

Legacy of former NCAE president to live on at school

Rodney Ellis
Literacy Dream
Center at Philo-Hill

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Although his return to the classroom was cut short, the legacy of Rodney Ellis will live on at Philo-Hill Middle School forever.

After serving as president of the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), Ellis returned to the classroom this year to teach reading skills at Philo-Hill. Just a few weeks into his return, Ellis passed away following a short illness, but that was more than enough time for him to leave his mark.

After working at the school for only two weeks, Ellis set the wheels in motion to start a book room, expand the school's food pantry, and start several mentoring programs at the school. Last week that vision became reality when a ceremony was held at the school to dedicate a newly renovated multipurpose learning space in honor of Ellis.

During the ceremony held inside the gymnasium,

Superintendent Dr. Beverly Emory said the spirit of Ellis was in the building.

"He knew what the relationship between school and community could look like," said Emory. "I think today is an opportunity for us to recommit to the possibilities that all of us can excel. Rodney Ellis had the vision to see that in people when they couldn't see it in themselves."

Even when he left the classroom, Ellis' mission to inspire students from low-income households remained the same. Emory said what impressed her most about Ellis was his willingness to return to the classroom after serving as NCAE president. She said that says a lot about what kind of person Ellis was.

Current Forsyth County Association of Educators (FCAE) President Rhonda Mays said she couldn't think of a better way to carry on the legacy of her friend. She said she is proud of the work Ellis has set forth.

Also carrying on the Ellis legacy at Philo-Hill is Rodney Ellis' daughter Gabrielle Ellis. Shortly after her father died, Gabrielle Ellis not only started teaching at the

school where her father worked, but she also took over his classroom. Ellis said she is grateful for the opportunity to step in for her father. She said, although she knows she has some big shoes to fill, the Philo-Hill family has made her feel at home.

As she stood before hundreds of students, teachers, educators and family members, Ellis said what she admired most about her father was his passion and willingness to fight, two things she takes with her every day she walks in the classroom.

"My father was a go hard or go home type of person. There was nothing you could do to dim his fire," she said. "He was a servant leader, and that's something I inspire to be."

Philo-Hill Principal Dr. Essie McCoy said the classroom now known as The Rodney Ellis Literacy Dream Center is to make sure every student has access to the tools they need to be successful in the classroom and outside. She mentioned the Junior League has already donated has over 1,000 books. They will also be taking donations the food pantry, and ongoing clothing drive for students.



Photo by Tevin Stinson
Gabrielle Ellis talks about carrying on the legacy of her father, Rodney Ellis, during a dedication ceremony at Philo-Hill Magnet School last week. Ellis took over her father's classroom earlier this year after he died.

Where to recycle your Christmas tree

SPECIAL TO
THE CHRONICLE

The city will collect Christmas trees and put them to good use as mulch for its parks and roadsides.

Residents in single-family homes inside the city limits can put their Christmas trees at the curb for pick-up during the regular city brush collection.

All lights, decorations, stands and nails must be removed from trees. Be aware that it may take several weeks to collect all the trees.

People who live in apartments, who live outside the city limits or who want to dispose of their trees quickly can take them to the following locations for recycling through Jan. 31:

- *Crawford Park, 4226 Oak Ridge Drive
- *Hanes Hosiery Recreation Center, 501 Reynolds Blvd.
- *Hanes Park (tennis court parking lot), 625 West End Blvd.

*Little Creek Recreation Center, 610 Foxcroft Drive

*Old Town Recreation Center (tennis court parking lot), 4550 Shattalon Drive

*Parkland Park (tennis courts), 1660 Brewer Road

*Polo Park (swimming pool parking lot), 1850 Polo Road

*Salem Lake (at the gate), 1001 Salem Lake Road

*Sprague Street Recreation Center, 1350 E. Sprague St.

*Winston Lake Park, 3535 Winston Lake Road

In addition, city and county residents may recycle one Christmas tree free of charge at City/County Utilities Division yard-waste facilities through Jan. 15:

- *Overdale Yard Waste Facility, 4010 Milwaukee Lane
- *Forum 52 Yard waste Facility, 180 Northstar Drive, Rural Hall

Free disposal at the yard-waste facilities is for households only. Commercial loads and commercial haulers will be charged the regular rate of \$30 per ton.

For more information, call CityLink 311.

HB 2

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2," Rep. Hall concluded.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Democrat Rodney Moore likened the GOP HB 2 repeal failure to the classic con artist movie, "The Sting."

"The GOP majority in the House and Senate played the House and Senate Democrats and the Charlotte City Council like a master grifter," Moore said. "After convincing the Charlotte City Council to totally repeal it's non-discrimination ordinance, then they do the old soft shoe for the better part of the day and we adjourn the Special Session that was called for the extreme circumstance of repealing the most damaging piece of legislation of the year, with no repeal or any substantive action taken. Masterful."

Triad Democrat Rep. Cecil Brockman (D-Greensboro) said, "I am extremely disappointed by the failure of General Assembly Republicans to follow through on their end of the deal to fully repeal HB 2. This harmful and discriminatory law has been a disaster for North Carolina, damaging both

our economy and reputation on the national stage. Instead of showing that North Carolina is open for business, Republicans decided to play games and wasted our time and taxpayers' money."

Brockman continued, "I will continue to speak out against H.B. 2 and push for statewide non-discrimination protection for the LGBT community. We have North Carolinians who are marginalized and vulnerable; it is well past time that we act to help those most in need."

State Rep. Evelyn Terry (D-Forsyth) insisted that Gov.-elect Cooper and Democrat lawmakers have to stand strong together against the kind of heavy-handed governance that Republican leaders have all but promised in the new year.

"We just have to rally our forces ... and we have to work within our own communities to restore the faith in democracy, as well as our responsibility as citizens to participate fully," Rep. Terry said. "In this atmosphere, we can't do anything but strengthen our own forces."

NH

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