prize-winning author of The Sportswriter and Independence Day was with us as this year’s Morgan Family Writer-in-Residence. In Memorial Hall on March 19th Mr. Ford read from his collection Rock Springs.

The Morgan program, established in 1993 by UNC alumni Allen and Musette Morgan of Memphis, brings nationally recognized and celebrated authors to campus for a week of seminars, meetings with our writing students, and a mid-week reading in Memorial Hall. Previous Morgan Family writers have been Civil War historian Shelby Foote, novelist and non-fiction writer Annie Dillard, and playwright Beth Henley.

At the end of the week with Richard Ford, the Morgan family announced that they would continue the program for an additional five years past 1998. All of us in Creative Writing are most grateful for their generous support.

CREATIVE WRITING AT CAROLINA

With an Arts and Sciences Foundation grant, sought and secured by Doris Betts and Michael McFee, poet McFee has written, edited and created a first-ever descriptive booklet about our program. The sixteen-page Creative Writing at Carolina, published in the spring of ‘96, looks at the history, past and present faculty, curriculum and extracurricular activities of this extraordinary undergraduate tradition.

To receive a copy, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope (6x9) with 55 cents first-class postage to: Creative Writing at Carolina Dept. of English, CB # 3520 UNC-Chapel Hill Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3520

SELF-PUBLISHED WORK BY FORMER CW STUDENT BESTSELLER IN DENVER

Susan Zimmerman, a creative writing student here at UNC some years ago and a graduate of Yale Law School, has written and published Grief Dancers, by Susan Zimmerman (Nemo Press) a nonfiction work about her experiences having a child with Rhett’s syndrome. Though the odds against success in self-publishing are long indeed, Ms. Zimmerman’s work, Grief Dancers, was near the top of the regional paperback nonfiction market last fall, selling briskly in Denver, Boulder, and Colorado Springs.

Ms. Zimmerman, the new executive director of the Women’s Foundation of Colorado, will publish a book on reading comprehension with Heinemann this spring. Of the do-it-yourself process, she recently wrote Daphne Athas:

“I’m learning more than I ever wanted to know about book distribution and marketing, but it’s pretty interesting . . .”

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Please send us news of alumni activities, and write if you wish to be added to the mailing list, including your name and the year you graduated from UNC. [Wire: Coombs@Email.UNC.Edu].
1st Rate
2d Sunday
Rolls On

The Second Sunday program of readings in Wilson Library’s Pleasant Family Assembly Room continues apace, with Doris Betts having passed the m.c.’s post on to Michael McFee. At October’s changing of the guard, Mr. McFee presented Ms. Betts with a framed copy of UNC English professor and poet William Harmon’s text:

A high IQ is overrated
bull:
I, even though I read
the door’s PUSH, pull.

Second Sunday is a monthly presentation of North Carolina poets and fictionists, jointly sponsored by the Creative Writing Program, the North Caroliniana Society, and the University’s North Carolina Collection. Readers for the ’96-’97 academic year are:

Sept. 8th: Lee Zacharias, fiction writer;
Oct. 13th: Janet Lembke, essayist; Donald Scearce, fiction writer;
Nov. 10th: Lynn Doyle, poet, Luke Whisnant, fiction writer;
Dec. 8th: Robert Watson, poet; David Guy, fiction writer;

Jan. 12th: Robert Kirkpatrick, poet; Ellyn Bache, fiction writer;
Feb. 9th: Allan Gurganus, fiction writer;
Mar. 9th: Catherine Petrovski, non-fiction writer;
Henry Petrovski, non-fiction writer;
Apr. 13th: R.S. Gwynn, poet; Laura Argiri, fiction writer.

* * *

Alums All Over

Will Alexander has taught English in Taiwan and has been a teacher’s assistant in Chapel Hill, prepartory to seeking his M.Ed. in English.

Kenny Allen has been studying at Harvard and living and writing in Boston.

Stephen Ausherman ‘89 taught in China, worked in Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, and India, and taught in Seoul from ’94-’96. His widely published journalism includes a travel article on Vietnam for the anniversary issue of Grand Tour.

Josh Boyer ‘94 worked with The Chapel Hill News, after a stint writing and editing at The Daily Southerner, Tarboro, NC. He will enter UNC-CH School of Library Science in the fall.

Ellen Bush is in the second year of the MFA program in creative writing at Cornell.

Mike Craver’s Radio Gals, a musical written with his Oil City Symphony collaborator Mark Hardwick, ran at the Houseman Theatre in New York to excellent notices, fall ’96.

Hyonmyong Paul (Hoch) Cho ’94 has published stories in the Carolina Quarterly and Sun Dog, and is a broker in Baltimore.

John Crutchfield ‘93 is in the first year of the MFA/Ph.D. program at Cornell.

Sarah Dessen in 1996 published the novel That Summer with Orchard Books.

Monica Eiland is living in Santa Monica, California studying neuroanatomy and sleep at UCLA and at the ’96 Internat'l. Conference on Insomnia, Versailles, France.

Farleigh H. Earhart is a trial attorney in the Environmental Crimes Division, US Department of Justice.

Jonathan Farmer ‘97 interned at Triquarterly, Chicago, last summer.

Susannah Felts has placed a story (written in Prof. Betts’ 99) to the North Carolina journal, The Sun.
Ben Fountain III has completed a novel, set in Haiti.

Shirley Fung ’94 is an editorial assistant at *Entertainment Weekly* in New York.

Mel Gilles has published a story she wrote while a student here, “Driving,” in *Cities & Roads* (spring ’96) of Greensboro. Mel has been an anthropology student in England, has done Americorps service in the West, and now lives in Greensboro.

Matthew Gross is working on a history of independent rock in America, planning a May trip to Alaska with his father and a June wedding to Mel Gilles.

Jack Herrick continues to lead the Red Clay Ramblers in such theatrical ventures as *Fool Moon* and *Kudzu*.

Sammy Lopez and Hitchens are living in Phoenix and expecting her first child.

Culley Holderfield has returned from Ecuador with a completed novel, set there.

Jay Iginlao is an MA student at NC State University, studying with Bill Henderson.

Randall Kenan won the *Prix de Rome* from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Ph.D. from Florida State last year, and is an assistant professor at the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia. His recent stories have appeared in *Mid-American Review, Florida Review,* and *Prism International.* He just completed a novel called *Skin Game.*

Lili King has published a story in *Glimmertrain.*

Suzanne Kratzer taught English last year in Taiwan, and is in the post-graduate English program at Meredith College.


Kristin Leigh ’93, after a year’s leave to work in the White House, has returned to Oxford University on a Marshall Fellowship.

Joanna Lyons is teaching English in Taipei.

Trent McDevitt is living and acting in Los Angeles; he recently co-starred with George C. Scott in “Country Justice,” a CBS Movie of the Week.

Alane Salerno Mason is an editor at Norton; her article “The Death of a Friend” appeared in *Commonweal,* March ’96.

Lydia Millet’s *Omnivores* was published last May and sold to Little, Brown for English publication.

Logan Mock-Bunting (in Prof. Betts’ 34 class, Spring ’97) has sold a story to *Surfer* magazine.

Lauren Muller, a graduate student in English at Berkeley, has collaborated with the Blueprint Collective in publishing *June Jordan’s Poetry for the People,* with Routledge.

Mary Moore Parham attends law school at UNC-CH.

Margaret Hundley Parker has been accepted at Sarah Lawrence.

Josh Pate is living in California, editing his latest film, as of Jan. ’97. *The Grave,* Josh’s and brother Jonas’s suspense film shot in Wilmington, made a splash at last year’s Sundance Festival.

Michael Piller is an executive in television and film production in Los Angeles.

Amy Pritchett ’94 is in the ECU graduate program for adult education.

Anthony Robbins has published *On the Tropic of Time,* a
collection of poetry, with Lynx House Press. He teaches at Northeast Louisiana University.

Dan Schwankl ’96 is teaching in a Jesuit school in Belize.

Jennie Shippen ’94 published two poems in the Carolina Quarterly. She has been awarded a Hoyas Fellowship for graduate study in the MFA program at the University of Virginia.

Julia Ridley Smith is finishing her MFA at Sarah Lawrence.

Colin Soloway spent 1996 covering events in Bosnia.

Claire Smith ’98 interned in the Kennedy Center press office, Washington, summer ’96.

Dana Terebelski ’94 toured Europe as a Phillips Scholar and has recently been in Chapel Hill managing the Weathervane Cafe.

Mary Cameron Vangraafeiland ’97 interned for CBS, New York, on Late Night with David Letterman, summer ’96.

Melissa Waldrop is a special education resource teacher at Chapel Hill’s Frank Porter Graham Elementary School, and she has just completed the book she began several years ago in Prof. Betts’ 99.

Jim Wann, whose Tony-nominee Pump Boys & Dinettes enjoys scores of productions yearly, appeared in King Mackerel at the Kennedy Center (June ’96), and has works in progress about Memphis and the American West.

Jackson Wheeler has published the novel Swimming Past Iceland.

Ross White ’97 published poems in Tar River Poetry and elsewhere.

Susie Wootten ’94 will be returning to UNC’s MBA program.

Sabrina Wyly has published Summer Games, a mystery-thriller, with Black Belt Press.

Marly Youmans has published the acclaimed Catherwood.

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IN MEMORIAM

We mourn the loss of Jake MacNelly, a popular campus figure here during the early ’90s, who died in an October climbing accident in Colorado. Mr. MacNelly worked on The Daily Tar Heel, and was a talented and jaunty student in Creative Writing. He is well remembered here for his wit and altogether winning presence.

Faculty & Staff Notes

Daphne Athas published “Cradle of Dreams” in Frank 15, an international journal of contemporary writing and art that appears on the Web; “Right Here” is anthologized in Close to Home, Revelations and Reminiscences by North Carolina Authors (Lee Child, ed., John F. Blair, Publisher); “On Leo Tolstoy’s Confession” is anthologized in Books of Passage, Twenty-seven North Carolina Writers on Books That Changed Their Lives (David Perkins, ed., Down Home Press). Readings and workshops: Isothermal Community College, Spindale, NC; O’Neal School, Southern Pines, NC; Barnes & Noble and Intimate Bookshop readings; NC Writers Network workshop and reading; and a radio interview WCHL. The 47th Annual Meeting of the NC Writers Conference (July ’96) was a tribute to Daphne Athas. She will be awarded an honorary doctorate from St. Andrew’s College, Laurinburg, NC, in April.

Doris Betts: The musical Violet, based on Betts’ story “The Ugliest Pilgrim,” after tryouts at Eugene O’Neill theater and Lincoln Center, ran Off-Broadway at Playwrights...
Horizons Feb. 14th-Mar. 30th. Film rights have also been sold. Her ninth book of fiction, *The Sharp Teeth of Love*, appears from Knopf in early May and has been sold to Scribner Paperbacks, which has already issued *Souls Raised from the Dead, Heading West*, and *The River to Pickle Beach*, and will reprint *Beasts of the Southern Wild* in 1998. LSU Press has reissued *The Astronomer & Other Stories* and will reprint her first book, *The Gentle Insurrection*, next year, it was written when she was a sophomore writing student at Woman's College, now UNC-G. She is at work on a novel, *Who Is Sylvia?*, about a South Carolina embezzler.

**Frances Coombs**, processing assistant for the program, was away from her desk a great deal during 1996 and early 1997. She was caring for her mother. She is back and is serving as the web page editor for the North Carolina chapter of NOW. She can be reached on the Net at Coombs@Email.UNC.Edu.

**Marianne Gingher** was appointed Director of Creative Writing in January, 1997. Essays are forthcoming in *The Southern Review* and *Pembroke Magazine*. Her book reviews appear regularly in *The News & Observer*. Most recently she contributed memoirs to two anthologies: *Close to Home*, edited by Lee Child (Blair) and *The Store of Joys*, a collection of poems and prose pieces published by the NC Art Museum to commemorate the Museum’s 50th anniversary.

**William Harmon** edited the University Press of Virginia’s upcoming *Rational Meaning*, by Laura (Riding) Jackson and Schuyler B. Jackson. Prof. Harmon published an article on barbecue in the *North Carolina Literary Review* and a review in *Sewanee Review*, with articles and reviews forthcoming in *Studies in Philology* and *Southern Review*. He is working on a CD ROM about poetry for high school students (Columbia University Press), an anthology of anonymous poetry (Columbia), and an anthology of American poets born between 1935 and 1945 (Maypop Press). A broadside poem is forthcoming from Larch Tree Press. "My biggest deal during the past year," writes Harmon, "has been becoming Vice President of the UNC Investment Club. I have arranged programs, presented reports, and come up with the first-prize winner in the Motto Competition. My winning motto: LET’S GET FISCAL."

**Robert Kirkpatrick**, a native of Charlotte, is a graduate of Erskine College and received his graduate degrees in English from Harvard University. A specialist in British Romanticism, he is currently editing a journal and letters of Robert Southey. His long poem "Double Staves" received the Charles R. Wood Award for Distinguished Writing in 1987, and poems published in *The Carolina Quarterly* have been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He has taught courses in Creative Writing since 1970 and established the Poetry Composition course for Freshman Honors. He has won both the Tanner Award and The Undergraduate Teaching Award and at present holds a Bowman and Gordon Gray Chair for Distinguished Teaching.

**Michael McFee** published his fifth collection of poems, *Colander*, in 1996 (Carnegie Mellon University Press). McFee gave readings and taught workshops at the Hindman Settlement School (Kentucky), College of Santa Fe (NM), and Long Beach City College (California). He is currently teaching a new course in Contemporary North Carolina Literature—which he has been developing for the past several years—as an Honors seminar.

Ruth Moose’s third collection of poetry won the Oscar Arnold Young Award from the NC Poetry Council. Moose also

James Seay was named a Bowman and Gordon Gray Professor. His Open Field, Understory: New and Selected Poems (LSU) appeared in January. His most vigorously applauded achievement, however, was his appearance as 47-Across in The New York Times Crossword Puzzle.

Alan Shapiro published two books in 1996: Mixed Company, a collection of poems, winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Award for Poetry ('96), and a memoir, The Last Happy Occasion, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.