

Chronicle Profile

She's climbing the corporate ladder

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

To call Elynor Williams a crusader would probably be an honest characterization of her, for if there's a cause that's worth her time, you better believe she'll fight for it.

"I am one of those people who wouldn't do anything I didn't believe in," she says, "or I'd be out on the corner selling pencils."

That part of her is deep-seeded, she says, a seed planted by her father, a man who moved about from Louisiana to Alabama and finally to Florida whenever a good opportunity arose.

Williams is director of corporate affairs for Hanes Group, making her one of a growing number of top black women executives in the country. Tomorrow, she celebrates her first anniversary with the company who recruited her from Western Electric, where she was senior public relations specialist.

Much of her free time, which isn't a lot, is devoted to championing others on, she says, giving advice and pep talks about the field of public relations and the opportunities it holds for women and blacks. She is also a feminist and proud of it, she says. And contrary to what others might believe, it's not the reason that she's reached her mid-30's and hasn't settled down with a husband, family, home and dog, she says.

"I've been engaged several times," Williams says. "I'm a feminist but that has nothing to do with it. I do like men, but it's all about being fair. I grew up with double messages from my father," she says. "The strong of it was learning how to take care of yourself."

Both Williams' parents were educators, giving

her and her sister the best there was to offer, she says. It is her father, however, that she speaks of with the greatest of admiration. He was the founder of the now-defunct Platick Junior College in Florida. Integration destroyed it, says Williams.

Looking at her now, conservatively dressed in navy blue silk and seated behind a good-sized dark wood desk, it's hard to imagine that Williams, the home economics graduate from Spelman College, is the same person who racked up high school sewing awards in 4-H competitions. She says she hasn't seen her sewing machine in years.

After she got her degree from the famed woman's college, Williams began what would be a series of crusades in her life. On the advice of her father, she says, instead of looking for a career in fashion merchandising, she began teaching home economics to seventh-, eighth- and ninth-graders.

"I took myself very seriously," says Williams. "I had this missionary zeal and I was going to save the world."

"You know," she says, "God looks out for fools and babies."

Williams draws that conclusion after looking back on how she went into the inner-city neighborhoods of Florida, seeking out parents of her students who hadn't attended school.

"Nobody did that anymore," says Williams, "but I didn't know that. I still like teaching. That's why I go to college campuses now the first chance I get."

A resident of North Carolina for the better part of her adult life, Williams, who holds a master's degree in communication arts from Cornell University, came to Winston-Salem after leaving



Although she's a highly respected executive in a fast-paced career, Elynor Williams, director of corporate affairs at Hanes Group, slows down long enough to

share with other up-and-coming executives what it takes to be successful (photo by James Parker).

her job as a communication specialist at North Carolina A&T State University's agricultural department to work for Western Electric. It was in Greensboro, in 1980, that Williams ran for the state House at the suggestion of a local senator.

"I attacked with all the gusto I could muster," she says. "I covered that county like you wouldn't believe."

"... Although I was known because of my volunteerism," says Williams. "I wasn't known in the political circles, but I did come to be known and respected."

She's received many honors and awards, including a recent doctor of humane letters degree from Clinton Junior College in South Carolina. Williams has also served on numerous boards and holds membership into influential professional and civic organizations.

Her career in public relations is high-pressured,

but she continues to maintain a leatherneck approach to it and a "go get'em" attitude, she says, because of her "workaholic and zealous" nature.

The associates and friends she meets are influential. While looking for a business card of an old friend, she dumps the rest on her desk. The pile includes the cards of editors from *Women's Wear Day* to the National Women's Political Caucus. But they're not just for souvenirs.

"I believe in networking," says Williams. "We need to begin to help each other a lot more and that's particularly true about black women, even if it's 'I just need to talk to someone.'"

"It can get kind of lonely when you have responsibility and authority," she says. "The magic words are networking and support. Be able to walk with kings and queens and still keep the common touch."

Smyre and Howard wed

Almeader Theresa Ann Smyre of Charlotte and Lee Samuel Howard Jr. of Charlotte and formerly of Winston-Salem were united in marriage, Saturday, June 30, at 5 p.m. at United House of Prayer in Salisbury.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Smyre of 907 W. Horah St. She is a graduate of Livingstone College and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She teaches in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg school system.

The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Samuel Howard Sr. of 1270 W. Sedgfield Dr. He is a graduate of Parkland High School and Livingstone College. He is employed by Phillip Morris.

Given in marriage by her father, the bride had Miss Patricia Nichols of Durham as her maid of honor and Mrs. Sharon C. Moore of Newport News, Va., as her matron of honor.

Bridesmaids were Miss Henrietta Howard of Charlotte, Miss Gloria A. Howard of Winston-Salem, both sisters of the groom. Other bridesmaids were Mrs. Thornton Howard III of Winston-Salem, Miss Zelma Davis, Miss Millicent Jones and Miss Marsha Pruitt of Salisbury, Miss Vickie Sadler of Man-



Mrs. Almeader Smyre Howard

chaster, Ga., Miss Frances Holt of Charlotte, Miss Karen Holt of Raleigh, Miss Tanya Doe of Winston-Salem, Miss Debbie Wilkerson of Baltimore, Md., and Miss Tonya Jones of Mocksville.

The groom's best man was Curtis D. Gore Jr. of Danville, Va.

Ushers were the groom's brothers, Ralph Howard of Toledo, Ohio, and Sylvester Howard of Winston-Salem. Other ushers were Sam Moore, Michael Holt, Terry Johnson and Michael Shields, all of Salisbury, Willie Davis III and Tony

Perkins of Winston-Salem, Darryl Jenkins of Charleston, S.C., Johnny Stoutamire and Eric Nelson of Charlotte, Johnny McLean of Knoxville, Tenn., and Charles McMurray of Washington, D.C.

The miniature bride and groom were Franco Copeland and Miss Rachel Reid, both of Salisbury.

Flower girls were Misses Deyonae Grace and Rashanda Chalk, both of Salisbury.

Ring bearer was Cameron Brent Hudson of Salisbury.

The couple will make their home in Charlotte.

Lartisa Oliver and Byron A. Williams wed

Lartisa Charlette Oliver and Byron Antonio Williams were married Saturday, June 30, at a 3 p.m. ceremony at the home of the groom's mother at 2220 Elbon Drive, with Elder A.W. McCloud officiating.

The bride is the daughter of Mrs. Jacqueline W. Rogers of 4460 Kimball Lane and Charlie Oliver Jr. of Miami, Fla. She is a 1978 graduate of North Forsyth High School.

The groom, son of Mrs. Sara G. Robinson of Winston-Salem and Richard Williams of New York, N.Y., is a 1978 graduate of Parkland High School, previously served in the United States Army and is now employed by Douglas Battery.

Given in marriage by her stepfather, Larry Rogers, the bride had Brenda K. Richardson of Winston-Salem as her matron of honor.

Best man was the bride's brother, Anthony L. Oliver of Winston-Salem.

Ushers were Gary Mitchell and Romellia Orlando Williams, both



Mrs. Lartisa Oliver Williams

of Winston-Salem.

Flower girls were Andrea N. Arrington and Cherisha L. Williams. Ring bearer was

George Wright.

The couple will make their home in Walkertown.

Salaam, Morton wed at Masonic Temple

Sherry Regina Salaam of Winston-Salem and Steven Gregory Morton of Tustin, Calif., were married Saturday, June 30, at a 4 p.m. ceremony at Prince Hall Masonic Temple, with the Rev. Archie Richmond



Mrs. Jacquelyn Morton

of Atlantic-Highlands, N.J., officiating.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wali Abdul Salaam of 3818 Sawyer St. She is a graduate of Bennett College in Greensboro and is employed by Locke Alterations.

The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Morton of Santa Ana, Calif. He is a graduate of North Carolina A&T State University and is employed by Carl Karcher Enterprise.

The bride, given in marriage by her father, had her sister, Miss Jacquelyn Salaam, of Winston-Salem as her maid of honor and Mrs. Glenda Gambil of Winston-Salem as her matron of honor.

Bridesmaids were Mrs. Daphne Watts of Statesville, the groom's sister, Miss Sarah Morton of Santa Ana, Calif., Mrs. Charmaine

Melton of Salem, Va., Miss Jerilyn Hyman of Winston-Salem, Miss Deadra Richmond of Atlantic-Highlands, N.J., Miss Cynthia Porter of Booneville, Miss Trevia Glenn of East Bend and Miss LeeAnn Thompson of Raleigh.

The groom's best man was his brother, David Morton of Santa Ana.

Ushers were the bride's brother, Reginald Salaam of Winston-Salem, and Benny Patton, Wayne Patton, Monroe Gambil, Lynn Sloan and Darryl Williams, all of Winston-Salem. Other ushers were John Watts of Statesville, Paul Hogan of Chapel Hill and Kenny Melton of Salem, Va.

The couple will make their home in Tustin, Calif.

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