

# Special Occasions entering its third decade of providing books and more

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

Special Occasions Bookstore, on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, is more than a bookstore according to Miriam McCarter, who owns the store with her husband, Ed McCarter. The McCarters recently celebrated 20 years of selling books, gifts, greeting cards and Greek paraphernalia to the African-American community.

"We're very proud of our business that has

**Location:** 112 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive

**Merchandise:** Books, Greek items, etc.

**Hours:** Monday-Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Phone number:** 724-0334

been supported by the black community in Winston-Salem. We have developed a position in the business community that we're more than a bookstore, more than a gift store, but regarded as a community resource," McCarter said.

The McCarters are both former teachers whose love of reading and books led them to open the bookstore.

McCarter said the good relationship that they've built with suppliers over the years has allowed them to offer "quality" merchandise to their customers.

"We have a strong customer base outside of Winston-Salem and outside of North Carolina. People have come to view this as the place they should come to when they come to Winston-Salem," McCarter said.

Special Occasions has received national exposure after being featured in the U.S. Airways in-flight publication *Attache* and from Maya Angelou, who kicked off her national book tour for her best-seller "A Song Flung Up



Ed and Miriam McCarter pose with their grandson in Special Occasions.

Photo by Courtney Gaillard

to Heaven" at the bookstore.

Special Occasions will host a book signing during the National Black Theatre Festival for Essence beauty director and cover editor Mikki Taylor, who has written a book titled "Self Seduction: Your Ultimate Path to Inner and Outer Beauty." Taylor's book, which contains more than 60 photographs of a variety of women of color, gives female readers tips on developing and maintaining a personal beauty regimen in their daily lives.

"We've formed so (many) lasting friendships through the people who come for the theater festival. It's been a good association," McCarter said.

Taylor is one of many authors who have held book signings at Special Occasions over the years. Customers tell the McCarters that

their store draws great authors such as Tavis Smiley on their book tours.

"Authors would go to Washington, D.C., and then to Atlanta, but now we're positioning ourselves to be included on the (book) tours of authors like Perry Brown, Sandra Jones, and Michelle Bowman," McCarter said.

The customers, said McCarter, have made the two decades that Special Occasions has been in business the most enjoyable aspect of the experience.

"The people - there's never a dull moment. In addition to that, there's been an opportunity for us to meet people in the publishing industry and writers because of this business," McCarter said.

Taylor's book signing will take place on Aug. 9 from 12-2 p.m. at Special Occasions.

## NBTF named one of nation's top attractions by association

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Convention & Visitor Bureau's nominee, the biennial National Black Theatre Festival, was selected as one of the American Bus Association's Top 100 Events for 2003.

The National Black Theatre Festival, scheduled Aug. 4-9, 2003, in Winston-Salem, was established in 1989 to unite black theater companies and to ensure the genre's survival. The event, under the leadership of Larry Leon Hamlin, producer and artistic director, now attracts more than 50,000 people, who come to watch more than 90 performances by 20 top theater companies from throughout the United States, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean.

In addition to showcasing nationally recognized and cutting-edge theater, the event features film showings, musical performances, celebrity receptions, poetry jams, and workshops and seminars. Shopping is available at the International Vendors Market. Celebrity guests have included Cicely Tyson, Sidney Poitier, Oprah Winfrey, Della Reese and Winston-Salem's own Maya Angelou.

The American Bus Association's Top 100 Events Committee, made up of motor-coach and tour operators, annually selects 100 events in the United States and Canada for its prestigious list. This diverse finalists are chosen from more than 500 event submissions each year and include festivals, exhibitions, fairs and sporting events.

The American Bus Association (AHA) facilitates relationships between North American motor-coach companies, tour companies and all related segments of the travel and supplier industries. It also promotes travel by motorcoach to consumers. AHA represents approximately 950 motor-coach and tour companies in the United States and Canada.

Its members operate charter, tour, regular route, airport express, special operations and contract services (commuter, school, transit). Another 2,300 member organizations represent the travel and tourism industry and suppliers of bus products and services who work in partnership with the North American motorcoach industry.

## 'Black Voices' prepared to resonate at festival

Clark Atlanta University production  
part of NBTF Fringe

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Sisterhood is a powerful word that most women do not take lightly. The true meaning behind the word is explored in "Black Voices," a production that will come to the NBTF from Clark Atlanta University.

Written by Willie L. Todd Jr., "Black Voices" is a collection of powerful vignettes that weave together the meaning of sisterhood. The play

explores sexuality, religion, drugs, exploitation, heartbreak, racism, unhappiness and self-fulfillment. Through that exploration, the highs and lows of everyday women come to the surface.

A. Clifton Myles directs "Black Voices." The production is one of this year's National Black Theatre Festival Fringe productions, a collection of productions put on by talent from colleges throughout the country.

**Venue:**  
WSSU Anderson Center

**Schedule:**  
Aug. 7 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Price:**  
\$20