

# Walker discusses life, writing

By ERIC SCHMIDT  
Collegian Staff Writer

About 200 University students joined students from 94 other universities and colleges across the nation Wednesday night for "An Evening with Alice Walker," via satellite.

Walker, the black feminist author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Color Purple*, was the subject of a two-hour televised interview by Barbara Christian, professor of Afro-American studies at the University of California at Berkeley.

At two different times, moderators stopped the program, which originated from San Francisco, to allow students from the 95 campuses to call in with questions.

Walker's interview, the last program of the University's Women's Awareness Week, was sponsored by

several University groups and viewed in Schwab Auditorium.

Christian said Walker grew up as a sharecropper's daughter in a small town in Georgia where the family income was only \$200 a year. She won a scholarship to Spelman College in Atlanta, Ga., but transferred to Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, N.Y. where she graduated in 1965.

Walker said her mother, who gave her her first typewriter, was also an important influence in her writing career.

"(My goal is) not to repeat my mother's life," Walker said, "I watched her take care of all of us and then to take care of white people's children... she did all of this with grace and style, but I didn't want that life."

Walker also said the work of Martin Luther King Jr. in the civil rights movement and the women's

movement, both of which she lived through, greatly affected her work.

"I really didn't think I could live with all the injustice," Walker said. "I was suicidal. Partly because of that, I could see that I didn't have a chance to grow up unless something happened."

Walker said that she was not upset because the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People condemned *The Color Purple*.

"I feel embarrassed to say that I have no reaction," Walker said. "I was here doing what I was doing and they're there doing what they do."

A University student asked Walker about her response to public reaction to a lesbian character in *The Color Purple*.

"I don't do a lot of 'responding,'" Walker said. "I knew when I wrote the book that a lot of people would be upset."

Another viewer asked Walker about the difference between a feminist and a womanist. Walker said she refers to herself as a womanist.

"It depends on how feisty you feel," Walker said. "It is a term that I created along with my culture to replace 'black woman feminist,' which always sounded like a fly spray to me."


Walker had this advice to give to future writers:

"Just write and read. It is just as important to write as to read," Walker said. "It's just like any other craft — the more you do the better you get."

The program was sponsored by Colquhoun, the College of Liberal Arts, the Center for Women Studies, the Undergraduate Student Government Department of Women's Concerns, Panhellenic Council, and other campus organizations.

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# Pattee's east wing may close in August for asbestos removal

The east wing of Pattee may be closed temporarily during the first two weeks of August for asbestos removal, said Dean of Libraries James Neal, but the plans to close the wing will not be confirmed until January.

"There is no current danger," said Maurine Claver, University industrial hygienist. "We have closely monitored for asbestos leakage since we were aware of the problem in 1979," she said.

Claver said there are no problems at the library or other buildings on campus insulated with asbestos.

This is the last area in the library that still has the fireproofing insulation, Neal said. Exposure to asbestos, widely used until the 1970s, has been linked to cancer.

If the project is approved, asbestos removal would take place during the first two weeks in August when the library is the least crowded, Neal said.

Pattee staff will predict which books of the east wing collection will be most needed during the two-week tentative closing period, but most of the collection will be inaccessible, he said.

Neal, Claver, Nancy Kilen — assistant dean of libraries — and William Pearce, the facilities planner of the library, met with the library staff to

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Maurine Claver — University industrial hygienist

inform them of the possible temporary shutdown.

The staff working in the east wing will probably be relocated to another area of the library, he said.

"We do not want to or plan to lay-off anyone" as a result of the possible temporary shut down of the wing, Neal said. If employees are laid off, it will be temporary, he said.

Along with the asbestos removal, new wiring for telephones and computers may simultaneously take place on the fifth floor of Pattee to improve the communication systems for the entire library, he said.

—by Megan McKissick

# Bell reaches out Touches PSU with million

By CAROLYN SORISIO  
Collegian Staff Writer

Bell of Pennsylvania has reached out and touched the telecommunications program at Penn State.

The corporation has donated \$1 million to the help build a new Center for Technology at the Wilkes-Barre Campus and also to expand Wilkes-Barre's telecommunications program to Penn State campuses in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh areas, University officials announced yesterday.

The gift is the largest gift given from an individual corporation to the commonwealth campuses in the \$200 million Campaign for Penn State, Robert Scannell, vice president and dean for the commonwealth educational system said.

In a prepared press statement, Gilbert A. Wetzel, president and chief executive officer of Bell of PA said "We see it as an investment, one from which we expect to receive a direct return in the form of having an excellent pipeline for potential employees who will be well-trained in the technical field of telecommunications."

Scannell said the gift is especially significant to the University because it supports an associate degree training program.

The telecommunication program, which began in 1980 at Wilkes-Barre, has been fully developed and is ready to expand to other campuses, Scannell said.

He said there is a high demand for the program's graduates, who currently number about 30 per year.

Marianne Tucker Puhalla, coordinator of public information at Wilkes-Barre, said the new center will feature laboratory equipment, an auditorium available for public use and a "resource clearing house" for local industries for world-wide information.

"The program is right on in terms of the needs of the telephone industry, the cable industry, and the whole computer networking," he said.

The Center for Technology at Wilkes-Barre will receive \$400,000, and the rest of the gift will go towards an endowment to support the program.

Puhalla said the gift is the largest that the Wilkes-Barre campus has received from the campaign.

The campaign is a five-year fund raising effort designed to enhance the academic quality at the University.

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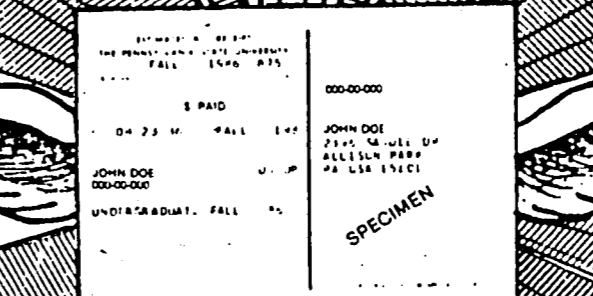
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