

Dr. Margaret Savoca introduces N'Gai Dickerson (left) and Dr. John Card to the audience.

FILM, DISCUSSION PROBE DANGERS OF DOWN-HOME GOODNESS

BY LAYLA GARMS THE CHRONICLE

The triumphs and pitfalls of Soul Food were explored during the screening of an award winning documentary at The Enterprise Center

Tuesday. More than 50 community members were on hand for the showing of "Soul Food Junkies," a provocative documentary that delves into the tradition of Soul Food, which filmmaker Byron Hurt describes as a "sacrament, ritual and key expression of cultural identity" and how it relates to eating habits in the black community and beyond.

"Communities color, we are facing a health crisis," Dr. Vanessa Duren-Winfield, director of research for Winston-Salem State University School of Health Sciences, said in introducing the film. " ... Data doesn't lie, and we American minorities lead the nation in obesity, heart disease,

hypertension and diabetes. We're killing ourselves slowly with this food, y'all."

Following the devastating of his loss father to pancreatic cancer. which some researchers

believe can be linked to a high-fat, low fiber diet, Hurt began traversing the country to learn more about the Soul Food that he believes contributed to his father's death, the cooking and eating traditions that have been handed down for generations, and the steps some people are taking to change those habits for themselves and the next generation.

"I hope that they enjoy it, that they talk about it, and to whatever level that they want to be, are inspired by it because there are a lot of things about it that make people believe in change," said Dr. Margaret Savoca, a research fellow with the Public Health Science division of WFU Medical School's Epidemiology Department who spearheaded the Foodways & Roadways effort along with SG Atkins CDC **Executive Director Carol** Davis. "...What we're doing is starting to open, I hope, doors for a lot of people."

The film, which was PBS's aired on Independent Lens series, was followed by a question and answer session



Dr. Vanessa Duren-Winfield introduces the film.

with Dr. John P. Card, an changing his diet may internal medicine specialist at Winston-Salem Culinarian Director/Executive Chef N'Gai Dickerson.

"It's an impactful movie that goes back to I survived because I got the history of who we are and why we do what we do," said Card, an inter-

> nal health specialist at Novant Health Winston-Salem Health Care. "What I got from the film is it laid the foundation and where we need to go."

The audiquestioned the men about

adopting healthier lifestyles, forgoing cooking traditions that have carried on for generations, and encouraging their children and families to embrace healthier meal options.

"You have to start early - you've got to start young. You've got to have children understanding that there's a different way of doing things," Dickerson said. "If you start young and give them that advice that they need, show them how to do it ... then that becomes their soul food, that becomes their comfort level."

attendees Many offered testimonies about their own eating habits and how they have impacted their lives. One man said he was inspired to make better food choices after seeing the

"It has encouraged me tremendously, and I'm already diabetic," he said. "I'm going to try to do even better now, after watching the film."

City resident John Raye Smith told fellow audience members that have saved his life.

"I'm a rare person -Health Care, and The I'm a black man who's a cancer survivor." declared. "I was diagnosed on my 65th birthday - colon cancer - and off all that meat. You just have to stop eating certain stuff, change your diet. Since I changed my everything diet, changed."

Foodways Roadways is enhancement to the work that the Atkins CDC (which is housed at the Enterprise Center) is already doing in the community with respect to food sustainability, Davis said. The facility is already home to a twoacre swath of land where 10 community groups tend gardens.

"It ties right into the garden initiative," she said of the series. "...I wanted people to drive the activities here (at the Enterprise Center), and it's taken on a life of its own. The garden is just a prime example of that."

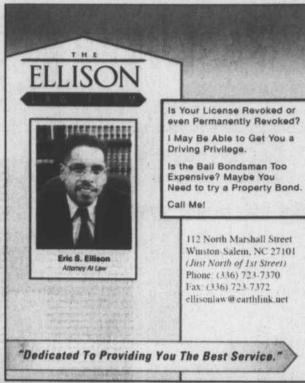
The "Soul Food Junkies" event was the first in a three-part "Foodways & Roadways" documentary film series presented by Wake Forest School of Medicine's Translation Science SG Institute, Atkins CDC, WSSU School of Health Sciences and the Psi Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. The series was birthed from a Foodways & Roadways multi-media exhibit that was held at the Enterprise Center in April. The exhibit, which employed archival photographs, filmed oral histories and current photographs to explore the changing food environment in recent decades, drew over 120 attendees.

"I just think that change comes from with-

in communities. That's what's happening in other parts of the country," said Savoca. "...This is a

start."

"Foodways Roadways" will continue on Tuesday, July 16, with the screening of Community of Gardeners" and Tuesday, August 13, with "Edible City: Grow the Revolution." Both events will be held at The Enterprise Center, 1922 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. For more information, call 336-734-6900. "Soul Food Junkies" is available for sale at amazon.com.









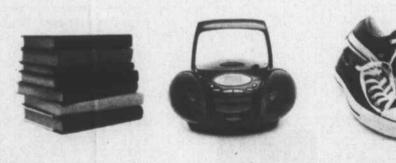
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