

Wisdom From the Streets

Psychologist **Dr. Kedric Cecil '75** writes a candid memoir using his past as a runaway teen to help others heal.

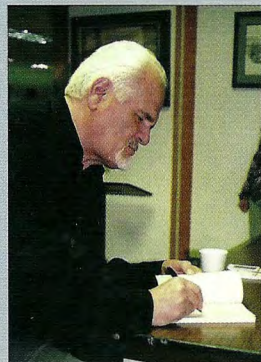
Even though **Dr. Kedric Cecil '75** has been a professional counselor for over twenty years, there is a part of him that still feels like a troubled street kid on the run. Decades before he earned his Ph.D. in Psychology and opened his private counseling practice in Montana, Cecil was a troubled runaway living on the streets of Seattle in the late 1950s.

In his 2010 memoir, "Wisdom from the Streets," Cecil examines some of the painful events of his early childhood – his parents' divorce, the move to a strange new city, and a physically abusive stepfather – that propelled him to life on the streets.

Throughout the book, Cecil presents a fictitious conversation between his grown-up therapist self and the cocky, street-smart teenager lurking beneath the surface to demonstrate the inner conflict that he so often feels.

"I finally got to a point in my life where I thought it was OK to be open enough to tell people [about] the internal process I go through," said Cecil, speaking by phone from his home near Havre, Mont., where he teaches psychology courses at Montana State University – Northern. "The work we do with helping people find Christ, they need emotional and deeper healing. The only way they can do that is by confronting [their past]."

After being in and out of juvenile detention and group homes as a teenager, Cecil eventually graduated high school, got married, and worked odd jobs until undergoing a radical conversion to Christianity at age 24. He then started working at a Christian-based organization in



Dr. Kedric Cecil '75

Vancouver, Wash. that served troubled teens. At the same time, he enrolled at Warner Pacific to earn his bachelor's degree in psychology.

Cecil said professors like Dr. Wilma Perry and Charles Nielsen modeled an approach to education that emphasized open and honest dialogue, encouragement, and genuine learning. That made quite an impression on Cecil, who, as a former street kid, was terrified of being seen as a failure.

"I was one of those students that was always questioning everything," Cecil said. "People at Warner Pacific truly gave me the opportunity to see that you could be a Christian and not check your brain at the door - that you could look honestly at truth wherever it comes and still be challenged. You can still have mystery. It's all challenging and exciting."

Cecil is currently working on a follow-up book that will delve deeper into the issues addressed in "Wisdom From the Streets." For more information, visit Cecil's website www.wisdomfromthestreets.com.

