



Journey of Healing

By Dawn Tolbert

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Those words, which history credits to Chinese philosopher Confucius, certainly hold true for Shorter College alumnus Dr. Eric Nix ('98), whose journey has taken him far from his native Calhoun, Ga., and enabled him to spread healing and compassion both at home and abroad.

The First Step

The road map for Eric's journey began with an early interest in medicine and became even more clearly defined when, at age 14, he saw his grandfather being treated for a stroke. Almost immediately, he began volunteering in the emergency department at Gordon Hospital, where he spent four hours each Saturday night shadowing a physician or nurse. "That's when I became devoted to pursuing medicine as a career," said Eric.

He worked to pursue that goal, earning a Bachelor of Science degree cum laude with a major in biology and a minor in chemistry from Shorter in 1998.

While at Shorter, Eric found a new direction for his journey through his participation in a MAYTERM trip to England and Scotland. "Prior to that, I had never been to another country," he expressed. "After experiencing a different culture – albeit a developed one – I became hooked on foreign travel. I decided that I wanted to devote at least a few months each year to international relief work since many third-world countries do not have physicians to provide much needed basic medical care."

The Preparation for the Journey

After graduation, Eric took a two-year hiatus from school to work full time as a

paramedic at Gordon Hospital.

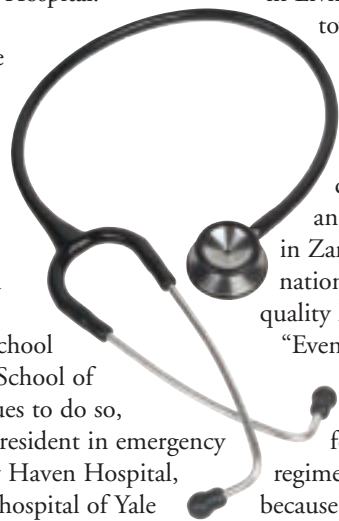
"My experience as a paramedic proved one thing: the unpredictable nature of emergency medicine appealed to me," he recalled.

Eric continued to develop his interest in emergency medicine throughout medical school at Mercer University School of Medicine and continues to do so, even now, as a senior resident in emergency medicine at Yale-New Haven Hospital, the primary teaching hospital of Yale University School of Medicine.

Fortunately for Eric – and many patients half a world away – he found that the shift work of emergency medicine allows him to take extended time off to travel. For Eric, that travel is not simply for his personal enjoyment but to put his medical skills to work making a difference in nations that are lacking in medical care.

The Road Less Traveled

Earlier this year, Eric took his extended time off – funded in part by the Yale/Johnson & Johnson Physician Scholars in International Health program – and spent two months working at two hospitals



in Livingstone, Zambia. In this tourist town founded by explorer Dr. David Livingstone, Eric found more than the famed Victoria Falls. He also found himself face to face with the "third-world trio of infectious diseases" – tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS. And, he found that in Zambia, one of the world's poorest nations, the obstacles to providing quality health care are numerous.

"Even at the highest level facility, there is always a shortage of medicines," he said. "I frequently found myself altering treatment regimens for inpatients mid-course because a medicine that was available on the first day of hospitalization is suddenly out of stock on the third day."

He adds that the Zambian hospitals where he worked have no CT scanners, no neurosurgeons, no ventilators, no ECG machines, and no blood glucose machines. Laboratory data is available, but quite limited.

"One patient, whom I suspected of having an inflammation of his pancreas caused by his HIV medicines, was admitted and treated based on clinical exams alone. There was no lipase – a test we order in the United States – to determine if he truly had pancreatitis. He was only 8 years old, and I wasn't about to take a chance.



Photos courtesy of Dr. Eric Nix



average life expectancy of 35, while the life expectancy for women is 37. “One estimate is that almost one in four Zambian children will never survive to the age of 8. I believe it,” he stressed.

“After spending time here, I can finally relate to the commercials on television that state for the price of a cup of coffee one can feed a child in Africa for a day. ...I do not think I can purchase my nightly cafe mocha without reflecting on what I have seen.”

– Dr. Eric Nix

The Path Ahead


Eric, however, plans to do much more than reflect on the needs in underdeveloped nations. As he finishes his last year of residency, he will also prepare for a two-month trip to Asmara, Eritrea, in 2008, where he will work with people in refugee camps in the United Nations Temporary Security Zone between Eritrea and Ethiopia. After that,

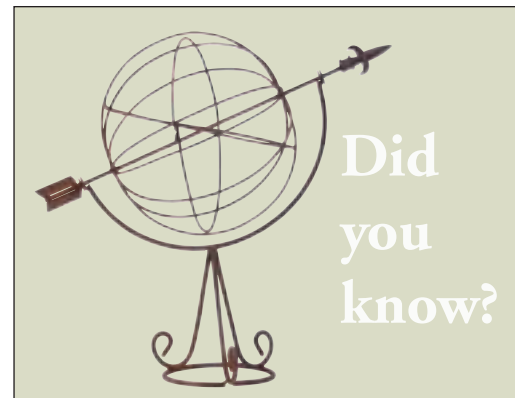
he plans to return to Northwest Georgia and practice emergency medicine – and continue to spend two to three months each year overseas.

“Eventually I plan to obtain a Master of Public Health degree in international health,” he said. “This will give me better preparation in developing sanitation and preventive medicine programs to prevent disease before it occurs.”

In closing, Eric added, “I think the education and cultural experience I received at Shorter have prepared me well for my career.

“There is a sense that after graduating from Shorter, you can go anywhere and do anything you want.”

With Dr. Eric Nix, the journey ahead is almost certain to bring healing and compassion to many, many lives. 



Numerous opportunities are available through Shorter College's Office of International Programs that connect today's students with the world – just like Eric Nix experienced while at Shorter. These opportunities include:

- **Semester or Year Abroad** – an individual program at one of more than 50 university partners on six continents.
- **Americas Program** – a four-week group program conducted in South or Central America.*
- **Asia Program** – a four-week group program conducted in numerous countries including China, India, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.*
- **Europe Program** (formerly MAYTERM) – a four-week group program conducted in England and one other European country.*
- **Department Program** – a 10-day program offered by a specific academic department.*

*Led by Shorter College Faculty

So, I admitted him on clinical suspicion alone, ordered him to have nothing by mouth to rest his pancreas, changed his HIV medicines, and ordered IV fluids to keep him hydrated. His condition quickly improved, and he was discharged home, pain free, only three days later.

“Hippocrates once said that ‘medicine is entertainment while nature heals itself.’ I feel that even in the most primitive of situations, medicine does make a difference.”

The Adventure of Medical Relief

While in Zambia, Eric was assigned to spend most of his time in the Bindi ward, a 30-bed pediatric unit. “There was only one trained pediatrician, and his duties were primarily administrative,” Eric recalls. “The other physicians have either never completed residency training or completed training in other specialties, such as adult medicine. The training of most of the physicians there is limited to one year of internship prior to starting work

on the hospital wards. “In some respects, I was both one of the most trained and one of the most inexperienced physicians there – trained in the sense of extensive residency training in a variety of adult and pediatric diseases, and inexperienced because of my lack of familiarity in treating patients with tropical diseases in such a limited resource setting.”

In addition to his time in the pediatric ward, Eric spent some time in the outpatient department (OPD), which is similar to emergency departments in the United States. There, he saw patients on a consultation basis instead of seeing every patient that arrived.

“During the afternoon hours of the OPD, I primarily saw assault victims – either those that were beaten, had been stabbed or had been involved in road traffic accidents. ”

The Route to Understanding

Eric adds that his experience in Zambia was “at the same time rewarding and depressing” due to the enormity of the needs present. Zambian men have an





LIFE ON THE BENCH

Jean Bolin ('77) is juvenile court judge for Atlantic Circuit

Everyone is responsible for his or her own destiny. I try to instill this idea in children, to help them see they can always become something significant and make something meaningful with their life."

These encouraging words might be expected from a teacher or a parent or a minister... but what about a juvenile court judge? For Shorter College alumna the Hon. Jean Jordan Bolin ('77), it is exactly this philosophy that has made the difference in her life. She uses her role in the community to improve children's opportunities.

However, Jean does not simply talk the talk. She is an impressive example of a woman who walks the walk. She was the first in her family to attend college; she began a career-changing law degree at age 40; and in August 2006, she was appointed as a juvenile court judge for the Atlantic Judicial Circuit. Throughout her life journey, Jean has come to understand and embrace the encouraging wisdom she shares from the bench.

Foundations on the Hill

Her story begins in a rural community in South Georgia. College was a dream that seemed extremely difficult – if not impossible – to achieve. Her parents worried about her attending college because of the images they saw on television of riots and violence on college campuses of the late 1960s and early 1970s. They feared for her safety. Additionally, she did not know anyone with a degree other than her schoolteachers.

Then things began to fall into place. In 1973 Jean had never even visited Northwest Georgia, but an admissions counselor from Shorter assured her that travel would be coordinated to fit her needs. "The next four years were absolutely wonderful," Jean reminisced about her Shorter experience. "It was my first time away from home, and the years at Shorter became four of the most important years of my life. I grew so much because of the nurturing campus community that equipped me to see the countless opportunities I could pursue."

Her positive experience on the Hill was not solely a result of assignments in the classroom or relationships with classmates. Jean was influenced and supported by Shorter's faculty and staff. "The moment I arrived on campus, the welcoming arms of faculty like Betty Zane Morris ('55) and Dr. Joe Baskin made my transition to campus very comfortable."

An unexpected surgery during her freshman year provided Jean the opportunity to experience the caring faculty first hand. "I had four siblings at home in South Georgia, so my parents could not stay with me in Rome while I was in the hospital, but Wilson and Thelma Hall sort of adopted me. They



Jean Jordan's activities while a student included being crowned the 1977 Homecoming queen. In the above photo, from the 1977 Argo, Jean, right, is being crowned by 1976 Homecoming Queen Magdaline Caparisos ('76). The photo inset at left is Jean's senior class portrait.



By Tracy Batchelor

“I came from a very strong and loving family background. I have lots of nieces and nephews, and I watch their lives and their growth. The institutions of home, family, church and school that have been such cornerstones for me and for them are not present in many of the children’s lives that I see in court. I try to apply the principles of nurturing my nieces and nephews to other children’s lives who don’t have the support system in place. The key is to stick with them long enough that you open up awareness inside of them.”

– Jean Bolin



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brought me Thanksgiving dinner. They assured my parents I’d be okay. They were wonderful. My parents were so impressed!

“I soon learned that my experience with exceptional faculty wasn’t unusual; instead, it was the nature of the school. Throughout my years at Shorter, I witnessed many occasions where Shorter’s administration, staff and faculty went beyond the call of duty to assist students. It is one of the reasons I have always loved Shorter.”

Jean’s appreciation for her alma mater continues today because she recognizes that students are blessed to have the opportunity to study at Shorter. “Today’s college seems to have maintained the close community atmosphere that I adored, and it has also grown into an impressive academic, artistic and athletic reputation. I thoroughly enjoyed being at Shorter and still appreciate the growth it provided.”

Opportunities on the Coast

After a full college experience – from being a member of the Epsilon Sigma sorority to being a little sister of the Alpha Gamma Omega fraternity, and from being a communications major to being named homecoming queen her senior year – Jean decided to move to the coastal community of Brunswick, Ga., following graduation. She got married 16 months later, and life was good for Jean. Her first job out of college was producing video programs for



Carol Kirby (68)

David Cavendar, chief superior court judge for the Atlantic Circuit, swears in Jean Bolin as the juvenile court judge for Bryan and McIntosh Counties on Aug. 31, 2006.

the regional library where she worked. She went on to enjoy a number of successful careers including public relations, newspaper editing, photography, and finally, working for a large industrial company.

Because things were going so well, she continued to file a dream in the back of her mind. “I was not happy in my current position. I’d been toying with a lifelong dream of becoming a lawyer, and on my 40th birthday, I walked into my

supervisor’s office and announced, ‘I’m leaving. I’m going to law school.’ This was the first time I’d actually said it out loud.”

As Jean was considering which law school to attend, her husband suggested Florida Coastal School of Law in Jacksonville, Fla. This was a new school 97 miles away from her home in Darien, Ga. Because the school was so new, it had yet to be accredited, and Jean realized the risk she took if she enrolled at this school. However, “the moment I sat down [at Florida Coastal], I knew this was where I needed to be.” Her instincts were correct because Florida Coastal received accreditation by the American Bar Association in 1999, and Jean was part of its first graduating class.

Although most of her days began with studying at 4 a.m. before commuting the one and a half hours to her 8 a.m. class, Jean enjoyed her studies. “My experience was awesome. Sometimes I wondered what I was doing, but then I realized that I was being allowed to do something no one in my family had been able to do.”

She credits her determination and perseverance to the support and encouragement of her husband. He was her inspiration in many ways because he had gone to nursing school following his 40th birthday a few years prior. Now a registered nurse, he understood the support Jean required to achieve her dream as well.



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“He was forever encouraging me and was willing to do what was necessary while I was in school, and I’m so grateful because he was the push I needed.”

With law degree in hand, Jean began her new career in a small attorney practice and then transitioned into the newly revamped Georgia public defender system. “At that point, things began to move very quickly,” recalls Jean.

A mentor judge encouraged her to consider yet another career transition, saying Jean should apply for juvenile court judge. “He told me that I was well suited for the position, I would enjoy the role, and they needed me. So, I applied.” Jean was selected and sworn in as a judge of juvenile courts in the Atlantic Judicial Circuit on Aug. 31, 2006. Today, she is responsible for the juvenile courts in McIntosh and Bryan Counties.

Impacts from the Bench

Her role has brought her full circle, from the student seeking growth to the adult instituting change. “Being a judge

allows me to give something back to the community, and I greatly appreciate that privilege,” Jean explained.

Her philosophy on the bench is one of sincere service. She works to make a difference and share her values with others. “There’s a need for strong Christian leadership on the bench, as well as in our schools and our homes.

“I believe I need to encourage teachers, community leaders, Sunday School teachers and other influential role models. If a child is willing, there are opportunities available. Together, we have to find a way to show that child how to do it.”

Jean knows from personal experience the need for solid foundations for children’s success. “I came from a very strong and loving family background. I have lots of nieces and nephews, and I watch their lives and their growth. The institutions of home, family, church and school that have been such cornerstones for me and for them are not present in many of the children’s lives that I see in

court. I try to apply the principles of nurturing my nieces and nephews to other children’s lives who don’t have the support system in place.

“The key is to stick with them long enough that you open up awareness inside of them,” Jean continued. “You can make a difference in a child’s life, even if that child has been involved with the law.

“I see many abused and deprived kids. If the kids say, ‘I can get past this,’ some parents cannot. Through court intervention I can sometimes facilitate change, recovery and improvement.”

Dreams and results. Initiative and persistence. Jean’s willingness to pursue her goals and to help others will continue to benefit communities along Georgia’s coast. Her work as a juvenile court judge is clearly a service of love. “I like to think that juvenile court does make a difference. I want these kids to know that I care about them. To me everyone of them is worth the effort.”



At The Met

Alumna Jamie Barton Wins Opera Competition

At the Metropolitan Opera's 2007 National Council Auditions, the Met's famed stage was filled with many of the most promising young opera singers of today. At evening's end, Shorter College alumna Jamie Barton ('04) stood among the six finalists who were selected as winners.

As a winner of the National Council Auditions, Jamie received a \$15,000 cash award and the opportunity to audition with the Metropolitan Opera, one of the world's premiere opera companies, once per year during the next three years. At each audition, she will be eligible to receive an additional \$5,000 award. The purpose of these follow-up auditions is to give the Metropolitan Opera an opportunity to follow the vocal development of their winners.

The grand finals, held April 1 and broadcast live nationwide over National Public Radio, were the fourth of four levels of competition that made up the National Council Auditions. The winners were chosen from nearly 1,500 singers who participated in the auditions, which are sponsored by the Metropolitan Opera National Council in 45 districts and 15 regions throughout the United States and Canada. Jamie first won the district level competition for the state of Indiana; she then claimed the Tri-State title for a region covering Southern Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. At the semifinals on March 25, she was named one of 11 finalists from across the nation.

Jamie earned her Bachelor of Music degree in voice performance from Shorter in 2004. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in voice performance at Indiana University. At Shorter and during her first year at Indiana, she studied with Dr. Brian Horne. She currently studies voice with Mary Ann Hart.

This summer, Jamie made her professional operatic debut as Annina in *La Traviata* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Recent engagements include Mrs. Soames in the world premiere of Rorem's *Our Town*, Little Buttercup in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, all with Indiana Opera Theatre. She recently won third place in the Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition and will join the Houston Grand Opera Studio in the fall of 2007.

Jamie is the fifth Shorter College music graduate to win the Metropolitan Opera's National Council Auditions. Other winners include Jacquelyn Benson-Kenley ('68), Phebe Odom Settles ('71), Indra Thomas ('93) and Theresa Hamm-Smith ('96). These winners all studied voice with longtime Shorter College music faculty member Dr. John Ramsaur. ✍

A Legacy of Learning

MBA Grad Returns as Professional Studies Professor

By Tracy Batchelor

That moment. It's the piece of your life when you discover a bridge to connect your experiences to your passion. It's the event that stands out because of its life-altering, purpose-inspiring spark. It drives your dreams and initiates your path to fulfillment.

For Dr. Craig Cleveland ('03), his moment occurred when he wasn't even looking for it. He was working on his Master of Business Administration through Shorter's Professional Studies program to gain advancement in the criminal justice profession.

But during the hours of rehearsing presentations, developing business plans and debating company ethics, Craig reached his moment. By studying hard, he only wanted to learn more. By listening to faculty, he yearned to continue the discussions. "This began my path to lifelong learning," the student-turned-professor shared.

Craig's experiences in the MBA program inspired him to pursue a doctoral degree, which he received in spring 2007. Although he experienced challenges in graduate school, Craig credits some of Shorter's faculty for their influential mentoring roles. "I was about 50 percent complete with the program when some personal issues arose," Craig said. "One of my mentors at Shorter told me, 'Just hang in there, you can do it.' Two weeks ago, that same mentor reminded me of this conversation. His guidance was very

helpful. My professors shared so much inspiration and knowledge with me; I'm ready to provide that push to others."

Even prior to earning his doctoral degree, Craig realized that his career direction had changed. He wanted to share his passion for education and inspire others, so he sought out a position of influence – in the same classroom that awakened his dreams. He wanted to come home to Shorter because, as he quickly explained, "This is where I got my start. I can relate to the Professional Studies students because I've been in their shoes."

Craig has already shared his drive with six cohorts in metro-Atlanta and Rome. His goal is simple: to equip his students to be better leaders. "I try to share wisdom with my students that allows them to be more confident in their lives and more willing to tackle life's challenges."

Now a college professor, Craig is also a criminal defense investigator. Add to that his years as an undercover international drug enforcement agent and an American embassy specialist in Turkey, and his resume resembles a smorgasbord of careers. One thing is for sure: he has interesting experiences to share with students, and he

understands the challenge of combining course knowledge with work experience. "It took awhile to find the connection that brought the two together, but now I can also help my students bridge that gap and apply academic concepts to their jobs."

What's next for this ambitious alumnus? "I want Dr. Dupuy's job as dean of the School of Business Management," Craig chuckles. "Seriously, I'm working to publish some scholarly journals as I become a well-respected professor and then, hopefully, a successful dean."

For now, Craig is busy with papers and presentations even though he is no longer a student. "It's a continual process. I keep mentioning lifelong learning, but that's what it's all about. I'm a student even as a professor." ✍



A vast array of experiences help shape the teaching of Dr. Craig Cleveland ('03). At left, top to bottom, he was a police officer, Drug Enforcement Agency agent, and doctoral student. Today, he teaches and encourages students in Shorter's Professional Studies program.

Hey, Professional Studies Grad:

Shorter magazine is looking for story ideas about how you're using your Shorter College degree. Let us know your story by submitting a class note to wtaylor@shorter.edu

