

# Attorney Donald Buie ends appeals court run

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

Local Attorney Donald Buie is ending his unaffiliated run for the N.C. Court of Appeals seat of Judge Martha Geer, who stepped down in May.

In an email to *The Chronicle*, he said he has suspended his campaign "due to unforeseen person-

al and family issues." Voters will still see Buie's name on the ballot and even in their mailbox, since his departure comes after the ballots have been printed and after information about judicial candidates was mailed out by the N.C. Board of Elections.

Two candidates remain who are vying for Geer's

old seat. One is Democrat Margaret Eagles, who has served as a district court judge in Wake County since 2009 and has been endorsed by Geer. The other is Republican Hunter Murphy, a trial attorney in Waynesville who has been endorsed by former N.C. Supreme Court Justice Robert Orr.

## City of W-S Univ. applications accepted

SPECIAL TO  
THE CHRONICLE

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Dec. 30 and are available at the Marketing & Communications Department in City Hall, 101 N. Main St. Suite 336, or by calling CityLink 311. The application is also posted online at [www.CityofWS.org/CWSU](http://www.CityofWS.org/CWSU) and can be printed and mailed in, or filled out and submitted online.

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## History

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ure," meaning that without strict accountability and transparency, any concessions at this point will fall way short of their goal, he says.

"They have an African-American infusion in the WS/FCPSS already," Rasheed continued. "The teachers have an option of whether they want to teach [black history] or not, so it's really not being taught. There is a multi-cultural education department, and there's only one person in that department, ... and they also have an African-American elective [in the high schools], but 17 students have to sign up for that class per school. If there aren't 17 students, that class is not taught."

One of the concessions from the school system, Rasheed says, was that it would be mandated that teachers teach the black history course already in the infusion, and Dr. Willette Nash, program manager of the multi-cultural education department for WS/FCPSS, and her assistant would also be tasked with training them.

Nash currently teaches multicultural education and diversity in the school system.

But who will hold the instructors accountable to make sure that black history is actually being taught effectively? If they don't, what happens, and how is all of this going to be implemented? Rasheed asks. He adds that the easiest thing for the school system to do is make the black history infusion mandatory for all students [K-12], but he's certain white parents would balk if their children were forced to take it in order to graduate.

Rasheed and the LOC, which was born out of the last Million Man March, feel it is vital that the African-American community be made aware of their efforts to establish a mandatory black history course in WS/FCPSS, and support the cause. Petitions have been circulated, and "tons of research" done to prove that it can be done, says Rasheed.

"There is so much work that needs to be done for our children," the activist laments, citing high poverty/low performing schools in the system where black children are failing, and young blacks males "being killed in the streets."

"There are so many groups here who are trying to do the same thing. What we should do is come together [to address the problems], but we don't."

Not surprisingly, what is playing out now between members of the black community and the local school system is part of the history of the Philadelphia Public School system. Prior to that system formally adopting African-American history as a mandated course of study for graduation in

the high school grades, Philadelphia's black community demanded black studies for almost 40 years before it was finally approved in 2005.

Through demonstrations, and sometimes violent protests and confrontations in the streets with the police, the black community kept up the pressure, making Philly the first school system in the nation to mandate black history courses.

As expected, right-wing white politicians fought the change, saying American history held out greater value for all students. But activists and educators countered that black history was American history, and not only gave African-American students a greater sense of pride, but allowed white students to also learn more about their classmates of color, beyond Black History month.

In the 10 years hence, even though the Philadelphia Public School System has its challenges, there is little controversy about the black history course mandate.

Dr. Kenneth Simington is the assistant superintendent for student services and chief academic officer for the WS/FCPSS, where there are 29 low-performing schools [five high schools and six middle schools], many of which have large black student populations from impoverished communities, the very students who need a greater understanding and awareness of self the most, the LOC says.

Simington told *The Chronicle* that system officials were "very open to having a discussion with [Ken Rasheed and the LOC] to determine what their interests were. He noted that "required courses typically come from the state Department of Public Instruction ... [in addition to] local courses that are approved for graduation," of which he added there are generally few of those in number.

"We fully support the interest of the [LOC] around increasing achievement for African-American students," the assistant superintendent said regarding their previous meetings. "How we get there ... I'll say we had some common interests, but some that were not the same," the inference being the school system would prefer to take baby steps toward the goal.

"In the context of the diversity course, maybe we weren't exactly clear about that," Simington continued. He referred to Dr. Willette Nash as being in charge of "cultural learning" for the school system, where students are taught about the challenges of racism and prejudice, and are helped to develop awareness skills "related to various groups of people."

Simington said the school system wants to provide "a curriculum in the multicultural piece

through our social studies curriculum," and make available professional development for teachers to instruct in multicultural education through Dr. Nash's office.

"Our position at present is that we would like to accomplish [the LOC's] request through our multicultural education [programming]," Simington said, effectively not making black history studies a stand-alone course, but integrating it as part of the school system's social studies curriculum with established strict standards.

But Simington warned that, in his and other educators' opinion, singling out black history, instead of making it a part of an overall social studies curriculum, "minimizes it" by separating it from the fabric of American history.

He acknowledged that, given the large percentage of African-American students in the WS/FCPSS, school officials have traditionally underestimated the value of multicultural education.

The next step for the "short term," Simington says, is to have Nash's office work with social studies and American history high school teachers on professional development for the course, the course standards, and "the emphasis that has been brought to us."

The long term objective is having elementary school students understanding the importance of African-American history as well," Simington said, indicating that K-12 planning is in the cards.

As far as accountability and transparency is concerned, Simington said there would be reviews of lesson plans, curriculum documents, classroom walk-throughs, learning walks - "all of these places we can look at to see how we're doing."

Simington expects the changes to kick off later this school year, with a plan expected from Nash by the end of this first quarter.

"We're open to work together [with the LOC]," Simington said.

When *The Chronicle* spoke with Ken Rasheed and members of the LOC again Monday evening, and shared with them some of Simington's thoughts, they were cautious. Many said much of what they were hearing now had gone farther than what had been previously expressed in their meetings with school officials, which was good, though they still had many questions. They still maintained, however, that while this may bring them closer to their goal, accountability and transparency to the community were extremely important on the part of the school system for any effort to successfully go forward.

"These are our children," Ken Rasheed said, "and we want the best for them."

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