

# Hundreds honor 'voice to the voiceless'

## Earline Parmon's funeral attracts wide range of people

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

Hundreds of residents from across the city and state filed into Emmanuel Baptist Church Monday afternoon to celebrate the life of the first black state senator to represent Forsyth County.

Former N.C. lawmaker and social justice warrior Earline Parmon, 72, who was the director of outreach for U.S. Rep. Alma Adams, passed away from complications of a brief illness last week at Novant Forsyth Medical Center. Before joining Adams, Parmon had a long career as an elected official.

"Earline Parmon gave a voice to the voiceless," Adams said during the funeral service.

Parmon served for 12 years on the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners. She also served in the N.C. House of Representatives for 12 years, where she represented the 72nd District.

In 2012, she was elected to the N.C. Senate, representing the 32nd District. While serving in the state senate, Parmon most notably sponsored legislation that kick-started the Silver Alert system for missing senior citizens and measures that have helped improve the state's high

school graduation rate.

Parmon was an educator and school principal as well. She founded the now-defunct LIFT Academy, a charter school that is credited with graduating youth who had been written off by the public school system.

She was first vice president of the Winston-Salem Branch of the NAACP, and was a veteran and a minister.

During the memorial service, Adams said that Parmon had a special gift of connecting with people. Adams also mentioned she spoke with Parmon three times before she died on Tuesday, March 15.

"She was honest, courageous, straightforward and compassionate, committed to the people and concerned about their welfare," continued Adams. "Earline Parmon gave a voice to the voiceless. We are all much better as a result."

Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines said Parmon was a crusader for the rights of the less fortunate across the state of N.C. Joines mentioned she also had pride in her heritage and often honored her mentors and those she worked with in the past.

"She learned from women like Velma Hopkins, and Maize Woodruff," said Joines. "She then in turn gave back to the young-up and coming leaders in this community."

Joines mentioned that although Parmon was a sweet lady, she was also a



Earline Parmon's granddaughter, Shalonda Ingram talks about the impact her grandmother had on her life during a memorial service on Monday, March 21.

fighter and a warrior who believed in getting things done. During the celebration of life, Joines issued a proclamation declaring 30 days of mourning and remembrance for Parmon.

"We will truly miss her but we will never forget her," Joines noted.

For nearly three hours, former colleagues of Parmon from Raleigh, Washington and the local area echoed the thoughts of Adams and Joines.

Others who spoke during the ceremony included U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, who

worked with Parmon in the General Assembly; Rep. Garland E. Pierce; state Sen. Paul Lowe, who replaced Parmon in the state Senate. Dozens more discussed Parmon's determination to stand up for the disadvantaged.

According to Judge Denise Hartsfield, the family received more than two dozen letters of condolences as well. The family is expected to receive a letter from President Barack Obama later this week.

A number of family members and close friends

gave those who attended a glimpse into what the former senator was like outside of politics. Parmon was a minister at Exodus United Baptist Church. Pastor Alvin Carlisle said, "Parmon was a force to be reckoned with. She may have been small in stature, but she was a powerhouse who loved The Lord."

Parmon's granddaughter Shalonda Ingram, said Parmon helped set the tone for her life. Ingram mentioned that while growing up, when she didn't know what to do next, all she had

to do was look to her grandmother.

"Everything that she ever taught us, told us, and every expectation she had in us were seeds," Ingram said. "Every person in this room is a product of a seed that she planted."

"Earline isn't gone. Every person in here has a piece of her inside them," she continued. "So whatever it is that she inspired you to do, continue to do that, because she is still watching."



Atkins High School senior Twylah Gathings shows off her prom dress during the Prom Dress Giveaway event on Saturday, March 19. The event was sponsored by the Chris Paul Family Foundation.



Wife of NBA superstar Chris Paul, Jada Crawley Paul, presents a lucky student with a gift certificate to Firebirds during the Prom Dress Giveaway on Saturday, March 19.

# Foundation sponsors 2nd annual Prom Dress Giveaway

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Prom season is a special time for many teens, but for those whose families cannot afford the costly price of a prom dress, it can also be very stressful. For the second year in a row, the Chris Paul Family Foundation has helped juniors and seniors from local high schools remove some of that stress with their Prom Dress Giveaway.

On Saturday, March 19, a conference room inside the Hawthorne Inn located in downtown Winston-Salem was filled with girls searching through racks of dresses, trying on shoes and even getting make-up tips to use on the big night.

The event also featured a fashion show with models from the Scarlet Lace

dance team from Winston-Salem State University, which was hosted by Roxie from 102 JAMZ 3 Live Crew morning show.

The Prom Dress Giveaway included a prize giveaway as well. A number of girls received gift certificates to popular restaurants in the area, limousines and tuxedo rentals for dates, just to name a few.

Wife of Los Angeles Clippers superstar point guard Chris Paul, Jada Crawley Paul, said she decided to bring the Prom Dress Giveaway to her hometown because she is a firm believer in giving back.

In years past the foundation held similar giveaways in Los Angeles.

"Prom is a very big deal. It will be something they remember forever," she said. "We wanted to make it easier on mom and the girls to ensure they have fun and enjoy their night."

According to Paul, with help from the Winston-Salem Forsyth County School System, this year's

event was the biggest so far. More than 75 girls left the giveaway with a dress, shoes, jewelry and handbag. Last year around 50 girls participated in the giveaway.

"The event seems to grow every year," said Paul. "We hope to help even more families next year."

Kayla Allen's mother, Michelle Smith, applauded Jada and the Chris Paul Family Foundation for putting on the event.

"This event is just excellent," said Smith. "It's great that she is reaching back into her community to make a difference."

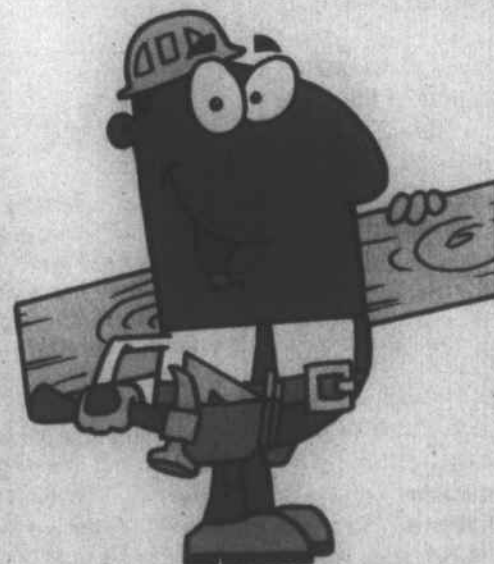
Atkins High School senior Twylah Gathings said the Prom Dress Giveaway was exciting and memorable.

"I think this event was very special because a lot of people don't do things like this for Winston-Salem," said Gathings. "As a little girl growing up, prom is something you dream about and as a senior, I'm ready to enjoy my last one."

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