

USC student learns about life in Washington, D.C.

STAFF REPORT

Most people don't think they will be part of a historical event. When Tomeaka Fladger, a sociology major, left for an internship in Washington last semester, she never anticipated she would witness two historic events.

Last fall, Fladger took part in USC Honors College's congressional intern program in Washington, D.C. While working in S.C. Rep. Mark Sanford's office, she experienced the government shutdown.

Fladger also participated in the Million Man March, an event which she feels blessed to have been part of as an African American.

"The march was so moving," said Fladger. "I looked around and thought, 'Here's a part of the population that no one expects good things to come from.' But it was great because what I saw were janitors and doctors side by side. I knew this was my moment. I felt essential and a part of history. It's so vivid in my mind that I even remember what I was wearing."

Fladger was one of six interns from USC who shared a house during the fall semester. Each intern worked for a different congressman on Capitol Hill. During the day, they learned the inside ropes of the federal government. At night, they attended classes in their house and

took in the Washington culture.

"I was a little nervous about working in a congressman's office at first," said Fladger, "but I quickly felt a part of the team."

"I appreciate what they do. It's a hard job. You have to play ball a different way—making compromises and addressing all sorts of concerns."

Fladger said she was shocked when the federal government initially shut down. She was thankful she was considered an "essential" government employee, which meant her internship wasn't interrupted by the shutdown.

"The government has money, but workers don't," said Fladger. "The shutdown was wrong, and I was sorry to see them play with people's lives like that. They need to put bipartisan debate aside."

In addition to learning about and experiencing the demands of public office, Fladger said living in a metropolitan environment like Washington helped her grow as a person.

"There were all kinds of people on and off the beltway," said Fladger. "I saw a lot of African Americans in professional careers—so many role models. Many people had different accents. It challenged me to communicate with people of other backgrounds, and I realized that I wasn't as cultured as I thought I



FILE PHOTO The Gamecock

Sophomore Tomeaka Fladger spent the fall semester interning on Capitol Hill. The program is sponsored by the Honors College.

was. Working in Washington taught Fladger not to be afraid to express concerns she might have about the way government is run. Fladger said she would definitely write her congressman with a concern.

"I think it's worthwhile to communicate your concerns," said Fladger. "After seeing, opening, filing and answering a congressman's mail, I'll just pick up the phone."

UNC ram mascot found dead

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH, N.C. — The ram mascot for North Carolina's football team was probably killed when a major artery in its neck was severed, an autopsy found Monday.

The ram also received as many as 10 stab wounds to the chest and neck, had a large gash on the abdomen and had his left front limb hacked away, said Rich Miller, an assistant professor of pathology at North Carolina State's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Preliminary results found the knife wounds were delivered with enough force to have fractured a rib.

"It's difficult to imagine why anyone would maliciously attack an animal like this," Miller said.

Rameses the ram was found dead Sunday morning on his caretaker's farm after serving as the latest in a seven-decade line of mascots for only a year.

North Carolina mascots have been targets of pranksters since the rams

were introduced in 1924. In the past, students at rival schools kidnapped them before big games, but the animals have always been returned safely. Sheriff Lindy Pendegrass told The Herald-Sun of Durham his office has "some suspicions" regarding a motive and suspects.

A white ram with horns painted sky blue, Rameses would lead the football team onto the field at the start of each game along with a cheerleader escort.

Robert Hogan's family has kept the rams since the tradition began in 1924. He told The News & Observer he is convinced the killing is not sports related.

Rusty Rogers was one of many North Carolina alumni repulsed by the ram's death.

"I've brought my nephews and nieces to games and they've all gone down to the fence at football games to see Rameses and to pet Rameses," Rogers said. "That's horrible. What's a little kid going to think?"

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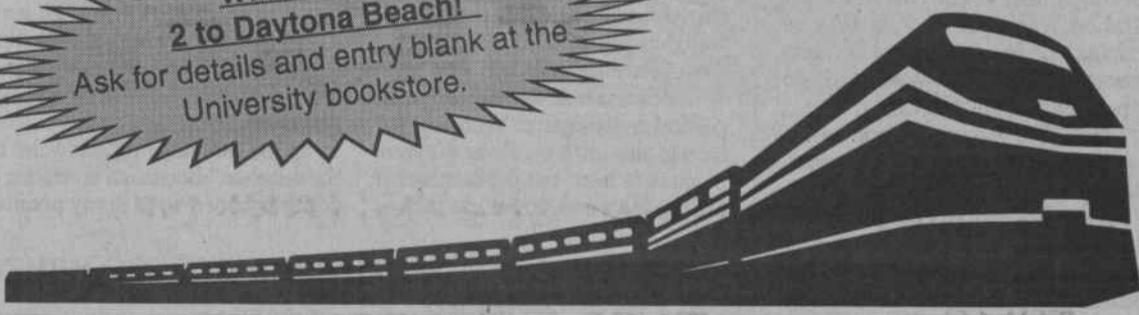
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