

**ALSTON**

from page A1

is necessary because in the recent past, state civil rights leaders "have not been speaking out and holding public officials accountable." Although Alston steered clear of pointing fingers, it's public knowledge that the organization has been embroiled in internal controversy. Alston believes his experience as an entrepreneur and as a publicly elected official can be an asset to the organization, particularly at this time.

Born and raised in Durham, Alston made Greensboro his home nearly 20 years ago. There he runs S&J Management Corporation, a real estate firm with a \$45 million portfolio. Alston also serves on the Guilford County Board of Commissioners. In addition to S&J Management, Alston has launched two other real estate development firms, including a venture with Tyrone "Muggsey" Bogues, who plays for the Charlotte Hornets. According to Alston, that partnership will focus on neighborhood revitalization in the Charlotte area. His other venture, Alston and Associates, specializes in revitalizing Greensboro neighborhoods as well as new construction.

In addition to those endeavors, Alston is a co-founder of Sit-In Movement Inc, which was formed to purchase and renovate the historical Woolworth building in downtown Greensboro. Alston's goal is to create an international Civil Rights Center and Museum.

Public funding of the museum has been of bone of contention for some taxpayers in Guilford County. Still, Alston, a Democrat, was able to negotiate with Republicans on the board of commissioners to shore up critical county dollars. The result was an indication that despite the controversy, Alston can get results.

The success he has achieved in business and in politics should be a possibility for African Americans around the state, said Alston in a recent interview with the Chronicle. Dressed in his usual crisp white shirt and dark suit, Alston sat back on the leather couch in his East Market Street office and explained why he wants to continue serving as state president.

He recalls how his great-grandfather was tricked out of several houses he owned. There was no one around to help him make wise business decisions. There was no one looking out for his great-grandfather's interests. Alston says he's willing to champion the rights of black people everywhere in North Carolina.

"We do have some of our chapters that have kind of stagnated. But that doesn't mean that they can't be rejuvenated," says Alston. "They need to have a cause to fight for. And we're trying to identify those causes and rejuvenate all of our staunch, hard civil rights leaders across the state."

From Alston's perspective, the NAACP doesn't have to manufacture issues to create a need for the NAACP. On request, he can rattle off a list of issues.

There's one right in his own back yard. Not far away, in Davidson County, the local branch has unsuccessfully lobbied the county commissioners for the past 10 years to formally create a holiday in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

"We have a plan that will be unveiled there in January" Alston said. "I will announce that during my address to the delegates on Nov. 1."

"We're going to get the holiday," Alston says confidently. "If not this year then next, or the year after that. We're going to keep pushing. That's going to be a top priority"

Alston, 40, cites King as his personal inspiration. Pictures of King and other civil rights leaders adorn several walls of Alston's office. "I'm trying to get national people to come to Davidson County on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and we're going to hopefully shut down the whole town."

There are still six counties in North Carolina that do not observe a King holiday. Alston says, "It's the principle of the thing. You have seven white, Republican males that are saying "no" to this holiday.

In addition to Davidson County, Alston says the state conference has important work to do in neighboring Rockingham County, where officials in Eden have asked for assistance in recruiting more black teachers.

Asked if the state conference should be more proactive in addressing racial inequities in North

Carolina, Alston responded:

"We really have to wait until people bring problems to us. We have a lot on our plate already. It's not as though we have nothing else to do and we're going out looking for problems. We have enough people that have day-to-day problems anyway."

Although Alston cites his experience as an asset, some may claim he'll bring political baggage. Alston has his critics in Guilford County. He is frequently criticized for raising racial issues at county commissioner meetings. Alston defends himself against those charges by saying that race is a legitimate issue. He says that his remarks are often intended to raise social consciousness, both at the state and local level.

"When you consider that the state Department of Transportation has \$5 billion in spending and only 1 percent of the contracts for those goods and services, are given to African Americans, yes, there are some real problems." Alston says he's not looking for quotas or set-asides. "I'm looking for fair treatment and fair opportunity." That will be accomplished by continuing to recruit new members, especially youth, says Alston, adding that under his interim leadership overall membership around North Carolina jumped by about 10,000 in one day. If he holds on to the position, Alston pledges to increase the amount of NAACP scholarships, youth chapters and tutorial programs. This strategy, he notes, is in line with the goals of the national organization.

**UNC**

from page A1

certificate for sports equipment rental from Play It Again Sports, a bouquet of roses, her crown, an Art Carved class ring, a three-month membership at a health spa, a visit to a full-service salon, and other gift certificates. In return, she will serve as a representative of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill throughout the year.

"It is a great honor to be chosen as a representative of UNC-Chapel Hill, and I give honor to God," she said.

As a senior biochemistry major at UNC-CH, Sellers considers this honor a fine way to round out her academic tenure. She wanted to make an impact on the campus in some way before she made her exit, and her role as queen offers the perfect venue for making a difference. "As UNC Homecoming Queen, I can show young people that they do not

have to compromise their beliefs or values to be accepted," she said.

As a part of her commitment to the title Queen, Melanie has designed a three-day service project called Giving to Others Daily (GOD). This project will involve the development of the spirit, soul and body of the participants. Because Sellers wants to build ties between students and faculty, the first day of the project will allow faculty and student pairs to volunteer a visit to the North Carolina Children's Hospital. They can take a gift that encourages mental development within the child, such as an activity book or a puzzle. The second day of the project focuses on the development of the body. Student and faculty volunteers will join with the Interfaith Council to serve as the local Soup Kitchen. On the third day, which addresses the soul, Christians will be encouraged to reach out to others and show their faith.

Melanie certainly knows where her allegiance lies. She spent this summer working in Tampa, Fla.,

with the Holy Bible Ministries through the Alpha Epsilon Omega Christian Sisterhood. For several weeks, she served in a local soup kitchen, helped to invite community people to a 40-day tent revival and assisted in the daily operation of the services. She worked with Apostle Derrick L. Wells.

"It was a small ministry that needed our help, and they found a place for us," Melanie said.

Melanie sees her service to this ministry as a way to give honor to God, who, she says, made her a royal daughter even before she was crowned Homecoming Queen.

"God has called all of us to be kings and queens in him. I was already a queen spiritually. I believe that God wants his children to pick up their crowns and walk as kings and queens daily," she said.

Sellers has been very active in the Black Student Movement (BSM) on campus as a member of the finance committee and of the BSM Gospel Choir. In fact, she was crowned Queen of the BSM Sept. 19. She's been active with the BSM since her fresh-

man year. Melanie said the organization gave her a strong foundation and offered her a chance to celebrate her uniqueness. It has been a source of encouragement and a way to build a strong network of support as a minority student on an historically white college campus.

Not only has Melanie been active in the BSM, but she walked onto the UNC Track Team and ran for two years, earning her letter jacket. She shared information about herself that made her special at the Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) self-esteem building workshop at Reynolds Park Recreation Center Oct. 18.

Melanie plans to continue her community service. Following graduation, she plans to take a year off and volunteer again with the Holy Bible Christian Ministries. She will then pursue her master's degree at the School of Public Health in the field of public policy and health administration.

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