

Though they benefit blacks now, wards have hurt

From Page A1

board of aldermen since the merger of Winston and Salem. In 1947, Dr. Kenneth R. Williams became the first black member elected to the aldermen and the first black elected to a city council in the South.

Williams represented the South Third Ward, serving five years before he was defeated by Crawford in 1953. Between 1881 and 1900, seven blacks had served as aldermen.

Winston during that period operated with three wards with three representatives from each ward. Although in 1892 there were almost as many black voters as there were white voters (1,246 whites to 1,071 blacks), the majority of the blacks lived in the Third Ward.

Jagged Shapes

The Third Ward, according to the "History of Government, City of Winston-Salem" compiled by Robert W. Neilson, a retired director of public works, had its share of bizarre boundaries. It, Neilson wrote, "started at 1st and Chestnut streets, running North on Chestnut Street to Seventh Street, with Seventh Street and its extension West to the corporation line (the city limits). North with the corporation line to the Northwest corner of the corporation line, thence with the North corporation line Eastwardly to the east corporation line, thence with the east corporation line Southwardly to the south line of First Street, extended thence with the south line of First Street Westwardly to the point of beginning at Chestnut Street."

Between 1890 and 1891, the Third Ward was represented by R.E. Clement and J.B. Gwyn, both black men, and J.F. Hughes. The next year, only one black man, Aaron A. Moore, represented the Third Ward. After 1895, there were no blacks representing the Third Ward and no blacks on the board of aldermen until Williams was elected in 1947. Blacks ran for alderman during that period, but there weren't enough black people registered to vote a black candidate into office, said Russell.

Constant Changes

From 1891 to 1895, Winston-Salem consisted of three wards, each represented by three aldermen who served two-year terms. Between 1896 and 1900, there were five wards with three aldermen from each ward for a total of 15 aldermen, each serving a two-year term.

From 1900 to 1909, the city returned to three wards with three aldermen from each ward all serving two-year terms. Bet-

ween 1909 and 1913, the city maintained the three wards but switched to only two aldermen from each ward.

The merger of Winston and Salem in 1913 added Salem as a fourth ward and in 1947, according to an article in the *Sentinel*, "The Negro voters up in the Third Ward flexed their muscles and elected the city's first Negro alderman."

Williams' ward contained all of East Winston, any neighborhoods with blacks in the western part of town and the Kimberly Park and Boston communities. That ward extended from one end of the city limits to the other.

Although that Third Ward was majority-black, only one alderman from the ward was black.

"It was possible to have both aldermen black," Williams said. "We didn't realize the strength we had in that ward. None of the other wards had any sufficient numbers of blacks to elect anyone."

In 1949, two years after Williams was elected, the four wards were halved, creating eight wards with one alderman from each ward serving a two-year term.

The split, according to an article in the *Sentinel* "assured the Negro (sic) of one alderman."

Russell Makes Changes

That ward system survived until 1965, when, with Russell's help, the city changed the lines again. The eight wards remained but their boundaries were completely redrawn, forming the North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West and Northwest wards. That same year, one other black alderman, C.C. Ross, was elected to represent the East Ward.

The 34 years before Williams was elected were a dry period for electing black candidates, but Williams said blacks were not politically dormant.

"The efforts of blacks went down the drain with the collapse of the Reconstruction," said Williams. "But we weren't quiet. Blacks ran for alderman in the 30s and 40s but they lost in the primary. They gained experience as they critiqued their losses. We were running candidates even though we were losing."

Russell said those years were also used to increase voter registration among blacks.

"The AFL-CIO helped us to get our people registered," said Russell. "Before, the precinct workers were all white, but the AFL-CIO came in and some of them became registrars and they helped us to get our people registered."

Once the registration numbers grew, said Russell, the next step

meant changing the wards and getting more black representation on the board of aldermen.

"Once I got in, I worked with Archie Elledge," said Russell. "He wanted to be mayor pro tem and I helped him with the promise that he would help me get the wards realigned."

Elledge, a white man, represented the ward that included Happy Hill and Columbia Heights.

"We got the plan approved," said Russell, "and it gave us a second black alderman and a chance for a third in the neighborhood along North Patterson Avenue."

Four Blacks Elected

In 1965, C.C. Ross was elected as the second black alderman, representing the East ward. In 1970, two other black aldermen were elected: Dr. Albert H. Col-

eman from the Northwest Ward and Richard Davis from the North Ward. For the first time in Winston-Salem's history, half of the members of the board of aldermen were black.

Coleman lost the election in 1974, but Russell, Ross and Davis retained their seats, leaving three black members on the board.

Davis lost his seat in 1977 to Larry Little. The realignment of the wards in 1981 added a fourth black member to the board of aldermen, Larry Womble, representing the predominantly white Southeast Ward. Womble, with only a 37 percent black population in his ward, beat Southeast Ward incumbent Eugene Groce to become the first black candidate to win an election in a predominantly white ward.

By that time, Ross had been replaced by Dr. Virginia Newell and Vivian Burke was elected to the board in the ward that had been represented by Russell

before he decided to run for mayor.

With the exception of a 34-year dry spell, blacks here have had some representation on the board of aldermen. That would lead many people to think that the ward system is a progressive form of government, said Little. But wards, he said, are actually a holdover from a racist era that originally were intended to dilute black voting power.

"Ward elections aren't a progressive feature," Little said. "It was a holdover from the big-machine politics that started in the big city."

"The at-large system resulted from progressive thinking."

Nevertheless, said Davis, wards have been good for Winston-Salem. On two separate occasions, he said, half of the board's members have been black, giving the black community considerable clout in City Hall.

"There have been times where there has been some crazy line

drawing," Davis said. "But the results of a ward system have helped Winston-Salem get four blacks elected to the board at one time."

Little agreed, noting that some people don't like the fact that the board today is 50 percent black and would prefer an at-large system.

"If we went to an at-large system, a disproportionate number of elected officials would come from the white, affluent areas of the city," Little said. "The majority of them would come from the West Ward. At the most, we might have two black aldermen."

If Winston-Salem had an at-large voting system, Little said, the board of aldermen would resemble the city-county school board.

"That school board has eight members and only one is black," Little said. "With an at-large system, we (the aldermen) would be in the same boat."

Davis

DOWNTOWN • THRUWAY • REYNOLDA MANOR
VISIT US OR TELEPHONE: DIAL 722-3411

anniversary 53rd SALE

downtown: 10:00-5:30
thruway daily: 9:00-9:00
saturday: 9:00-6:00
reynolda manor: 10:00-9:00
saturday: 10:00-6:00

sizes 4-7 & 8-20 in woven, cotton blend group of plaid flannel buttondown or spread

BOYS' SPORT SHIRTS

10.00-11.00 **7.99-8.99**
davis boys' wear

infants' sizes in Italian made acrylic knit button front, boys' or girls sizes

KNIT BABY BUNTING

16.00 **7.99-9.99**
davis infants' wear

sizes 4-6x, 7-14, 100% acrylic shetland type, red, navy, kelly, cream, violet, tuchsia, royal

GIRLS' CREW PULLOVERS

12.00-13.00 **7.99-8.99**
davis girls' wear

missy, junior, petite size, melton, wool plush, novelty fabrics, kashmir, etc.

FASHION COATS

112.00-160.00 **92.90-129.90**
davis fashions

petite and missy size spun, crepe, pongee weave polyester in dressor casual

NEW FALL DRESSES

38.00-42.00 **29.90**
davis fashions

sizes s-m-l, fitted or boxy styles mohair, rib knits or boucle solids and tweeds

SWEATER COATS

30.80-82.00 **23.99-47.99**
davis sportswear

sizes s-m-l, lilac, pink, aqua, white hooded pullover, vest, running pants, cotton blend

JR. ACTIVE SEPARATES

22.00-25.00 **12.99-14.99**
davis jr. sportswear

sizes s-m-l, arnel nylon, long length with trapunto trim or ruffle neck styles

FLEECE ROBES

34.00 **20.99**
davis lingerie

sizes s-m-l cotton flannel long length with eyelet trim at placket, neck and cuffs

WARM GOWNS

14.00-21.00 **10.99-15.99**
davis lingerie

name or initials engraved free of charge, warm, subtle colors in sleek matte finish

PERSONALIZED INK PENS

7.50 **4.99**
davis notions

lifetime warranty, sparkling ruby, sapphire, emerald, amethyst, diamond looks, and more

COCKTAIL RINGS

values to 50.00 **14.99**
davis jewelry

sizes s-m-l in 3 styles of outerwear acrylic sweaters in solid fashion colors

HEAVY CARDIGANS

26.00-38.00 **18.99-24.99**
davis budget wear

sizes 4-14, long sleeve, button front, wing collar, Shirred shoulder, georgette

PETITE BLOUSES

30.00 **19.99**
davis petite wear

sizes 38-44, cream, grey navy, red acrylic button front, 2-pocket, cable design

PLUS SIZE VESTS

28.00 **18.99**
davis fashions-at-large

sizes 30-46, baseball style, knit collar and cuffs, zip front, fully lined, split

LEATHER JACKETS

90.00 **53.99**
davis men's wear

sizes 14½-17, 32-34 sleeves oxford weave, buttondown collar, one pocket, cotton blend

DRESS SHIRTS

20.00 **11.99**
davis men's wear

sizes s-m-l-xl, woven cotton flannel plaids, regular collar 7 button front, top center

FLANNEL SHIRTS

20.00 **11.99**
davis men's wear

oven-to-table ware, 2½ oval or round casseroles, 10" pie or quiche plates, other

FRENCH WHT. CORNINGWARE

7.75-21.89 **3.89-16.89**
davis home stores

blue cornflower, spice or wildflower designs, 1-2-3-quart sizes of freezer-oven-table

CORNING CASSEROLES

14.75-21.99 **7.99-14.88**
davis home stores

perfect-fit, tender touch flannel, twin-full-queen sizes, plus pillow covers

MATTRESS PADS

9.00-35.00 **7.49-28.99**
davis home stores



Your pregnancy should be a safe and happy journey.

Call your March of Dimes chapter for a free booklet about good prenatal care.

support...



March of Dimes
BIRTH DEFECTS FOUNDATION