



Class of 1957 graduates Jessie Heron, from left, Bernice Davis, Sadie Webster and Edna Williams attended the weekend brunch.

WSSU's first crop of nurses feted at homecoming brunch

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The first nursing class to ever graduate from Winston-Salem State University in 1957 was honored Saturday at a special brunch held for the alumni of WSSU's School of Health Sciences. The event took place during the school's Homecoming Week.

In 1957, Russia launched Sputnik, the world's first satellite, into space and gasoline was a mere 29 cent a gallon. There was also a nursing shortage in North Carolina, which led the state's governor to approve two, new nursing schools a few years earlier — one at WSSU, then known as Winston-Salem Teachers College, and one at N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro.

There were 33 students in WSSU's very first nursing class, but only 12 made it to graduation in '57. They went to work at hospitals, county health departments and other health organizations.

While today's students have state-of-the-art equipment, that wasn't so for the class of 1957. Gwen Andrews, who taught at the brand new nursing school, said students didn't even have the equipment that would've been considered modern for its time. She said that students in the segregation-era class didn't have all the things that their counterparts at white universities had, but Andrews never let that compromise their education.

"The graduates of this program learned an awful lot because of the adversity," said Andrews. "I won't say because of segregation we couldn't ... I would say in spite of segregation, we did." Due in part to segregation, there were no opportunities for local internships for the nursing students, so they had to go as far away as Atlanta and New York to get clinical experience.

Andrews took great pride in seeing her former students after 50 years.

"Those were my babies, now they're my colleagues," said Andrews.



Andrews

Ten of the 12 graduates are still alive. Of those, four came to the brunch. They were Jessie Maye Herron, who worked at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte for 22 years; Edna Taylor Williams, a nurse at the Halifax County Health Department for 32 years; Bernice Donnell Davis, who worked at Moses Cone Memorial Hospital in Greensboro for 31 years; and Sadie Webster who returned to the nursing school to teach and also became its director.

All four women expressed gratitude for the education they received at WSSU. Williams said not only did they learn all the skills they needed to be nurses, but they also learned how to live with one another.

"It was the most wonderful experience I've ever had in my life," said Davis.

Webster described the graduates as a very close-knit class. She said instructors expected students to excel, which made the class a very driven one as well.

"We knew we had a purpose to get as much education as we could to become skilled, professional nurses," said Webster.

The School of Health Science's Archive Center is named for Webster and contains caps, hoods and other memorabilia from the Class of '57. And a concrete bench featuring the names of the nursing class has been placed between Carolina and Blair halls on the campus.

At the brunch, commemo-

orative plaques were presented to each of the four class members. Plaques were also sent to those class members not in attendance and to the families of the two deceased members.

The nursing program at WSSU has changed dramatically in the last 50 years. WSSU is the fourth largest producer of nurses in the state with a 94 percent board passage rate in the school of nursing. The nursing school makes up 80 percent of the nearly 1,500 students in the health science department at WSSU.

News Clips

Festival of Trees to benefit Brenner

The 20th annual Festival of Trees will held later this month at the Education Building on the Dixie Classic Fairgrounds.

The festival features shopping, entertainment, activities for children and the chance to view the Christmas tree forest. All proceeds from the event support pediatric programs at Brenner Children's Hospital.

"The Festival of Trees has always been one of the largest fundraisers for Brenner, and is an event that brings the community together in order to raise money for programs that directly help patients and their families," said Susan Kennedy, director of annual support and special projects, at the medical center. "We encourage everyone to come out, celebrate the holidays and support the excellent pediatric programs at Brenner Children's Hospital."

The centerpiece of the festival is the 40 large, theme trees decorated by local garden clubs, interior designers and the supportive Friends of Brenner Children's Hospital, who put on the Festival of Trees each year.

Gingerbread houses and celebrity ornaments will be available through silent auction, while decorative wreaths and 2-foot and 3-foot

miniature trees can be purchased throughout the weekend. The festival will have a wide range of vendors.

The festival will be held from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m., on Saturday, Nov. 17, and from noon until 5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 18. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$4 for children 12 and under. Parking is free. A Santa's Breakfast that includes special treats and a visit from Santa will be at 9 a.m. Saturday morning.

WFU Counseling Department honored

Wake Forest University's Department of Counseling was recently named the "Outstanding Masters Counselor Education Program for 2007" by the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) Conference in Columbus, Ohio.

Wake Forest's counselor education program was founded in 1968 and became the counseling department in 2003. In 1999, the university was recognized by ACES as having the "Outstanding Counseling Program" in the nation.

The program offers a two-year Master of Arts degree in Counseling.

A&T's Turman takes part in Miami hip hop event

Bryon D. Turman, a lecturer of humanities, composition and hip hop at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, recently participated in the 2007 Hip Hop Journalist Convention in Miami, Fla.

Turman served as a mod-

erator for the town hall meeting on hip hop, which provided an opportunity for readers, scholars and writers of hip hop to openly discuss hotbed topics



Turman

affecting the music/culture. The Hip Hop Journalism Association includes journalist, editors and publishers of the leading Hip Hop media outlets including: The Source, Vibe Magazine, XXL, Scratch, Ozone, BET.com, AllHipHop.com, HipHopDX, HHNLive and others.

Local airman completes basic training

Air Force Airman Bryson P. Hill has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is the son of Claude Hill of East Bend and Cynthia Springer-Jones Winston-Salem. Hill is a 2007 graduate of Ronald Reagan High School.

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Standing: Drs. Stephen Tatter, Thomas Ellis, David Kelly Jr., Daniel Couture, Thomas Sweasey.
Sitting: Drs. Charles Branch Jr., John Wilson.

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