



Photo by Tevin Stinson
Black Achievers scholarship recipients pose for a picture together following the 2016 Black Achievers Gala held last week at the Hawthorne Inn & Conference Center.

Area youth and business leaders honored at annual gala

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY FOR THE CHRONICLE

The YMCA is not just for working out. Ask Andrea Hicks, who has been working to make a difference there.

"I've been working with the Winston Lake YMCA for 13 years and I found through working with the students, I had a passion for youth development and helping them reach their potential," said Hicks, Winston Lake Family YMCA Youth and Family Services director. "I just truly enjoy working with the Black Achievers because it's good to help them set goals and let them know whatever dreams or aspirations they have, they can get there, and we are here to help."

Community and business leaders along with graduating high school seniors were recognized at the 19th annual Winston Lake Family YMCA Black Achievers Gala at the Hawthorne Inn and Conference Center.

The Achievers program emphasizes

academic and career development for high school youth. The program provides different soft skill workshops such as resume building and public speaking to help graduating teens navigate the next steps after high school. Eight of the graduating teens in the program received scholarships during the gala.

Atkins Academic and Technology High School senior Angel Williams said she joined the Black Achievers because she is shy and thought the club would open her up. She has been in the program for two years and said, "I wanted to be involved in an extra-curricular activity and thought the program would help my communication skills."

"I am really honored to have received the scholarships," she said. "I was kind of worried about going to Hampton with their tuition cost, so this helps a lot with my financial obligations freshman year. I am really excited and appreciative."

Williams received the Moses H. Lucas Scholarship, named for the Winston Lake

YMCA beloved former youth director. She also received the Winston Lake Family YMCA Merit Scholarship for her leadership and academic excellence. Her plans are to attend Hampton University in the fall to study pre-pharmacy and wants to pursue a career as a pharmacist upon graduation.

Other scholarship winners were Jada Moore, Chardonoe'te Campbell, Amber Peppers, Davont'e Wilson, Kiana Carter, Tracy Powell, and Keaira Green.

City Council member Derwin Montgomery was the May 12 gala's keynote speaker. In 2009 Montgomery was elected to the City Council, becoming the youngest council member in the city's recorded history and the youngest African-American elected official in the United States.

Montgomery spoke about how life is full of struggles and they make us better because we endure them. Quoting Frederick Douglas, Montgomery said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." He wanted all the young people in attendance to understand that no one is going to hand them a "golden ticket" and some fail on their first attempt in life. But when adversity comes, they have to persevere and strive to achieve their goal and cannot give up. Montgomery recalled the time he failed in his attempts at SGA president while at Winston Salem State University, but continued in his efforts to serve and eventually won the City Council seat.

Dr. James D. Branch, M.D. was presented with the Lifetime Service Award for his almost 40 years of service practicing ophthalmology.

"I am honored and humbled to receive this award," said Branch. "I am a strong advocate for academic achievement and I recommend youth be ambitious, work for the best, give back and add value to your community and pray."

Winston Salem State University Director of Athletics Tonia Walker was also honored with the Distinguished Service Award. Walker is in her second year as Director of Athletics and said, "When you are nominated by your peers, it is a great thing. Any time that I'm able to pour into the lives of young people and share my experiences, I'm always willing. I am very honored, blessed and humbled to have won this award."

The 2015 Adult Achievers who serve as role models for the youth and provide support for the Black Achievers program were recognized. They included Shirley Gathier, Ashley Mungo, Justin Ramsey, Heather Davis-Riddick, Danielle Smith, and Letitia Simmons of PepsiCo; and Johnetta Huntley of JDL Castle.

The Minority Business Award went to the Ote'sha Creative Arts Ensemble. Hashim Saleh is the executive director and founding musician. He says that his purpose and mission is to educate, inspire and uplift our community through cultural dance, music and theatre.

NC LEGISLATURE

Bills addressing college costs, immigration, pay filed

RALEIGH (AP) North Carolina lawmakers offered bills before a self-imposed deadline Tuesday addressing the cost of college education, penalties for "sanctuary cities," economic incentives and worker pay.

House and Senate members filed close to 120 pieces of legislation before this year's cutoff for bills that would affect next year's budget or that study commissions recommended.

Sen. Tom Apodaca, R-Henderson, filed legislation - Senate Bill 873 - that would prevent in-state tuition at University of North Carolina campuses from rising for a student seeking a bachelor's degree, either for eight or 10 semesters.

street improvements if they don't comply with federal and state immigration laws. The legislature told cities and counties last fall they could not enforce their own policies preventing a person from being asked their immigration status.

The bill also creates a process whereby the public could file complaints alleging local governments weren't complying with immigration laws with the attorney general. Newton is the Republican nominee for attorney general this year.

"Hopefully this bill will provide some extra incentive for local officials to do the right thing," Newton and Sanderson said in a release.

Several House Republicans, including

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-Buck Newton and Norman Sanderson, Republican Senators

ters. Senate Democrats filed a separate "fixed tuition" bill.

But Apodaca's bill also would drastically reduce tuition starting in fall 2018 to no more than \$500 per semester for in-state students and \$2,500 for out-of-state students at five UNC campuses: the historically black Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State and Winston-Salem State, along with UNC-Pembroke and Western Carolina.

The change would be designed to attract new students to some campuses with lower enrollment or to stimulate regional economies. University leaders also would be directed in fall 2018 to reduce student fees at nearly all campuses by 10 percent to 25 percent compared with this fall. Apodaca also wants to create a scholarship program giving full rides to students attending the historically black North Carolina A&T and N.C. Central.

News reports had said that the bill also would require the UNC Board of Governors to

evaluate the effects of changing the names of the five universities, but media are now saying that part of the bill is expected to be modified.

Another bill by Sens. Norman Sanderson, R-Pamlico, and Buck Newton, R-Wilson, would deny local governments money for public school capital or city

Majority Leader Mike Hager of Rutherford County, filed legislation Tuesday that would allow local governments to request a moratorium on resettling refugees in their area that would ultimately be sent to the U.S. Department of State. Local government bodies also would be required to hold public hearings before notifying North Carolina officials they wanted to resettle refugees.

Refugee issues received attention late last year after the Paris attacks, based on worries that terrorists would pose as refugees to gain access to the U.S.

House and Senate GOP lawmakers filed 28-page bills offering or extending a host of tax breaks and credits to those investing in North Carolina business, as well as using certain funds held by the state treasurer for venture capital targeting businesses with North Carolina connections.

House Democrats filed their own bills Tuesday, two of which would repeal or replace the law approved in March limiting anti-discrimination protections for LGBT people and the use of public restrooms by transgender people to the one aligned with their biological sex.

Democrats also filed several bills to raise the minimum wage to \$12 or \$15 per hour and mandate equal pay for men and women performing the same work.

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