



Submitted Photos

The local group poses with Dikembe Mutombo (above) and Jacqui Carpenter and WSSU leaders (right).



Local kids enjoy excitement of CIAA Tournament

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

New CIAA Commissioner Jacqui Carpenter applauded longtime CIAA Tournament volunteers Ben Piggott and Robert Chadwick for year-after-year bringing a fresh crop of ball boys and ball girls from Winston-Salem to assist during games.



Fred Hammond poses with Piggott, Chadwick and local children.

Piggott, the director of the Carl Russell Recreation Center, and Chadwick brought 60 kids to the recent Charlotte tournament. In addition to their on-court duties, the youngsters got the chance to meet alumni of CIAA schools and celebrity guests like Chris Brown, Yolanda Adams, Fred Hammond, Rick Mahorn, Bernard King and Dikembe Mutombo.

Dave Morrison, Tim Cunningham and Jeff Brantley served as supervisors for the children.

"We thank God for helping us to have another great year in Charlotte for the CIAA Basketball Tournament and letting the children know that it is more important to graduate from a college than to just attend and only party your time away," said Piggott.

They also watched as the Shaw University Women's Basketball Team was crowned the 2013 women's champion and as the men of Bowie State hoisted their victory trophy.



Photo by Todd Luck

Judge Denise Hartsfield administers the oath.

GAL

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treatment to parents to help them correct the problems that led to them losing their children. In cases where reunification isn't possible, the GAL program must suggest an alternative plan for the child, such as adoption or giving custody to a relative.

Volunteer GALs receive 30 hours of training to learn the ins and outs of the program. Each volunteer is asked to take at least one case. The GAL office supervises the volunteers on each case.

Most of the new volunteer GALs already had cases assigned to them by the time they ended training Saturday. District Court Judge Denise Hartsfield, who regularly works with the GAL program and its volunteers, administered the oath to the volunteers.

Hartsfield said sometimes children are more comfortable confiding in a volunteer, telling them things they would not share with a judge or lawyer. Hartsfield urged the volunteers not to become discouraged when they deal with cases involving sexual abuse, kids living in squalor and other difficult circumstances.

"This is a big job and an awesome responsibility, and I can't thank you enough for being willing to take this opportunity," Hartsfield said.

Volunteer GALs come from all walks of life and backgrounds. Alex Bohannon, 18, is a freshman majoring in political science and philosophy at Elon University. He was Hartsfield's summer intern; the judge suggested that

he consider the GAL program.

The aspiring lawyer, judge and politician hopes his youth will be an asset when he has to communicate with children.

"My youth ... makes me more relatable," he said.

Harvey Long, 22, a WSSU senior majoring in English and minoring in Sociology, plans to become a school counselor. He was drawn to the program by the opportunity to work with children.

"I'm excited about doing it, but I hope I can live up to it because it's a huge responsibility," said Long.

Cynthia Moir, 50, earned a master's degree in community agency counseling in 2009 from N.C. A&T State University. She said becoming a volunteer GAL is a great way to hone her counseling skills. She's already done a variety of volunteer work, including tutoring at-risk teens and illiterate adults, but said working with the GAL program will be something special.

"It's sentimental to me because children don't have a real voice in the court system and being able to speak on their behalf is a humbling experience," she said.

Devine said that GAL trainings are held several times a year. There are no special educational requirements to become a volunteer GAL, but participants must pass a criminal background check.

For more information about becoming a GAL, visit ncgal.org or call 336-779-6651.



GAINING RECOGNITION.

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During the first several decades, Slater Academy and then Winston-Salem Teachers College provided undergraduate degrees in a variety of areas, but students wishing to gain a graduate degree had to look elsewhere. Many students went on to gain graduate degrees at other in-state and out-of-state institutions, but opportunities for African American students was still limited.

As the school gained recognition and academic growth, the demand for postgraduate programs increased. In 1981, the UNC Board of Governors authorized graduate-level programs in business and education.

Today, WSSU offers 11 graduate degree programs in the areas of education, business, computer science, health sciences and physical therapy.

This is WSSU now.



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