

# The Caldwell Fellows

Engineer Josh Davis '06 stands in front of the Dueling Dragons attraction at Universal Studios Singapore, which opens this spring.



» redandwhiteforlife.com: An extended interview with Josh Davis '06. KEYWORDS: Josh Davis

## The Ride of His Life

Josh Davis '06 is on track to become a roller-coaster designer.

**A**t 16, Josh Davis '06 decided he wanted to design roller coasters. Since then, the Lynchburg, Va., native has pursued that goal, earning a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from NC State and a master's in the same field from Cal Poly in 2008. Where is he today? Since October, he's been in Singapore as a project coordinator and junior engineer for California-based Attractions Services Company Inc., working specifically on one of the attractions planned for the Universal Studios Singapore, opening in spring 2010. Davis is helping implement the designs of the show-action equipment—objects that move using mechanical components and pneumatics—and flame effects for the Lights!

*Camera! Action! attraction, which will give visitors the opportunity to see how special effects work and how movies are made. A Caldwell Fellow alumnus, he spoke to NC State about his career and roller coasters.*

### What makes a roller coaster special to you?

The newer roller coasters are sexier because it's about pushing the limits—bigger drops, faster speeds. But I love the classics because they carry so much history and represent the skill of some great designers [like John Allen who designed the Racer at Kings Island in Cincinnati, Ohio], who weren't privy to using technology that we have available today. It's pretty cool to ride coasters that have been standing for 60, 70 years.

**Where does your drive come from?** I was fortunate to have a wonderful family, teachers, friends and mentors as I grew up. To have that constant support makes a differ-



The NC State Alumni Association founded the Caldwell Fellows and supports its scholarships, stipends and programming.

ence because everyone is always pushing you to be better. I didn't have any excuse to not be where I am. But, the game of basketball was where I learned about my drive. It was the first thing I ever completely concentrated on, and I failed at it. But you never get anywhere without failing somewhere along the way. Those mistakes and lessons from basketball have fueled my drive to design roller coasters.

### What did you learn from your Caldwell experience?

[I took an Alternative Spring Break] to San Francisco, Calif., where we served the homeless. The way they structured the trip was for us to actually experience what it was like to live as a homeless [person]. You didn't necessarily see people in rags coming in. We saw people who looked exactly like us. It was an eye-opening experience to recognize how fortunate I am but also how much work we need to do to make life better for everyone else, not just ourselves. That's one of the cool things about [the entertainment] industry: We reach people in a different way. Every day, when I go in to work, I try to remember what we're doing. We're entertaining, and I get a feeling of satisfaction from hearing a kid say, "Mom and Dad, that was really cool. I wonder how they did that."

—Cherry Crayton '01, '03 MED

A CORE CALDWELL VALUE:

## Civic Engagement

Josh Davis '06 doesn't just have his sights set on roller coasters; he's also an advocate for underprivileged youth. When he was a Caldwell Fellow, he used an enrichment stipend to organize a fundraiser for the Jubilee Family Development Center in Lynchburg, Va., that brought in more than \$35,000 in two years. "He exemplifies the Caldwell Fellows' value of civic engagement," says Janice Odom '94 PHD, the director of Caldwell Fellows.