



Protesters stand outside of Joel Coliseum.

Photos by Layla Farmer

Dean Morant addresses Pepperdine law graduates

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Wake Forest University School of Law Dean Blake Morant gave the commencement address at the Pepperdine University School of Law on May 21. He also received an honorary doctor of laws degree during commencement exercises at Alumni Park on the Malibu (California) Pepperdine Campus.



Photo courtesy of WFLU

Dean Blake Morant holds his honorary degree.

His speech focused on the 21st century lawyer as citizen and professional, incorporating references to Sir Thomas More, the famed Lord Chancellor of England during the reign of Henry VIII.

"Delivery of the commencement address to the faculty, staff and graduates of the Pepperdine School of Law was both a privilege and honor," Morant said.

Pepperdine University School of Law began as the Orange University College of Law in Santa Ana, Calif., in 1964. The school was acquired by Pepperdine in

1969. By 1975, the school moved to Pepperdine's 830-acre campus, which overlooks the Pacific Ocean, according to the school's Web site.

Protest

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include families headed by same-sex couples. The protesters said that it is past time for the YMCA of Northwest N.C. to follow suit.

"There still seems to be some hesitation to really fully embrace an inclusive membership," said Mary Jamis, a lesbian woman who organized the rally. "We're really here to encourage them to take a risk and step out and do what other YMCAs are doing across the state and across the nation, by having a broader definition of family."

Jamis, a mother of two who has been with her partner, Starr Johnson, for 11 years, says she was inspired to take action after reading about local couple Mark Maxwell and Timothy Young, a same-sex couple who began speaking out about the YMCA's policies in March, after they learned their family was excluded from discounted memberships.

Association Board Chair Michael Lischke said the YMCA Board did discuss the possibility of changing its membership policies at last Thursday's meeting, but he said no decision was made at the meeting.



Mark Maxwell and Timothy Young

"I think that folks realize that the perception is that there's some exclusivity (in the membership policy), and that's never been what the Y's about," he said. "...The intent is for the Y to continue to be a community resource that is open to and available to everybody."

The board typically reviews its membership policies every four to five years to ensure that the categories still accurately reflect the community the YMCA serves, Lischke said. The board is also considering other membership categories, such as one for seniors with dependents, to accommodate the many grandparents that are now raising their grandchildren, he added.

"We're trying to be very mindful of what our community looks like today ... and then being even more mindful of what it will look like five

years from now," he said.

Lischke, a member of the Kernersville Family YMCA for the last 14 years, says he does not believe that same sex couples and their children should have to pay more than traditional families for memberships.

"My wife and I and our kids are no different than (Maxwell and Young)," he said.

The full association board is slated to meet on July 22 to vote on any recommendations in changes to membership categories, Lischke said.

Rev. D. Charlie Davis, the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Winston-Salem, and his wife of 22 years, Gail, were among the supporters at the rally. Davis, who is white, and Gail, who is black, say they see many similarities between the issues faced by interracial couples and the struggles faced by same-sex couples.

The couple held up a two part sign that read "We Are Family... Since 1967," referencing to the 1967 Supreme Court ruling that legalized interracial marriage.

"We've just always been real supportive of gay rights and also just being aware that the concepts of family change," said Charlie Davis.

"It's a matter of human and civil rights," said Gail Davis. "I don't see how you could see it any differently."

Jamis says a petition, which already has nearly 400 names, has been started to encourage the YMCA to change its policy.



Hairston



Photo by Layla Farmer

Jaiden Teague and Kora Ferjoste are huge fans of Mr. Wormack's.

Wormack

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Classified Employee Committee, which was created by the school system over a year ago to increase non-certified school system employees' access to top administrators, said Committee Chair Brian Elliott, a senior communications analyst. Part of the committee's goal was to implement the yearly award, which mirrors those the school systems already gives for Teacher of the Year and Principal of the Year.

"Mr. Wormack stood out because he went above and beyond the call of duty," said Elliott, who added that the school system plans to use Wormack's curriculum as a best practices model for other schools. "He took it to the next level."

Wormack also coaches boys soccer and track at Flat Rock, in addition to leading the co-ed step team he founded and the school's gymnastics classes.

He was selected for the Classified Employee of the Year honor from a pool of more than 90. The committee conducted interviews and solicited statements from semifinalists to select the top four finalists, which also included Home-School Coordinator Denise McKoy of Konnoak Elementary; Data Manager Teresa Scott of Old Richmond Elementary; and Bert Rodden, a custodian at Meadowlark Elementary. Committee members observed each of the four finalists as they went about their daily duties.

They all were impressed with Wormack. "He's really doing a great job of building and molding the kids' character," said Carol Montague-Davis, assistant superintendent of

middle schools. "He's not only doing the academic piece, making sure they get their work done, he's also ... changing their behavior, in order for them to be able to cope when they get back into the classroom."

Wormack, a Winston-Salem State University alumnus, has been with the school system since the late 1990s. He taught physical education at Hill Middle School last year, before making the transition to Flat Rock.

"I was excited because I knew it was a new challenge and I love challenges," the Lumberton native said of leading the ISS program. "I never have a problem reaching (the kids)... I just show them that I actually truly care about them. When they know that you care about them, you can get them to do anything that you want them to do."

Seventh graders Jaiden Teague and Kora Ferjoste said they were pleased to see Wormack honored.

"Coach Wormack really did deserve it, out of everybody in the school," said 13 year-old Kora. "He can be fun, but when it comes to your education and the way that you act, he's very strict."

"It makes us very proud because we're very close to Coach Wormack. We look up to him," commented Jaiden, 13. "He really shows that he cares about you. He always puts a smile on your face, no matter what you're going through. If you don't have a smile on your face when you're walking through school, he'll make sure that he changes that."

Wormack said he was honored to receive the distinction.

"I'm excited to be nominated and recognized for all the work and time that I put in, but it's a team thing," Wormack said. "This is a team honor; it's not just my honor."



Elliott

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