

State Reps. Larry Womble and Earline Parmon speak at a rally last week in support of a death penalty moratorium.

## Pleas to save Robbie Lyons fall on deaf ears

because his crime was not pre-meditated. But Stafford's widow,

who witnessed her husband's

murder, told The Associated Press

after the execution that she did not

barging into our store shooting a

gun, all my husband had to defend himself was his hands,"

she said. "The death that Lyons

had tonight was a painless one. I think of my husband's death, and

inmate executed this year in

North Carolina, the most since

1949, when 10 people were put to

Lyons had mixed feelings about

his impending death. They said he

wanted his sentence commuted,

but also would have rather been

dead than endure what they called

a pizza and lasagna, prepared

according to Muslim dietary

rules, and a Pepsi.

tributed to this story

Lyons' last meal consisted of

The Associated Press con-

mistreatment by prison officials.

Lyons, 31, was the seventh

Family members said that

it certainly was not painless.

"When this individual came

buy those arguments.

Last-hour protests by the faith community and at least two members of the N.C. House of Repre-



victed Robbie Lyons. As scheduled, he died by lethal injection Friday in Raleigh.

Lyons was convicted of the 1994 shooting death of store owner Stephen Wilson Stafford. The murder happened in Winston-Salem. Stafford's wife and children watched as Lyons was put to death.

Members of Lyons' family were in Winston-Salem last week to take part in a rally aimed at urging Gov. Mike Easley to com-mute Lyons' death sentence to life in prison. The rally featured several dozen protesters. Among them were state Reps. Earline Parmon and Larry Womble of Forsyth County. The two are among those spearheading an effort to pass a death penalty moratorium in North Carolina. The Rev. Jesse Jackson had even sent Easley a letter urging clemency for Lyons.

Lyons supporters said he did

## **EWPS**

from page Al

school has hired the law firm Kilpatrick Stockton to help the school with its appeal. Muham-mad said the school will base its appeal on documents and other evidence that he said will show that the school did everything state officials requested in order to keep the school, which serves

elementary-age children, open. Muhammad said the school hired a new CPA and a new Student Information Management System person. Another allegation the state has made is that the school lied about its enrollment in order to get more state funding. The school also cleared its board of people who had conflicts of interest, Muhammad said. Tucker told school officials in August that the board would have to change because several people on the board had such conflicts, including two EWPS teachers who were on the board. Bonham is a member of the new board. Muhammad said that is not a conflict because the school's own investigation has found that Bonham did nothing wrong. Bonham stepped down as director of the school once the allegations came to light and is still being investigated by the Police Department for possibly

misusing school money.

Muhammad said the new board was seated in September and has been working with the N.C. Center for Nonprofits for

training purposes The case of EWPS is eerily similar to that of LIFT Academy, the last charter school in the city to have its charter revoked. Like EWPS, LIFT served predominantly African-American stu-dents and LIFT fought the revocation of its charter, even taking the state to court. LIFT lost its battle, however, and closed in 2000. Muhammad said EWPS is looking carefully at the LIFT case in order to help the school in what could be a drawn-out

appeal process. "We are looking at LIFT's situation, and we are trying to learn from that," Muhammad

He said East Winston Primary School's enrollment has not decreased since the school's charter was revoked. But, he said, parents have voiced concerns about the situation. Tonight at 6:30, school officials will meet with parents to discuss the pending appeal.

## Art

"It was the Delta Arts Center that sort of got me interested in African-American said Williams, whose love for arts was piqued several years ago when he attended an exhibit of John and Vivian Hewitt's works at Delta Fine Arts Center.

Those like Williams who have been touched or influenced by the work Delta Arts has done over the past 30 years have been especially supportive in the center's two-year-old capital campaign. Artists who have had their works shown at the center over the years donated the pieces that were auctioned. They included everything from bright pastel and oil painting to stone sculptures and hand-woven cloth and purses. The list prices for items ran the gamut as well. Prints and woven scarves were listed for as little as \$35, while a pencil drawing from the late Lois Mailou Jones, considered the grandmother of African-American art, was listed for \$20,000. The works of other well-known artists such as John Biggers and Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe (the widow of the late tennis star) were also on the auction block.

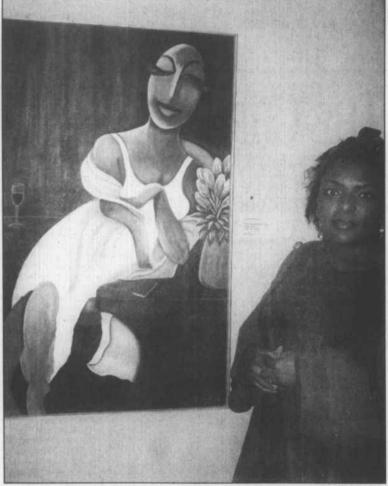
Local artists who have found the welcome mat always extended at Delta Arts repaid the center by donating pieces as well. Local artists Leo Rucker, Barbara Eure and Lee Elliott Cox attended the auction and donated pieces to be auctioned. Cox said for an artist, being present at an auction where one of the artist's pieces is up for sale and under great scrutiny can be somewhat nerve-racking. But Cox said his nerves were at ease

"This is such a good cause, you don't feel as nervous," he said.

Stay-at-home-mom-turned-artist Ann Bonner donated a colorful oil painting for the auction. Bonner hopes a new building will give Delta Arts the visibility it deserves. She said the center has always offered great shows, but they may have been overlooked because the center's current location, a quaint little house on Third Street, is far from showy.

"They show fabulous art here. I am excited because (the move to the new building) will be a great opportunity to become more visible," Bonner said.

The auction was held at the former Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) store off New Walkertown Road that the Delta Fine Arts Center has already purchased and hopes to be situated in by the spring.



Ann Bonner poses with the piece she donated, "The Solitude of Self."

Taking the site from a liquor store to a premier art gallery won't happen overnight, and it won't be cheap

Dianne Caesar, executive director of the center, said the capital campaign is lacking just a third of its \$1 million goal. In this phase the center is trying to raise that roughly \$350,000, which will be used to do a complete renovation of the building. The walls have to be redone to make them more friendly for hanging art. The heating and air systems also must be upgraded. Special lighting also is needed. The strict requirements are a must for

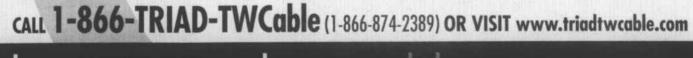
the center if it hopes to borrow art from top-name galleries, many of which require such standards before they will

The new space is nearly five times larger than the 1,325 square-foot building the center currently calls home. It will offer the center things it has never had,

such as storage space and office space.

The center also is raising money through a series of dinner fund-raisers called Dining with Delta. The next Dining with Delta event will be Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. at Cafe McMillans in the Stevens Center.









Now anything's possible