

Dollar stores carry inexpensive options for healthy eating

Dear readers: Emma Nipp and Purav Shah, rising second-year students, received a summer fellowship to do nutrition education from a fund at the ECU Health Foundation that supports medical students interested in learning more about nutrition in community and primary care. Nipp describes their special project for this summer. Here is what she wants you to know.

Myth or fact? Fresh vegetables are the healthiest choice, but frozen and canned vegetables are a great option if you cannot afford fresh ones.

If you joined us at our Dollar General grocery store tour this summer, you would know that healthy eating does not require expensive fresh produce or a trip to a large commercial grocery store.

Together with my medical school classmate, Purav Shah, we explored how to transform nutrition recommendations one might receive in a doctor's office into accessible, affordable and realistic changes that families can incorporate into their daily lives. Hence, we created a grocery store tour and cooking class curriculum using ingredients typically available at Dollar General stores. Our goal was to show the community that nutritious meals can be affordable, convenient and possible even when food choices seem limited.

One of the biggest misconceptions we encountered was the belief that healthy eating required expensive ingredients and that frozen or canned vegetables were inferior to fresh. While fresh vegetables can be a great choice, frozen and canned vegetables can provide important nutrients while offering a longer shelf life and convenience. Importantly, frozen and canned vegetables may also often fit better within a limited budget.

Our project was centered at the Bethel Dollar General store because we wanted to bring nutrition



KATHY KOLASA

nized that barriers to healthy eating can include long travel distances, limited transportation and fewer opportunities to receive nutrition education. Rather than simply encouraging people to “eat healthier,” we wanted to provide practical strategies that could be used with the foods already available in their community.

We designed and hosted a Dollar General grocery store tour, inspired by the Pitt Partners for Health Penny Pinchers grocery store tours that are offered throughout the year in different Food Lion stores in Pitt County. During our Dollar General tour, we walked through the aisles with shoppers, showing them tips for finding affordable healthier options. We guided community members through reading the Nutrition Facts labels, comparing unit pricing and looking for the “DG Better For You” tags. Many participants were surprised to learn that healthier options were available on the shelves they passed every week.

It is our hope that this tour might be expanded on and offered at other Dollar General locations around Pitt County. We appreciated the cooperation of the staff at the Bethel Dollar General, who allowed us access and answered lots of our questions.

We also hosted two cooking classes at the Bethel Pentecostal Holiness Church. We are extremely grateful to Rev. Marc Swanner for allowing us to host our classes in the heart of Bethel. The cooking classes we designed and

education to a community where access to a large grocery store is limited. We recognized that barriers to healthy eating can include long travel distances, limited transportation and fewer opportunities to receive nutrition education. Rather than simply encouraging people to “eat healthier,” we wanted to provide practical strategies that could be used with the foods already available in their community.

implemented expanded on the topics covered in the grocery store tour and incorporated cooking demonstrations on how to prepare healthy meals using canned ingredients from Dollar General. Many people were surprised by the versatility of canned goods and how they could be incorporated into nutritious meals.

Our first class focused on vegetables. During this class, we prepared vegetable soup, green beans and tomatoes, and a bean salad. The vegetable soup was definitely a hit, and the cost per serving was only 94 cents!

As we continue our medical education, we will carry these experiences with us. This summer confirmed to us why community-based education truly matters.

Our experience in Bethel helped answer the question: How do we transform nutrition

recommendations one might receive in a doctor's office into meaningful action? The answer is by making those recommendations practical, accessible and relevant to the communities we serve.

We appreciated the mentorship of Kay Craven, MPH, RDN, CDCES; Brittany Smith, MS, RDN, LDN from ECU Family Medicine; and Morgan Chesson, ECU dietetic intern. As future physicians, we hope to continue to approach patient care with this perspective.

We hope that everyone who came to our classes — and now everyone reading this article — knows that the best vegetables are the ones that they can afford and will consistently eat.

Professor emeritus Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian nutritionist and Ph.D., is an affiliate professor in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolasaka@ecu.edu.

OBITUARIES

William Henry Queen

GREENVILLE - William Henry Queen died peacefully on July 6, 2026, at Cypress Glen Retirement Community. He was 91 years old.

William, affectionately known as “Bo” by his family and “Bill” to friends and colleagues, was born on April 23, 1935, in Birmingham, Alabama, to Vivian Estelle McCrary Queen and William Fred Queen. He grew up with siblings Betty, Libby, and Carroll Richard and attended Phillips High School.

During his first year at the University of Alabama, Bill left school to serve in the United States Army (1954-1956). After completing his military service, he returned to UAB for both his bachelor's and master's degrees. In 1964, he earned a Ph.D. in Botany from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

At Duke he met and married Diana Roberts Calverley, who was also a student at Duke working toward a master's degree in chemistry. They exchanged vows in the Duke Chapel and had a daughter the following year. Katherine Lynne was born in Durham, NC, in 1965 and Bradley Trent, was born in Columbia, SC, in 1966.

Bill began his academic career as a professor of biology at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. In 1971, he accepted a position leading a major Chesapeake Bay research project conducted jointly by the University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins University, and the Smithsonian Institution. There he developed a lifelong appreciation for interdisciplinary collaboration between marine and social scientists. At the University of Maryland, he developed the Maryland Sea Grant Program.

When the project concluded, Bill moved to Greenville, North Carolina, to become Director of the Institute for Coastal & Marine Resources (ICMR) at ECU, a position that would define the next four decades of his career.

Under Bill's leadership, ICMR grew from a staff of three with an annual budget of \$30,000 to as many as 24 faculty and staff with annual funding exceeding \$1 million. He played a pivotal role in integrating social science into coastal research and was instrumental in establishing East Carolina University's first doctoral program in Coastal Resources Management.

Bill also contributed to the development of the Coastal Studies Institute in Manteo, North Carolina, a collaborative partnership among ECU, NCSU, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Wilmington, and Elizabeth City State University.

Throughout his career, Bill worked closely with the North Carolina Sea Grant Program, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). His expertise earned him invitations to conferences around the globe, including one in Beijing, China.

After 40 years of distinguished leadership, Bill retired in 2008 at the age of 73.

In 1980, Bill married Beverley Rippard Reid. Together they shared 35 wonderful years of marriage until her passing on December 23, 2015.

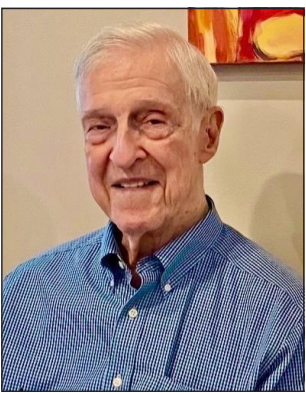
Travel was Bill's greatest passion. He and Beverley took the family to Italy, Spain and France. He wanted his children to experience his love of art, architecture, history, religion, and different cultures firsthand while developing a lifelong appreciation for the world around them.

Bill is survived by brother, Carroll Richard Queen (Jan); children, Katherine Queen (Jeffrey Aiken), Brad Queen, Rebekah Hunter (Doug), David Reid III, and Jacqueline Yongue (Harris); grandchildren, Alice Queen, Reid Hotelling, Rachel Hotelling, Jacqueline Hotelling, and Alicia Whisenant; nephews, Rich Queen, Jeff Queen (Mary Kay) and daughters, Samantha and Lucy, and Keith Sides (Jane) and children, Trey Sides, Katie Beaugez (Joe), and David Sides (Shelby).

A service will be held on Saturday, July 25, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 401 East Fourth Street, Greenville, North Carolina 27858. Following the service will be an interment of the ashes and a reception in his honor.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Arrangements by Smith Funeral Service & Crematory. Online condolences may be expressed at www.smithfcs.com.



Henry Louis Stephenson, Jr., M.D.

GREENVILLE, NC - Henry Louis Stephenson, Jr., M.D. passed away on April 24, 2026 in Greenville, NC.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, August 8, 2026 at 2 PM at First Baptist Church in Washington. A reception will immediately follow the service at the North Carolina Estuarium Seafood School.

Hank, as he was known to friends, was born on September 1, 1930, in Roanoke Rapids, NC. He was the only child of Henry Lewis Stephenson and Ruth Faucette Stephenson. (No spelling error in “Lewis”. There is a story here.) He grew up in Fremont and Smithfield, NC. His father was a senior executive with First Citizens Bank and involved in other banks in the R. P. Holding family of businesses. He attended undergraduate and medical school at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He then served an Internship in Internal Medicine at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA.

On the first day of his internship in Charlottesville, he met the love of his life, Frances Hampton, a nurse at the medical school. They were married on June 30, 1956, in Galax, VA, Fran's childhood home. They were married for 66 years until Fran's passing on October 23, 2022. They were absolutely devoted to each other for every minute of those 66 years. Theirs is one of the great love stories.

Hank served two years as a Captain in the U.S. Army at Fort Campbell, KY, where he was the personal physician of several famous Generals. Following Army service, Hank and Fran lived in Chapel Hill where Hank completed a Residency and Fellowship in Cardiology. He was a recipient of the Henry C. Fordham Teaching Award for teaching residents. He became a Board certified specialist in Cardiology.

In 1961, Hank and Fran moved to Washington, NC, where Hank practiced medicine and cardiology for 32 years with Pamlico Internal Medicine, P.A. There he practiced with a number of talented physicians, and he was particularly close to Clark Rodman, M.D. and Neal Partrick, M.D. The three of them were fondly referred to in eastern NC as “The Three Wise Men”.

In 1992, Hank retired from Pamlico Internal Medicine, P.A. and joined the East Carolina University School of Medicine as a part time Assistant Professor, where he taught cardiology to residents and medical students until 1997. During that time period, he also served as a consulting staff member of Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

Hank also served Beaufort County in numerous capacities, including Chief of Medical Staff and member of the Critical Care Committee at Beaufort County Hospital, a member of the Washington Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and a Deacon and choir member at First Baptist Church. Hank was a member and leader of the Washington City School Board during the era of integration, and was a lifelong staunch supporter of quality public education for all children, regardless of race.

Medicine and cardiology were Hank's hobbies, as well as his career. He loved the study of medicine; he read about it and attended continuing education programs long after his retirement. He also continued “consulting” with friends about their health issues until shortly before his passing. He also read voraciously about world and American history. He was passionate about Tar Heel sports. He was a great lover of music, especially swing era band music. As a youngster, Hank learned to play the trumpet, and frequently played in a band with others from the Smithfield area. He enjoyed golf and tennis, and was an avid exerciser 6 days per week until just days before his passing. Like Fran, Hank was a devout Christian and dedicated member of First Baptist Church in Washington.

No story about Hank is complete without Fran. They truly were one person living in two bodies. They absolutely adored each other and were inseparable until Fran's passing. After her passing, Hank missed her greatly and often spoke of his love for her. They both were totally dedicated to their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. They loved nothing as much as having them all jammed into their river home for holidays and long weekends. They were a team like no other. No family has enjoyed better role models for life than the Stephenson family.

Fran and Hank are survived by their sons, Henry Louis (Steve) Stephenson, III (Linda), Hale Hampton Stephenson, (Lee), Samuel Faucette Stephenson (Courtney); their grandchildren, Emily Stephenson Austin (Brian), Henry Louis Stephenson IV (Andrea), Elizabeth Stephenson Longino (Beau), Rebecca Hampton Stephenson (Michael), Anna Frances Stephenson, Sarah Hampton Stephenson, Parker Fitzpatrick Stephenson; and their great grandchildren Adeline Rebecca Austin, Margaret Wilder Austin, Caroline Frances Longino, Edwin Henry Austin, Thomas Schulte Ryan, and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

The family would like to express its deep appreciation to the entire staff at Cypress Glen for taking wonderful care of Fran and Hank. Additionally, the family is extremely grateful to Elaine Martin and Joyce Roberts for their loving, patient care of them.

One thing Hank disliked was lengthy obituaries. Since he likely is watching us from heaven, we apologize for the length of this one!

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Fellowship of Christian Athletes - Eastern NC or Boys & Girls Clubs of the Coastal Plain.

Arrangements by Wilkerson Funeral Home & Crematory. Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneral-home.com.

OBITUARY POLICY

For information on submitting obituaries or death notices Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., call 329-9505 or email obits@apgenc.com and specify that you are interested in obituary information for The Daily Reflector. On weekends and holidays, email obits@apgenc.com.

Ebola death toll rises to 930

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUNIA, Congo — The death toll in Congo's Ebola outbreak has risen to at least 930, the country's Ministry of Health said on Monday, with 37 new deaths reported in a 24-hour span Friday into Saturday, one of the highest totals.

The deaths were recorded out of the 2,344 cases confirmed as of Saturday, the health ministry said.

The Ebola outbreak that was declared in eastern Congo on May 15 is the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record. The Bundibugyo virus responsible for the outbreak is less common than others

that cause Ebola disease, and there is no approved vaccine or treatment.

Ebola is highly contagious and can be transmitted to people from wild animals. It spreads in the human population through contact with bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen, and with contaminated surfaces and materials such as bedding and clothing. The disease is rare but severe and often fatal.

The surge in deaths comes as safety fears have restricted the response in the worst-affected province of Ituri. A total of five provinces have been affected, all in the eastern region where rebel violence is rampant.



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