

Lash
tourney
has many
standouts

- See Page B1

Kwanzaa
event
looks at
economics

- See Page A3

Massage
therapist
launches
business

- See Page A9

Church
holds
gospel
show

- See Page C1

THE CHRONICLE

WINSTON-SALEM • GREENSBORO • HIGH POINT

For Reference
Not to be taken
from this library

Vol. XXX No. 18

75 cents

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2004



Free At Last, Free At Last

Supporters help welcome
Darryl Hunt home

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

To teenage members of the NAACP Youth Chapter, Darryl Hunt has been more than just a man. For their entire lives, his name has been synonymous with injustice in this city, a horror story of what can happen to a black man when good ol' boys are angry and hellbent.

On Christmas Eve, Hunt became real to the youngsters, real enough that many of them shook his hand and gave him hugs after Hunt came to Emmanuel Baptist Church soon after he was released from prison. Hunt was serving a life sentence for a crime that DNA and his most loyal supporters say he had nothing to do with.

Velma Thomas, head of the NAACP Youth Chapter, went to pick up the teens about an hour before Hunt arrived. Hunt supporters wanted the church's sanctuary to be packed with as many people as possible in order to give Hunt a warm homecoming. Thomas wanted the young people to witness the event for another

reason.

"It is sad," she said, "the injustice that black people have to go through. This is history, and it is also a lesson these kids need to learn. It is a hard lesson, but they need to learn it."

Close to 100 people cheered and chanted "Darryl Hunt is free" as Hunt made his way into the church last week, but there was pain behind the smiles and joy. Hunt's arrest and prosecution for the 1984 murder and rape of white newspaper copy editor Deborah Sykes has left many in this town bitter, angry and astonished. Hunt was convicted on nonexistent physical evidence and witnesses that were as shaky as an amusement park ride.

Even as Hunt took his first steps of freedom in more than 10 years last week, his supporters said they were not ready to forgive or forget the system that convicted him twice and took nearly 20 years of his life.

"Darryl Hunt is just a microcosm of a greater problem," said Nelson Malloy, a City Council member and longtime Hunt sup-

See Hunt on A6



Top (from left): Mark Rabil, Hunt's attorney talks to the news media; Rev. John Mendez talks to Hunt supporters as Larry Little and Imam Khalid Griggs look on; Minister Carolyn Gordon sings with other Hunt supporters as she waits for Hunt to arrive. Above, Darryl Hunt and his wife, April, take questions from the news media.

Moratorium
supporters
are buoyed
by Hunt case

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

The release of Darryl

Hunt has reignited fire in the bellies of local supporters of a statewide death penalty moratorium. The Hunt case is a textbook example of what is wrong with the criminal justice system, moratorium supporters say.

An overwhelming white jury convicted Hunt, an African-American, of murdering Deborah Sykes, a young, white newspaper copy

See Moratorium on A6



Sutton

Call Her Rep. Parmon

Grassroots champ has made waves during freshman term

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Earline Parmon has not been County Commissioner Earline Parmon for about a year, but if she had a dime for every time someone made that mistake she could rival Oprah Winfrey's fortune.

But Parmon - who left behind 12 years on the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners to win a seat in the N.C. House - is not over-

"There are no permanent enemies, just permanent interests."

- Rep. Earline Parmon

ly concerned that her title is sometimes butchered when she is introduced at community events. She said when people stop remembering that she is an elected official altogether, then she will start to worry.

"Having been a local elected official for so many years, it is going to take people some time to realize that you have moved to another level of government," she said. "It is just an honor to serve people. I don't take it lightly that people have voted for me to serve them."

Parmon did not go Raleigh last year as bright-eyed and naive as other freshmen legislators. She has spent most of her life in politics

and community activism. She knows all the angles. She can talk the talk and walk the walk. Parmon has bucked tradition - which calls for freshman legislators to shut up, sit and learn - finishing a term that she and her colleagues call prolific and productive. The first bill signed into law last session was one that Parmon introduced. The bill gave individual school systems the ability to devise creative ways to make up school time missed as a result of inclement weather.

"After that, I really got confidence in my ability to be an effective part of the Legislature," she said.

Parmon also co-sponsored a successful bill along with fellow Forsyth County legislator Larry Womble that repealed the state's controversial sterilization law. Her plate for next session, which will officially start in May, is already full with items she introduced that are still stuck in committee. One bill that Parmon wants to see pushed through would raise the state's minimum wage to \$6. She also is pushing legislation that would increase the wages of the state's teacher assistants.

"We have a group of people that have very much an impact on our kids' education, but they are paid wages below the federal poverty level," Parmon said. She has garnered some keen committee assignments. She sits on five committees, including the powerful Appropriations Committee. She is the vice chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

Womble said Parmon's committee assign-

See Parmon on A7



Photo by Kevin Walker

State Rep. Earline Parmon waves from a float during the Winston-Salem State homecoming parade.

Bryant hopes new
financing rule
will help her keep
focus in '04 race

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

N.C. Court of Appeals Judge Wanda Bryant is hoping that the N.C. Judicial Reform Public Financing Program will help her hold on to her appellate seat in 2004. Bryant is the first judicial candidate to opt in to the new financing program, which requires candidates to obtain contributions from registered voters in the state.

She said this program will allow her to focus her efforts on her judgeship rather than fund-raising.

"This seems like a good thing because of how difficult it is for us as judges to raise money, period," said Bryant. "Fund-raising takes so much time and energy, and this is a huge election year in 2004...Everybody is raising money."

This optional finance program act, which is open only to candidates for seats on the N.C.



Bryant

See Bryant on A7



In Grateful Memory of Our
Founders,
Florrie S. Russell and
Carl H. Russell, Sr.

"Growing and Still Dedicated to Serve You Better"
Russell Funeral Home
Wishes to Thank Everyone For Their Support

822 Carl Russell Ave.
(at Martin Luther King Dr.)
Winston-Salem, NC 27101
(336) 722-3459
Fax (336) 631-8268
rushome@bellsouth.net