

Family Affair

Local School Board member trying to help nephew win high profile Georgia sheriff's race

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

To people in these parts, the name Thomas Edison Brown Jr. does not mean much. But in DeKalb County, Ga., Brown is lauded for his bravery.

Brown has served as interim sheriff in the county since the beginning of this year. He took over a job that was to be held by Derwin Brown, no relation to Thomas Brown, who was elected to the position in November, but savagely gunned down in the driveway of his home on Dec. 15. A nearly \$100,000 award for information leading to the person or people behind the murder has not led to many leads for investigators.

Talk continues that the murder was an inside job, possibly involving high ranking law enforcement officials who were afraid of the tough policies Derwin Brown

promised to implement if elected.

Thomas Brown is one of six candidates who will vie for the permanent sheriff's job. He is the nephew of City-County School Board member Geneva Brown.

Thomas Brown has held several high profile jobs in DeKalb County, most recently serving as director of public safety from 1990 until he took over as interim sheriff. As public safety director, Brown headed the county's fire, police, ambulance and 911 departments.

But this will be his first time running for public office.

His aunt, who is an old pro at winning elections, is trying to help him through his first election. She'll hold a fund-raiser for her nephew at her home Saturday. Thomas Brown is expected to be at the event.

Geneva Brown has also gathered the support of several high

profile local people who will serve as sponsors for the event, including Forsyth County Sheriff Ron Barker, former Winston-Salem mayor Martha Wood and University Board of Governors chair Ben Ruffin.

"He is not from here, but I want to help him locally," Brown said.

Geneva Brown said her nephew is not scared that he will become a victim like Derwin Brown. She said instead he's looking forward to serving the people of the county.

"He is not afraid at all. He is well liked by everyone," she said.

Derwin Brown's widow, Phyllis, was thinking about seeking the position; but as of press time, she was not one of the candidates, according to the Atlanta Journal Constitution (AJC).

According to the AJC, Thomas Brown has combined his own style of management with agenda changes once touted by the slain sheriff-elect.

"I'm all about reforming the jail," Thomas Brown recently told the newspaper. "I've called for an audit. I've kicked the bonding companies out of the jail. I've



Photo provided by Brown family

Thomas Brown shakes the hand of then President Bush during his tenure as public safety director.

already started reviewing the process of evaluating the personnel. If I find something that needs to be changed, I'll change it."

Among those who will challenge Thomas Brown in the

March election is Geraldine Champion, who would have been Derwin Brown's assistant chief deputy.

Geneva Brown will hold the

fund-raiser from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday. Those who are interested in attending can contact Brown at (336) 724-9336 or email her at Gbrown1930@aol.com. She can also be faxed at (336) 725-9348.

Arts Council president takes position in Portland, Ore.

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

David C. Hudson, president and CEO of The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, has accepted the position of executive director of the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) in Portland, Ore.

RACC is a publicly funded, non-profit organization with the mission to provide leadership, funding and advocacy for arts and culture throughout the tri-county Portland region. Hudson's last day with The

Arts Council will be Friday, Feb. 16, 2001.

"David's success in running a major U.S. arts council, his work in grassroots arts advocacy and exceeding his annual fund-raising goals, attracted us to him," said RACC Board Chair Alice Norris.

Hudson will oversee a staff of 18, an extensive granting program for artists and arts organizations, a public art program, and an arts education program that brings artists into the schools.

Barry Nichols, chair of The Arts Council's board of trustees, said, "We have begun to discuss this transition and are beginning the search process for a new president and CEO. David has made a significant contribution to The Arts Council and the Winston-Salem community and we wish him continued success in his new position."

African-American Read-In Chain to be held at Reynolda House

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

An African-American Read-In Chain will be held at Reynolda House, Museum of American Art on Monday, Feb. 5, at 11 a.m. Everyone is invited to bring a favorite writing by an African American to read or enjoy listening to important passages from African-American writers. The event is free.

The 12th national African-American Read-In Chain is a celebration of Black History Month and hopes to make the celebration of African-American literacy a traditional part of the month's activities.

Sponsored by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English and endorsed by the International Reading Association, the Read-In has had participation by more than a million readers of all ethnic groups, from 49 states, the West Indies and African countries. Reading materials should be selected from works authored by African Americans, professional or novice writers.

For further information, contact Reynolda House, Museum of American Art at (336) 725-5325, or visit our website at www.reynoldahouse.org.

NAACP

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three main topics," Alston said.

The state NAACP will also continue its efforts to encourage more young people to join its ranks, Alston said. There are currently more than 100 youth and chapters in the state.

Alston said he would like to see that number grow. Young members were not abundant at the winter meeting. Alston said 400 to 500 young people will be on hand for the state NAACP's annual convention, which will be held in Monroe County this year.

"There are a lot of young people

that are associated with this organization, but there could always be more," he said.

Both the state and the national NAACP are also keeping their eyes on the latest lawsuit filed against the Adam's Mark hotel chain. This time employees are claiming discrimination, charges that the hotel chain is fighting vigorously (see page A8). Bill Tatum, president of the Winston-Salem NAACP told the crowd at a banquet Saturday night that a backup location for the winter meeting was secured, but that the state organization got the okay to hold the meeting at the Adam's Mark.

throughout the country. Sometimes they call Gaines when they are embroiled in a debate among one another about who was the better player. But more often, they call simply to say "thank-you, Coach"

"That's the greatest pleasure you can get: when someone says you have touched their lives, because they have also touched (mine)," Gaines said.

"I've truly been blessed by God."

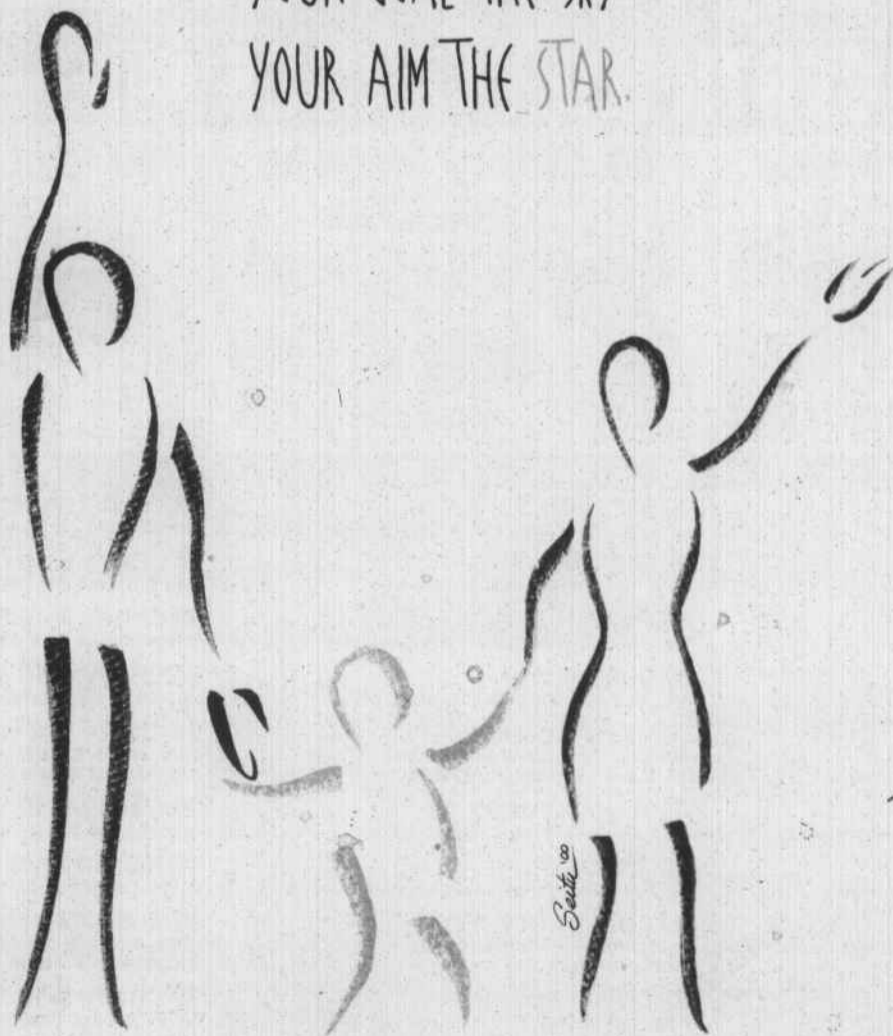
Gaines joked that the Humanitarian award was one of the few non-sports prizes he has won. He said the award means a lot because of the organization that presented it to him.

Gaines is a Life Member of the NAACP—literally.

"I've been involved with the NAACP since I was 9-years-old in Kentucky (his birthplace)," he said. "We are know enjoying the results of what the NAACP has been working for since 1909."



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