

# In the Spotlight

*Highlighting Exceptional Employees*

## Horace Sewell EI Transit Driver

### **Joined Town: 1998**

Chapel Hill Transit driver Horace Sewell EI of Cary completed a bachelor's degree after working toward it for more than 40 years—the past 10 of them part time at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Sewell EI dedicated graduation day to his mother, Annie R. Daye: "She is one of the women I wanted to honor that day for inspiring me to continue on in my education. She went back to school at age 40."

He isn't in touch with and doesn't know the name of the other person he wishes to honor. She was that little old lady at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, N.Y., whom he promised, on the day he dropped out at age 19, that someday he would finish his degree.

"If for no other reason but the fact that that she took the time and the interest to care about me, this poor kid from Queens, I promised her," he said recently. "I wish I could thank her for the spell she put on me, because here I am at UNC still trying to fulfill the promise I made to her."

When Sewell EI was growing up in Queens, N.Y., in the 1960s, his neighborhood and high school were rife with drugs and prone to race riots. Then, he found demonstrations against the Vietnam war and other distractions at the community college.

"I had no job, no money and I wanted to marry my high school sweetheart," he said. "I had this hot prospect for a job ... driving a city bus paying \$10 an hour to start, with benefits, pension plan and health insurance."

So Sewell EI spent 25 years as a New York City bus driver, but he went to Queens College at night and almost finished a paralegal certification. He also worked on the side for 10 years as a real estate broker. He relocated to North Carolina in 1998 and has been driving buses full time for Chapel Hill Transit for 12 years.

In 2000, he started continuing education classes at UNC to finish the paralegal certification. After achieving that, he said, "I've gone this far, on to the four-year degree."

He earned his bachelor's degree in anthropology on May 9, with his mom, children, Grand Sheik Robert Stone-El of the Federation Moorish Science Temple in Durham and friends from that congregation attending.

Coincidentally, Stone-El is the son of the late UNC professor for whom the University's Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History is named. And in a North Carolina connection, Sewell EI's mother is descended from Thomas Day (circa 1801- 1861), a prominent furniture maker in Milton.

### **Value in the Spotlight**

## Respect

trustworthy • open • defender of individual rights • customer-focused • sensitive • civil • decent



Sewell EI plans to keep driving the bus, but more schooling may be in his future. He'd like to earn a master's degree in public administration from the School of Government and work for the Town of Chapel Hill in another capacity.

—This story was written by Laura Toler of  
UNC-Chapel Hill News Services

### **Senior Management Team Values**

In November 2007, the Town's Senior Management Team adopted the following set of values to guide their behavior and decisions. These values are Ethics, Social Equity, Professionalism, Respect, Innovation



and Teamwork. It is the intent of the Town Manager and the Senior Management Team to strengthen the organization with a commonly held set of values that drive our mission and objectives.