

# Chief: WSPD is embracing community policing

BY CASH MICHAELS  
FOR THE CHRONICLE

Earlier this week, a tired, weary Dallas Police Chief David Brown, admittedly still heartbroken over the murders of four of his department's officers and one Dallas Area Rapid Transit officer during a shooting rampage July 7 by a crazed gunman, still wanted the world to know that despite what had happened, by all accounts, he led the "best police department in the nation."

Chief Brown had solid numbers to back him up – the murder rate in Dallas dropped way down under his tenure, as did civilian complaints against Dallas police officers. The entire community was supportive of DPD, and the force was well known and regarded for its extensive community outreach, particularly in poor neighborhoods like the one Chief Brown grew up in.

"Community policing works," declared Chief Brown to reporters Monday. "It makes us safe."

"Community policing," a concept dating back to the 1800s where law enforce-

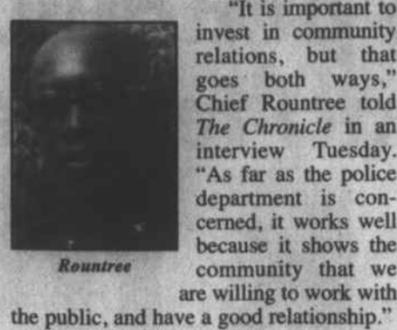
ment routinely interacts with the communities they serve, not just to stop or solve crimes, but also enhance the quality of living, is generally seen as key to help building strong police-neighborhood relationships, and ultimately improve public safety.

Here in North Carolina, many of the state's major city police departments apparently share Chief Brown's view about community policing, including Winston-Salem.

Headed by Chief Barry D. Rountree, the WSPD is a force of approximately 570 sworn officers. The WSPD's community policing effort, headed by the Community Resources Unit, boasts of such programs as Police Explorers, the Citizens' Police Academy, and of course, Crime Prevention, and Neighborhood Watch.

In its most recent newsletter, the Community Relations Division of the Winston-Salem Police Dept. featured a front-page message from Chief Rountree talking about the Winston-Salem Police Foundation, a charitable, independent 501 (c) nonprofit organization, and how it will

"... secure financial resources the police need to strengthen community partnerships through mentoring, community outreach and police athletic leagues."



Rountree

"It is important to invest in community relations, but that goes both ways," Chief Rountree told *The Chronicle* in an interview Tuesday. "As far as the police department is concerned, it works well because it shows the community that we are willing to work with the public, and have a good relationship."

Everything that we do, it takes community cooperation. And by forging those relationships, and reaching out, it works better for us when there is a crisis or when we need information about a crime, or whatever it may be.

"It just makes the community a better place for everybody – police officers and citizens," Chief Rountree said.

Rountree has been police chief for three years, but a police officer for 29 years. He says the force has a "pretty good" relationship with the African-American community, which unofficially stands around 12 percent. One of the areas he has been working to improve is recruiting more blacks to the force, and the department has employed a number of outreach efforts to do that through churches, etc.

It's when tragic events like the police shootings in Baton Rouge and St. Paul take place, that Rountree feels some citizens take it out on his officers, even though they obviously had no part in those incidents. That needs to be addressed, and a greater bond of trust must be developed among all sides.

"We all have to come together to sit down and understand what the issues are, without assuming what they are," Chief Rountree said. "We can do a better job of educating the public, reaching out, and working with the public."

# Peaceful protest calls for change

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

Hundreds of Black Lives Matter supporters rallied and marched through downtown last Saturday afternoon to show solidarity, following a pair of deadly police shootings and the sniper attack on police in Dallas.

Before hitting the streets, the diverse group of protesters, which included residents of all ages and ethnic backgrounds, gathered at Corpening Plaza located on First Street. While surrounded by a sea of residents dressed in black, rally organizer Frankie Gist said in order to see a change, people must first change themselves. He mentioned that if people don't change their views on things such as race and gender, nothing will ever change. He also encouraged others in the community to step up as leaders.

"We have to change the way we think, the way we look at people, and the way we judge people," he said. "Once we change ourselves, then we can change the community. Leaders lead first."

In between leading chants of "No Justice, No Peace" and "Hands Up Don't Shoot," Gist told *The Chronicle* he was ecstatic to see so many people from the

community and surrounding areas come out to support the peaceful protest.

"That's what this is all about, spreading peace," said Gist. "We are here today to call for an end to all violence. Too many lives have already been lost."

As the protestors made their way through downtown, Tamila Waters said she decided to attend the rally because she was fed up with unjust killings of blacks by law enforcement.

"We have a system in place that has failed our community," continued Waters. "It's time that we take a stand and let those in power know that we will not tolerate this injustice any longer."

Young advocate and city native Jayleen Mack said he believes more rallies should be held to get more people on the same accord.

"Before moving on to the next step, we should try bringing more people together like this. We must first develop a plan before taking any other action," said Mack. "Once we get more people involved, I feel like we can do more."

A number of well-known community leaders attended the rally as well, including Judge Denise Hartsfield, third vice president of the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity Pastor Alvin



Photo by Tevin Stinson

A diverse group of people marched through the streets of downtown last Saturday, June 9 in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Carlisle, and local NAACP president Isaac Howard. City Manager Lee Garrity also attended the rally. Mayor Allen Joiner released a statement on behalf of the City Council.

The statement reads: "On behalf of the City Council and me, we are shocked and saddened by the events of this week. Citizens in Baton Rouge and Minneapolis

have been killed, as have five law officers in Dallas. It is appalling. But no matter how angry we may get about these deaths, we must not allow violence to beget more violence. We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of the victims in Baton Rouge, Minneapolis and Dallas, and urge all citizens of Winston-Salem to join us in keeping them in our thoughts and prayers."

## Reform

from page A1

from the law enforcement community, but the African-American community and other communities all across the country," Butterfield told MSNBC on Monday. "It's pouring in every day from the American people who want action on gun violence. They're demanding that we, as members of Congress, legislate to make sure that those who are not capable of flying [on] an airplane because they're on a no-fly list that they are disqualified from owning a weapon. Ninety-percent of the American people believe that there should be background checks before you can purchase a firearm."

Butterfield continued, "The American people are speaking very loudly, so we need a hearing here in Congress on gun violence that we need legislative action, and we need it now. Anxiety and fear is gripping the nation, so we need a legislative response and we need it now!"

Addressing the growing concerns that relations between the African-American community and law enforcement have become increasingly worse since the recent police shootings and nationwide protests, Butterfield said that Congress does have a role in lowering the temperature.

"The statistics are clear – of all of the unarmed men shot by police in this country, at least last year, 40 percent were African-American, even though black men make up only 6 percent of the nation's population. So the data is clear – African-Americans are two-and-a-half times more likely to be killed by police than other Americans."

"We must immediately stop what we're doing here in Congress and appropriate money for law enforcement agencies across the country so that they can train and retrain their officers, so they can separate the good ones from the bad ones, and get to the concept of community policing, thereby creating this bond of trust between the community and law enforce-

ment," Butterfield said Monday. "Until we do that, we're going to continue to have unrest in our communities, and we are better than that."

Congress goes on a seven-week recess one day early today, combining the traditional two-weeks off for the two national political conventions, and taking off the month of August. When Congress returns at the beginning of September, it will convene only for a brief period, and then recess again, allowing members to return to their districts to tend to their November re-election campaigns.

According to *The Hill.com*, "After delaying a vote on a gun control bill this week, GOP leaders told rank-and-file members they plan to adjourn for the long summer recess beginning Thursday, a day earlier than expected."

The *Hill.com* continued, "The measure currently lacks the votes to pass, given divisions among Republicans and widespread Democratic opposition."

## Boycott

from page A1

period. As much as you are able, Don't spend one cent, unless it is in a black owned establishment."

According to the post, the boycott was scheduled to begin on Sunday, July 10, and is expected to end on July 31.

Hip-hop artist and activist Killer Mike has outlined other strategies for civil resistance, such as banking with black-owned banks. During an interview with Hot 107, the Atlanta native and avid Bernie Sanders supporter said, "You can go to your bank tomorrow and say, until you as a corporation start to speak on our behalf, I want all my money."

"Take your money out of this dog's hand. Out of

their paws. Take your money."

At the local level, 102 Jamz' on-air personality Brian "B-Daht" McLaughlin has started a campaign to get 100 people to open an account at Merchant and Farmers Bank, located on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

During a rally held on Saturday, July 9, Cassandra Davis said economic boycott may be the only way to really make an impact and bring about change.

"I think we are at a point where we have no other option," said Davis. "Having rallies and marches are good, but at some point we have to do something different. We can't keep doing the same things and expect someone to take notice."

Salem College

Assistant Professor of Sociological and Criminal Studies Kimya Dennis noted, although marching is a great tool to network and brainstorm ideas, there is no doubt that something more has to be done.

"We have to fight behind closed doors as well," she said. "This goes beyond an altercation and this is not about one individual. This is about institutional power."

Dennis noted the movement needs consistency. "We need people who are willing to continue this fight even when it isn't all over the news or on the front page of the paper."

"More than anything, what the movement needs is consistency. You have to be willing to fight behind the scenes."

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