

# Greeks collect more than 400 dictionaries for Africans

BY FELECIA P. McMILLAN, PH.D.  
THE CHRONICLE

The Delta Sigma Chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., the Rho Zeta Chapter and the Nau Tau Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. came out early on Saturday morning and collected more than 400 English dictionaries that will be shipped to Africa to help raise the literacy rates in schools and orphanages in East Africa.

According to Ken Love, president of Delta Sigma Chapter, this collection effort is in support of the Books to Africa program that state Rep. Larry Womble started six years ago.

During the collection on Saturday, Ed and Miriam McCarter of Special Occasions Bookstore opened their doors to the project. They will be collecting dictionaries at the store throughout the year to assist with the project.

Since the beginning of this project, Womble has shipped more than 30,000 books to

Africa. For the last 16 years, he has been making yearly trips to the motherland. He has been to Ghana, Mali, Kenya, Egypt, Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Uganda, Somalia, and his next trip will take him to Sierra Leone.

His first trip was associated with his involvement with an organization called the Friendship Force. This group seeks to foster one-on-one friendship to people in other countries. Womble went to England, Wales and then to Kenya with the group. He made contacts with the people of Kenya, and now he continues to return. He often stays in their homes.

After seeing the tourist side of Kenya, his friends introduced him to "the real Africa," and this unveiling opened a door for his educational ministry to the less fortunate.

"God has plans that you don't even know about, so I don't question Him. A group of my friends in Kenya took



Mildred Peppers drops off her books Saturday.

Photos by Felecia McMILLAN

me to meet another American who worked for the U.S. Embassy. She took me to an

area called 'the bush.' In America, we would call it going to the 'country' or the rural parts," Womble said. "She took me to a small village that was a refugee camp for the Ugandans who survived the war. Of all the things they asked me to bring to them from America, they wanted books. I promised them that I would keep my promise to send books."

According to Womble, this work requires an assembly line of people to sort, pack, label and tape the boxes of books. For the last six years, he has worked alone, except for a few individuals who would help occasionally. The Sigmas and Zetas have eased some of the burden.

President Love noted that the groups decided to get involved because the mission of the project fits in with the mandates of the fraternity and the sorority. Education is one

of the major thrusts of the organizations. The Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity awarded Womble the Social Action Award for 2001 because of his service to the community at home and abroad. Although Womble is a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the Sigmas had no qualms about recognizing Womble's service record.

"We do not discriminate. In the community, we look for people who are exemplary in the fields of education, social action and business. We brought our idea to state Rep. Womble about sending dictionaries after we saw all of the work he was doing," Love said. "The children in Africa have to learn English because it is the language of higher education, of business and commerce and administration. If they do not know English, they cannot matriculate." The purpose of the pro-

gram is to send educational materials to help students who actually must learn English in order to matriculate to all levels of learning. According to Womble, the Sigmas and the Zetas are the first fraternity and sorority to assist him as organized groups with his Books to Africa project.

Danetta Fitts, president of the Rho Zeta Chapter, was pleased to participate in the project.

"This is part of our national thrust to provide service to our community. We also have some Zeta chapters in Africa. So we are helping our sisters in Africa. Since we are a service organization, education is a component of our national thrust," Fitts said.

Virneva Penn-Wilson of the Nau Tau Chapter was proud to help. "I consider myself an African woman. Americans should not only reach out to other countries besides Africa. We need to reach out to Africa also," she said.

Rodney Ellis, language arts instructor at Atkins Middle School and a member of Phi Beta Sigma, was able to secure 75 dictionaries from principal Sterling Garris.

"We just donated all of the dictionaries that we are no longer using. We upgraded our dictionaries, so we were able to donate these," Ellis said.

Several churches donated dictionaries and shipping supplies.

Mildred Peppers, a retired history teacher, came out with a bag of dictionaries to give.

"Anything I can do to improve the strides from the mother country, I will do. Dictionaries give you a whole list of words to learn, to master. Education is the key to all progress," Peppers said. "If we learn words, we can maneuver in a capitalist society. It can only help them."



Members of Phi Beta Sigma and Zeta Phi Beta organize the books they collected.



File Photo  
Chancellor Harold Martin is sworn in last year as the chancellor of Winston-Salem State University. Martin led the school as interim chancellor for a year before he was sworn in.

## Martin to lead UNC system delegation to South Africa

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem State University Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. is leading a delegation from the University of North Carolina system to explore the possibilities of a student exchange program between the universities in the North Carolina system and institutions in the Western Cape of South Africa Aug. 28 through Sept. 3.

The delegation includes: Dr. Betsy Brown, associate vice president for academic affairs for the University of North Carolina system; Dr. Olasope Oyelaran, director of the Office of International Programs at Winston-Salem State University; Dr. George Wilson, vice provost of international affairs at N.C. State University; Minnie Battle Mayes, director of the Office of International Programs at N.C. A&T State University; and Steve Flynn, the director of the University of North Carolina Exchange Program (UNC-EP)

"This trip is extremely

important in the university's continuing mission to offer our students and faculty the most meaningful cultural and enlightening experiences possi-

ble both at home and abroad," Martin said. "This is the first of many such trips I hope to make in order to make this effort a reality here at WSSU."

## Fire stations plan Sept. 11 events

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The public is invited to attend commemorations that will be held at all city fire stations as part of a nationwide observance of the anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Mayor Allen Joines, Alderman Vivian H. Burke, Fire Chief John Gist and Police Chief Linda Davis will participate in the commemoration at the Arnold Bullard Fire Station, 651 N. Marshall Street. The ceremony will include bagpipers and a reading of the names of the 15 police officers and eight firefighters who have died in Winston-Salem in the line of duty. A community reception will follow.

All commemorations will be held from 10 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. During the commemoration, all fire stations in the city will sound their sirens at 10:05 a.m. and again at 10:28 a.m. as fire departments throughout the United States mark the moments that the towers of the World Trade Center collapsed.

Members of the public interested in attending are asked to gather at city fire stations in silence. For more information, call the city's Marketing & Communications Department at 727-2317.



File Photo  
New York area firefighters look at the devastation at Ground Zero last year caused by the Sept. 11 attacks.

Here's the schedule of events for the observance at the Arnold Bullard Fire Station:

- 9:45 a.m.: Trucks roll out of bays.
- 10 a.m.: Public assembles in silence.
- 10:05 a.m.: Siren sounds to remember the collapse of the World Trade Center South Tower\*.
- 10:06 a.m.: Flag is lowered to half-mast, moment of silence\*.
- 10:07- 10:27 a.m.: Welcoming remarks by Alderman Vivian H. Burke, remarks by Mayor Allen Joines, reading of "The Final Alarm" by Fire

Chief John Gist, remarks by Police Chief Linda Davis, recitation of fallen police officers and firefighters.

- 10:28 a.m.: Siren sounds to remember the collapse of the World Trade Center North Tower\*.
- 10:29 a.m.: Flag is raised to full mast, moment of silence\*.
- 10:30 a.m.: Bagpipers play "Amazing Grace."
- 10:32 a.m.: Community reception.

\*The events are being coordinated by The International Association of Fire Chiefs as a national observance on Sept. 11.

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