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Stevenson and McLean, along with many of their peers, agreed that “seeing old faces” was the best part of Homecoming.

Joe Butler graduated in 1979 with a degree in business management and marketing. He was one of the first honor students to attend UNCP. He currently works for Southeastern Regional Medical Center.

Butler said that then Pembroke State University was “phenomenal.”

“I still tell Robeson County kids it’s the best buy for the buck,” he said.

Butler said that UNCP was more of a commuter school, but experienced major growth under Chancellor Kyle Carter and his predecessor, Allen Meadors.

“We have great professors and resources and phenomenal instruction. It’s a phenomenal quality of education,” Butler said.

Newer grads

More recent alumni also attended Homecoming. Cristi Rader came up from Orlando to attend. She graduated in May 2011 with a mass communication degree in public relations. She said she liked UNCP “because it was comfortable to be here.”

Rader said that while the campus grew a lot while she was a student, a lot more has changed in the months since she left.

“The biggest change are the new dorms and the freshman class,” she said.

Rader, a former cheerleader, said that she was used to cheering and sharing in the school spirit during Homecoming, but doesn’t mind being an outsider too much.

“It’s nice to be on the other side and see the spirit,” she said.

Wendy Lowery is a 1996 graduate and was recently named vice chancellor for the Office of Advancement. She said she is a “hometown girl” and was a member of the Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority. She also commented on how different Pembroke is since her college days.

“All we had when I was here was a Piggly Wiggly,” she said.

Lowery was happy with the day’s turnout.

“Just to see everyone supporting our athletes is just great,” she said.

Chancellor Carter, his wife, Sarah, and Provost Ken Kitts were among about 100 attendees at a special luncheon in the athletic center before the game.

Sarah Carter said that guests were treated earlier in the day to a reception and tour in the Chancellor’s home, where she and her husband celebrated the 50th reunion of the Class of 1961.

“We wanted everybody to feel welcome as possible,” she said.

"Seeing old faces” part of Homecoming festivities