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32 Pages This Week

MAKING IT BIG

Hairston: Success sounds so sweet

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Two days after signing a major contract with Atlantic Records, Curtis Hairston still talked often and smiled broadly, as if Christmas had come in March.

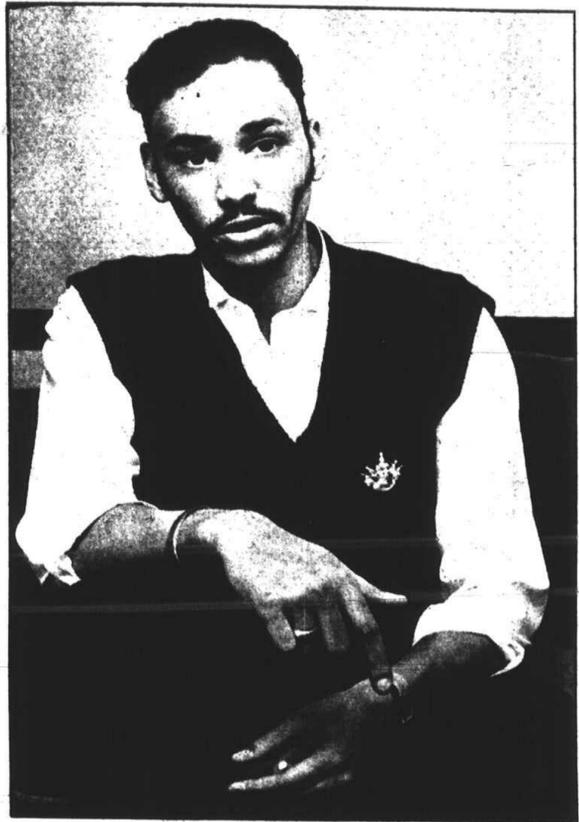
In a sense it did. Hairston's big break came last week in New York, where he opened a show for popular recording artists Yarbrough and Peoples. The next day, Hairston, 24, signed a long-anticipated contract with Atlantic, whose clients also include Roberta Flack, Sister Sledge, R.J.'s Latest Arrival and the Manhattan Transfer. The feat culminated years of hard work, said the Twin City native and East Forsyth High School alumnus.

"I feel absolutely wonderful about signing this contract," said Hairston during an interview at his home on Spough Street. "It is the ultimate for me. I had been negotiating with Atlantic since December and it all fell into place when I signed with them on Tuesday."

An animated Hairston said he's not at liberty to discuss the terms of the pact, but he did say he signed "a multi-record, 34-page" contract that covers "about a five-year period."

Although this is his first major contract, Hairston is no newcomer to the industry. He recorded his first song at age 19 and his records

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Curtis Hairston: "Not everybody makes it to the top... I think I'm going to do just fine" (photo by James Parker).

Maria Howell: A passion for 'Purple'

By L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Having a small role in a hit movie such as "The Color Purple," starring comedienne/actress Whoopi Goldberg, would be an impossible dream for some people. But for Maria Howell, it's a reality.

Miss Howell, a 24-year-old Gastonia native and Winston-Salem State University graduate, indeed has a part in the movie, but don't try to convince her that the part is small.

"It's more of a singing part, but it includes some acting," Miss Howell said in a telephone interview from Charlotte, where she is the featured performer at Jonathan's Uptown, a popular restaurant and jazz loft.

"The scene I'm in is the turning point

of the whole movie," said Miss Howell. She appears in the film as a soloist in a backwoods Georgia Baptist choir.

She said she had been on pins and needles after the filming of the movie finished and before it came out, trying to figure out how, and if, her scene was incorporated in the final version.

"It's a major scene," she explained. "It changes the whole movie. I didn't realize it would even be in there. When I saw it the first time, I just sat there crying. I was so relieved."

Miss Howell says she's seen the movie three times. She says she can't even estimate how long the scene lasts.

"It felt like an hour to me," she said. "It's really something to see your face on a screen that big."

The emotion-packed scene, which

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Maria Howell

Tisdale's friend pleads guilty in DWI case; DA not charged

By L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Vicki Matthews Oakley, the driver of District Attorney Donald K. Tisdale's car during a Dec. 19 accident, pleaded guilty last Thursday to charges of drunk driving. No charges have been filed

By press time, no charges had been filed against Tisdale for "allowing" Mrs. Oakley to operate his vehicle while impaired.

ed against Tisdale, a passenger in the car, for aiding and abetting the crime.

Mrs. Oakley was given a 40-day jail sentence, suspended on the condition that she not have any traffic-related offenses in the next year, and was ordered to pay a \$100 fine and \$100 in court costs.

She also must attend a state-sponsored DWI school and perform 24 hours of community service within 30 days.

Mrs. Oakley lost her license for 30 days but was granted limited driving privileges to go to and from work by Judge Claude W. Allen Jr. because of a good driving record.

Allen, the chief district judge of the 9th Judicial District (Person, Vance, Warren, Franklin and Granville counties) and special prosecutor Michael D. Johnson, the district attorney for the 1st District (Elizabeth City), handled the case.

Forsyth County judges had refused to hear the case in early February because of their working relationship with Tisdale, and, two weeks ago, Tisdale removed his office from the case because, he said at the time, it was "cleaner."

By press time, no charges had been filed against Tisdale for

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Photo by James Parker.

Philadelphia Mayor W. Wilson Goode erred in the MOVE tragedy, concludes a special commission. Stories on A2.

Biracial ministers' group endorses new trial for Hunt

Clergymen representing 150 congregations ask to file a 'friend of the court' brief

By L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

The area's two major ministers' organizations, representing both black and white congregations, have moved to file a brief supporting a new trial for Darryl E. Hunt.

The predominantly black Baptist Ministers Conference and Associates of Winston-Salem and Vicinity and its white counterpart, the Forsyth Ministers Fellowship, asked the state Supreme Court March 6 to allow them to file a "friend of the court" brief in support of motions for appropriate relief and summary reversal filed recently by Hunt's attorneys.

Hunt, a 21-year-old black man, was convicted in June of the August 1984 rape and murder of newspaper copy editor Deborah B. Sykes. He is serving a life sentence.

Ministers from both organizations, who say they represent more than 150 congregations in the area, appeared at a press conference at Parkway United Church of Christ on Corporation Parkway. The Rev. Thomas W.

Mann, pastor of the church, spoke for the group and read a "Statement of Theological Concern" which is attached to the group's motion.

The group says in its statement that it is deeply concerned with the Sykes case "not only because of the brutal murder, but also because the subsequent investigation and trial have raised serious questions within the community about the procedures which led to the conviction of Darryl Hunt."

"If left unresolved, these questions threaten to rend the social fabric of the community, to exacerbate racial tensions, and to create an unhealthy mistrust in our most basic institutions of justice," the statement said.

Appearing with Mann were the Rev. Garther W. Roland, president of the Baptist Ministers Conference, the Rev. Jim T.

Fatzinger of St. Thomas United Church of Christ and the Rev. J. Dexter Taylor of Trinity Presbyterian Church.

The ministers say a review by City Manager Bryce A. Stuart that criticizes the police department's handling of the case, and subsequent disciplinary action against officers who handled the case, give "the appearance of injustice and unfairness in the trial of Darryl Hunt."

"Public confidence in the judicial system of Forsyth County can only be renewed and strengthened, and the appearance of justice can only be achieved, by granting



The Rev. Thomas W. Mann, left, outlined the contents of a proposed Hunt brief during a Tuesday press conference. Also shown are the Rev. Garther W. Roland, center, and the Rev. Jim T. Fatzinger (photo by James Parker).

Hunt a new trial, free of errors alleged in the city manager's report and in Darryl Hunt's motions," they said in the statement.

Mann said the Forsyth Ministers Fellowship voted to write the brief in January. "We got together with the Baptist Ministers Conference and agreed to file the same brief," he said.

Roland said, "We have come together to declare our concern for this community, and to do our duty to all humanity. We have to make (the public) aware of the injustices that exist in our system."

In their statement, the ministers cited biblical references to justice, and said, "It is not only our constitutional right, but also our covenantal responsibility to call for evaluation and reform. Thus it is in the

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Black-owned high-tech firm plans to locate in Winston-Salem

By L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

A black-owned firm with gross sales of more than \$24 million last year will open an office in Winston-Salem in two weeks, a high-ranking company official said Monday.

Maxima Corp., ranked the fastest-growing black-owned company in America last year by *Black Enterprise* magazine, will move into the Winston-Salem Business and Technology Center on Marshall Street in two weeks.

"We've done our initial lookings at the market and determined that Winston-Salem is a place we want to be," said W. Gary Fleming, Maxima's executive vice president, in a telephone interview from the firm's corporate headquarters in Rockville, Md.

"We want to get the feel of the community, and the feel of the business there," he added. "We're ready to begin active

marketing and developing of business."

Maxima, founded by Joshua I. Smith, 44, eight years ago, helps other businesses operate and manage computer centers and includes on its staff a team of pro-

"We've done our initial lookings at the market and determined that Winston-Salem is a place we want to be."

—W. GARY FLEMING

gramming and data analysis experts.

Fleming said the company's major clients are the federal departments of energy and defense. Maxima has offices in 14 cities, he said.

"We chose Winston-Salem because we look for places to locate where it is an advantage to be," Fleming said. "We're a

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