

BALSA plans scholarship banquet

By TONYA V. SMITH
Chronicle Staff Writer

Afro-American students at Wake Forest University are sponsoring a banquet to raise funds for their comperees wishing to attend law school.

Ronald H. Brown, candidate

when you decide to go to law school here," said Grady Crosby, a first-year law student, and former star football player at Howard University and East Forsyth High school.

Afro-American enrollment in the law school has increased by 100 percent, Abernathy said. There were

can send a donation to: BALSA Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 7206, Winston-Salem, N.C., 27109.

Brown, the keynote speaker, is a member of the executive committee of the Democratic National Committee and chairs the Committee on State Participation. He is past



Photo by Charmaine Delaverson

Above are the students who are in charge of the banquet. From left are Angela Leverman, Joe Ross, Valerie Gwynn Quick, Grady Crosby, Clayton Morgan, Rick Bradley and Alvarez Abernathy.

for Democratic National Committee chairman, will be the keynote speaker at the Black Law Students Association (BALSA) scholarship banquet Feb. 25.

This year will mark the fourth year Afro-American law school students have sponsored the scholarship banquet, which is the brainchild of graduates Lisa Caldwell, now an attorney with Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice law firm, and Jeanette Peace, an attorney in Siler City. This year's theme is "Exceeding the Expected."

"The banquet was started in 1985," said Joseph Ross II, co-chairman of the organization's publicity committee. "Jeanette said it came out of a frustration of not being able to get to the community because Wake Forest is so isolated from the rest of the city, and it's hard for the community to believe there are blacks on campus who are interested in this city."

The scholarship banquet is unique because it is sponsored by students, and is one of the only efforts in which students raise funds for potential students. For BALSA, it's an opportunity for them to help increase Afro-American enrollment in the predominantly white university's law school, said Alvarez Abernathy, the group's president.

A \$10,000 goal has been set for the banquet. The funds will be used to help Afro-American students pay the \$8,757 in tuition a year.

"You're talking about making a \$30,000 to \$40,000 investment

six first-year students in the program during the last academic year, and, this year, 13 Afro-Americans enrolled for their first year of law school, he said. BALSA has helped a lot in that effort by sending students who attended predominantly Afro-American schools back to recruit.

Most of those students are introduced to BALSA during their first year. The organization gives students their books, outlines and they provide a support system for each other, said Ross.

"We try to give our group the support we need because law school is a different experience," he said.

The transition to law school is often made a little difficult because of white students displaying signs of subtle racism, said Abernathy.

"Some of the professors here try to be as helpful as possible and most can be less outwardly racist than the students," Abernathy said.

"The professors do show more concern than the students," said Angela Leverman, a first-year law student who did her undergraduate work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "But in our class I haven't had a problem (with racism) because there are 12 to 13 other blacks with me in all my classes."

Tickets for the banquet are \$30, general admission; \$75, patron; and \$125 for a sponsor. All donations are tax deductible. Anyone unable to attend the banquet and wishing to contribute to the scholarship fund

deputy chairman and chief counsel. Since 1981 he has been a partner with Patton Boggs & Blow, a 140-attorney law firm. He was general counsel and staff director for the office of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, where he was chief political adviser to the senator and coordinated policy between the office and the Labor and Human Resources and Judiciary committee staffs. He has served as chief counsel of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Brown was recently appointed to the American Bar Association's standing committee on law and the electoral process.

Other special guests include district court judges Loretta Biggs and Roland Hayes, and Associate Justice of the N.C. Supreme Court Henry Frye.

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Families interested in the program should contact the person named above or telephone toll free 1-800-SIBLING.

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