



Science fair shows students' boldness

-See Page B1

Residents get say in chief selection

-See Page A2

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Native takes reins at Fisk

BY LAYLA GARMS
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One of Winston-Salem's native sons began his tenure as Fisk University's 15th president last week.

Dr. H. James Williams assumed his position at the helm of the esteemed historically black university in Nashville, Tenn. on Feb. 2. Williams, an East Forsyth alumnus and the third of six children, was born in East Winston and reared in the Twin City. His parents, the Revs. Hubert and Lula Williams, still live in the area.

"It feels wonderful. I really do feel like this is a once in a lifetime opportunity," Williams said of his appointment. "I feel like I'm in a position now that I can really make a difference ... to an institution that has this type

of longevity. I feel very blessed."

Officials at Fisk announced his appointment in December, ending a nearly yearlong search for President Hazel O'Leary's replacement. O'Leary, who is best known for serving as President Clinton's energy secretary from 1993-1997, retired after serving as Fisk's president since 2004.

"Dr. Williams is the right person for the job," O'Leary stated. "He exhibits high energy, intellect and a proven ability for fundraising. He is committed to Fisk and is well positioned to work successfully with the business and academic communities in Nashville and the nation."

Williams, who holds a collection of degrees in higher education, including a juris doctorate, an MBA and a Ph.D., comes to Fisk following a more than eight-year stint as dean of the Seidman College of Business at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich.

"Our task was to identify the next leader of Fisk who embodies the values, skills, intellect, and proven business and academic leadership needed to accelerate the progress made over the last eight years," said Robert Norton, chairman of Fisk's Board of Trustees. "I am delighted that in Dr. H. James Williams we have found such a leader. His breadth and depth of experience, multi-disciplined approach to teaching and research and unwavering commitment to the intellectual growth of students, as well as, community outreach, positions Dr. Williams to lead Fisk at this critical time in its history."

Williams, a father of two, also

See Williams on A2