

Hampton *helped* make the man

He's virtually a legend in his own time. As a matter of fact, one-time civil rights activist Felton J. Capel Sr., '51, has mixed ideas with Martin Luther King Jr. and table-talked with Hubert Humphrey at the White House in the heat of the segregated 60s. A mover and shaker of the civil rights era, Capel has a history of "firsts," including being the first black city councilman and mayor pro-tem in Southern Pines, N.C. He gives a good bit of credit to Hampton for his success.

"Hampton has really prepared me, perhaps not knowingly, for many of my future challenges," muses Capel, who has retired as the chairman/president of Century Associates in North Carolina, distributors of stainless steel waterless cookware and other housewares. "For us, there was no quitting, no giving up. You had to be the best!"

Fresh off the heels of World War II at the tender age of 20, Capel took his GI Bill straight to Hampton. "Hampton is one the finest institutions in the country," emphasized this self-proclaimed professional grandparent whose name adorns the \$11 million sports facility at

Fayetteville State University. "I needed the discipline the professors provided and I now realize that they helped make me who I am today."

Athletic at heart, boxing caught Capel's fancy at Hampton, "because if you didn't belong to a varsity team, you could not belong to the Varsity Club whose members were prominent Hamptonians. I got lucky, won my division and represented our team in the CIAA Middleweight Championship fight." Hard to believe, considering he's the family patriarch of basketball greats Jeff Capel Jr. Norfolk's (Va.) outstanding Old Dominion University basketball coach, and his two sons - record setting Duke standout, Jeff, III, and Jason, a starting freshman guard for the North Carolina Tarheels.

Capel still maintains an office at the family-owned Cardinal Recreation Park, a summer recreational facility that was spawned from the segregation of the early 60s. "We needed a place for our associates to entertain their families and where my sons could work and play. Now, we cater to churches, family and school reunions and businesses."

Consulting and motivational speeches

now occupy much of Capel's time. Well, that and golf.

Having teed up with the likes of Michael Jordan, Lee Elder and Dean Smith, he keeps his skills sharp by challenging his three sons, Jeff, Mitch

and Ken, in a family duel. Capel is also a member of the President's Council for the 1999 U.S. Open which will be held in Pinehurst, N.C., the week of June 20, 1999.

Over the years, Capel has been yet another Hamptonian force to be reckoned with. What helped to keep him going? "Why, words of the great Booker T. Washington himself, who once said, 'Let down your buckets where you are.' I pride myself in taking what's available to me and doing the best I can until something better comes along." **H**



Felton J. Capel Sr.