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History beckons trailblazing jurist

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Fulton could earn top court job

Superior Court Judge Shirley Fulton could become the top jurist in Mecklenburg County by the end of the year.

Fulton, 45, is in line to replace Judge Chase Saunders, who is stepping down from the senior post in September. N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Burley Mitchell will appoint a replacement, which usually is based on seniority.

"I haven't heard from the chief justice yet," Fulton said. "For the most part I know it is going to happen."

"Being chief resident judge will be a new challenge, as well as an opportunity to model the court system with some of my thoughts and ideas," she said. "I would like to leave an imprint on the court system."

Fulton, the first black woman elected to an N.C. Superior Court

seat in 1988, said she's already doing a management and operational audit to decide what, if any, changes she will make.

A graduate of N.C. A&T State University and Duke University Law School, Fulton once dropped out of college before deciding she wanted to be a lawyer while working in the register of deeds office in Guilford County.

"I had a contact with lawyers and my job was a dead end job,"

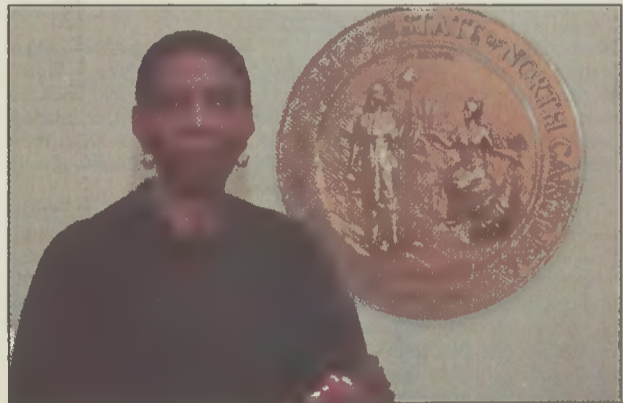
Fulton said. "I thought being a lawyer would be interesting and something I would like to do."

Fulton is a co-organizer and vice president of the grassroots Queen City Congress and a vice president of her Wesley Heights Neighborhood Association. She is also a student in the Queens College MBA program.

Saunders will be missed, Fulton says.

"I think he is a good judge and his wisdom and guidance will be

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Shirley Fulton is in line to become Mecklenburg's top judge.

PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

Day of the Red Tails



A C-17 cargo plane flies behind the Tuskegee Airmen Monument that was unveiled Monday at the old Walterboro Army Airfield in Walterboro, S.C. Many of the black military aviators were trained for duty during World War II at the base that currently serves as the Walterboro airport.

By Jesse J. Holland
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WALTERBORO, S.C. — Tuskegee Airman Eugene Richardson Jr. waved his hand toward phantom buildings at the rural Walterboro Airfield as he remembered his time as a 19-year-old P-51 Mustang pilot 52 years ago.

"The control tower was over there and our hangar used to be here," he said Monday, thinking back to his time at the old Army Air Base about 50 miles west of Charleston. "They're all gone now."

"But this more than makes up for that loss," the retired lieutenant from Philadelphia said, turning to the bronze bust and concrete monument dedicated to the heroism of the aviators who broke the color barrier on their way to becoming one of the most respected squadrons of World War II.

More than 15 of the famous Tuskegee Airmen returned to South Carolina on Memorial Day to see the dedication of their monument, only the second in the country to them,

S.C. honors black fliers



PHOTO: PAULA ILLINGWORTH

Lt. Col. Hiram E. Mann, retired, center, one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, laughs after receiving the Order of the Palmetto from S.C. Gov. David Beasley. Mann's wife, Kathadaza, is to the right.

according to Richardson.

There also is a monument at the Air Force Academy in Colorado, as well as plaques at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia and at their original base in Tuskegee, Alabama, he said.

"I thought I would never see the day that something like this would go up in South Carolina, of all the places," Richardson said.

Many of the 1,000 airmen got their flight training in Walterboro in 1943-44 after classroom instruction in Alabama.

The monument features a bronze bust of a black aviator atop a concrete tablet with an engraved gray and blue P-51 Mustang with the signature red tail. Beneath that is an inscription explaining the Tuskegee Airmen and a green and brown P-40 Warhawk, which the airmen also flew.

Gov. David Beasley gave the black pilots and one of their white trainers, retired Capt. John Truluck of Walterboro, the

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DA's decision on police shooting is still pending

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

District Attorney Peter Gilchrist said Wednesday he has not decided on possible criminal charges against two Charlotte police officers who shot an unarmed woman to death on April 8.

A police spokesman said the department's internal investigation will await Gilchrist's decision, since it may turn up additional witnesses or evidence.

The shooting has sparked renewed support for a citizens review of police actions and a review board is expected to be approved next month.

Gilchrist said he's actively working on the investigative file provided by the police department's homicide unit, but does not know when he will have a decision.

"There is some additional forensic work being done," Gilchrist said. "I don't know if that will affect any decision."

Laboratory tests are being conducted on evidence in the shooting.

Gilchrist could file criminal charges against the officers who fired 22 shots into a car in which Carolyn Sue Boetticher, 48, a Concord native, was a passenger. She was shot in the back of the neck and died about five hours later.

Officers shot into the car as it sped past. The car had failed to stop at a license check at State and Gesco streets off Tuckaseegee Road in the Seversville community.

The driver of the car, Robert G. Lundy Sr., 55, of West Columbia,

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Preschool program still has places open for 1,000 children

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools officials are looking for a few good 4-year-olds — or 3-year-olds who will be 4 by Oct. 16.

The school system has about 1,000 open slots for its new preschool program and is launching a blitz to fill them.

"Our concern is we are not getting some of the children we need to reach," said Barbara Pellin, assistant superintendent for student services.

"It is designed for 2,000 children the first year. We are about at half that now. That's just about where we expected to be at this point. We have been screening now about 3 1/2 weeks."

The school system plans to step up its recruitment, Pellin said.

"We will be setting up special recruitment pieces, for example at Marie G. Davis (Elementary School)...some of the places where we think there are children who probably will qualify. Screening will go on through the summer."

Pellin said the target population is children who have not had adequate preschool experiences. That doesn't mean children who have not gone to an organized day care center, since children can get proper

preschool experiences, such as frequent reading sessions, in the home.

"We are looking at neighborhoods where kindergartners come to us not ready," Pellin said.

Some are low-income areas

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