

Rolonda Watts returns home to promote novel

Actress, producer is scheduled to hold book signing at local book store today

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE



Watts

After years of traveling the globe, actress, producer, and radio and television talk show host Rolonda Watts is returning to the place where it all began.

Right here in Winston-Salem.

A graduate of Salem Academy, a local private school for teenage girls, Watts will hold a book signing for her novel, "Destiny Lingers," today, June 2, at Barnes & Noble.

"It's going to feel great to be in my hometown," she said. "I still have a lot of family and friends there. It's going to be very special moment for me."

During an interview with *The Chronicle*, Watts noted that she learned a number of valuable lessons as a teenager in the Twin City that helped her become the success she is today. She said a number of teachers, family members, friends, and others encouraged her to follow her dreams.

"I would not be in the position I am today if it weren't for the support system I had growing up," said Watts. "The city will always have a special place in my heart."

After high school, Watts went on to attend Spellman College in Atlanta, Ga. where she was the editor-in-chief of the school newspaper and graduated Magna Cum Laude. In 1981 she earned

ging for more.

The romance novel tells the story of an investigative news reporter in New York City named Destiny who uncovers breaking stories every day, but has yet to uncover the truth of her own life. That all changes when she discovers that her husband is cheating on her with her best friend.

Amid personal tragedy and shocking deceit, Destiny decides to return to her roots in Topsail Island, N.C. It's there that Destiny finds herself and begins to look toward the future, after she reconnects with a childhood crush she couldn't be with years before because of racial barriers and segregation.

"Destiny Lingers" received one of the final endorsements from the late Dr. Maya Angelou. Watts said Angelou was mentor and a mother figure to her for over 30 years. She said the endorsement from "Auntie Maya" is one she will cherish for the rest of her life.

"That was just amazing. After reading the novel, she said she was upset that it ended," Watts laughed.

Watts mentioned she is currently working on a sequel to "Destiny Lingers" and other books as well.

The book signing will be held today, Thursday, June 2, at 7 p.m. at Barnes and Noble located at 1925 Hampton Inn Court. For more information on "Destiny Lingers" and a list of other book signing events, visit www.rolonda.com.

a master's degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. After leaving Columbia, Watts returned to N.C. and began her career as a general assignment reporter at WNBC, where she was nominated for an Emmy.

Her career continued to skyrocket from there.

From 1994 to 1997, she was the host of the international syndicated talk show "Rolonda." On the show, Watts would help guests with their problems. She also used the show as a platform to help at-risk teens. Today, Watts is an on-camera announcer for Divorce Court.

Although she has had a stellar career in journalism, radio and television, "Destiny Lingers" is Watts' first novel. When asked why she decided to write a book, Watts said, "This is a life-long dream come true."

"Writing has always been a passion of mine and I always wanted to become an author," Watts said.

"It feels great to finally accomplish a goal I've had since I was a little girl."

According to Watts, "Destiny Lingers" will keep your eyes glued to the pages and leave you beg-

What's Happening NOW in City Government



\$442 Million Budget Proposed for 2016-2017

The city would make significant investments in equipment, facilities and personnel that have been on hold since the economic recession, and the city property-tax rate would increase 2 cents under the \$442 million budget for 2016-17 that City Manager Lee Garrity has recommended to Mayor Allen Joiner and the City Council.

The proposed budget allocates \$326.5 million for operations, \$41.5 million for debt service and \$74 million for capital improvements. The property-tax rate would be 58.5 cents for every \$100 of value.

The proposed 2-cent increase in the property-tax rate, combined with growth in sales taxes and the tax base, would allow the city to address pent-up needs, Garrity said in his budget message.

"The city has reached a critical point where more investment is needed in our employees, facilities and equipment to maintain our excellent city services, enhance the quality of life in the community and position the city to be more competitive in attracting jobs and growing economically."

Garrity noted that tax increases in recent years, with the exception of the bonds passed in 2014, simply made up for revenue lost through actions of the General Assembly and did not actually address these needs.

Even with the 2-cent increase, Garrity said, "Based on the current tax rates of the other large cities in North Carolina, Winston-Salem's rate would remain in the middle of the group."

The City Council's Finance Committee will begin reviewing the budget June 7 and will hold a public hearing June 9. The City Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing and vote on the budget on June 20. By state law, the council must adopt a budget for 2016-2017 by June 30. The budget would take effect July 1.

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

Charges for services:	\$144.3 million
Property taxes:	\$121.2 million
Intergovernmental resources:	\$54.1 million
Sales taxes:	\$38.9 million
Bond proceeds:	\$38.7 million
Civil penalties, other:	\$25.8 million
Reserve:	\$10.1 million
Licenses & permits:	\$7.1 million
Investment income:	\$1.8 million
Total:	\$442.0 million

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Healthy environment	\$181.1 million
Safe & secure community	\$100.8 million
Debt management	\$53.9 million
Service excellence	\$36.5 million
Quality transportation	\$34.6 million
Livable neighborhoods	\$18.4 million
Economic vitality & diversity	\$16.7 million
Total:	\$442.0 million

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET:

- Creation of a fourth police patrol district to improve response times in the central portion of Winston-Salem.
- Targeted pay raises for police officers with 5 to 15 years of service to address continued attrition of experienced officers.
- \$3.54 million in lease payments to replace dozens of aging police cars, fire trucks, dump trucks, garbage trucks and other public works equipment, as well as computers and other equipment used by city employees, all of which have been kept in service longer than planned.
- Creation of a four-person drainage crew to work with citizens whose property is affected by stormwater runoff.
- Creation of two crews to collect litter along roadsides and in city parks.
- No increase in most user fees; a 3 percent increase in sewer rates, a 1.5 percent increase in water fees and a \$2.49 increase in the bimonthly water and sewer base charge.
- \$544,270 for downtown improvements, provided by the 9-cent levy recommended by the Downtown Winston-Salem Business Improvement District Advisory Committee.
- Second round of public safety supplemental pay increase on Jan. 1; 3 percent market pay raise for other city employees; increase in city employee minimum wage to \$10.40 per hour; new 401(a) supplemental retirement plan to improve employee retention; all employees also eligible for merit-based raises of 1.5 to 3 percent based on performance.

Vote June 7 John Larson



We need a Councilmember who will:

- negotiate for more resources for the entire South Ward!
- celebrate our diversity!
- value our concerns to build consensus, not just push a personal agenda!
- continue a successful work record with credible business experience!
- fight for us when the next important zoning, safety, or tax issue arises!

John Larson is the **only** candidate who can do **all** of these.

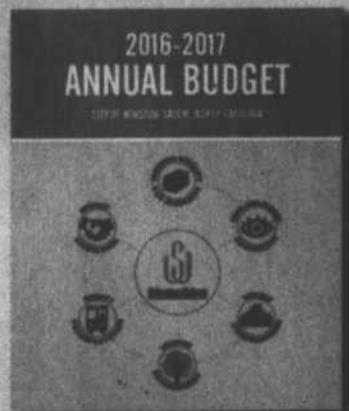
South Ward Forward



How to Participate...

Copies of the proposed budget are available for review at public libraries, all city recreation centers and City Hall, 101 N. Main St. Suite 30. Copies of the budget are also available online at www.CityofWS.org.

- Finance Committee Budget workshops June 7 at 3:30 p.m., June 13 at 4:30 p.m., and (if needed) June 14 at 2 p.m., all in City Hall, Room 239.
- Finance Committee Public Hearing, 7 p.m. June 9, City Hall Council Chamber, Room 230.
- Public Safety Committee review, 6 p.m. June 13, City Hall, Room 239.
- City Council Public Hearing, 7 p.m. June 20, City Hall Council Chamber.



Watch Council and Finance Committee budget meetings live on WSTV.

WEIGH IN ON THE BUDGET WEIGH IN on the budget. Phone in comments about the budget to the Citizen Feedback Line, 734-1400, or submit comments through the form on the city web site.

SHOWING THIS MONTH ON TRAIL
WARNER CABLE CHANNEL 13 OR 74.3
AND AT&T UVERSE CHANNEL 82
WSTV
DIGITAL MEDIA

- State of the Community
- Fallen Officers Memorial
- East Winston Library Historic Marker

REQUEST A SERVICE — REPORT A PROBLEM
WEEKDAYS 7 A.M.—7 P.M., WEEKENDS 9 A.M.—5:30 P.M.



Call 311 or 336-727-8000
citylink@cityofws.org

Question or concern about city government services? City Link (727-8000) is now open 24-hours-a-day to receive all non-emergency calls, 7 days a week.

The City of Winston-Salem does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, national origin, religion or disability in its employment opportunities, programs, services or activities.

Mayor: Allen Joiner City Council: Vivian H. Burke, Mayor Pro Tempore, Northeast Ward; Denise D. Adams, North Ward; Dan Basso, Southwest Ward; Robert C. Clark, West Ward; Molly Light, South Ward; Jeff MacIntosh, Northwest Ward; Darwin L. Montgomery, East Ward; James Taylor, Jr., Southeast Ward City Manager: Lee Garrity

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