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Wrestling team hopes to continue its success against Nebraska on Saturday. **PAGE 6**



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Aaron Taube breaks down UNC basketball's game against the Tigers. **PAGE 5**

# THROWING COLORS TOGETHER

Field athlete expresses himself with art

BY LEAH CAMPBELL  
STAFF WRITER

When North Carolina track and field thrower Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong Keene's seventh-grade classmates hung their self-portraits on the wall, he saw nothing drastically different between his painting and those that flanked it.

Everyone else did. Among the myriad of tans, taupes and browns, was Keene in all of his Crayola green glory.

"I'd used bright green paint for my skin," Keene said. "I didn't realize anything was wrong because I couldn't tell the difference. My mom kind of freaked out and took me to the doctor, and that's when we found out I'm colorblind."

Keene's colorblindness prevents him from seeing variances in shades and differentiating between secondary colors like green and purple.

But Keene, who leads his team in shot-put and discus distances, has stuck with painting despite his handicap — transforming the disability into an excuse to manipulate color and experiment with shading.

"I figure if I can't see it, there's no harm in trying to make it work," he said. "I'm not ever too worried about what the end-product is going to look like, I just try it out. My colorblindness helps me break out of the technical mold and focus more on the abstract."

He paints green monkeys, orange skies and purple elephants, but to Keene, that's what makes his art unique.

His confidence and drive makes Keene an inspiration to those around him, like senior and best friend Craig Barclay, who met Keene during his recruiting visit to Chapel Hill.

"I've always noticed he doesn't really say a lot," Barclay said, "but

he's one of those guys that when he talks — you listen. He doesn't need anyone to sit on him. He's always on top of what he needs to do.

"He gets it done and gets it done well. He's just the man."

Keene doesn't see his disability as any reason to stop pursuing art. He is an economics and studio art double major, receiving art instruction for the first time in his life.

Yet sometimes, the artist needs a break from the run-of-the-mill canvas. His medium of choice: plain white Vans or basic Nikes — wearable art.

"One day I just started sketching a face of an animal on an old pair of my shoes," he said. "They were white, so they reminded me of a canvas. It's fun to do shoes because they only take an hour or two and it's not something people usually expect to see."

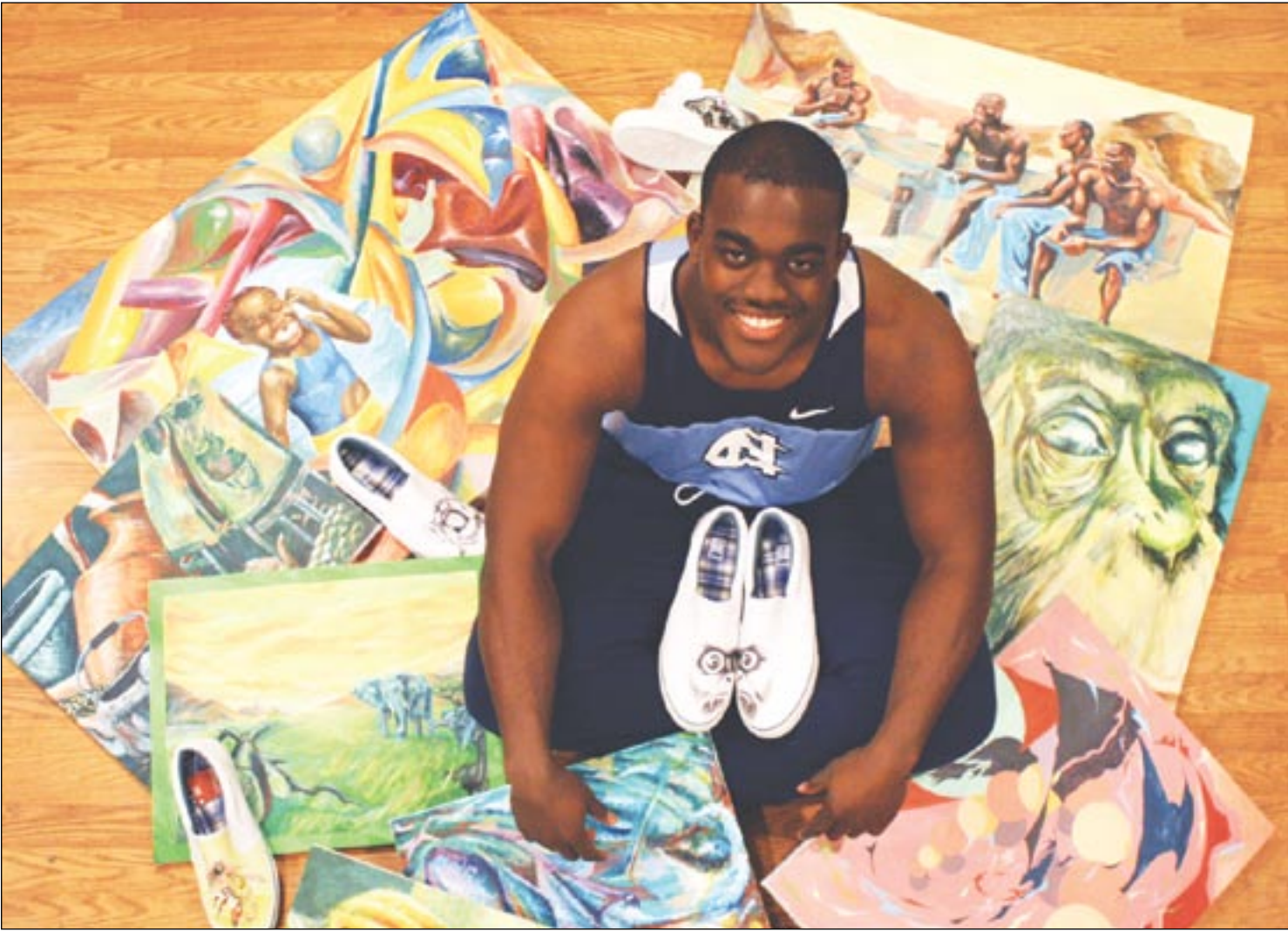
Keene has since begun a small, custom-painting shoe business, Kwopuni Designs, and has produced about twenty five pairs of custom shoes with designs ranging from Marilyn Monroe to Biggie Smalls, from zombies to Miley Cyrus.

"My mom's the one that got me painting," Keene said. "She used to draw for me and my three sisters growing up, so I'd try to emulate her and it just stuck with me."

Refraining from sports until high school, Keene spent his childhood in Ghana experimenting with paints and attempting to replicate things he saw on Animal Planet — his favorite channel.

Keene's favorite design to date is his first pair of shoes — a face sketched with a black marker.

"My first memory of painting is when I was six," Keene said. "I got my first watercolor set and my mom had this huge SUV. When she'd come home from work, I would go sit outside and try to



DTH/ERIN HULL

North Carolina track and field athlete Kwabena Keene with some of his best work. The junior is UNC's leader in shot-put and discus throwing, but has a passion for painting in his free time. In addition to canvas work, Keene also paints custom shoes for his small business, Kwopuni Designs.

paint it."

From then on, he was hooked.

Keene's ability on the athletic field may seem miles away when he's in his kitchen painting, but he says the two activities go surprisingly well together.

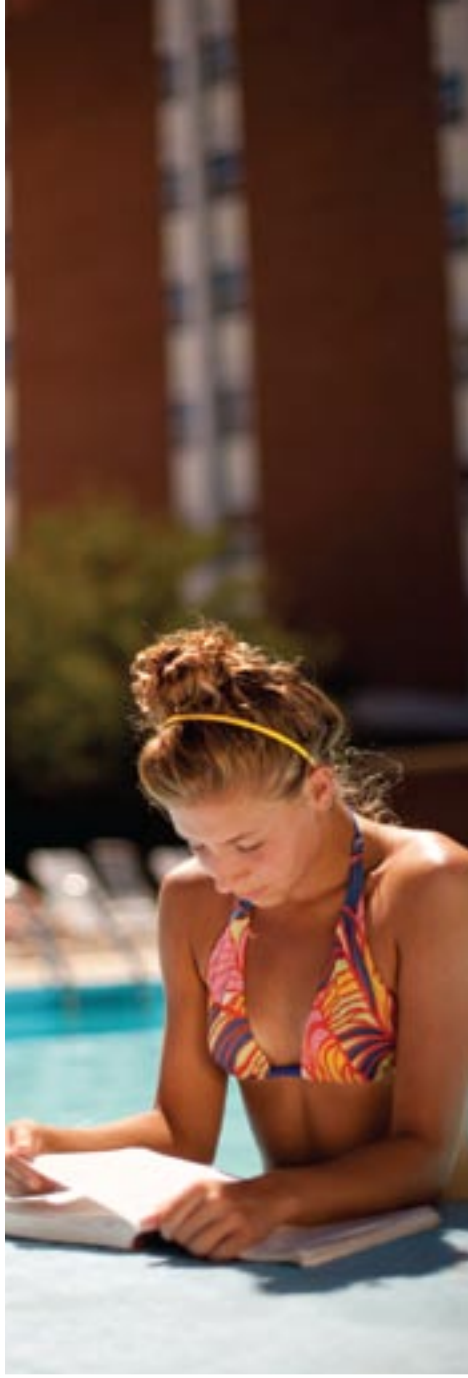
"The discipline I had to learn in athletics translated into me being more disciplined in my art," he said. "I learned to express myself a lot more."

SEE KEENE, PAGE 5



DTH/ERIN HULL

Keene, who is colorblind, holds up a shoe depicting a lion. Much of his other work is inspired by memories of growing up in Ghana. This past summer, Keene went back to Ghana and now wants to learn woodcarving.



  
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Students must complete all three core courses during the 2011 summer term: SPAN 265 (prerequisite SPAN 204), SPAN 321+293 and SPAN 335.

SPAN 265, "Spanish for the Professions," will be offered in first session, and SPAN 321, "Medical Spanish," (with the accompanying service-learning course SPAN 293) and SPAN 335, "La comunidad hispana," will be offered in second session. Students have the option of taking their allied course in first session.

Students can get a pre-registration form from program director Darcy Lear at [lear@email.unc.edu](mailto:lear@email.unc.edu).

Additional information is available at [romlcourses.unc.edu/Spanish/professions](http://romlcourses.unc.edu/Spanish/professions).



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