

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

The Choice for African-American News and Information

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"Power concedes nothing without a struggle." — Frederick Douglass

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## Family Questions Murder-Suicide Theory

▲ "I saw them that weekend and . . . they were the happiest they had ever been."

By DAVID L. DILLARD  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Relatives of a young Winston-Salem couple found dead 10 days ago say the incident was not a murder-suicide as police reports indicate. Instead, they believe, the shooting was an accident or the couple was shot by someone else.

Police officers found Raymond Lee Graham, 29, and his wife Teresa Blackwell Graham, 28, late March 13 lying inside their car in the 3300 block of New Greensboro Road.

"It has been hard to accept the way it was reported," said Joe Covington, Raymond Graham's father. "I know it wasn't a murder-suicide. If anything it was an accident-suicide."

When police found them, the car had been wrecked and both Grahams had been shot in the head.

"They were so much in love with each other," said Clara Graham, Raymond Graham's mother. "It was such a beautiful marriage. It bothered me when that happened. It still bothers me now, but I don't believe it. It's like they are gone on a trip."

The Grahams grew up together and have been inseparable since childhood. Both had never dated anyone else and were married in their teens.

Covington said they had visited him that weekend and that they appeared happy.

"I saw them that weekend and everything was fine — they were the happiest they had ever been," he said. "Raymond and Teresa were the example the other kids wanted to be like."

Raymond was employed by Triad Printing Company and his wife was a cheerleader coach with the Tiny Greyhounds football organizations. They had two children Raymond Jr., 6, and Sha-Kessia Nicole, 12.

The Grahams had been married nearly nine years and recently moved into their home at 624 Waltrude Lane.

"I was so proud and happy for them, especially to be so young," Clara Graham said. "You don't find too many young people doing good and moving out into a beautiful house. I told them other people would be jealous of them having something like that."

Police Lt. Larry Reavis said police believe their car had ran off the road, then one shot the other then turned

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Raymond, Teresa and Sha-Kessia Graham

## Working Toward Racial Healing

▲ Black, white churches hold joint worship service

By CHUCK WALLINGTON  
Special to the Chronicle

The congregation of two Baptist churches — one predominately white and one African-American — are working together to tear down racial barriers while also working to building a Habitat for Humanity house.

More than 600 members of the two churches held a joint worship service Sunday morning at First Baptist Church on Highland Avenue in East Winston.

"We are on the leading edge of a great new adventure," said the Rev. Richard Groves, minister of Wake Forest Baptist Church, who delivered the sermon.

But beyond building a house together for a low-income family, he said: "Ours is a ministry of reconciliation. That is in large part what we are about, as we relate to one another over the next few months."

The financial and volunteer equal partnership the two churches have formed to build the Habitat for Humanity house is the first of its type in Winston-Salem and is the first to benefit from a special Winston-Salem Foundation grant made to encourage such interracial partnerships.

The two congregations have raised more than \$34,000 in cash contribution, each exceeding its initial

\$15,000 goal.

The local Habitat of Humanity organization will contribute \$10,000 from the Winston-Salem Foundation grant.

"There is so much more we can and need to do together," Groves said. "We need to talk. We need to be together. We need to be honest with each other. We need to get to know one another. We need to eat together. We need to do these things for the sake of the world."

"But more than that," he added, "we need to do them because Jesus prayed that we might be one, and we are not going to be one with another unless we get together and break down some walls."

The house will be built in Winston-Salem's Morningside neighborhood on Pleasant Street in the Winston-Salem State University/Bowman Gray Stadium area. Construction is expected to start around April 1 and be completed in the late summer.

Following the Habitat for Humanity concept, volunteers from both churches will help build the house, along with the family that will live there and others who donate their time and talents.

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Jeffrey and Renee Davis, with children Victoria and Antoine, will move into their new home soon. Also pictured are the Rev. Wendell Johnson (right) of First Baptist and the Rev. Richard Groves of Wake Forest Baptist.

## Speaker at A-A Summit Tells Participants to "Looks to the Stars"

By MARK R. MOSS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Rev. Eddie Lawrence, pastor of Greenwood Baptist Church in Warrenton, said at last weekend's Winston-Salem/Forsyth County African-American Summit that during slavery a saying that helped the slaves endure was: "Look to the stars, children. Look to the stars."

That adage implied hope, he said, and believing in hope is what has helped African Americans to become leaders in a variety of fields.

"Thus, we a century and a half later . . . (also) have our eyes on the stars," said Lawrence, who is also director of Churches and Community Development Projects

of the N.C. Association of Community Development Corporations.

Looking to the stars was perhaps a guiding principle of the two-day African-American Summit.

Lawrence also gave an historical perspective of the black race.

"When you don't know your own history, it's easy to believe what others say you are," Lawrence said.

He said the Garden of Eden was not in Rome or Paris, but in Africa. He said that civilization's first surgeons and the first hospital were founded in Egypt on the African continent. There were universities in Egypt that taught mathematics and other disciplines before the Greeks, he said.

Lawrence said that during antebellum, whites were

able to control their slaves because they kept one slave in the house and the other in the field.

African Americans are offspring of generations of slaves who weren't supposed to survive, he said. "You weren't supposed to make it but you did," he said.

"Why did you survive? Because somebody told you to look at the stars."

The intent of the summit is to develop an action plan to implement solutions to five issues: economic development, education, criminal justice, housing and youth. Summit participants attended workshops on each of the issues and developed a step-by-step plan to implement the solutions.

"I'm hoping with this conference we'll get away from rhetoric . . ." said former Alderman Virginia K.

Newell. "We've been talking too long."

"The highlight of it all," Newell said after the summit, "was that we had a re-awakening of the young people. . . I'm hoping that if nothing else, we'll follow through on what some of the young people suggested."

About 200 people participated in the event, including about 30 young people.

Newell castigated school integration and the effects it has had on black children.

"We were further along forty, fifty, sixty years ago, than we are today," she said. "Aside from education, we've got to love each other."

She advised the summit participants to be willing to admonish black young people who they see doing wrong.



Rev. James W. Ferree

## Powerful Black Methodist Leader to Retire in '95

▲ Rev. Ferree is one of two black district superintendents

By DAVID L. DILLARD  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Rev. James W. Ferree, superintendent of the Winston-Salem District United Methodist Church, enjoys supervising over 40 pastors and visiting local churches, but says he plans to step down next year.

Ferree, one of the most powerful black parishioners in the state, oversees 59 Methodist churches and handles a budget of over \$100,000.

"I'm going to serve one more year then retire from work," he said. "I'm in pretty good health so I just finish out my term." Each term last for six years.

Ferree is one of 14 district superintendents in the

Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church who make administrative decisions for the churches, including overseeing a budget of over \$15 million and the appointment and dismissal of pastors.

Ferree is one of two black superintendents in the conference.

"We work in a cabinet and find out needs and the interest of the church and the pastors," Ferree said. "The pastors report to us, we approve their salaries and report to the conference. Basically that's what it's all about."

Of the 59 churches in his district, seven are black.

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### THIS WEEK IN BLACK HISTORY

William H. Lewis appointed assistant attorney general of the United States on March 26, 1911