

## Davidson Professors Among Honor Program's Finalists

Gail Gibson and Cynthia Lewis, two English professors at Davidson College, were named silver medal finalists in the 1987 Professor of the Year Program sponsored by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Gibson and Lewis were among 39 finalists earning gold, silver or bronze awards in the CASE program. Gibson also was named North Carolina Professor of the Year. Ralph Ketcham, a professor of political science, history and public affairs at Syracuse University, was named Professor of the Year. More than 400 professors were nominated in this year's program.

The CASE program, started in 1981, recognizes undergraduate faculty members for their contributions to the lives and careers of students. CASE juries also consider such factors as scholarship, service and former students' achievements. CASE, based in Washington, D.C., is the largest institutionally-based education association in the nation.

No other college or university had two professors named to the silver lists (Purdue and Georgetown each had silver and bronze winners), and

## Mount Zion Methodist Church Schedules Annual Barbecue

Mount Zion United Methodist Church at Cornelius has scheduled its annual barbecue for Saturday, Nov. 7.

Serving, which will get underway at 11 a.m., will continue in full swing until 5 p.m., according to Mrs. Suzie Caldwell, barbecue chairperson.

The plates, including barbecue, homemade slaw and dessert, will sell for \$5 each. Sandwiches will be

## Auctioneer's Job "Lots Of Fun"

"Start'em along what do ya give me for them? I bid \$70, who'll give me \$75, who'll give me \$75, now," chants William "Bear" Stephenson, a Clinton, Tenn., auctioneer.

"I just love it. It's lots of fun," says the 38-year-old bachelor, who's sold on auctioneering.

Bear, a Vietnam veteran, learned his craft at the Nashville Auction School. He then worked as an appraiser for two years under the wing of Hank Ayers, president of the National Auctioneers Association.

Last year, Bear went out on his own and says the auctioneering business has already provided him with a bank full of fond memories.

The most intriguing sale he ever performed brought \$71,000. The entire amount went to charity.

On of the most embarrassing moments he experienced was selling a frilly piece of lingerie.

"I had told up a red teddy once," he says, flashing a rough grin accompanied by a quick wink of



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By Michael A. Gule  
Metter, Georgia

A diner asked, "Why do you call this 'enthusiastic stew'?" "Because," explained the waiter, "the cook put everything he had into it."

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## Veteran Director Guides Davidson Fall Production

Steve Umberger, one of the principal founders of the Charlotte Repertory Theater, says the best director is one who serves as a traffic cop — as someone with a "vision of a goal" toward which he points his company. The former actor will direct the fall theater production of "The Water Engine" at Davidson College.

As artistic director of the Charlotte Repertory Theater from 1976 to 1983, Umberger directed and acted in 25 plays, including "Crimes of the Heart" and "The Elephant Man." He has worked as resident director since 1983, producing three plays a year.

Umberger now works also for the Children's Theater of Charlotte, where he has served as guest director for nine years. The theater produces two to four shows yearly.

Umberger has produced stage adaptations of Cat Stevens' record album "Numbers" and Alan Parker's film "Bugsy Malone."

A native of Charleston, W.Va.,

Umberger says he has always had a desire to act. "It's the only thing I've seriously wanted to do to all my life, so I pursued it," he says. His acting credits include the musical adaptation of Robert Shaw's "Mollie" at Theater Off Park in New York and the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival in High Point.

The move into directing was not planned, and Umberger says he fell into it.

"I didn't trust the director I was working with. I found out the hard way the big picture rather than my part on the script. Acting is now a fun change of pace." When the Charlotte Repertory Theater was founded in 1976, there was a need for directors. Umberger naturally took the opportunity. He finds the "traffic cop" role to be the most difficult challenge of directing.

"You have to get people to work together. You have to be on the same wavelength." His philosophy of

directing is to "find the best people... the best they have to give... and find ways to allow them to do that."

Umberger was asked by the Davidson theater faculty to direct a play of his choice for the 1987 fall season. As a great admirer of Mame's work, he naturally chose his favorite: "The Water Engine."

"The Water Engine" explores the juxtaposition of technological advances against its dehumanization of the individual. Set in 1934 during the Chicago World's Fair, it was originally written as a radio play. The production makes use of this fact by setting the beginning action in a radio station; actors speak into microphones. Scenes are gradually moved to actual settings. Sound effects are provided from the center of the stage.

In the play, principal character Charles Lang is the inventor of a water engine he wants patented. "What happens is that he gets ripped

off," Umberger says. "The play is about how and why that happened, and what could have been done to prevent it."

This is Umberger's first time working with college students. How does he rate Davidson's cast? "They're good. (They're) very intelligent and interested in acting. Of course there are different levels of experience, but there's potential — lots of potential. So far we're on schedule."

A freelance writer in his spare time, Umberger writes arts features for Playbill, American Humanist and Southern Theater magazines.

Umberger earned a creative arts degree from the University of North

Carolina in 1976 and attended the Summer Academy at American University in Washington, D.C. in the same year. He acted at Circle in the Square in New York from 1980-81.

"The Water Engine" will be performed Oct. 30-31 and Nov. 5-7 in Hudson Hall of the Cunningham Fine Arts Building. The performance begins at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 5 and at 8 p.m. on all other nights. Tickets are \$5 general admission and \$3 for students, and may be purchased beginning Oct. 26 by calling 882-1696 from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays. For information before Oct. 26, call the theater department at 882-2000, ext. 361.

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