

Extended Hours Alert! Robeson Community College's Student Services will be open late to better serve YOU! Stop by from 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. on: August 11-14 (Monday through Thursday) August 18-19 (Monday and Tuesday)

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RCC PROVIDES 'TURNING POINT' FOR RON JEFFERSON

Discover your purpose, and transform your future. That's what RCC hopes students achieve as they enroll, take classes, and engage with the campus community, and it's exactly what Ron Jefferson experienced as he sought to continue his education.

"My friends call me Ronnie," Jefferson said. "My story at RCC started in August of 2020, fresh out of high school... it was a very exciting experience for me, because you know, when you hear about college, you think about making friends and starting your life and adulthood and things of that nature."

But 2020 was also the year COVID-19 struck, bringing everything to a screeching halt.

"It was a time of the pandemic, viruses, and the apocalypse," Jefferson said. "So, it was a very different time, especially for education, and especially for a student who had disabilities and needed services to be successful."

Jefferson says he was considered an "EC" student in high school.

"That program was basically designed for students like me with special needs or disabilities," Jefferson said. "The program helps provide work outside of high school because a lot of the students with the EC program really didn't go to college... they landed jobs, not careers."

It was a career that Jefferson was looking for. He initially wanted to become a lawyer but felt that was outside of his reach because of the amount of reading required.

"I was like, yeah, I know I'm not going to go to law school, because I hate reading, so I wanted to do something in the educational field," Jefferson said.

"I wanted to be a dance teacher, and that's something that I still want to do," Jefferson said. "So, I came out to RCC after getting my high school diploma and started taking the introductory classes."

Since he had not taken college prep classes, Jefferson says he was not prepared for the level of work that was required.

"So, I basically had my first MLA paper, and I didn't know how to do that, I didn't know how to do any computer work, I didn't know how to do anything when I got to Robeson Community College, so I was basically a sitting duck," Jefferson stated. "I stopped attending classes, I just stopped... I had a .5 GPA; the only class I passed was Freshman Transition and I passed that with a C."

Jefferson says his grade improved in the Spring 2021 semester but decided to take a break from college, saying, "I didn't want to go back, I didn't want anything to do with academics, nothing in school."

Taking a job at Popeyes as a backup plan, Jefferson went to work full-time. But something inside his heart kept wanting more out of life, and that's when he says his turning point came.

"I heard that you could be a substitute teacher through RCC's workforce development program," Jefferson recalls. "So, I took the Effective Teaching Training class and became a substitute teacher in 2022."

After subbing for two years, Jefferson approached his father about something that had been on his mind for some time.

"I said, Dad, what if I went back to school? How would you feel?" Jefferson asked. "He said, 'I would be very proud.'"

With parents who are both educators, Jefferson says he always looked up to them. His father earned a doctorate degree, and his mother received a master's degree in education. His sister is in law school getting ready to take the bar exam. So naturally, Ronnie says he did not want to disappoint anyone and felt he should at least give college one more chance.

"So, I went back to school in 2023," Jefferson said. "I came back and started taking just one class at a time, then I started taking two classes, and started putting more on my plate... I was getting comfortable; I started to be motivated."

Jefferson enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program, and as he attended classes, he continued to work at Lumberton High School.

"I was hanging around teachers that loved their job, they loved being around the kids and I was also hanging around motivational people saying, 'Ron, you can do it. You got to stay determined' and so I said, you know what, I can. I can do it."

This May, Ronnie will graduate with an associate's degree, allowing him opportunities to advance from a substitute teacher to a teacher's assistant.

"But I don't just want to be a TA, I want to be a principal or an assistant principal, college professor, so I know there is a lot that I want to do," Jefferson said.

Full of pride, Jefferson says "There's always been this passion inside of me that's always supposed to work harder, you know? I'm always saying to myself, you've got to work harder than the next person, if you don't, you're not going to try hard enough."

All of Jefferson's hard work did pay off. With a current GPA of 3.3, he has risen above the challenges of the past and now there's a light at the end of the tunnel.

"I want to help grow kids into scholars, academic scholars, and push them to greatness," Jefferson said. "That's always what I see for all these kids out here, especially in Robeson County, greatness."

"Robeson Community College was definitely a turning point in my life."

In his free time, Jackson loves to dance and is a Michael Jackson impersonator.

"I've been doing it professionally for about seven years now, but I've been dancing like Michael Jackson all of my life, it helps me out with being social," Jefferson says. "I love being on stage, performing, not everybody can do that, especially in a big crowd."

"I'm a huge Michael Jackson fan, you know, he's my favorite artist," Jefferson said. "If you open up my closet, I have everything Michael Jackson, Michael Jackson jackets, Michael Jackson pants, Michael Jackson hat, Michael Jackson glove, everything Michael Jackson."

If you're interested in watching his next performance, you can catch him this weekend at the Rumba on the Lumber at 1pm on the plaza in downtown Lumberton.



Ron Jefferson assists with the coloring station during FAESA day at Robeson Community College as part of his capstone course in Early Childhood Education. Jefferson is set to graduate this May.

Published on March 6, 2025 by Cheryl Hemric

NEWS

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES



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Lumberton, NC 28359

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5160 Fayetteville Road
Lumberton, NC 28360
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Pembroke, NC 28372
910-272-3482

A.S. Thomas Center
62 Union Chapel Road
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910-272-3611

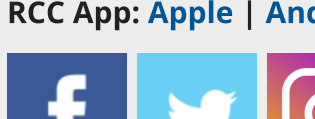
Emergency Training Grounds
5825 S. Roberts Avenue
Lumberton, NC 28358
910-272-3330

Maxton Site
The Learning Academy
305 North Hooper Street

Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday 8am - 5pm
Friday: 8am - 3pm

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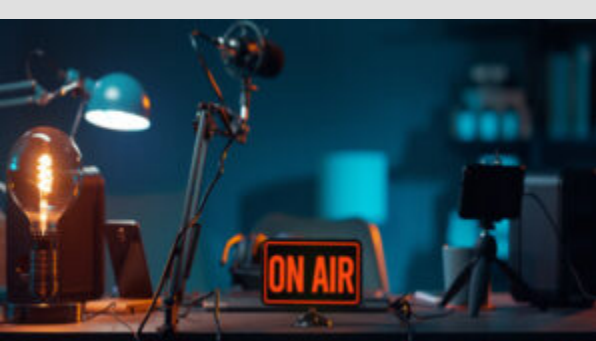
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