



Morris Dees talked about hate and hope.

Photo by Garrett Garma/WSSU

## Dees, a bigot's worst nightmare, at WSSU

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

The crowd of more than 300 rose to its feet as Morris Dees took the stage, clapping enthusiastically as he approached the podium.

The civil rights warrior and founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center spoke at the Albert H. Anderson Center on the campus of Winston-Salem State University last Thursday night, as part of the school's J. Alston Atkins Memorial Lecture in Constitutional Law series.

Named for the youngest son of Simon Green and Oleona Pegram Atkins, the university's founders, the series highlights

the impact of constitutional law on its citizens through the perspectives of some of its most foremost experts.

Chancellor Donald Reaves characterized J. Alston Atkins as a man who "never gave up his work for civil rights nor his study and love for the constitution... a man who used his ... skill to create a more just society."

Like Atkins, Dees has dedicated his life to the pursuit of justice, said Attorney Jonathan Harkavy, who introduced Dees to the crowd.

"We're in the presence tonight of national treasure," stated Harkavy, of the law firm Patterson Harkavy. "He has been at the forefront of our nation's struggle against hate groups, while securing for us a more just society."

Dees, formerly a successful businessman, had an epiphany while snowed in at an airport in the mid-1960s. He sold his publishing company - which grew to become one of the largest in the South - and took up the cause of litigating for civil rights, facing off against some of the most prolific hate groups in the nation.

Though he didn't officially become an activist until he was an adult, Dees credits his grade school teacher with instilling the values of equality in him at a young age.

"She shared her views about fairness and equality ... she'd say, 'How can you love God that you've never seen and yet hate your neighbor that you see?'" he related. "She wanted us to grow up to be good citizens."

Dees spoke at length about the Nov. 4 election and its implications for the direction of America. He drew parallels between the hopefulness of the Civil Rights Era prior to

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and the pre-election spirit of Sen. Barack Obama's supporters.

He likened the pivotal moment in history to a turning point in the history of another society, the Biblical Israelites, who he said wandered in the desert for 40 years

because they were too afraid to cross the River Jordan to get to the Promised Land.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also spoke of a Promised Land in his famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech just before his death, a fact that was not lost on Dees.

"I think it's ironic that it's been 40 years since the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King (spoke those words) and now we're back at that river," he said. "America is facing the opportunity to put the past behind us, to cross that river... We have a front row seat to history."

Dees, an ardent Obama supporter, spoke optimistically about the outcome of the election, calling it "a historic election to show that this nation will judge a person by the content of his character and not the color of his skin."

"There have been dark days in the history of this country and I think the sun is soon to rise," he remarked.

Nevertheless, Dees cautioned the audience not to get complacent if Barack Obama is victorious.

"Regardless of how things turn out ... you have to remember that the march of justice continues," he said.

Dees' remarks were followed by a lively panel discussion featuring Attorney

Robert Elliot, District Court Judge Denise Hartsfield, WSSU associate professor and activist Larry Little; WFU Law School Professor Wendy Parker.

The lecture was sponsored by the Kilpatrick Stockton law firm.



J. Alston Atkins

### Flu

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and has been proven to be just as effective. This nasal spray is an attenuated virus, which means it is a weakened virus that has been altered so it can't cause the flu.

#### What are the most common myths that exist about the Flu Vaccine?

You would be surprised how many people still believe the flu vaccination can actually cause them to get the flu. This is absolutely not true! Our modern vaccines are developed from viruses that have either been killed or inactivated so they cannot make you sick. Once immunized, our bodies develop antibodies that fight off the infection. There is still a chance that a person can get the flu before their immune system is activated, which may take up to two weeks. Both the nasal spray and the injection (shot) have been shown to prevent the flu effectively.

Another myth is, "Since I was vaccinated last year, I don't have to be vaccinated again." This statement is also false. The influenza viruses change (mutate) their outer coating frequently. They can thereby evade our human defenses, requiring that we be vaccinated each year to have protection against the current strain.

#### Who should get a flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is recommended for people over 6 months of age, both healthy and with chronic medical conditions. It is strongly recommended for those who have a chronic medical condition; those over 65 years of age, (especially if they live in a nursing home or other area that houses people with chronic medical conditions); those with heart conditions or conditions that can compromise respiratory function, such as a brain injury, asthma,

or a seizure disorder; children (especially those aged 6 to 23 months of age); women who are pregnant; those with a weakened immune system (including those with HIV/AIDS); and caregivers and healthcare providers, or those who are at risk for transmitting the virus to others.

However, everyone can get the flu, and therefore everyone should receive the vaccine, unless you are allergic or have other medical conditions as a result of which you should not receive the flu vaccine. People should NOT take it if they are severely allergic to chicken eggs; if they have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past, including Guillain-Barré Syndrome; they are under six months of age; or they have an illness with a fever (wait until the symptoms subside).

Like any medication, the flu vaccine can cause side effects. The most common are mild symptoms that may develop soon after the vaccine is given and generally last for 1-2 days. Side effects may include redness or swelling near site of injection, low-grade fever and/or muscle aches. Severe, life-threatening allergic reactions are extremely rare. Overall, the potential benefits far outweigh the risks.

If you have any questions about the flu vaccine, or whether or not you or a family can receive it, or if your community will be offering any free/low cost flu vaccine clinics, you should talk to your health care provider or your local health department.

— Contributed by Ramon Velez, MD, and Sarah Langdon

Do you need further information on this topic or resources in your area or have questions or comments about this article? Please call toll-free 1-877-530-1824. Or, for more information about the Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity, please visit our website: <http://www.wfubmc.edu/minorityhealth>.

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### Exposed wiring isn't only a danger in houses...

which is why the city has drafted a minimum code for commercial structures.

COME LEARN MORE about the draft Minimum Nonresidential Ordinance at a public information session.

6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 11  
Room 530, Bryce A. Stuart Municipal Building  
100 E. First St. Winston-Salem

A question and answer period will follow a presentation on the draft code. The draft code is posted online at [www.cityofws.org/hsn](http://www.cityofws.org/hsn)

