

Pastors say \$11 million HBCU drive is about support, self empowerment

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

North Carolina's black churches announced last week their plan to raise \$11 million for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the state over the next five years.

The group, North Carolina Black Churches for North Carolina Black Colleges & Universities, said the goal of this statewide fund-raiser is to ensure that black schools of higher education remain academically competitive beyond the 21st century.



Mendez

"This is an exercise in African-American institutional self-empowerment," said Rev. Carlton Eversley, pastor of Dellabrook Presbyterian Church. Eversley will be the executive director of the NCBC/NCBCU. "This is the moment. This is the time - God's time, not mere mortals but God's time to do what must be done to save our nation's soul."

North Carolina Black Churches for North Carolina Black Colleges & Universities is a nonprofit organization that will allow churches to determine their contribution goals. Churches can raise money through traditional fund-raising - bake sales, car washes - or through specific budgeting based on members' pledges.



Eversley

More than 35,000 students attend North Carolina's HBCUs - Barber-Scotia College, Bennett College, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Livingstone College, N.C. A&T State University, N.C. Central University, Saint Augustine's College, Shaw University and Winston-Salem State University.

The church fund would gift each school with \$1 million to be used toward scholarships, endowment programs and operations costs.

"Many of us graduated from African-American schools....That's a long way from the cotton fields of Dixie....It's time for us to give back to the black schools that took us when nobody else would take us," said Rev. John Mendez, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, where the news conference took place.

Several heads of local HBCUs, such as WSSU Chancellor Harold Martin Sr., Bennett College President Johnnetta B. Cole, and Barber-Scotia President Sammie Potts, agreed that many of the black schools owe their existence and meager beginnings to the black church.

Martin called the multimil-



The Rev. Williams Fails (from left) and Father George Clements listen as Al Wellington of the MATAH Network speaks to reporters at last week's news conference.

lion church fund-raiser a "promise which they will keep" to black college students of today and tomorrow. Cole vowed that each school, including her own, will "find ways for you to know that our cup so runneth over with gratitude that we find ourselves drinking out of the saucer. These institutions exist because black people believe in education."

The brainchild behind this black college fund is Rev. William S. Fails, pastor of Greater First United Baptist Church in High Point. He hopes that black churches across the country will follow suit and contribute to other HBCUs in need. Fails will serve as assistant executive director of NCBC/NCBCU, and Ben Ruffin, former chair of the UNC Board of Governors, will be the honorary chairman for the campaign.

Father George Clements said a program like this one being initiated by black churches is proof that the Lord helps those who help themselves. Clements founded the One Church, One Child program, which secures the adoption of black children, and he was the first Catholic priest to adopt a child.

"The black church is why we're here. The black church gave birth to these historically black colleges, and the black church will nurture them," Clements said.

The MATAH Network, which is a wholesale distributor of hundreds of products manufactured by African-Americans, has developed an economic model, similar to Clements', for churches to use to raise black dollars for black schools. Through the One Church, One Channel, church congregants can spend their moneys on household products distributed by MATAH in order to generate a profit for their churches and for the black college fund.

"These people are here because they recognize the moment in history this represents when the church community comes forth and makes a declaration that it will use self-

empowerment strategies to fund its own schools and institutions," said Al Wellington, co-founder and president of

MATAH Network.

For more information, call Rev. Carlton Eversley at 788-7846 or 725-4274.

Man called 'Hispanic Tom Brokaw' coming to town Saturday

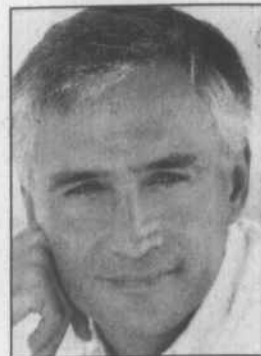
CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Winston-Salem is gearing up for one of its biggest book signings ever. Saturday, Jorge Ramos, an anchorman for a popular news program on Univision, will be at the store, 1925 Hampton Inn Court, to sign copies of his book, "No Borders, A Journalist's Search for Home." Univision is one of the nation's most popular Spanish-language networks.

The event is being sponsored by the Hispanic League of the Piedmont Triad in conjunction with Barnes & Noble. The event also coincides with Hispanic Heritage Month.

Born in Mexico, Ramos, who has been called "the Spanish equivalent to Tom Brokaw," overcame many odds to make it in journalism. The book details many of those struggles, including his decision to leave Mexico for America and the battles he fought with English-language establishments.

Ramos has been on Univision for 16 years, and his work has earned him seven Emmys. Ramos has covered wars from El Salvador to the Middle East, and has interviewed many of the



Jorge Ramos

world's top leaders, including President Bush and former President Bill Clinton. Ramos also writes a weekly column for more than 35 newspapers in the United States and Latin America, and provides a daily radio commentary to dozens of radio stations.

Ramos is expected to give a talk about his book as well on Saturday. The book, now in paperback, will be available for purchase. A percentage of sales of "No Borders" will go the Hispanic League of the Piedmont Triad. The signing will start at 4 p.m.

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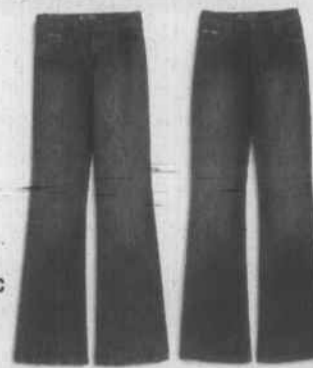
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