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WSSU students take on project

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Retail manager excels on the job

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THURSDAY, December 13, 2007

James Johnson to speak at Goler

21-year-old black man at heart of racially-tinged murder case

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

A young black man who is literally in a fight for his life will worship at Goler Memorial AME Zion Sunday.

James Johnson, 21, was released from prison in September, where he had languished for two years waiting to be tried for the murder of 17-

year-old Brittany Willis. The murder of the young white honor student has strained race relations in Wilson, N.C.,



WRAL Image
Johnson

which is about 50 miles east of Raleigh. One young black man, Kenneth Meeks, who was just 16 at the time, has already been convicted of abducting, raping and killing Willis and is serving a life sentence. Meeks initially named Johnson as an accomplice, but later admitted to lying about Johnson's involvement.

Johnson's arrest and imprisonment stirred outrage among blacks in Wilson and civil rights organizations. Johnson has admitted that Meeks came to his house after Meeks killed Willis and confessed to Johnson about the crime. Johnson said he went with Meeks to the crime scene and then helped Meeks wash his car because he feared that Meeks might harm him as well.

There is no physical evidence linking Johnson to the crime and two witnesses who claim to have seen Willis with two black men have been called "unreliable" by Johnson's many supporters.

Johnson has been using his

See Johnson on A11



Photos by Jason Pitt

Students at Triad Barber School watch as owner and instructor Mary Kyles cuts the hair of a customer. Kyles has been in the beauty business for several decades.

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY

Barber trainer has embraced her blessings and passes them on to others

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Mary Kyles knows a thing or two about weathering a storm.

The Triad Barber School owner was walking across Liberty Street near her shop in the spring of 2001 when she was struck by an oncoming car - changing her life forever.

The injuries Kyles sustained warranted a two-month hospital stay, followed by a month of grueling rehabilitation. It was touch and go at first, she says.

"They thought maybe I wasn't going to make it," she remarked.

Admittedly, the effects of such an experience are far-reaching, but Kyles refused to let her suffering deter her from the path she feels she was destined to travel.

"I always say that God had something else for me to do," she says.

A self-described "people person," Kyles, the mother of four adult sons, says she was drawn to barbering because of its ample opportunities for social interaction.

"I like people; I think everyone is interesting," she commented. "They all have a different story to tell."

She obtained her barber's license from Winston-Salem Barber School in

1979 and wasted no time in stepping out on her own. She opened Mary's Barber Shop on Liberty Street the following year.

Though she says she has always enjoyed barbering, Kyles, a Winston-Salem native, says she's had her share of challenges.

"Being in business can be a headache if you let it," she commented. "I've had my problems, but I've always tried to be strong enough to overcome them."

By the time she traded in her clippers for a teaching career in 1991, Kyles had two Mary's Barber Shop locations in

See Kyles on A12



Mary Kyles

Passionate, imperfect life of AIDS warrior celebrated

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

The late Silette Ideanna Settle marched to the beat of her very own drum.

Nearly every member of the modest group that gathered at her home church, Dellabrook Presbyterian, to honor her memory last Friday afternoon could attest to that. A spirited and passionate soul, Settle was known to approach life with youthful abandon.

"Deanna was somebody to be reckoned with. You always knew where Deanna stood on anything," quipped Pastor Ron McRae, a longtime friend of

Settle's and pastor of Little Salem Christian Church of Reidsville.

"Deanna was always a character," he added. "I thank God for having had the opportunity to have known her."

It is no secret that Settle's life was far from perfect. She made, perhaps, more than her share of mistakes, but those who knew her say she was stunning in her valor during the twilight of her years. She boldly owned up to her positive HIV/AIDS status, inspiring many as she vehemently fought against the

disease.

"When I think of her, I think of that hope that keeps us all going," the Rev. Otto Gaither, an associate Dellabrook pastor, commented. "... though I tackle my obstacles differently than you tackle your obstacles, hope is hope."

Settle first attended Dellabrook in 2003, an ex-offender looking to embark upon a new chapter in her life.

"She came to the church looking for, she said, 'a new playground with new playmates,'" recounted Dr.

Carlton Eversley, Dellabrook's pastor.

She immediately stood out at the church, requesting to serve as an acolyte. Eversley agreed, allowing her to carry the candle during services.

"She wanted to be an acolyte, which is almost always a child's job, but because she was so small, she could, in fact, fit into the acolyte's robe and at times, she did in fact serve as an acolyte, which is entirely unique," he revealed. "I've been a pastor for 23 years and I've never heard of any other grown person being an acolyte."

Settle was active in Bible study and took several college-level courses under

See Settle on A12

'SUPER' HONOR



Photo by Felicia Long

Schools Superintendent Dr. Don Martin, with his wife, Rita, holds the Administrator of the Year Award he received from the Urban League recently. See who else won on page B7.

Students create multi-ethnic cookbook

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Hill Middle School's racial and ethnic diversity is evident in the pages of a new cookbook produced by students.

"Dining on the Hill" was a project in the keyboarding and business computer technology classes. More than 70 6th, 7th and 8th grade students helped create the cookbook at the arts magnet school, which is located on Tryon Street.

Teacher Juanita Ramsey initiated the project as a way to teach students how to type and format using a word processing program.

"I wanted them to bring in two recipes from home," said Ramsey.

Many students brought in recipes that are tradi-



Photos by Todd Luck

Khadejah McMullen, from left, Jennifer Miranda, Kiera Roper and Jennifer Daye all contributed to the cookbook.

See Hill on A13

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