

# Jocelyn Elders eyes girl, women, teen smokers

By Melde Rutledge  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

GREENSBORO, N.C. (NNPA) - Tobacco is the only product sold in the world that will kill you when used as directed, according to former U.S. Surgeon General M. Jocelyn Elders.

The American Cancer Society reported that 440,000 people die each year in the United States from tobacco use. And ciga-

rettes kill more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide and illegal drugs combined.

"So, I'm saying, we've got to deal with smoking," she said.

Elders participated in a "sister chat" among a sizeable crowd on the campus of Bennett College for Women as part of the school's On the Ground Smoking Cessation and Prevention Project, de-

signed to reduce smoking among college students, strengthen campus smoking policies and raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use.

In February 2004, the American Legacy Foundation provided a \$1 million grant to three historically Black colleges and universities to initiate the project.

Bennett, now a smoke-free campus, became one of those grantees, and is using the funds to bring influential speakers to the all-women college to discuss tobacco prevention and cessation.

According to the National Cancer Institute, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among women — 87 percent as a result of smoking.

"When women smoke like men, they die like men," she said.

Elders' short-lived stint as surgeon general began in September 1993 under Presi-

dent Bill Clinton. From the onset of her appointed position, she riled many conservatives over her vocal stance in support of sex education, the distribution of condoms in schools, abortion rights and the medical use of marijuana.

In December 1994, Elders' assertion that "masturbation is part of human sexuality and a part of something that should be taught" initiated Clinton to seek and receive her resignation.

"If you ask me, it was far more than one comment made about a fact of life that led to the indefensible and unjust forced resignation of Dr. Elders," Bennett President Johnnetta Cole told the audience about Elders' resignation. "As a Black woman, she spoke truth to power."

Elders praised Bennett for its smoke-free initiative, but added that the school shouldn't limit smoking awareness to the boundaries

of its campus.

"You've got to get everybody involved, Sharon (Height)," she said to the project director of the On the Ground Smoking Cessation and Prevention Project.

"You can't just educate Bennett. You've got to go out and educate the people that are out there in the streets to make sure that they are aware."

Along with cancer, tobacco use increases a person's risk for many other serious health problems, such as heart attack and stroke. This is due in part to some of the compounds found in tobacco smoke, which include ammonia, tar and carbon monoxide.

"The more education you have, the less likely you are to smoke," said Elders.

She noted that African-Americans are more prone to complications from smoking than Whites, due in part to African-Americans' inability

to metabolize nicotine as well as Whites.

"But the other thing is, we smoke (cigarettes) until they're shorter — all the way down to the stub," Elders joked.

She also pointed out that most smokers begin their habit before the age of 19, and that most people who have not begun to smoke before that age will most likely refrain from smoking throughout their lives.

"Nicotine is a teenage drug," she said about the drug added in cigarettes.

Elders recommend solutions to prevent smoking, such as raising the legal age to buy cigarettes and boosting cigarette taxes up 10 percent. However, throughout her address, she stressed that the strongest tool in smoking prevention is making people aware of its damaging effects through education.

Melde Rutledge writes for the Carolina Peacemaker.

## Enrollment

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other way around," Hyser says.

"A student might be okay where they are at sports-wise, but the parents aren't. They are going to do everything they can to make sure their kid goes somewhere where they can get playing time."

Athletic transfers "is an issue that long has been a concern," says MSHSL Executive Director David Stead, adding that rarely will students admit that sports is the primary reason for transferring.

"If you generally ask people why they transfer, very few ever will say it is for athletics. They will always say it is for academic reasons or won't say anything at all."

Open enrollment has also fostered a culture of recruiting, which is illegal (MSHSL Bylaw 308.00). According to Hyser, "Open enrollment not only has encouraged recruiting, but it almost demanded it. If you want to be competitive nowadays, many coaches feel that they have to recruit."

It is a wink-wink sort of thing, jokes Portis: "Some of those high school coaches are better recruiters than what [Head Coach Dan] Monson has on his staff at the University of Minnesota."

Stead says his office regularly gets calls accusing a school of illegal recruiting. Although the MSHSL doesn't have an investigative office, "We actually hired outside investigators to go look at a school's program because of the number of inquiries that we have had," he recalls.

Without solid evidence, proving that illegal recruiting took place is hard to do, Stead admits. "We've had circumstances when people in fact sent letters to us saying that they know this has happened and will testify to it. And when the outside investigator asked them to confirm what they had written, they wouldn't do it."

Therefore, Stead says the MSHSL member schools must ensure that each student enrolled is eligible for athletics (MSHSL Bylaws 305.00 and 306.00).

"It's up to the integrity of every school, coach and program to make sure that they follow the rules," he adds.

Currently, there is no consensus on changing the current prevalence of athletic transfers under open enrollment, but most everyone agrees that something must be done.

Students should be required to play at the school of their home attendance area if they transfer to another school, suggests Frost. Portis wouldn't mind the high school league adopting the NCAA's current policy on athletic transfers: "If a kid is going to transfer to another school, and only for athletics, I think that half-year [suspension] is not stiff enough. They've got to sit out a year for any sport."

Stead reports that a group of athletic directors recently expressed their wish for changes: "There were probably 25 athletic directors from around the state, as well as Minneapolis and St. Paul, and every hand went up when I asked how many believe that we should do something to tighten up the transfer rule."

He adds that if any changes are made, "It may not have any resolution until the 2006-07 school year, and it wouldn't go into effect until the 2007-08 school year."

Finally, regardless if any modifications are instituted, open enrollment is here to stay, says Washington.

"There are too many influential people out there who will not let this rule go back to where it used to be," he concludes.

Charles Hallman writes for the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder.

## Your Horoscope Says... Dec. 22-28

### ARIES

Your rapport with your business partner should improve as you take steps to enhance communication. Love waits for you. A message from a distance contains the key. Give in to your generous impulses.

Soul Affirmation: My attitude is the key to my happiness.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 45, 52

### TAURUS

Luck is with you. You have the Midas touch this week. Buy a lottery ticket or make a small wager. Others will respond favorably to you and your opinions. Group activities are highlighted.

Soul Affirmation: I will be my own divine sweetheart this week.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 26, 28

### GEMINI

Keep focused. Your energies are likely to be scattered a lot this week. Your attention is likely to be pulled in many directions. Don't let yourself be seduced by something that looks a whole lot better than it'll turn out to be.

Soul Affirmation: I take time off to smell the roses.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 22, 28

### CANCER

This week is better than last for career goals. Charm is an extremely effective tool for you this week. The charm works better than at any recent time, especially at home. Focus on gaining the trust of young people.

Soul Affirmation: I embrace new ways of thinking without hesitation.

Lucky Numbers: 43, 46, 55

### LEO

Creative interests need not pay you in cash. Joy is in the doing. Working

with a partner is better than ever now. Enjoy letting others know how much you think of them. Work hard at pleasing those important to you.

Soul Affirmation: I give special thanks for loved ones this week.

Lucky Numbers: 19, 32, 34

### VIRGO

Your sweetheart and pals can keep the home life lively. Invite them in. Be choosy about accepting social invitations yourself. Best action takes place at your place. Seek harmony with those you work with this week. It should be easier to achieve.

Soul Affirmation: I gladly bend so that I will not break.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 12, 43

### LIBRA

If someone has told you that you are more mental than emotional, let everyone see your versatility. Be emotional. Think hard about the best use of the soft feelings that you have for the mother figure. That protective side that you have... Give it full power this week.

Soul Affirmation: I open myself up for the glad surprise.

Lucky Numbers: 21, 43, 51

### SCORPIO

Is there someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from? Asking forgiveness is sometimes hard for you, but it can have a bittersweet aspect this week. Getting started may be tough, but once you're into it, you'll taste the sweet part. Kiss and make up. Tum-on!

Soul Affirmation: I seek a chance to give and find a gift.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 33, 46

### SAGITTARIUS

Hey smart guy or girl, wait. Don't think about it. Meditate on it. There's a difference. Don't go after the answer

mentally. Let the answer come to you. That's hard, but you can do it. Close your eyes and see what comes and then execute.

Soul Affirmation: I let others be mirrors into which I look to see my true face.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 31, 46

### CAPRICORN

You'll need all the skills you possess to deal with the confusion that will come into your life this week. Float on the surface of things. If you go deep you could get lost chasing after your own tail. Seek rewards in a relationship that has a long history.

Soul Affirmation: I take a loving walk down memory lane any time I can this week.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 45, 52

### AQUARIUS

You have opportunities to win this week. Make the most of them. Stay alert to things that catch your eye. You might find something that you thought was lost. An old friend is waiting for you to get in touch.

Soul Affirmation: I give thanks for who I am.

Numbers: 2, 34, 52

Lucky Numbers: 24, 38, 42

### PISCES

Keep firm control of your anger this week. It is justified, but you have to make it work for you. Unexpected news comes from afar. It may be in essence different from what it appears on the surface. Take some time to look at causes and consequences.

Soul Affirmation: I am ripe to accomplish what I set my mind to this week.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 34, 52