

Malcolm X's
Daughter On
Her Dad 8A



Another Look
At Wilson
Concert 1B



CIAA Basketball
Tournament
Preview 8B

Red Cross Seeks
Stronger Ties To
Community 2C

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50 Cents

COLUMN ONE

News And Notes From Charlotte
And The Rest Of The World.

Brotherhood Program



Stroud

The Charlotte Chapter of the National Council of Negro Women will sponsor a community-wide brotherhood dinner and fellowship Saturday at 7 p.m. at

McDonald's Cafeteria.

Charlotte native Barron LeGrant Stroud, director of the Division of Quality Integrated Education in Montgomery County, Md., will be the guest speaker. A dance will follow the dinner, which will recognize the contributions of sponsors and affiliate organizations.

Donations are \$15 per person. Sponsoring organizations, churches and groups are asked to contribute \$50. For more information, call 376-9955.

Prom Promise

Keeping young people sober and safe during the high school prom season is the focus of a program tonight in Charlotte.

More than 180 people from over three dozen area high schools will participate in a Prom Promise orientation today at 6 p.m. at the Hilton at University Place.

Prom Promise is a positive peer-pressure program that allows schools to compete for cash and prizes while delivering an anti-drug and alcohol message. More than 1 million students are expected to sign the Prom Promise this year.

For more information, call T. Keith DuBois at (919) 834-4757.

Sigma Shootout

The Beta Rho Sigma Alumni Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity will sponsor the Phi Beta Sigma Basketball Shootout Feb. 26-27. Teams from the four black Greek fraternities in Charlotte -- Kappa Alpha Psi, Alpha Phi Alpha, Omega Psi Phi and the Sigmas -- will play. Proceeds will benefit the Sigma Beta Club, a youth organization for young men between the ages of 13 to 18.

For more information, call Mark Colston at 563-5834.

Summer Job Opportunities

The City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Chamber have joined forces to help young people find private sector jobs.

The Charlotte Works program is designed to help young people age 16-21 find work and job opportunities through local companies.

The goal of the Mayor's 1993 Summer Youth Program is the employment of 1,200 youths. Last year, 942 youngsters who qualified for the program were placed in jobs.

For more information, call 336-3101.

Charlotteans Made Difference In A Number Of Ways

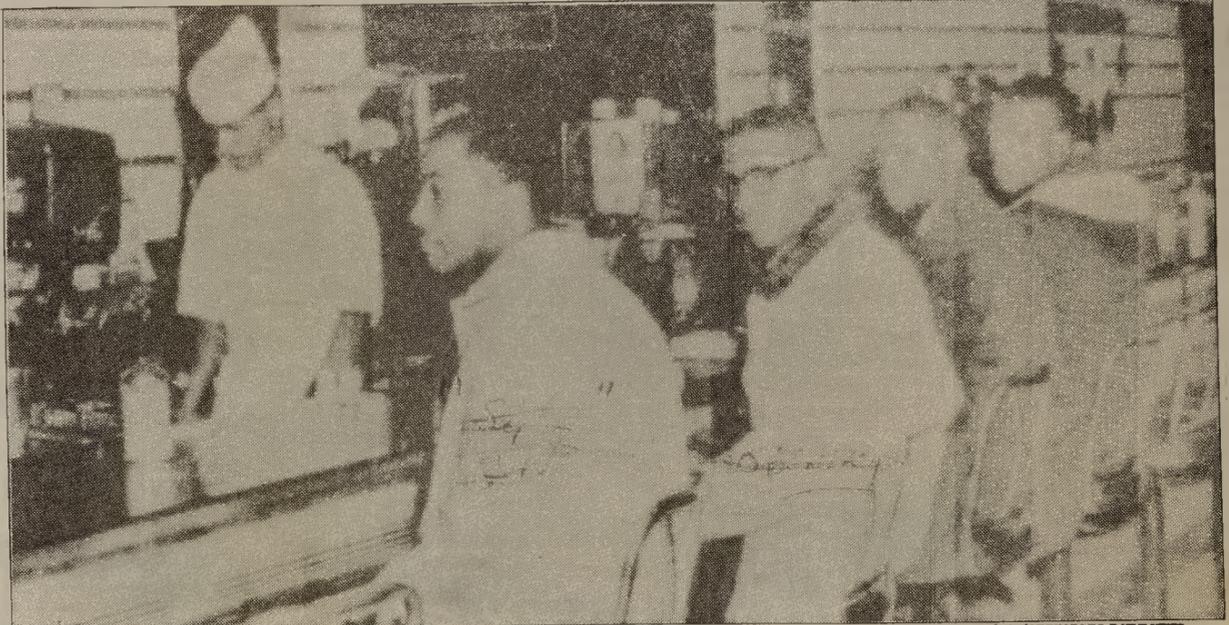
FRANK McCAIN

Pioneer Of The Sit-In

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Frank McCain has been angry at society all his life. "Not at anybody, but at systems and how things operate in this city, state and country," he said. "I suppose I'll go to my grave angry because all the changes that I've hoped for will not be made in my lifetime. We're not committed to fairness. It's like a double entry level -- you meet one criteria and you have to scuffle like hell to meet the next set of criteria."

See SIT-INS On Page 2A



Photo/GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS

Frank McCain (in glasses) was one of four N.C. A&T students who started the sit-in phase of the civil rights movement in 1960 when they demanded service at a segregated Greensboro lunch counter. McCain now lives in Charlotte.



Photo/CALVIN FERGUSON

Pauline Hoover Coffey is believed to be the first black female to drive a school bus in Mecklenburg County. She drove students 20 miles to Pineville Colored High School.

PAULINE HOOVER COFFEY

Busing Had Different Meaning In Late '40s

By Cassandra Wynn
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Crosstown busing is something Pauline Hoover Coffey learned a whole lot about 45 years ago. Then, busing was used to perpetuate segregation.

"We passed the white schools to get to Pineville Colored High School," Coffey recalled.

It was a time when blacks persevered to get educated riding long distances, driving secondhand buses and passing white schools to get to black schools.

Coffey's husband, Charles, drove a bus too. "It was a circuitous route, taking me 18 or 20 miles. We passed two white schools, Oakhurst and

Hickory Grove to get to Clear Creek."

Pauline Coffey, one of the first African American women in Mecklenburg County to drive a public school bus, says the sight of buses today conjures many memories. Some of them are endearing. "Even today when I see students who rode my bus, they still give me that respect," she said.

It was in 1947 that she was approached about driving a school bus. Her brother, Benjamin Hoover, was a bus driver. His bus picked up students from the old Steele Creek community and parts of Pineville, traveling some 20 miles altogether to get to Pineville Colored High School. About 40 students, See **FIRST** On Page 3A

Charlotte's First Black Radio Star Set 'The Pace For Others To Trace'

By Arlicia Greene
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Eugene "Genial Gene" Potts drove around Charlotte's old Brooklyn neighborhood

selling commercial time for his popular radio shows most afternoons from the late 1940s into the 1970s.

"He sold so many commercials that people were calling him Gene Spots instead of Gene Potts," former disc jockey John Surratt once said.

Potts was Charlotte's first black disc jockey, appearing

on WGIV-AM, the first station to target a black audience.

Potts sold commercial time to numerous black-owned businesses that thrived in Brooklyn, just south of uptown, and the largest concentrated area of black residents from the 19th century until it was displaced by urban renewal in the 1960s.

Disc jockeys received little pay before the payola scandals, but sold commercial time on their shows. Potts made little at the start and went on the air for pleasure, but soon he had a large and lucrative stable of sponsors.

Potts started in entertainment as an emcee at the Excelsior Club, a popular night-

'GENIAL GENE' POTTS

spot since Jimmie McKee opened it in 1944. The club often hosted meetings and social events for professional groups, as well as political meetings.

Francis M. Fitzgerald, one of the owners of WGIV, heard Potts at the Excelsior and asked him to go on the air. First Potts did 55-minute broad-



Potts

casts from the Excelsior, then 15-minute early-morning shows, which soon grew longer, and still later, gospel and soul programs.

WGIV was losing money when Potts went on the air, but his instant popularity convinced the owners they could increase earnings by cultivating black listeners and advertisers. The station became one of the first all-black-oriented stations, a few years after WDIA in Memphis became the first.

Fitzgerald, Tom Brandon and S.K. Lange started WGIV in 1947 and chose the call letters to stand for "We're GI Veterans." Initially, the station broadcast from sunrise to sunset using a low-power transmitter from a small building at Fairmont and

Toomey streets.

In the late 1950s, WGIV started to broadcast 24 hours a day, increased the transmitter power and built a large modern facility with room for a live audience in the studio. The station was one of Charlotte's most popular, and the most popular black-oriented station, until the popularity of FM stations displaced it. WPEG, now owned by the same company that owns WGIV, overtook its older, more established rival in the '60s.

Celebrities like Brook Benton, James Brown, Sam Cooke and Otis Redding visited WGIV regularly. The station featured daily soul music programs and on Sunday varied religious programs, See **'GENIAL'** On Page 2A

INSIDE

6A-7A Editorials

10A Religion

12B Classifieds

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