

Community News B1



Winston-Salem native makes it big in 'Big Apple'

▲ Rolonda Watts is new co-host for Lifetime's program, *Attitudes*

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She's funny. She's vivacious. And she's got a way of just making people feel so comfortable that you can't help but think of her as a friend the instant you meet her. It must be that Southern hospitality shining through.

Who is she, you ask? She's Rolonda Watts, the co-host of Lifetime Television's *Attitudes* program, an information and entertainment show that focuses on women's issues. It airs Monday through Friday at 3 p.m. Watts, a native of Winston-Salem and graduate of Salem Academy, recently

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— Rolonda Watts



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became the co-host of the show along with Dorothy Lucey.

Currently on hiatus from the show, Watts returned to her hometown last week to speak at Salem College in conjunction with the installment of the College's first female president, Dr. Julianne Still Thrift.

She told the crowd of about 50 students and teachers Thursday, that living and working in New York has always been a dream of hers, and it came as no surprise to her parents, Roland and Dr. Velma Watts, who still live in Winston-Salem, when she eventually ended up there.

"I think they always knew because I had always talked about living in New York. So they knew that I was eventually going to do that," she said.

Since her childhood, Watts, 32, has always wanted to be a writer. In fact, she told the audience at Salem College that she "fell in love with words" while attending Salem Academy. She later graduated magna cum laude from Spelman College with degrees in English and theatre arts. She earned her masters degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

It was immediately after graduate school that Watts began her career in journalism. She started out as a reporter at WFMY-TV2 in Greensboro, and has worked in Atlanta and New Jersey. However, her heart soon led her to the "Big Apple," where she worked for WABC-TV as a reporter and anchor for nearly three years before joining *Attitudes*.

She says the show is just one more step to achieving her overall goal of becoming a writer, and eventually getting into the moviemaking industry. "I believe that your mind is like a ballistic missile. If you set a target for it, it's going to go there. So you've got to keep your mind clean, because it's going to go to whatever you set it to go to," she said.

"So as I'm working for one thing, there's that subconsciousness in the back of



Rolonda Watts hopes that her success will inspire other African-American women, as Oprah's success inspired her.

mind, there's that ballistic missile that's going take me to my writing dream. But one thing at a time."

She added that she hopes her success will be an inspiration to those other young African-American women waiting in the wings to attain their own success in the television industry.

"I hope that my success does for another young black woman what Oprah's success did for me, because she opened the floodgates, and said 'Come on in, there's plenty of room.' And I am certainly benefiting from that. I'm benefiting from America's acceptance of Oprah, and perhaps they will accept me as well," she stated.

She also said that for those women who aspire to reach that level, or any level of success, should follow some simple rules. "Number one, believe that you can do it. Number two work really hard. It's not enough to say 'I'm not going to get it because I'm a woman or because I'm black.' I don't believe in those kinds of things. You have to work that much harder and be that much more prepared. How many times do you hear somebody saying that they got it because they were ready when the opportunity presented itself? So always be prepared, be the top-notch at your craft, and look at any setbacks as a challenge to move that much further ahead," she advised.

WSSU Nursing Program to pin its largest class ever

The nursing program at Winston-Salem State — once beleaguered by low enrollment, dismal test results and the threat of being abolished — will pin its largest class ever — 108 students — on Friday, May 1.

The graduates will be recognized at the traditional pinning ceremony for nursing and medical technology students at 6 p.m. in the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium on the main campus. The public is invited at no charge.

The class of 1992 represents a remarkable turnaround in the nursing program's recent history.

Only two years ago, The University of North Carolina Board of Governors was seriously considering doing away with the program's "generic" component and limiting enrollment only to registered nurses seeking a bachelor's degree. Registered nurses, the reasoning went, had already passed the NCLEX, the state nursing board, which had proved troublesome to many of the generic graduates, the traditional four-year students who had no background in the nursing profession prior to entering the program at Winston-Salem State.

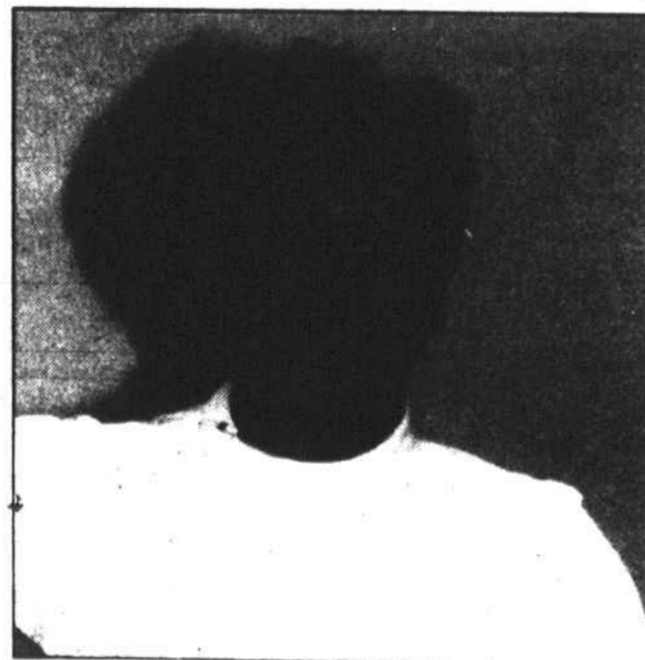
Low enrollment also plagued the program, which has a capacity of 150

students a year but which frequently had far fewer. The paucity of students drove up costs, and that provoked additional ire.

Since the threat of closing in 1990, internal and external changes in the program produced sufficient evidence to convince the Board of Governors in February 1991 to keep the program in tact for at least two more years.

Enrollment has shown steady improvement, increasing from 81 students in Fall 1989 to 107 in 1990 and to 132 this year. Enrollment for 1993 is expected to top 200, including the registered nurses who are working on degrees through Winston-Salem State's extension programs in Salisbury, Boone and Wilkesboro.

Dr. Sylvia A. Flack, a 1968 graduate of what is now Winston-Salem State's Division of Nursing and Allied Health, returned to campus in August 1989 as nursing coordinator to help reverse the decline that endangered the program's existence. Dr. Flack was recently named director of the division.



Dr. Sylvia Flack

Under Flack, enrollment expanded, in large part because of the extension programs, which were designed for registered nurses with diplomas or associate degrees who needed a baccalaureate degree to get ahead professionally. A couple of years ago, a similar program was started for paramedics, who were in similar straits because "they tend to burn out at a young age and found there was no place to go," according to Flack.

Thirty-four registered nurses and 20 paramedics will be among the 1992 graduating class.



Pictured (from left to right) are Lashean S. Wilkerson, first runner-up; Cherie D. Aldrich, second runner-up; Matokie E. Willis, third runner-up; and Montrice D. Brown, 1992 Debutante Queen.

Beta's celebrate 40th cotillion

"A Celebration of New Dreams" was the theme of the 40th Annual Debutante Cotillion presented by Beta Alpha at the Benton Convention Center April 11, 1992.

The Debutante Cotillion was choreographed by Larry Leon Hamlin of the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. Twelve young

ladies of distinction were introduced to society by Theldora Small Williams.

The 1992 Debutante Queen was Montrice Brown, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brown Jr. Her sponsors were sorors Clara Douglas and Sarah Ephraim. First runner-up was LaShean Wilkerson, second

runner-up was Cherie Aldrich, third runner-up was Motokie Willis. All 12 of the debutantes received scholarships.

The chairpersons were sorors Peggy Galloway and Nancy W. Green.

President of Beta Alpha Chapter is soror Virginia E. Wright.