

Schmoke to head Howard law school

BALTIMORE - Kurt L. Schmoke, a Harvard-trained lawyer who served three terms as mayor of Baltimore, has been named dean of the Howard University School of Law.

Howard President H. Patrick Swygert announced the appointment of Schmoke, who was the first African-American elected mayor of Baltimore, at a news conference in Washington last week.

Schmoke, 52, will take over as head of the nation's best-known historically black law school Jan. 1.

"It sounds like a wonderful opportunity," Schmoke said. "It's very exciting. For me the biggest attraction was to become involved in work that helps to nurture the next generation of leaders."

Schmoke said that he will continue to live in Baltimore, where his wife is an eye doctor, and commute to Washington. Howard's most famous law school graduate, the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, also commuted from Baltimore to Washington while he attended law school.

Schmoke's leadership role extends to his high school days at City College, where he was quarterback for an undefeated football team in 1966 and was elected student council president in 1967.

He graduated from Yale before going on to Oxford University, where he studied as a Rhodes Scholar, and Harvard University Law School, where he graduated in 1976. He joined the Baltimore law firm of Piper & Marbury.

In 1982, after stints in the Carter White House and the U.S. attorney's office in Baltimore, Schmoke defeated incumbent State's Attorney William A. Swisher.

Six years later, after William Donald Schaefer left City Hall to become governor, Schmoke defeated Schaefer Clarence Du Burns, the City Council president who, in filling out Schaefer's term, had become Baltimore's first black mayor.

Since leaving office in December 1999, Schmoke has practiced law at the firm of Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering in Baltimore.



Schmoke

Outgoing congressman discusses his life and career in his biography

TULSA, Okla. - In his recent biography, U.S. Rep. J.C. Watts discusses his opinions on political parties, race and his past in Oklahoma.

Watts, the only black Republican member of Congress, will begin promoting the book, "What Color Is a Conservative?" this week.

Watts' surprise retirement announcement this summer fueled speculation that he would use the book to be openly critical of Republicans and their lack of sensitivity to racial issues.

While he doesn't give his party a pass, he does criticize the GOP on certain issues.

But only about half the roughly 300-page book is about Watts' political career. The book also covers the congressman's early years growing up poor in segregated Eufaula, his football career at the University of Oklahoma and his mostly unhappy stint in the Canadian Football League and briefly discusses the two daughters Watts fathered with two different women while a senior in high school.



Watts

Woods' Augusta National views scrutinized

NEW YORK - Tiger Woods doesn't understand why his opinion in the debate on whether women should be members at Augusta National Golf Club has become so important.

"I didn't see it coming to this degree," he said in an interview published Sunday in The New York Times. "Yes, I've always wanted to impact lives in a positive way. But I like to pick my own causes and not be forced into having to do something."

Woods was first asked about the issue of women membership at Augusta during the British Open in July.

At that time he said, "It would be nice to see everyone have an equal chance to participate, but there is nothing you can do about it."

When Woods, the world's top golfer, was asked again last week, he gave a more detailed answer.

"Do I want to see a female member?" he said. "Yes. But it's our right to have any club set up the way we want to."

There is dispute as to whether Woods' latest comments were positive or negative.

The Rev. Joseph Lowery, a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, credited Woods for "trying to do the right thing," but criticized what Woods said.

"He said they're both right, didn't he?" Lowery told the newspaper. "He sounds like a politician. It's a good thing he doesn't play golf that way. That's so nonaggressive, so milquetoast, so lukewarm."

Clinton inducted into Black Hall of Fame

Former President Bill Clinton was inducted as an honorary member into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame, the first non-black in the hall's 10-year history.



Clinton

"It is this community's way of saying thank you to him for the work that he has done," said the hall's chairman and founder, Charles Stewart.

According to Stewart, the induction is in honor of Clinton's appointments of African-Americans into high levels of state and federal government and his efforts to confront AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean.

"Most members of the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame have been personal friends of mine. To be included in their numbers, after a lifetime of working for equal rights and greater opportunity, is a wonderful gift," Clinton told reporters.

Clinton was inducted on Oct. 19, along with singer Al Green and Dr. Edith Irby Jones, the first black graduate of the University Of Arkansas, College Of Medicine.

- Compiled from staff and wire reports

Family matriarch turns 105

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Ever since Florence Bratcher turned 100, her family has been throwing her a birthday party. And this year, as Bratcher turned 105 last Friday, was no different.

Members of the Bratcher family have been traveling to Winston-Salem from far and wide every year to help their oldest and most beloved relative celebrate her life.

"Grandma, Grandma, how many children did you have?" asked Lisa Hodges-Lewis, Bratcher's great-granddaughter.

Bratcher softly replied, "A whole lot."

"Yes, you did have a whole lot," said Hodges-Lewis, whose great-grandmother had 10 children, three of whom are still alive today. Bratcher was one of 11 children herself.

While Bratcher, who is one of the oldest residents of the city, joined the Century Club five years ago, neither of her parents lived past the age of 45. Bratcher is from Surry County, where she and her husband, Arthur Bratcher, raised their children on their tobacco farm. Her husband, who served in World War I, died in 1966.

"I don't care if it was 6 o'clock in the morning or midnight, there was a pot of beans on that wooden stove," said Hodges-Lewis, who recalls time spent on the Bratcher farm. Bratcher always preferred cooking on her wood stove, even though she also had an electric stove in her kitchen, Hodges-Lewis said.

The family doesn't mind that Bratcher can't always remember much, but at times she recalls bits and pieces of her long life and shares them in a whisper. Bratcher is just "Grandma" to all, and they are happy that she is still alive.

"Grandma, do you remember when you used to kill hogs? Tell me how we used to do that," asked Hodges-Lewis, who was one of many relatives who surrounded Bratcher and attempted to



Above: Ruby Herbert, 92, helps sister Florence Bratcher, right, celebrate her 105th birthday at a celebration Saturday.

At right: Florence Bratcher poses with sixth-generation descendant Jalen, who is 11 months old.



soak up her past and their family's history.

Bratcher has been living with her daughter, Mildred Span, for the last seven years and is in fairly good health.

"The doctor says she's in better health than I am; no, Mama's in good health," said Span, who added that her mother has to take only two kinds of pills each day, one for her heart and one for gout. "She isn't sick; she's just old. She's really not sick," Span said.

They continue to celebrate Bratcher's birthday, even though Bratcher really isn't aware of her age anymore, because the celebration brings the family together, Span said. Relatives travel from Georgia, Florida, Michigan and all around North Carolina to

attend her birthday parties.

"She was a good woman. She made us walk the straight line," Span said.

Bratcher, a longtime baseball fan, especially of the Dodgers, still enjoys watching games on television.

Span's house was filled with relatives, young and old, immediate and distant, covering Bratcher with hugs and kisses as they passed through the living room, where she was sitting. Occasionally you would hear "hey, Granny" and "How're you doing, Grandma?" as family members would greet her.

"I just can't imagine

(Bratcher being 105), I can't imagine being 92," exclaimed Ruby Herbert, Bratcher's 92-year-old sister, who was also on hand to celebrate the special occasion. "I'm so happy to be here. I'm happy and sad...I like to be here," said Herbert, who teared up and became emotional about the long life she has lived.

The youngest member of the Bratcher family, 11-month-old Jalen Phlegm, is a sixth-generation descendant of Bratcher. He crawled around at Grandma's feet and even posed with her for a picture, proof that the family line has gone on.

Goler to host election forum

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Oct. 29 at 6:30 p.m., the community is invited to a forum to meet the candidates and listen to their positions on important issues.

Issues such as jobs, education, taxes and safety are on the minds of most Forsyth County citizens. The public is invited to share their concerns regarding these critical quality-of-life issues with candidates and find out how they stand before they go to the polls Nov. 5. The forum is designed to help ensure voters will be able to make informed decisions at the polls.

The forum is being sponsored by Goler Memorial AME Zion Church, Black Leadership Roundtable of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County, NAACP and the Winston-Salem District AME Zion churches. The forum will be held at Goler Memorial Church, 630 N. Patterson Ave. For more information, call Linda Sutton at 724-9411 or 776-2404.

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