

# Retired Principal Insists CMS Teachers Do "An Outstanding Job"

By Audrey C. Lodato  
Post Staff Writer

Pinewood Elementary School principal, Vernon Dreibelis, retired the end of January after 35 years as a teacher, coach, and principal. His entire career was spent with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The last 12 years Dreibelis served as principal at Pinewood. He was principal of Quail Hollow Junior High from 1967 to 1973.

"I feel very fortunate to have been principal at Quail Hollow and Pinewood," he began, "to be associated with outstanding teachers. People complain about teachers, but I think they're dedicated and do an outstanding job."

In the course of 35 years, there have been many changes in the schools: the segregated system became integrated, city and county schools merged, the number of schools increased dramatically as the area population soared, and the education process itself has changed.

"I thought for a while that we'd gotten out of the basics," the retired principal remarked, "but we're getting back to the basics now." He commented that, at times, schools may perhaps try something new before it has been adequately tested. "It's trial and error," he reflected. Too, it is hard to get teachers trained in new areas, such as computers, when they've been teaching all day.

Dreibelis commented that, when integration of the schools took place in the late sixties, it was a difficult transition for both students and teachers alike. It was tough on some of the students, he recalled, because they were leaving a familiar environment and school to move to a school where "they didn't know if they'd be liked." He continued, "If one school had a disruption, you



Vernon Dreibelis  
Seen many changes

knew the next day there would be one at your school." Sometimes, Dreibelis stated, students would start a rumor of a fight in order to get out of school. He credited local leadership with helping things to eventually settle down.

Pinewood's former principal has found his career in education to be very rewarding, although not financially. "Money isn't everything," he noted. "It's rewarding when parents or students call. If you turn one or two students around, then it's worth it. You know you've touched their lives."

Besides serving as principal at Pinewood and Quail Hollow, Dreibelis was teacher and coach at

the old Alexander Graham Junior High School and assistant principal at the new Alexander Graham Junior High. His wife, Charlotte, and sons Dean and Mark are also involved in education.

One of the things Dreibelis looks forward to in his retirement is freedom from timetables. "When you're in education," he laughed, "you can't say 'I'll do it tomorrow.' It's nice to know that now I won't have any deadlines." The educator is planning to concentrate his energies on one of his favorite hobbies, refinishing furniture. He has not closed the door, however, to remaining in the field of education in some capacity.



Newly-elected president of the West Charlotte Lions Club, L.C. Coleman (center), poses with secretary Ennis Graves, left, and treasurer Thomas S. Chiles.

## Newly Organized West Charlotte Lions Club Elects L. C. Coleman President

By Jalyne Strong  
Post Staff Writer

Who are the Lions? "They are volunteer members of clubs grouped under an international organization, where they enjoy fellowship, develop their leadership capacities, and dedicate part of their free time to help those in need all over the world, while making their individual communities a better place to live in," describes this organization's introduction pamphlet.

However, what is not mentioned in the pamphlet is that since its initiation in 1917, the Lions Club has been completely, then, predominately white. That is, until recently, Charlotte activist, L.C. Coleman, was requested by a representative of the Lions to recruit more blacks into this highly prestigious club.

"We now have the required number of signed and paid-up members," informs Coleman. Their progress up until now has included the designation of 20 charter members, election of officers and the naming of this specific charter.

Called the West Charlotte Lions Club, the charter members are as follows: L.C. Coleman, Clarence Nolly, Thomas Chiles, Ennis Graves, Bill Johnson, John Macdonald, Charles Williams, Larry Mackey, James Peeler, Robert Graves, Thomas Springs, Charles Simmons, Oscar Bldgood, James Grier, Adam Turner, Charles Ransour, Oren McCullough, Rev. S.L. Fulwood, Rev. George Goodman and Larry Daniels. Coleman was elected President. Nolly elected vice President with Chiles as Secretary and Ennis Graves as Treasurer.

"We are going to do our best to organize blacks into the Lions Club," predicts Coleman. "This Club is international and therefore it offers many advantages that can benefit the black community."

What Coleman refers to is the major activities that the Lions are involved in. The numerous service programs Lions undertake have been classified into ten primary categories, each offering a range of projects suitable to the needs of any community. They are: Sight Conservation and work with the blind; Citizenship Services; Hearing and Speech Action and work with the



Clarence Nolly  
Vice president

deaf; Educational Services; Environmental service; International services; Recreational services; Health services; Public services; and Social services.

These services all can be utilized by the black community, suggest Coleman. "For example, the Lions Club has an eye bank and homes for the blind-and-blacks need help in these areas. The Lions have experts and skilled people with connections all over the world. With blacks being a part of this organization we can get this assistance at no cost. For instance, free glaucoma tests for the black community," explains Coleman.

Coleman has much experience in forming organizational chapters in the Charlotte area. He recently organized the Charlotte chapter of the National Council of Senior Citizens. He says though the Lions club has strict membership rules he sees no problem for the newly formed charter group to adhere to them.

"We'll follow the rules and guidelines," claims Coleman, "and set some of our own. If they can do it we certainly can."

The first issue on the agenda for the West Charlotte Lions Club, informs Coleman, is to set a project. "There are certain things are especially needed in our community," he begins. "Such as lobbying committee to represent our community in Washington, D.C. There is no one

standing up for us. As full citizens we need to do this for ourselves. There is a lot done in foreign missions, but there has not been enough done in home missions. That is what we are going to concentrate on," Coleman points out.

So far, the West Charlotte Lions Club consists of a diverse group of young and older men. "The point is to have many ideas working together to have a better organization," Coleman emphasizes. "We will be seeking to increase our membership also."

The Lions Club is a all-male adult organization. However they also sponsor Lioness Clubs, for women, and Leo Clubs, for the young.

The Lions' slogan is, "Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation's Safety." Their motto is, "We Serye." The Lions' colors are purple and gold. And their emblem consists of a gold letter "L" on a circular field bordered by two lion profiles at either side facing away from the center. Symbolically, the lions face both past and future-proud of the past and confident of the future.

## Segregated Schools

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at 2722 Bancroft Street. In expressing his opinion on the question, Rev. White stated, "I would simply start from the point of view that under the fatherhood of God, there shouldn't be separation of mankind. All mankind are brothers and sisters. We are not following the mandate of creation, that which God expects of us, if we separate ourselves." He concluded, "I would go so far as to say it's not Christian."

The Reverend William Robinson, associate minister of First United Methodist Church on Tryon Street in downtown Charlotte, was also asked his opinion. He replied, "A Christian school needs to be an inclusive school. For a private school to be Christian in the true sense of the word, it would need to be open to including all races. If there was any exclusion, I would have a hard time with it. Christ said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.' He didn't say only the white children."

Finally, the pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, 3301 Beatties Ford Road, rendered his opinion. The Reverend Clifford Jones declared, "No, they cannot." He explained, "As I understand the word segregation, it means separation of persons because of ethnic group or race. One group, or the predominant group, in an effort to preserve its false sense of understanding humanity, separates itself, which is diametrically, ethically, morally, theologically, alien to the teachings of all religions, and certainly Christianity. Christianity is predicated upon the love of God

and the brotherhood and sisterhood of mankind."

The Rev. Barry Shearer is one of the ministers at Northside Baptist Church and the administrator of Northside Christian Academy, which is located on Jeremiah Boulevard. Rev. Shearer reported that the school presently has a minority enrollment of five or six percent of its 900-plus students. Explaining that the school has always had an open admissions policy, he stated, "It was never our intent to have an all-white or a segregated school." Factors such as the school's tuition, lack of scholarship money, admission standards, and some black parents' wish to have their children attend school where they would not be such a small minority have all contributed to the low enrollment numbers of blacks at Northside. Rev. Shearer added, however, that the number is growing year by year. If a so-called Christian school were to have a closed policy and be intentionally segregated, he remarked, "Personally, I would have a difficult time calling a school like that 'Christian.'"

With all the references to love and relationships in the New Testament, one would be hard put to justify a segregated school in the name of Christianity. As Dr. Voorhis puts it, such a situation would have to be "few and far between."

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