

How tall are you? How did you become a professional speaker?

Questions Answered

Humorist Jeanne Robertson says the two questions asked her most often are, “How tall are you?” and “How did you become a professional speaker?” The answer to the first one is well known because this six-foot-two Graham “girl” became the tallest contestant to ever compete in the Miss America Pageant - a distinction she still holds over forty years after she was Miss North Carolina.

The answer to the second question can be found in the Graham Historical Museum where all of Jeanne’s pageant memorabilia is featured in a permanent exhibit titled *Behind Her All The Way - Graham’s Miss North Carolina*. From being crowned Miss Graham through her more than 500 presentations as Miss North Carolina, trace how the seeds were planted and took root for a professional speaking career that has grown for decades.

Behind Her All The Way

The year was 1963 - John F. Kennedy was President, the Cold War was at its peak, the civil rights movement was going strong. That year, a 6’2” young woman named Jeanne Swanner from small town Graham was Miss North Carolina and was headed to Atlantic City to compete in the Miss America Pageant. And her whole town got behind her.

Over 400 Graham citizens traveled to Atlantic City that year, where Jeanne was



Photo by Steve Exam

awarded Miss Congeniality by the highest margin of votes in the Pageant’s history.

Now some forty years later, Jeanne Swanner Robertson is a nationally known humorist, with thousands of speaking engagements to her credit. She has been awarded every top honor in her profession. And it all started in Graham in a different time.

A Different Era

Take an exciting, humorous look back to the early 1960s when the baby-boomer generation was coming of age and the country was about to change forever. Beauty pageants were big and so were hairdos. It was the era when newspapers

printed a contestant’s measurements in the headlines, playing the ukulele was considered pageant talent, and women wore merriwidows under their evening gowns and pillbox hats on their heads. A panoramic view of a year in North Carolina, this exhibit features memorabilia from events across the state in 1963-64...local pageants, town parades, ribbon cuttings and more.

Behind Her All The Way salutes a small town united together in support of one of its own. It symbolizes a place where dreams can come true with love, support and good hometown values, and it answers the question so often asked Jeanne, “How did you become a professional speaker?”

Graham Historical Museum

Behind Her All The Way - Graham’s Miss North Carolina
The Jeanne Swanner Exhibit

135 West Elm Street • One block west of the Court Square • Graham, NC 27253

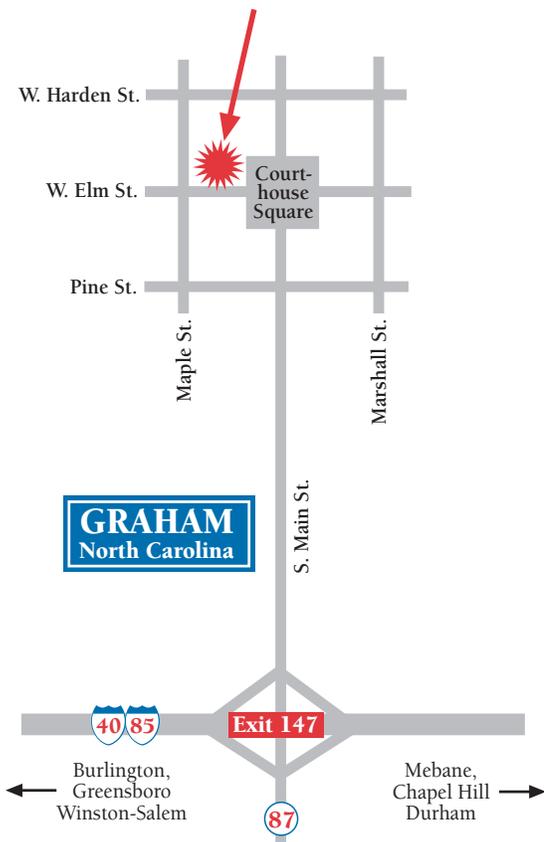
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Graham Historical Museum



How to Find Us

The Graham Historical Museum is located just west of the Graham Courthouse Square. From Interstate 40/85 in Alamance County, take exit #147 and head north. You'll see the Courthouse Square straight ahead. Go three-quarters of the way around the courthouse and head west onto Elm Street. The museum is the white building on the right.

Free parking is available on the street, in the lot beside the museum, and around the Courthouse Square.

There's More...

In addition to the *Behind Her All The Way* exhibit, The Graham Museum also houses other exciting displays from small town America including:

- 1930 Seagraves fire truck and fire fighting equipment
- Graham High School memorabilia and Sports Hall of Fame
- vintage weapons and military artifacts
- first Elon College printing press – Elon was founded in Graham
- copper still found in Alamance County
- local pottery and historic needlework

Other Museum Details

The museum is open *most* Sunday afternoons 2:00 - 5:00 pm, by appointment or when the flag is out!

You may call (336) 513-4773 or (336) 226-4794 to confirm museum hours or to schedule an appointment.

Admission to the museum is FREE, but there is a Ball® jar near the door that loves donations!

♿ The *Behind Her All The Way* exhibit is located on the second floor of the museum and is accessible only by stairs. However, many of the items in the exhibit are portable and may be brought downstairs when necessary.

Stay a Spell - It's a Friendly Place!

The City of Graham would love to have you visit for a while. At the museum, be sure to pick up a copy of Graham's brochure which gives you a walking map of local historical sites, area history and interesting facts.

There are several restaurants within walking distance of the Graham Historical Museum... just head in the direction of Courthouse Square and don't be afraid to ask someone on the street for recommendations!

For more information on area attractions, restaurants and shopping, contact the Burlington/Alamance County Convention & Visitors Bureau at (336) 570-1444 or (800) 637-3804, or visit www.burlington-area-nc.org.

The Graham Historical Museum is sponsored by the Graham Historical Society.

For more information on the Graham Historical Museum, visit www.ncecho.org, look for Alamance County.

To contact Jeanne, call (336) 584-9641 or visit www.JeanneRobertson.com.