



**Carver celebrates track victories**

-See Page B10



**Gardeners talk green at local conference**

-See Page B1

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# THE CHRONICLE

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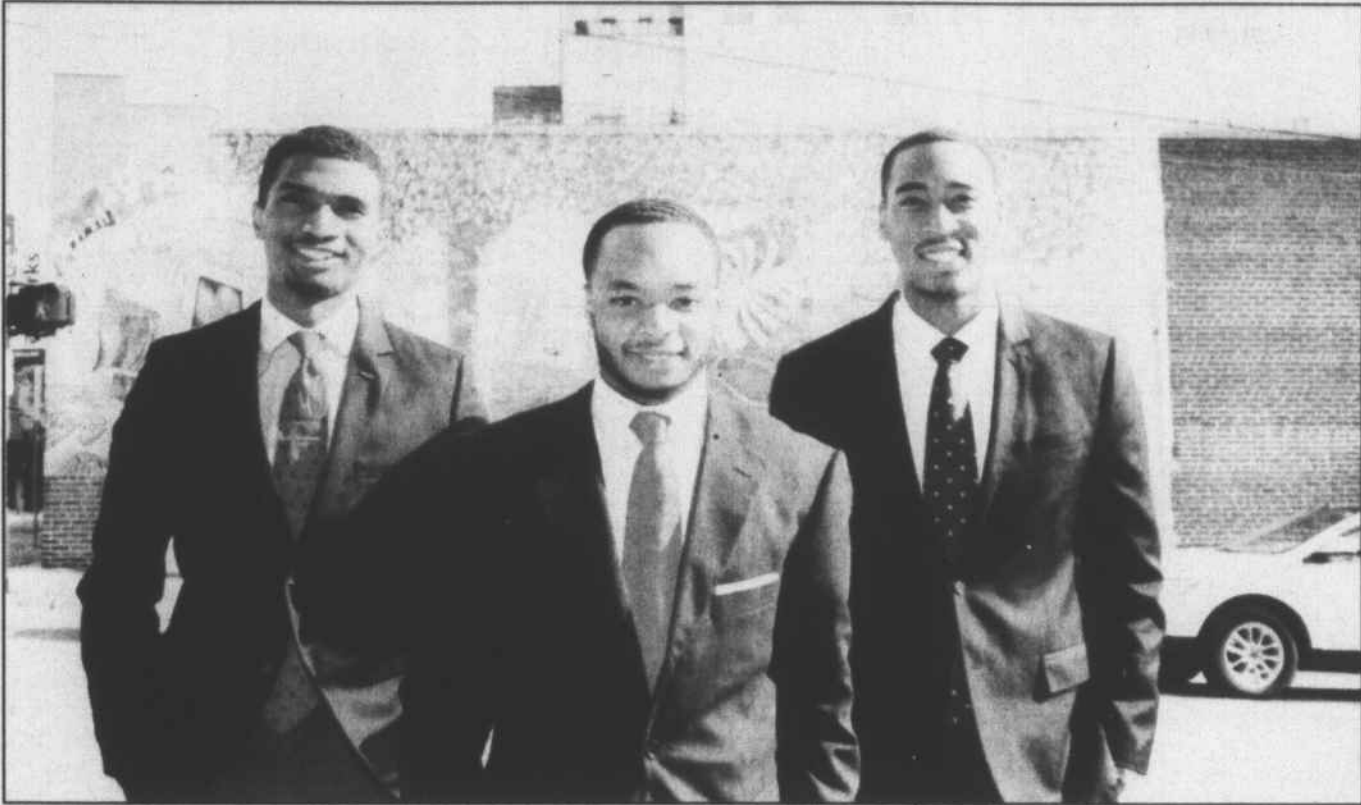


Photo by Layla Garms

Ram Connect founder Chinaemeze Kelsey Okoro (center) with Quentin Slade (left) and Kyle Brown.

## Opportunity Knocks

BY LAYLA GARMS  
THE CHRONICLE

As Greensboro native Chinaemeze Kelsey Okoro prepares for his graduation from Winston-Salem State University tomorrow, he is making plans to leave behind a legacy that he hopes will impact his alma mater and the community for years to come.

The 21-year-old is the visionary behind Ram Connect, a new initiative that he hopes will someday be a source of income, both for him and local businesses.

Restaurants, shops and other businesses pay a fee to be listed on the

*WSSU student pushing for unique business venture to take off*

Ram Connect Web site and app, Okoro says, and members of the Winston-Salem State family will use their student or staff ID cards or proof of their alumni status to receive discounts at those businesses.

"The whole concept is pretty much a helping circle," explained Okoro, an exercise science major. "I just want to help businesses, and I want to help stu-

dents, faculty and staff and alumni — the whole school."

During his sophomore year, Okoro, who is in a dual enrollment program at Wake Forest University, said he noticed that Wake students were often afforded perks and discounts at area retailers and eateries, simply by flashing their school IDs. Yet, when Okoro produced his WSSU ID, he was repeatedly denied such benefits.

"It made me feel a little bit upset," he confessed. "From there, I was just thinking about how can I change things."

Ram Connect is his solution. He

See Ram on A7

## Self-taught genealogist enjoys the chase

BY LAYLA GARMS  
THE CHRONICLE

City native James Gist is an addict.

His vice? Genealogy. "It's fun. You have to play detective sometimes, but that's okay," he said of researching his family's history.

The Atkins High School alumnus' love affair with genealogy began more than three decades ago when he discovered a family Bible at his mother's Winston-Salem home.

"I found this page that had all this family information on it, but there were some blanks in it," recalled Gist, who is retired from the U.S. Air Force and Lockheed Martin Aerospace in California. "I started talking to my grandmother — she was still living at the time — and she just kind of blew my mind."

The historical tidbits his grandmother provided sparked a curiosity that Gist says set the course for his genealogical journey. He

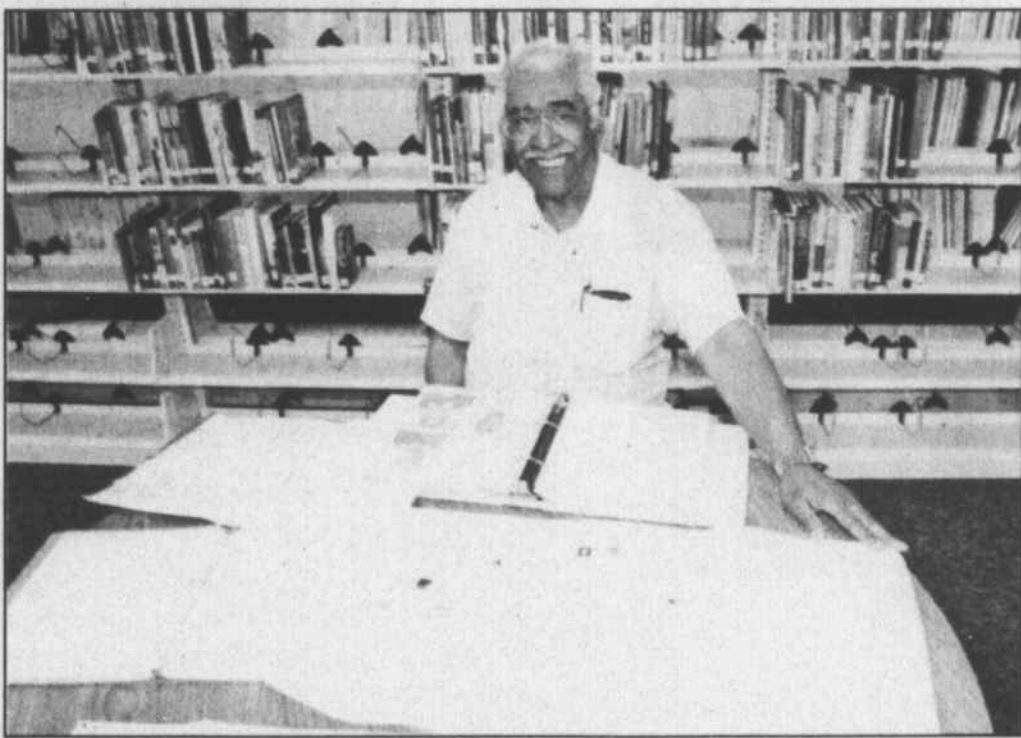


Photo by Layla Garms

James Gist poses with some of his research.

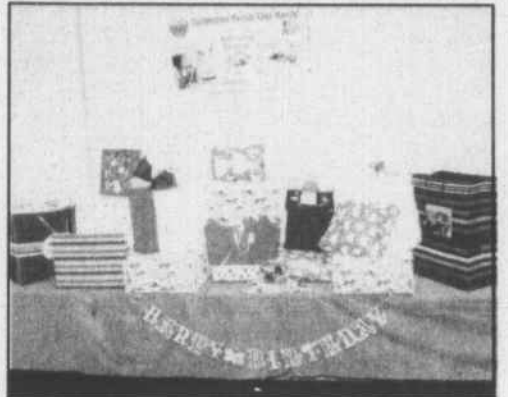
learned that his great-great grandfather was a slave in Anderson County, S.C. at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation. Among his

first acts as a freeman was the selection of a surname.

"Instead of taking the name of the family (that had owned him) when he was

emancipated, he took the name of the town, which was the Martin Township," Gist explained.

See Gist on A2



## Lawyers giving gifts to foster children

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

Local lawyers detailed Project Birthday at the Forsyth County Department of Social Services on Friday, May 2, the second day of National Foster Care Month.

Through the Forsyth County Women Attorneys Association- and DSS- sponsored program, attorneys will purchase birthday gifts for local foster children, who will also get a birthday cake (courtesy of Lowes Foods), candles and party favors on their special day.

FCWAA already provides Christmas gifts for foster kids, but when Jessica Bell, an attorney in private practice, heard DSS didn't do anything for kids' birthdays, she pushed for her fellow FCWAA members to take action. The group accepted the call enthusiastically and vowed to make sure all children in foster care, which was 161 the last week on April, receive birthday packages.

"We hope that the children in Forsyth County know that they are loved; they are special, and they are not forgotten," Bell said.

Gifts purchased by Winston-Salem Women of Womble — which is made up of lawyers at Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, where FCWAA President Sarah Crotts practices — for foster kids with May birthdays were displayed during the kickoff announcement, which included remarks by WXII Anchor Wanda Starke and Mayor Allen Joines. Other firms and legal organizations are being solicited to provide gifts for upcoming months.

Starke, who was adopted, thinks the royal treatment foster kids will receive thanks to Project Birthday will make a huge difference.

"I had loving parents who always celebrated my birthday and made me feel special," she said. "... Unfortunately, there's about 9,000 children in our state in foster care who don't know that feeling, necessari-

See Birthdays on A2



Photos by Todd Luck

Jessica Bell

## BA (Bachelor of Affection) awarded

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

When one thinks of a Bennett Belle, Clarence Allen Pitt isn't exactly what comes to mind. Yet, he walked away with a degree from the historic black women's college during its Commencement Weekend earlier this month.

The 70-year-old was astounded when President Dr. Rosalind Fuse-Hall summoned him before the standing-room-only crowd in Annie

See Pitts on A8



Lydia Pitt cheers for her husband.

Bennett College Photos  
**Dr. Rosalind Fuse-Hall presents Clarence Pitt with his special degree.**



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