

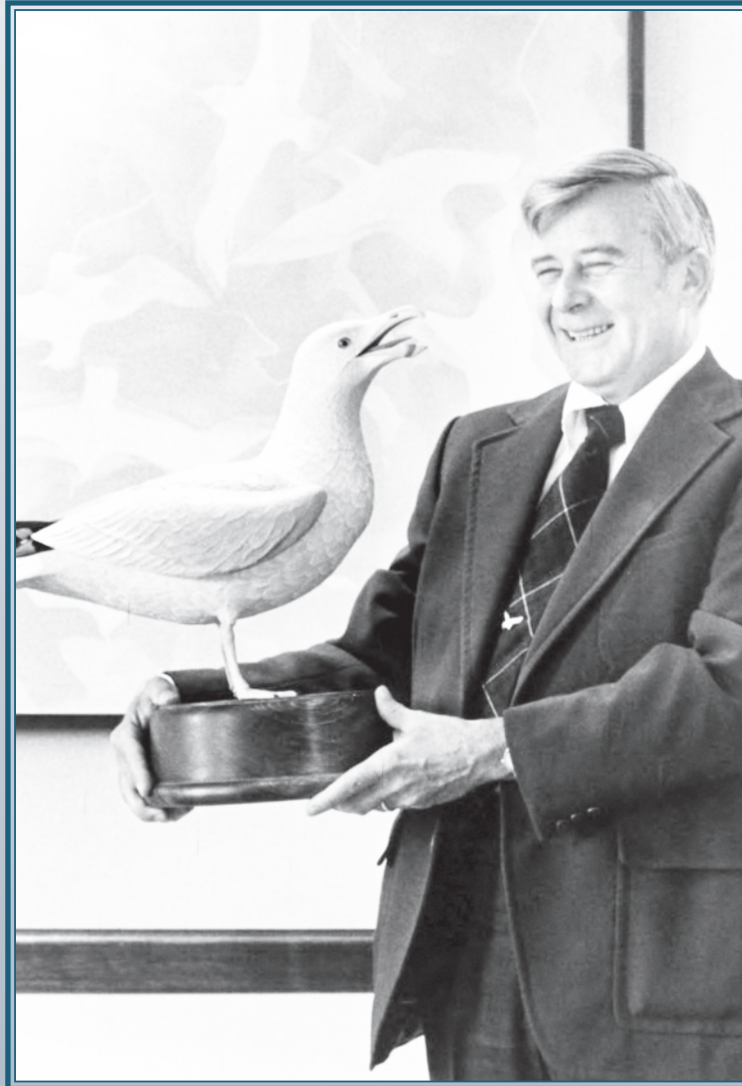
Remembering DR. NORMAN CRAWFORD

By G. Ray Thompson, Ph.D. – History Professor Emeritus

(The following is excerpted from the eulogy delivered May 20, 2016, at Dr. Crawford's funeral)

Although Dr. Norman Crawford's life-long passion for Salisbury State College athletics is well-known, I recently interviewed him, discovering other equally important features. He was immensely proud of the role that Boy Scouts had played in his character development and spoke also of how various jobs had prepared him for the SSC presidency. Between 1970-1980, he "grew" the college. At his arrival on campus there were 61 faculty; in the next two years that number more than tripled. The student body grew as quickly. Norm felt very keenly that a very important part of his legacy was the racial integration of the campus. In 1970, there were only three African American students on campus; two years later there were 11; and in 1980, there were 430. He also hired African American faculty and was considered a father figure to the African-American fraternity. Those were forward-thinking accomplishments of which he could be proud.

Equally as important was the spirit of "family" that he and Garnette engendered. They made faculty and students feel part of a closely knit family. Once my wife and I joined the faculty in 1972, we quickly realized how fortunate we were to be a part of an institution that really cared about its faculty and its students. The Crawfords were at EVERY campus event, whether it was athletics, poetry readings, student organization initiations, fall Oktoberfest, or hosting fall dinners and spring picnics for us. They



opened their home for all of us – we tromped through it as if it were our own. They spoke personally to each of us – got to know us – and in subsequent conversations continued those personal conversations. I am most impressed that Norm could remember so much about each of us – our children's names, their interests and their schools, and details of our own academic and personal lives. He knew our strengths and appreciated them. This was indeed a time of family.

Norm was ahead of his time. Long before that phrase "it takes a village" was popularized, he recognized the power of bringing people together and of valuing them for who they were and for their individual talents. He encouraged each of us, trusting us to do our jobs in the classroom and giving us the freedom to develop courses and programs that strengthened the school. He mentored us, encouraging us to engage with students as teachers, advisors and sponsors of student organizations. On more than one occasion, Dr. Crawford sat in on my class just because ... !

He often could be found strolling around campus, speaking with students. His daughters also frequently were seen on campus. The Crawfords attended campus bonfires and observed the occasional nude pyramids in the Quad and the harmless streaking at Honors Convocation or late night in Blackwell Library. Faculty will recall the commencement when a student strode

across the stage brandishing a bottle of champagne, shook the president's hand and handed him the bottle, then proudly walked from the stage.

Much could be said about President Crawford; he was very human and humane; he remained a friend over the years, still remembering those special things about each of us that made us feel cared for and appreciated. Norm, we will miss you. Your legacy remains strong!