



Photo by Terin Stinson

This marker dedicated to the Winston-Salem Chapter of the Black Panther Party is near the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Fifth Street.

Former Black Panther Party leader Little speaks out on petition to have marker removed

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Last month, an online petition was started to have the marker honoring the Winston-Salem Chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP) removed.

The Winston-Salem Chapter was the first BPP in the South and was known for its many community service programs, including a free breakfast program for children, an ambulance service and medical screenings.

The Winston-Salem Chapter was one of many branches that came from

the original Black Panther Party in Oakland, California.

The petition was started by Wayne Pearce of Henderson, N.C. Pearce believes the marker should be taken down because of the recent actions of the New Black Panther Party during a rally in Charleston, S.C., where they called for the killing of white people and the children of slave owners.

According to the petition, the people of Winston-Salem are calling for the removal of the sign, although Pearce isn't a resident of Winston-Salem or Forsyth County.

During an interview, Dr. Larry Little, who was the leader of the local branch during the height of its popularity, was quick to point out that Pearce isn't from this area and doesn't understand what the BPP did for the community.

"He isn't even from here," said Little. "He doesn't understand the impact we had on this city, not just with African-Americans, but the entire city. We were about equal rights for all, not just black people. He doesn't understand that."

Little went on to mention that the New Black Panther Party doesn't have

anything to do with the marker or the original Black Panther Party.

"The New Black Panther Party is a totally different organization, with no ties to the original Black Panther Party," Little said.

"We went to court to try to stop them from using our name, but because they added 'New,' there was nothing we could do."

During the first week, the petition gained over 100 signatures. That number quickly grew to over 3,000 in less than a month.

Although the petition almost reached its goal of 5,000 signatures, Little is confident that the marker

will never be removed.

"It's not going anywhere," said Little. "The marker is a historic monument."

The marker honoring the BPP is protected under a law that protects historic monuments, which renders the petition useless.

As of Tuesday, Aug. 25, the petition had 3,931 signatures. An update left on Aug. 2 states that Pearce has downloaded the signatures in case they are needed.

Pearce could not be reached for comment.

Little said that people should do more research on the Black Panther Party to

understand what they were about.

"A lot of people don't understand what we stood for, when the city honored us with the marker, that was the biggest crowd ever for a marker unveiling," Little said.

The petition can be viewed at change.org, a freemium petition tool that has over 100 million users.

The marker honoring the Winston-Salem Chapter of the Black Panther Party is located at the northeast corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and East Fifth Street.



Submitted photo

Publisher Sheila Robinson of Winston-Salem meets with Daymond John.

Local magazine publisher meets with 'Shark Tank' personality

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Local magazine publisher Sheila Robinson is on a mission to continue the growth of her 10-year-old parent company Robinson & Associates Communications LLC, with media brands Diversity Woman magazine, INCLUSION magazine and national Diversity Women's Business Leadership Conferences.

Robinson is also an author, a thought leader and doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania.

She visited the FUBU Headquarters in New York City the week of Aug. 21 and had the opportunity to share her vision for growth with Daymond John, founder and CEO of FUBU apparel and television personality of "Shark Tank." Robinson states that it was an empowering session that inspired her to think beyond her current vision and she left the session invigorated.

"All I could think of when I left the session," said Robinson, "was 'Watch out New York, there is a new 'Shark' in town, and Stay tuned!!'"

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