



'I choose to be here'

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER – "I've taught people from all over the world," she says. "And I'd put some of these kids up against any of them."

For Elizabeth Napp Gore, teaching at Choctaw County High School is a choice. It is, she says, a place where she chooses to be, and one where she knows she is making a difference.

Teaching at CCHS is not just another school for her, after all. It is home.

A 32-year veteran of the education profession, Gore has taught in a wide spectrum of classrooms, from remedial math classes at the University of Alabama to college courses in Mississippi and Arkansas, to high school level math and science in two different states.

And for the past seven years, she has been giving of her time and talents to teach science and math at her alma mater, the place where she graduated as Valedictorian of the CCHS Class of 1979. After so long in the classroom, she says she has seen what differences can be made in her students' lives — if they just have someone who'll choose to be there for them.

It's a choice she made years ago, and one that she has not regretted.

To those who know her and her family, Gore's choice to become a teacher seemed to be an obvious one. Her family line is filled with educators, from her grandmother to her aunts to her mother.

For the Napp family, the tradition of teaching in the Choctaw County School System began with Gore's grandmother Marguerite Tyson who taught 3rd grade at the former Butler Elementary, and then with her mother, long-time educator at CCHS, Yvonne Napp.

But, despite her family history, Gore says she never intended to become a teacher.

"I was not going to teach," she admits. "My granny was a teacher, my grandmother's sister, my mom, and both of her sis-



Mrs. Elizabeth "Beth" Gore is pictured among some of her students in her classroom at CCHS. Gore is the Sun's Teacher of the Month for February.

ters were all teachers. They all said, 'Don't do it' because of the stress and the low pay."

Following her high school graduation, Gore attended the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and earned her degree in chemical engineering. It was a field that incorporated her love for math and science. But because of economic circumstances at that time, she never worked in that career field.

"When I got my degree, the oil recession hit," she explains. "No one was hiring. Most of my classmates went back to school to do something else. That was when they were having a big push for math and science teachers, so that's what I did."

After completing her certification to teach, Gore attended classes at night to earn her Master's degree. Still in Tuscaloosa, she entered the classroom as a teacher for the first time.

"I worked for 2 years teaching at the University," she says. "It was a remedial math class."

From there, Gore taught at the prestigious Millsaps College, a nation-

Teacher of the Month February 2007 Elizabeth Gore

ally recognized exclusive private college in Jackson, MS. She was there for 2 years.

At that time, Gore married and the couple moved to Arkansas, where she took a position at the University of Central Arkansas, and later at a branch of Arkansas State University.

For the first 11 years of her career, she taught at the college level. But when her family moved to Monroe, Louisiana, Gore found herself teaching math and physics in a high school setting for the first time.

"My husband Steve started driving a truck," she says. "We had C.J. by then, and he wanted him

to grow up here in Choctaw County. So it was time to make the move back home."

From the first moment they returned to Butler, there was no question about what she would do.

She chose to return to her alma mater.

"This is home, and they needed me," Gore explains. "So many people have left them. I felt like it was important for me to be here, and to stay."

Through the years at CCHS, Gore has primarily taught advanced sciences. But she is now teaching advanced math. It was an area where her skills were badly needed to fill a gap in the number of available

teachers in that subject.

"I teach juniors and seniors," she says. "It's an advantage for me to teach the seniors because I have taught in college settings. I can tell the seniors, 'You need to know this for next year', and they know I know what I'm talking about."

But her work with the students does not end in the classroom. She serves as Student Government Association (SGA) advisor, Senior Sponsor, and is deeply involved in the committees who prepare for state review.

Gore's service in education not only touches the lives of the students at CCHS, but students and teachers across the state. She currently serves on the Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching that is working to make recommendations for a revamping of teacher training methods in colleges throughout the state.

"Teachers are not being prepared for the classroom," she explains. "That's why so many are getting out of the profession after a few years. They are not getting enough classroom experience in college so that

they are aware of what to expect when they take jobs as teachers."

As part of the Commission, Gore is working to add more clinical practice time to the required curriculums for educational degrees.

But her work to help new teachers adapt to their professions does not stop there. A long-time proponent of teacher mentoring programs, Gore serves as Mentoring Coordinator at CCHS where she partners experienced teachers with new teachers for one-on-one assistance with everything from required documentation to classroom discipline.

Gore's interest in mentoring began years ago during her first years in Louisiana.

"The first year I was in Louisiana, I had a wonderful mentoring teacher," she recalls. "It was a hard year, but he worked with me and made a big difference."

"The state of Louisiana had begun a mentoring program, and I was in training for that when I left there," she adds. "I brought that with me when I came here."

Gore's experiences and abilities have earned her prestigious awards, including 2003 Teacher of the Year for the largest district in the state, District 3. Her talents have also led her to travel to a variety of places to share her knowledge — even overseas. In 2005, she traveled to Japan where she worked in classrooms alongside Japanese instructors.

Although teaching was not her intended profession, Gore now says that she feels like she is in the field where she was meant to be.

"It's not something that I get up everyday dreading," she says. "It's easy for me to come to school and do this every day. I guess if it comes that easy for you, it's what you're supposed to do."

And, Gore says, she is doing it in a place where she feels called to be.

"I can do anywhere I want to go to teach," she says. "But I choose here."

Moore joins with other Black Belt superintendents

■ Coalition addressing educational issues common to Black Belt counties

By Dee Ann Campbell
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BUTLER – Superintendent of Education Sue Moore has recently joined with other superintendents in Alabama's Black Belt counties to address concerns that are unique to the region.

Moore joined with the Alabama Black Belt Superintendent's Committee (ABBSC), attending her first meeting with the organization last month.

A branch of the Black Belt Action Commission's Education Committee, the ABBSC was organized in August of last year after a year of planning by the BBAC. Originally, 15

superintendents from 12 counties joined the committee, which met for the first time at Tuskegee University last July.

Until Moore's attendance at the committee's meeting last month, Choctaw County had not been involved with the organization.

The premise of the ABBSC is to address issues common to all systems in the Black Belt through collaboration within the region. Working through a partnership between the Black Belt Education Committee and Auburn University's Truman Pierce Institute, the superintendents are approaching common issues as a group in order to maximize resources, share ideas, and increase their advocacy voice.

Serving as chairman of the ABBSC is Dallas County superintendent Dr. Fannie Major-McKenzie.

Through McKenzie's leadership, the coalition is now partnering with several state organizations to implement initiatives that focus on arts, health science, library media specialists, school readiness and professional development.

In particular, the

coalition is working to provide professional development for local educational leaders through its professional development committee. This, and other ABBSC sub-committees, are the result of Alabama Senate Bill 567, which authorizes two or more city or county boards of education that are not adjoining to enter into joint purchasing agreements. Introduced by State Senator Hank Sanders, the bill builds the purchasing power among Black Belt school systems.

The ABBSC is also working to implement a school readiness program called HIPPY, (Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters). Working with HIPPY Alabama and Alabama Power Company on the project, the ABBSC is promoting programs to train parents to take active roles in their children's education, and to assist young children with the transition from pre-school to elementary school.

The ABBSC meets on a quarterly basis and is a 501-3C non-profit corporation. Donations can be made to the ABBSC by calling (334) 353-0544.

Graduation exam dates for spring testing released

BUTLER, GILBERTOWN -- The Choctaw County School System Announces the Spring Administration of the Alabama High School Graduation Examination

The Alabama High School Graduation Exam will be administered on the following dates:

Language	Monday	March 5, 2007
Social Studies	Tuesday	March 6, 2007
Science	Wednesday	March 7, 2007
Mathematics	Thursday	March 8, 2007
Reading	Friday	March 9, 2007

For additional information, please contact Rhonda Johnson at (205)459-3031, or Joy Seybold at (205)459-2139, or Brenda Franks at (251)843-5645.

ADAW testing dates scheduled

BUTLER, GILBERTOWN -- The Alabama Direct Writing Assessment will be administered to the following grade levels on February 27, 2007:

Grade Level:	Fifth Graders
School Involved:	Choctaw County Elementary School Southern Choctaw Elementary School
Grade Levels:	Seventh and Tenth Graders
Schools Involved:	Choctaw County High School Southern Choctaw High School

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