

Al Sharpton talks about rocky relationship with Jackson in magazine

NEW YORK — In a deeply revealing and combative interview to appear in next Monday's New York Magazine, the Rev. Al Sharpton speaks about his struggle for power with the Rev. Jesse Jackson and how their relationship will be changed by his run for president.

"Jesse has lost some of his instincts for issues. He's like Muhammad Ali now. He can't fight no more, but he is still a great champion," Sharpton told Jack Newfield in the New York Magazine interview.

The article, which also includes an interview with Jesse Jackson about the conflict, hit stands on Dec. 31.



Sharpton

African-American funeral directors concerned over corporate takeover

PHILADELPHIA — Today two of the mainstays in the black community remain the church and funeral homes. But some black funeral directors are concerned that this is changing, with large businesses having bought out black-owned funeral homes.

And while the trend of corporate acquisitions has slowed in the last several years, it is continuing, both blacks and whites in the industry say.

"Funeral homes is one of the last businesses African Americans have," said Greg Burrell, owner of the Terry Funeral Home in West Philadelphia.

That is because the vast majority of blacks are still buried by black funeral directors, and few whites, unless they are married into black families, are buried by blacks, industry officials said.

"This business is still very segregated," said Sharon Seay, executive director of the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association, an industry group that represents roughly 2,300 black funeral homes, or about 12 percent of the total.

That is down from more than 2,500 some 10 years ago, a drop due in part to acquisitions.

Some independent owners say the personal touch is lost when large companies move in.

The average black funeral home does between 500 and 1,000 funerals a year and, if sold, would fetch between \$1 million and \$2 million, Seay said. In most cases, the former owner, as well as employees, are kept on for several years to offer continuity.

Most black owners sell because they are getting older and don't have a family member to take over, Tucker said. And for most small black businesses, \$2 million is a lot of upfront money.

However, white corporations often don't want the community to know that they are owners of black funeral homes out of fear of losing business, Seay said.

She said her organization urges owners determined to sell to keep the businesses in the black community.

Library project for former president creates black tourism niche

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — When a preview exhibit for the Clinton Presidential Library opened here in December, organizers asked tourists if there was anything missing from the display. The consistent answer — information about Clinton's trips to Africa.

Skip Rutherford, president of the Clinton Library Foundation, sees that as a sign of interest in the Clinton presidency among black tourists.



Clinton

"Bill Clinton has always had very strong support from African Americans, and many African Americans have been to the preview exhibit," Rutherford said.

The exhibit has since added a series of photographs from Clinton's trips to Africa. Exhibit volunteer B.J. Quast said the photographs are among the exhibit's most popular items.

The preview exhibit also features a sculpture of Michael Jordan given by Jordan to Clinton, pictures of Clinton with musicians B.B. King, Stevie Wonder and Lenny Kravitz and gifts from African heads of state.

Between 3,000 and 5,000 delegates of the National Baptist Convention, USA, the nation's oldest black religious organization, will hold their annual convention in Little Rock on Jan. 21-24. Clinton is scheduled to address the group and his library preview exhibit will likely be a popular stop among conventioneers.

"Out of support for the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau and out of appreciation for African Americans, he (Clinton) made the decision to come and speak," Rutherford said.

The conference is expected to bring between \$3 million and \$5 million in revenue to the city.

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co., Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

INDEX

- BUSINESS.....A4
- OPINION.....A6
- SPORTS.....B1
- RELIGION.....B5
- CLASSIFIEDS.....B8
- HEALTH.....C3
- ENTERTAINMENT.....C7

Retiree devotes life to helping others

BY FELECIA P. MCMILLAN
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Robert Lindsay Grier Jr., 79, can be considered a Renaissance man. He dabbles in many different areas of the community. Grier is a father, retired firefighter, volunteer extraordinaire, gospel musician, jazz musician, interior decorator and artist. A native of Winston-Salem, Grier is a 1939 graduate of Atkins High School. He attended N.C. A&T State University, and he spent four years in the U.S. Army. As a World War II veteran, Grier helped to transport medical supplies and ammunition to the front line.

He is one of the original eight African-American firefighters hired in Winston-Salem in 1951, a job he retired from in 1981. Since his retirement, he has discovered many of his latent talents. One of his most outstanding attributes is that of his strong volunteerism. According to LuAnne Rikard, senior secretary I, volunteer services department, Baptist Hospital, and Susan Washbaugh, director volunteer services, Grier has amassed 5,009 volunteer hours at Baptist Hospital as of November.

Grier started volunteering with Baptist Hospital and the American Red Cross in 1987, one year after his wife, Barbara Prather Grier, died of leukemia.

"After Baby died, I grieved real hard, and I received an anonymous letter inviting me to volunteer at the hospital," Grier said. "I still don't know where it came from. Fourteen years later, I am still here."

Grier assists with admissions and discharges at Baptist Hospital. When a call comes from the desk that a patient will be discharged, Grier is assigned to go to the room



Photo by Felicia McMillan

Robert Lindsay Grier Jr., 79, a retired city firefighter, stands beside an American Red Cross van. Grier donates his services to many area agencies.

to pick up the former patient. He enjoys meeting new people and seeing them get well enough to go home. However, there is a down side to this job, according to Grier.

"Sometimes, the ones I roll out of here to go home have to return, and I carry them to their rooms again. But sometimes they die and are not longer with us. That is the pitiful part," Grier said.

Starting in 1987, Grier worked three days a week for the Red Cross and two days for Baptist Hospital.

"I overdid it at first, but I started slowing it down. I did not have time for myself as a retiree. Now I am just a part-time volunteer for Red Cross," he said.

He still participates in blood drives and assists the American Red Cross by picking up donors and transporting them to the donor site. In addition, he helps to deliv-

er blood to hospitals in the Red Cross van, with the Highway Patrol leading him all the way. He also makes emergency runs out of town if someone in areas such as Asheville, Charlotte or close areas in the state has an immediate need for blood services. He has also worked in the canteen, serving refreshments to the donors after they give blood.

"This has been therapy for me, but I could not do it at Forsyth where my wife died. The agony of losing her would be too great," Grier said. "She lasted for five months, and I rented a bed and stayed right beside Baby until she died."

Grier's four children — Samuel L. Grier, Patricia Grier Boyd, Kelly O. Grier, and Alvin M. Robinson — have been very supportive.

Helping others has helped

Grier to heal himself.

"I have always had jobs in public safety such as the Fire Department, where I helped to save lives," Grier said. "I am still doing something for somebody. I get a certain satisfaction from doing it. God has given me longevity and good health at my age. I praise the Lord for that."

James Allison, IV, patient escort at N. C. Baptist Hospital, is thrilled to have Grier as a volunteer in the host area.

"Volunteers are very important in this area. If we did not have volunteers, all of the stress and strain would go to the main transportation department of the hospital and security," Allison said. Having volunteers minimizes the stress on other co-workers here. It also gives the volunteers a chance

See Grier on A9



KRT Photo

Pat Robertson, the founder of the Christian Coalition, speaks at an event in 1999.

Christian Coalition settles discrimination suit

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Christian Coalition has settled a racial discrimination lawsuit filed by black employees.

The suit claimed that the workers were denied health benefits and overtime pay, had to enter the organization's Washington headquarters by the back door and were forced to eat in a segregated area.

The terms of the settlement were not disclosed.

"The matter has been resolved amicably," George Doumar, a Washington lawyer who represented the employees, said Friday. Doumar said he was not allowed to make any further comment.

Ten black women filed the suit in February. They worked in the coalition's data-entry and remittance departments, opening mail, tabulating donations and entering them into a computer

database.

The women claimed they were subjected to "Jim Crow-style racial discrimination," including being told to use the back door because Executive Director Roberta Combs didn't want "important people" seeing them in the reception area.

They also said they were forced to use a segregated break room and were excluded from the coalition Christmas party and events related to President Bush's inauguration.

They later filed an amended complaint alleging that the coalition retaliated against them for bringing the suit. Five more employees joined the amended suit, including a white man who said he was fired because he refused to spy on his black co-workers.

In July, U.S. District Judge Ricardo M. Urbina ruled that the

employees had shown they were likely to prevail in the case and issued an injunction ordering the coalition not to retaliate against them.

Combs was unavailable for comment Friday. She had previously denied the workers' allegations, characterizing the lawsuit as an attempt to embarrass and extort money from the coalition.

The settlement comes three weeks after founder Pat Robertson resigned from the grass-roots religious lobby, saying he was getting out of politics to concentrate

on his Virginia Beach-based broadcast ministry and Christian university.

How Can You Get Some Good Advice On Insurance?

Get Met. It Pays.

At MetLife, there's a new kind of insurance leader.

A MetLife Financial Services representative who is a good friend when you need advice and plain talk about policies. Which explains why millions of people are served by MetLife. And why you might want us to insure you, too.

Let us tell you more. Call your MetLife MetLife Financial Services representative today.



Gordon Wilson, BA
Financial Services Representative
380 Knollwood Street, Suite 340
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
Tel (336) 499-2855
Fax (336) 773-1413

GET MET. IT PAYS.
MetLife Financial Services
MetLife Life Insurance Company, New York, NY
©2001 MetLife

Attention Homeowners

Homes 1 year and older need to be checked for termites



"A flea circus is a good act but it takes termites to bring a home down."

Call
Triad Pest Control
1535 S. Martin Luther King Drive
Winston-Salem, NC
788-3020

The Chronicle Online is coming soon!!

Say goodbye to the symptoms.

Say hello to the flu, Winston Salem.*

Is your medicine cabinet ready to greet the cold and flu season? According to Surveillance Data Inc., Winston Salem is at high risk for respiratory illness right now — so stock up. And visit www.vicks.com for your city's weekly cold and flu updates.

