

Anti-hate crusader Dees to speak

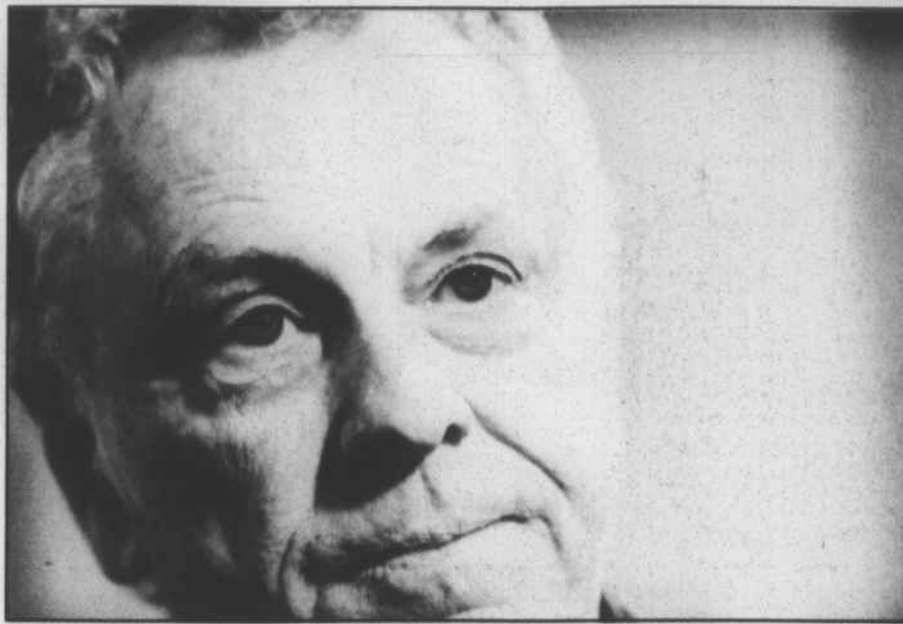
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Morris Dees, founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, will give the keynote address at the Wake Forest University School of Law's annual Public Interest Retreat.

The retreat will kick off with the keynote speaker at noon on Friday, Feb. 4, in Room 1312 of the Worrell Professional Center. The keynote address is free and open to the public.

Dees co-founded the SPLC in 1971 following a successful business and law career, according to the organization's website. He started a direct mail sales company specializing in book publishing while still a student at the University of Alabama, where he also obtained his law degree. After launching a law practice in Montgomery in 1960, he won a series of groundbreaking civil rights cases that helped integrate government and public institutions. He also served as finance director for former President Jimmy Carter's campaign in 1976 and for Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern in 1972.

Known for his innovative lawsuits that crippled some of America's most notorious white supremacist hate groups, Dees has received more than 20 honorary degrees and numerous awards. Those include Trial Lawyer of the Year from Trial Lawyers for Public



Morris Dees is the founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Justice and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Award from the National Education Association, the web site states.

Dees was named one of the 100 most influential lawyers in America by the National Law Journal in 2006. In addition, the University of Alabama Law School and the New York law firm Skadden, Arps jointly created the annual Morris Dees Justice Award to honor

a lawyer devoted to public service work. Dees has written three books: "A Season For Justice," his autobiography; "Hate on Trial: The Case Against America's Most Dangerous Neo-Nazi;" and "Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat."

In 1991, NBC aired a made-for-TV movie called "Line of Fire" about Dees and his landmark legal victories against the Ku Klux Klan.

Ball

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their names from fashion labels.

Cash and trophies will be presented at the ball for the fiercest competitors, but Seltzer says the HIV testing is the most paramount aspect of the ball.

"The nature of (the ball) will really be about getting people tested for HIV," said Seltzer. "But it's a high energy event; it will certainly be a lot of fun."

Several satellite testing sites will be announced a few weeks before the ball where people can get tested and receive their ball passes, said Seltzer, who added that testing will also be done at the Milton Rhodes Center during the ball.

Though Intersections' approach is a bit unorthodox, HIV/STD Prevention Supervisor Patrice Toney of the Forsyth County Department of Public Health said when it comes to HIV testing, virtually any method that gets people in the door is a good method.

"There might be people who get tested just for the incentive but either way, the outcome is the same," Toney said. "Whatever motivates people to get tested I think is a good thing."

HIV/AIDS in the African American community is reaching epidemic proportions. According to figures from the CDC, nearly half of all of the Americans living with HIV/AIDS are black. Many of them are African-Americans who belong to what Seltzer calls the MSM (Men who Sleep with Men) Community. It is that community that is the main focus on the ball/testing effort.

Icon Mother Jack



Anthony "Mother NC Anky Miyake-Muglar" Oakes has been active in the ballroom scene for over a decade.

Mizrahi, a celebrity in the ballroom community, will serve as Master of Ceremony for the local ball. Seltzer's assistant at Intersections, Anthony Oakes, known as "Mother NC Anky Miyake-Muglar" in the ballroom community, will serve as the commentator for the event. Oakes, a city native, has been involved in the ballroom scene for more than 14 years and says he helped to bring the first ball to North Carolina a decade ago.

"I've had so many friends die of this disease because of ignorance, because of vanity. It has just been very disheartening," said the 35 year-old Carver alumnus. "I just want to give back to a scene that I've

participated in. I don't want the young people to see the death toll that I've seen in my career."

The Naked Truth intentionally targets a population that has a high incidence of contracting the disease, Oakes said.

"It's the naked truth about the disease - the truth is the ballroom community has a high infection rate," he declared. "We need to fight this disease that's a monster in our community and the key to it is prevention."

The ball is just Intersections latest effort to combat HIV/AIDS. With the help of local HIV-prevention organizations, Intersections offers free HIV testing to anyone in the community twice a week.

The remote testing sites will be posted on the Intersections Web site, www.i-triad.com, Seltzer said. He hopes to draw as many as 300 to the inaugural event.

On Feb. 7, Intersections of the Triad, 502 E. 15th Street, will host a special program for members of the faith community in support of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. For additional information or to RSVP, call at 336-782-4556 or visit www.i-triad.com.

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