

# Elections, voter suppression, deaths and retirements color 2016

BY DONNA ROGERS  
THE CHRONICLE

2016 was a tumultuous year.

One of the things that sticks out is the number of deaths of prominent people linked to the Winston-Salem area.

These names come to mind:

- \*Former N.C. Sen. Earline Parmon (March)
- \*Darryl Hunt (March)
- \*Mo Lucas (June)
- \*Rodney Ellis (September)
- \*Rolland Greene (February)
- \*Carl Wesley Matthews (February)
- \*Carl Russell Jr. (March)
- \*Mildred Peppers (November)

The death of Mo Lucas was jaw-dropping because the community had just celebrated his special day, Father's Day, days before he died in June.

Parmon keeps getting accolades after her death. A street has been named after her, a scholarship has been established bearing her name, among other honors. Lawmakers and people she mentored have moved into new ventures, citing her inspiration.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools has honored Ellis by naming a room after him and hiring his daughter to teach in the classroom he taught in.

Also, boxer Muhammad Ali and journalist George Curry died. They were national figures who had links to North Carolina.

The other thing that stands out is the number of retirements, namely:

- \*Ravonda Dalton-Rann, from Winston-Salem State University.
- \*Beth Hopkins, from Wake Forest University.
- \*Alan Caldwell, from Reynolds American.
- \*Silvia Flack, from

Winston-Salem State University.

\*Tim Grant, from the City of Winston-Salem.

\*Dr. Elwanda Ingram, from Winston-Salem State University.

\*Hazel Mack, of Legal Aid.

Then there were the African-Americans who came to Winston-Salem to head high-profile nonprofits, namely James Perry, who came from New Orleans to head the Winston-Salem Urban League; Laura Gerald, a pediatrician and former state health director, who is the new president of Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust; and Maurice "Mo" Green, who is the executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

And Parkland High School's auditorium was named for long-time drama teacher Flonnie Anderson.

Of course, politics stood out in this election year, not to mention protests against police shootings of black men, who might or might not have been armed. Politics crept into the issue as presidential candidates weighed in on the matter of gun control.

## Elections

Donald Trump became president-elect after a contentious campaign and a surprising victory. He won the GOP primary and General Election vote in North Carolina. He says he supports police, pretty much whatever they do. Hillary Clinton won the most votes, though, beating Trump by almost 3 million votes. People protested, including in Winston-Salem, that it was unfair that Hillary Clinton lost, but the Electoral College rules in the United States, at least for now. Many people are calling for that to change.

Forsyth County voted



Michelle Obama rallies for Hillary Clinton, left, at the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Winston-Salem on Thursday, Oct. 27.



Parmon



Lucas



Hunt



Peppers



Russell



Ellis

for Clinton, so many people are in a funk because Trump won. Forsyth County Democratic Party Chairman Eric Ellison is trying to help his brother become chairman of the Democratic National Committee to try to thwart GOP efforts to continue

winning in 2018 and beyond. Keith Ellison is running against several people for the job.

Judge Michael Morgan became Supreme Court Justice-elect Morgan after the November elections, which was one of the few bright spots for Democrats and African-Americans. And Forsyth County got its first African-American register of deeds when Lynne Johnson beat out the incumbent in the Democratic primary and the Republican in the General Election.

On the federal court front, affecting elections, the N.C. NAACP's lawsuit against the state of North Carolina regarding the voter ID law moved through to be upheld by one federal judge, but struck down by a federal court.

Federal courts then began to rule on lawsuits

regarding congressional districts and North Carolina House and Senate districts. The federal courts struck down the congressional districts first, two were discriminatory, and they were redrawn and elections were held in June for representatives in the new districts. Part of Forsyth County was moved from District 12, where Alma Adams serves as the representative, and the entire county was moved to District 5, where Virginia Foxx is the representative. She becomes Forsyth County's representative in January after winning re-election to the seat in November.

Now, the General Assembly has to redraw its district lines by March 2017 after a federal court ruled many were discriminatory. Primaries will have to be held as well as a General Election. Then, the

process starts all over again in 2018.

Kalvin Michael Smith was freed after almost 19 years in prison, but it wasn't because of Attorney General Roy Cooper. A judge ruled him released on time served, but Smith is vowing to prove himself innocent of brutally beating a pregnant worker at a Winston-Salem store.

Democrat Cooper went on to become governor, finally, after GOP Gov. Pat McCrory stalled for about a month and would not concede.

## Institutions

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools board and Forsyth County commissioners submitted to voters a bond issue for the schools that failed to include a new middle school in East Winston after the only middle school the area had was closed because of toxicity under the school. The local NAACP and others had advocated the new school. The bond issue went on to pass overwhelmingly.

The Winston Lake YMCA could be transformed into the Mo Lucas Senior Inclusive Recreation Center as part of a partnership between the City of Winston-Salem and the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina if the city buys the 50,000-square-foot Winston Lake Y for \$1 and lease 8,300 square feet back to the YMCA to continue its branch services there for \$1. The city would use its portion, which would include the gym and pool, for recreation services for seniors and special populations. The Y had been a point of contention for members when officials made changes without consulting them. The Y faced shortfalls in operating the facility.

Also, East Winston will be getting an aquatic park.

And the Village Produce and Country Store opened in Ogburn Station to help curb the food desert in the eastern part of the city, where most black people live.

Two other institutions are getting new leaders.

The Rev. Alvin Carlisle will lead the Winston-Salem Branch of the NAACP. He said the late former Senator Parmon inspired him.

Also, the Rev. Dr. Lamont Williams will lead the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity.

## Family of teenager fatally shot on Christmas Eve raising money for his funeral

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

After a tragic Christmas Eve shooting that left a 19 year-old man dead, an online fundraiser is trying to help his family with funeral expenses.

Theron Thomas Brannon III, known to his family and friends as "Tre," was found by officers responding to a reported shooting at 3:17 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 24, at his family's home at 1020 Nancy Lane.

His mother, Angela Brannon, said that he answered a knock at the door and, as soon as he opened the door, shots were fired.

Police were still investigating as of press time. A police release on Saturday said that shortly after the shooting, Bryan Markuise Little arrived at a local hospital with a gunshot wound and authorities are attempting to determine if the incidents are related.

A friend of the family, Lily Smith, has started a GoFundMe page to pay for the funeral. She describes Brannon as a "carefree, easy going, thoughtful young man who had his whole life ahead of him."

East/Northeast Winston Neighborhood Association President Marva Reid commented on the page that he

"had a passion to make East Winston a better place for all."

Money raised beyond funeral expenses could help the family move, which they had previously planned to do since they



Brannon

frequently heard gunshots in the neighborhood.

Brannon had two brothers and a 4-year-old daughter. He graduated last year from Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy. His mother said he was a straight "A" student. She said he was preparing to go to Germany to train at Polyvlies' main plant for a year. Polyvlies, a German nonwoven textile manufacturer, has a plant in Winston-Salem.

After that, Tre was planning to go to N.C. A&T State University for engineering. She said he hoped to be an entrepre-

neurial engineer, building devices that would save the environment and help communities become self-sufficient.

She said he was active in the community. He'd participated with his family in clean up efforts with Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful and their own group, Operation: Community Unity. He also marched with his family in numerous peace walks by the Local Organizing Committee, in which he would speak to his peers about their rights and the need to stop violence and come together.

"My son was respected and recognized by many elders because of his intellect and poise," said Angela Brannon. "He always smiled. He loved his family fiercely and cared about the community. He was a great father, brother, son, grandson, uncle, cousin."

Brannon's death was Winston-Salem's 24th homicide this year.

The GoFundMe page for the family is <https://www.gofundme.com/funeral-expenses-for-19-yo-tre>. Anyone with information about the crime can call the Winston-Salem Police Department at 336-773-7700 or CrimeStoppers at 336-727-2800.A



Photo by Todd Luck  
Presidential nominee Donald Trump spoke to a crowd of thousands at the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds Annex on Monday, July 25.

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636