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## Quiet Fire

### A profile of Ruth Norman

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

As a child, Ruth Elizabeth Gordon Norman watched southern America fight to keep segregation alive. She daily scanned the pages of the New York Times newspaper reading about the lynchings, beatings and other attacks made on Afro-Americans.

She was free to frequent the restaurant or restroom of her choice in her native community of Jamaica in Queens, N.Y. However, she admonishes, discrimination was very much a part of the lives of Afro-Americans in the North.

"Mine was not a 'Pollyanna' existence," said the administrative assistant for alumni of Leadership Winston-Salem. "We were very, very aware of what was happening not only in the South, but in the North there

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The quiet, grandmotherly nature of Ruth Norman camouflages the inner spirit of the woman who handles hair-raising situations with the greatest of ease.

Photo by Mike Cunningham

## \$10k grant to assist N.C. education plan

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

A \$10,000 grant donated by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation will allow a state organization to implement a plan designed to ensure that all children, particularly Afro-Americans, are successfully educated.

Gladys Graves, president of the North Carolina Council on Educating Black Children, said the grant will allow the organization to develop and implement "A Blueprint for Action II." That project evolved out of a plan designed by the National Conference on Educating Black Children

which studied ways "to eliminate the continuing inequities in the education of black children," said Ms. Graves, who has 19 years of educational experience and is a former president of the state Association of Educators.

"The council started in 1986 as a steering committee established to sponsor the conference," Ms. Graves explained. "That whole concept grew out of a group of national black leaders who got together to respond to five major issue areas in education: students, teachers, administrators, parents and policy makers."

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

# The Darryl Hunt case: Is justice on trial?

By ROOSEVELT WILSON  
Chronicle Staff Writer

This is the third of a series of articles examining the investigation, conviction and possible retrial of Darryl E. Hunt for the 1984 murder of Deborah B. Sykes.

Questions remain about the credibility and reliability of Johnny Gray as a witness — the key witness — in the case against Darryl E. Hunt.

Mr. Hunt's conviction was overturned by the North Carolina Supreme Court in early May, and Surry County District Attorney Dean Bowman will decide if the charges will be dropped or if Mr. Hunt will be tried again.

Members of the Afro-American community are fearful that not only will Mr. Hunt be tried again, but since Ms. Sykes was white and Mr. Hunt is an Afro-American, Mr. Bowman will pursue a conviction at any cost.

Before District Attorney Warren Sparrow — citing a conflict of interest in the volatile case that threatens to divide the community along racial lines —

turned the case over to an outside prosecutor, he expressed reservation as to whether Mr. Gray would testify if Mr. Hunt is retried.

But who is Johnny Gray?

When he telephoned police on Aug. 10, 1984, to report the crime he identified himself as Sammy Mitchell. He contacted police again on Aug. 22, 1984, acknowledged it was he who made the call and identified himself

"But I won't forget his face. I wasn't no more than 20 yards from him. Maybe 30 yards from him, and I seen his face, you know, I won't forget his face, and I'm not lying to y'all. And this is the man that killed that lady."

— Johnny Gray, key witness

as Johnny Gray.

In court, Mr. Gray testified he was born Johnny McConnell, and his name was legally changed to Gray after his mother remarried and he was adopted by his stepfather, whose name also is Johnny Gray.

Police records and records in the office of the Register of Deeds indicate that Mr. Gray has used both names from time to time.

Mr. Gray has police records both as Johnny Gray and Johnny McConnell. Prior to the Hunt trial Johnny Gray had been a suspect but not arrested in simple assault, breaking-and-entering and strong arm robbery cases in Forsyth County. Johnny McConnell had been arrested in Greensboro on disorderly conduct and resisting arrest charges. Also in Greensboro Johnny McConnell was convicted and served active prison sentences for receiving stolen goods and unlawful break-in.

"On March 11, 1975, Mr. Gray was married to Ms. Vickie Anne Cain, using the name Johnny McConnell. The son of Vickie and Johnny is named Johnny McConnell Jr.," cites the review of the Sykes murder investigation. Police records also indicate that Mr. Gray was using the name McConnell less than a year before the Sykes murder.

In court under oath Mr. Gray said he did not know Mr. Mitchell or Mr. Hunt prior to the trial and made up the name Sammy Mitchell when he called

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# Candidates for city offices make intentions known as deadline nears

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

'Twas the eve before the last filing date and all over town every candidate was scurrying to the Board of Elections to write their names down.

As of press time, 20 candidates had paid \$5 and registered their names with the county board to be the city's next mayor or to sit on the Board of Aldermen. The fate of some of these political hopefuls will be determined in the September primaries. Those remaining will enjoy the thrill of victory or the agony of defeat on Nov. 7.

Running for the office of mayor are Christopher D. Dirr, Charles S. Smith, G. Dee Smith and Martha S. Wood.

Mr. Dirr, 28, is a Republican.

Charles Smith, 60, is the only Afro-American seeking the office of mayor. He has targeted adequate paying jobs, economic development, health care and education as major issues in his campaign.

Dee Smith, 59, announced his candidacy after reigning Mayor Wayne A. Corpening decided against seeking another term.

A Winston-Salem native, Mr. Smith graduated from the city schools and continued his education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also served four years in the U.S. Naval Reserve. He is best known for his positions within R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. In 1985, he retired as executive vice president of the company and is now president and chief operating officer of First Home Federal Savings and Loan Association which operates 10 offices in the city.

He, as are the majority of the candidates, is concerned with engineering a more cooperative spirit among elected city officials.

"I would say that it is vital that we find a way to work together more cooperatively with an attitude of trust to accomplish the goals for this city," Mr. Smith said. "Right now the attitudes of city officials are more confrontational and combative."

Like other business people in the city, Mr. Smith supports the idea of marketing Winston-Salem in conjunction with surrounding municipalities to persuade big industry to locate here.

## The Latest Candidates To File



Knox



Smith



Dirr



Pleasant



Wright



Brunstetter



Folwell

"But I think we've got to get Winston-Salem ready to be marketed," he said. "We have a lot of assets but we need industrial sites zoned and water and sewer connections available so that the industrial candidates can locate here. Once we get Winston-Salem to that level then we can begin working closely with Greensboro and High Point, because the Triad combined has more than 1 million people which makes this an attractive place for businesses to locate."

Martha Wood is sacrificing her Northwest Ward seat on the board to vie for mayor. Her campaign will be geared towards providing city residents with what they want most, "the best possible police protection and drug enforcement, an economic development program that builds jobs, homes and community; and a government that encourages and welcomes participation."

All but one of the city Board of Aldermen's Afro-American members have filed for reelection. Patrick Hairston of the North Ward will not seek reelection. Two Democrats and two Republicans have filed for his seat.

Frank K. Thomas Jr. and Nelson L. Malloy Jr. are Afro-Americans who have announced their candidacies. Afro-American Diana Williams-Cotton will run on the Republican ticket and will face James L. Knox in the September primaries. Mr. Knox is the only white seeking to be elected in the predominately Afro-American ward. In the 1985 November elections, Mr. Knox was trounced by Mr. Hairston, 1,172 to 274.

Mr. Knox, 32, is a route salesman for Sale Vending. He attended Surry Community and Rutledge Business colleges and studied computer programming and business administration.

"I feel like I have something to offer the city, in particular the people in the North Ward — that's why I'm running for alderman," he said. "I want to bring the North Ward back to the place it was when Richard Davis was alderman."

"During that time if you had a problem or a concern you could call Mr. Davis and he would always get back in contact with you, and if he couldn't help you he would refer you

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# Local NAACP branch to participate in national silent march on D.C.

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

In response to four cases — one of which was instigated by a Winston-Salem resident — recently heard by the U.S. Supreme Court that threaten "to lead a stampede to the rear on civil rights," the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is calling for a silent march.

"Our silent march will be concerned with one issue alone: the Supreme Court and its recent hostile decisions," said Benjamin L. Hooks. "We will be sending a message primarily to the Administration, Congress and the American people that the decisions of this court are harmful to the body politic of this nation and prompt action must be taken to reverse them through legislative means."

The silent march, set for Aug. 26, will be modeled after one that took place more than 70 years ago. NAACP leaders W.E.B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson led more than 5,000 people in a silent march down New York City's Fifth Avenue in a protest against "Jim Crow," lynchings, segregation, disenfranchisement and race riots in Memphis, Tenn., and East St. Louis. In the August march, men will wear black and women and children will don white, said Mr. Hooks.

Walter Marshall, president of the local NAACP chapter, said his membership is making plans to participate in the noon march on Washington.

"The scary thing about those Supreme Court decisions is that most blacks don't realize the effect they could have on affirmative action and set asides and other programs set up for our people," said Mr. Marshall. "Those decisions put a damper on the basic civil rights laws and will make it harder for blacks to achieve our goals."

"When the abortion decision came down white women across the country began protesting. We've had four decisions that threaten our rights to come down, having our rights snatched right away from us, and we have not done a thing to show we disapprove."

Mr. Hooks said the NAACP wants Congress to prescribe legislative remedies in response to the Supreme Court decisions.

"If Congress does not act then we must call upon our citizenry to mount other demonstrations until our voices are heard and our just demands are acted upon," he said. "We are not looking toward bringing vast numbers of people to Washington. In this instance, the medium is the message and the medium is the silent march that bespeaks the seriousness of our dissatisfaction and the need to move without hesitation to correct the

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