

Black voters usher Wood into city hall

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Mrs. Wood's "B K (Bootie Kickin') Team" organized an army of volunteers in the Afro-American communities that provided financial, electoral and other assistance to ensure her win, said supporter Evelyn Terry, director of institutional research at Winston-Salem State University.

"The power that was the energy of the people was more than what money could ever pay for and is attributed to our success," Mrs. Terry said. "It was a powerful campaign and we want to say thank you to the thousands of people we almost badgered, the people we shamed, the people we begged for money."

"It's historical. It's never been done before in Winston-Salem. This kind of voluntary commitment to a principle is unprecedented in my tenure in this city. The people deserve a great round of applause."

About ten Afro-American supporters in Mrs. Wood's camp donned sweatshirts Tuesday night with the "B K Team" on their backs. Those people included Mrs. Terry, Earline Parmon, Leon Kay and Marie Roseboro. Members of the B K Team wrote a "rap", the stars of which are: "a little lady 'bout five foot three (Mrs. Wood)," the "head of the local daily gazette (the Winston-Salem Journal)," "the stock broker, the banker (Mr. Smith) and the big sign maker (William Whiteheart)."

Mrs. Terry said she is proud of all "bootie kickers" who played a part in Tuesday's win.

"For days some did not sleep because we had to work, but we have now joined the rest of the nation in saying enough is enough from the power elite. Government is for the people, by the people and of the people!"

Apparently it is for, by and of the black people in particular, as Afro-Americans made historical firsts: Douglas Wilder, governor of Virginia - a U.S. first; David Dinkins, mayor of New York City; Norman Rice, mayor of Seattle; Chester Jenkins, mayor of Durham. Women also were re-elected to their mayoral seats: Patricia M. Sheppard won a second term in Clemmons, Sue Myrick held on to her job as Charlotte's first woman occupying that seat, and Kathy Whitmire beat the former mayor of Houston and will begin her fifth consecutive term in the office. In addition, political novice Beverley Clark, an Afro-American, unseated a white Republican in the at-large Houston city-council election.

Obviously, the new "unofficial" mayor's triumph was in line with Democratic minorities' wins across the country. Said Mrs. Wood, "I think this shows exactly what we've been saying throughout this campaign. Winston-Salem has the opportunity to be one of the true great cities of America. It's right in there with progressive communities across the country."

As in the previous elections, Mrs. Wood's victory can be credited to a consistent and solid base of Afro-American support.

Voter turnout was down a smidgen in the North Ward, but

Mrs. Wood still captured each of the six precincts. Her largest victory came at the hands of voters at the Martin L. King Recreation Center where she won 487 votes to 7.

Mrs. Wood captured nearly 90 percent of the total votes cast in the Northeast Ward where voter turnout increased by a percentage point. Carver High School's precinct cast the highest number of votes of all

the precincts, 683, and had the highest voter turnout of all the predominantly black precincts, 43 percent.

Early in the day the television media had predicted high voter turnout in the western section of town and low turnout on the east side. However, 32 percent of the voters in the East Ward showed up at the polls, compared to 23 percent there in the Oct. 17 primary. Voter

participation was up across the board in all eight precincts.

Mrs. Wood lost the Northwest Ward where she has served as alderman for the last eight years. The same was the case in the first Democratic Primary.

The new mayor shares her victory with her supporters and campaign workers.

"My consultants have said they

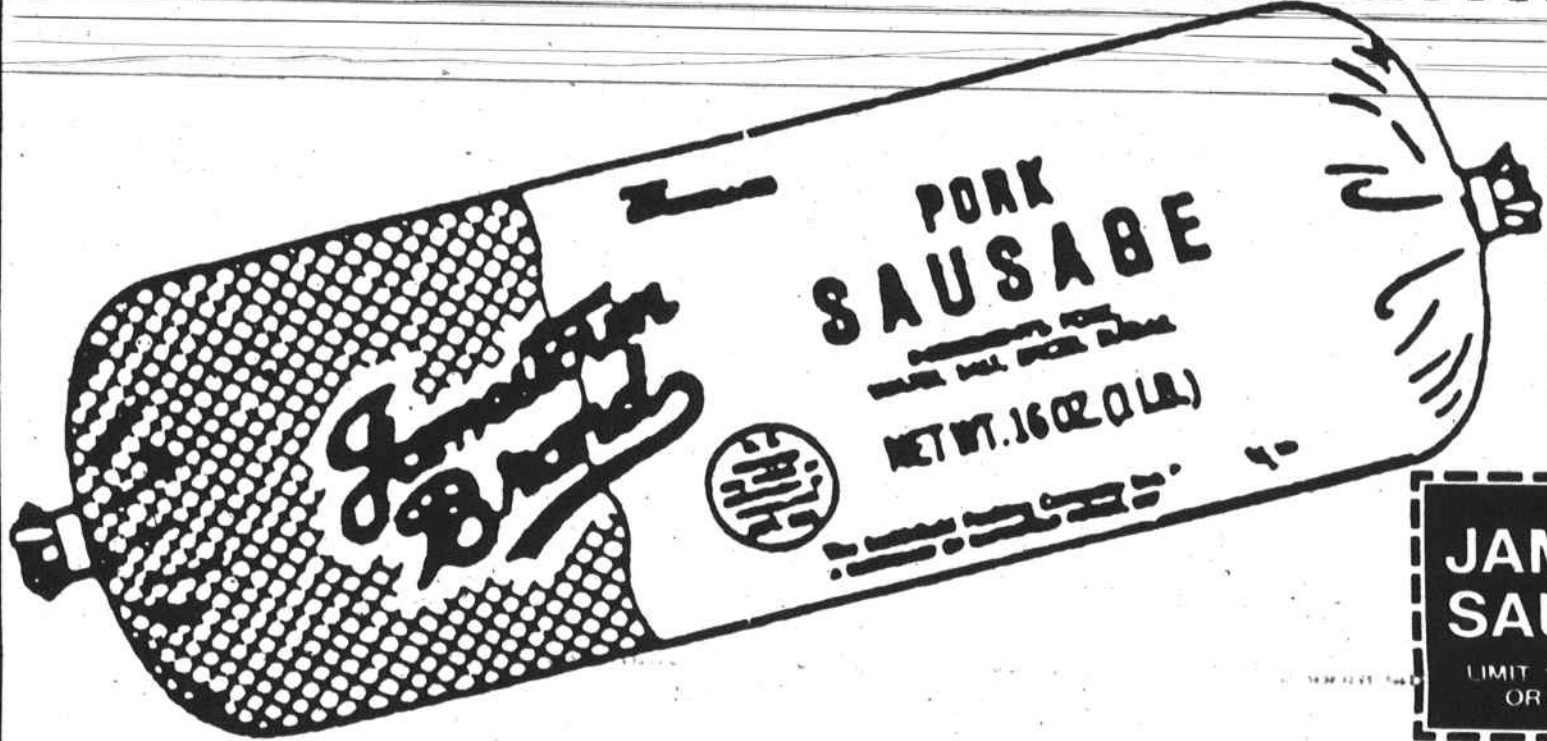
have never seen as much talent in the black community as they have seen here in Winston-Salem," Mrs. Wood said. "I said, 'Didn't I tell you?' It made me proud to see that someone from the outside with complete objectivity could recognize that."

Twenty-four years ago Congress passed the 1965 Voting Rights Act which outlawed obsta-

cles to black voting and authorized federal officials to enforce fair voting practices. Blacks were initially denied the right to vote because whites recognized their power potential. On November 7, 1989, by exercising their right to vote, Afro-Americans galvanized and unleashed a power that has rewritten history and that will rechart their future.

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Seminar

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McLean Trucking Company credit union, in 1984. She charged that Robert Stevenson, credit union general manager and president, harassed and discriminated against her because she is Afro-American. Ms. Patterson alleged that the company discriminated against her with regard to promotions and layoffs and subjected her to racial slurs, excessive work and denied her a merit pay raise. The high court's ruling prohibited Ms. Patterson from collecting damages for racial harassment.

"Because of what the Supreme Court did this summer, most legal analysts believe the only way to save the Civil Rights Act is to amend it and put more teeth in it," Ms. Reynolds said. "That's the only way to keep the Supreme Court from obliterating it. And to do that we've got to have knowledgeable people who will help us lobby our representatives to get the act amended and revised."

The second day of the program at WFU will begin with a continental breakfast at 8 a.m. and the panel discussion will follow at 9.