

CIAA a winning moment for Charlotte

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money - \$1 million per year - to the CIAA's General Scholarship Fund.

And Cannon, then mayor pro tem, sold the vision of Charlotte as a city, detailing how uptown would transform into a "CIAA Village" where everything was in walking distance - a first for the tournament - if the event came here.

The Norfolk dream team, backed by many others here in Charlotte, put together a scenario the CIAA could not refuse.

CIAA Commissioner Leon Kerry came here on a "fact-finding mission" three days after the presentation. By mid-December, Charlotte had wrested the CIAA Tournament away from Raleigh and been awarded to play host to the nation's second-largest college basketball tournament in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

For the vital roles they played in landing the tournament, Cannon, Newman and Tapscott have been named The Post's 2005 Newsmakers of the Year.

"The commissioner has said, 'Until you all came in and made your presentation, it was really a formality - we were going to stay with Raleigh, but you guys really opened our eyes in that presentation,'" Newman said without bragging.

Sell hard, stay humble
While Cannon, Newman and Tapscott were confident in what Charlotte had to offer the CIAA, neither man was cocky as he entered the pre-

sentation. Johnson C. Smith president Dorothy Yancy played a role in making certain that didn't happen.

"Dr. Yancy has been dying for this thing to come to Charlotte for her entire 10 years at Smith, and she was giving us her sense of it," Newman said. "She said, 'You've got to go put on a real convincing show. Don't leave anything on the table. You've got to really sell them on the vision of Charlotte.'"

"So we had a little bit of an underdog feeling going in, which I think is always good. And I said all through the process, 'We've got to sell like we're in first place, but work like we're in last place.' We couldn't take anything for granted. Be professional, be optimistic, but dig to make sure that we don't leave anything on the table."

Economic, social impact
The tournament begins Feb. 27, with the tip-off of the first women's game, and concludes on March 4, with the men's and women's finals.

The CIAA will be advantageous for Charlotte on many levels. For starters, when the tournament was in Raleigh, it typically had an economic impact of \$12 million on that city each year. Newman said Charlotte should expect to bring in that much - at a minimum.

But the social ramifications are just as critical as the economic impact.

"I certainly look at these studies that say, from a trust standpoint, from a tolerance standpoint, there are areas we need to work on," Newman said. "Well, we're going to have what I think is the biggest African-American event in the country, in many ways, here in town. That, I

think, sends a positive message."

And then there's the cultural impact the tournament will have on Charlotte residents.

"This certainly is one of those events that the people in Charlotte have never gotten to experience," said Cannon, who is a graduate of Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference member North Carolina A&T State University but has attended the CIAA tournament off and on since high school.

"The CIAA will bring a diversity to this city that it's never seen. What I get excited about is the idea of those people here who have never attended the CIAA tournament and what they are in for. It really is a beautiful, special event. There are things you see at the CIAA tournament that you never see anywhere else. I think Charlotteans really are going to be in for a surprise.

"Opportunities like this don't come along every day. It feels good to know (I was) a part of something special like this."

Perfect timing
It was a long time coming for Charlotte.

Back in 2002, Charlotte actually had bid to play host to the tournament during the 2003-2005 rotation, but lost out to Raleigh, in large part, because the Charlotte Coliseum did not have all the amenities Kerry and the CIAA wanted.

Then, Black Entertainment Television founder Bob Johnson was awarded ownership of Charlotte's new NBA franchise, the Bobcats. A new arena was on the horizon. And Charlotte was determined to make certain the tournament didn't slip

through its fingers the next time.

"When I first came to town here, the idea was to listen to this community about what it wanted," Tapscott said. "Well, CIAA came up early and often. And so we committed to working to go after it."

"This really was a collaborative effort between the CRVA, the local organizing committee, the city government and, of course, our organization, as the custodians of (the arena)."

Then, Tapscott reflected on the Norfolk trip, that cool, November day.

"I think one of the great things about that is that Tim and Patrick and myself had developed a real solid friendship long before we had to make this trip," said Tapscott, who first attended the CIAA tournament as a teenager in 1969. "So I think what came across to the committee of presidents and chancellors and, of course, the commissioner of the CIAA was that there was a good working relationship here amongst the three critical parties that would make this event a reality."

"Needless to say, what (the CIAA was) looking for was the best venue, the best city, the best environment for their fans, students, alumni and supporters. And clearly, they want to know that the city is able to deliver on its commitments in that bid process. I think what they saw gave them confidence that 'These guys are going to work together to make this the best possible show for the CIAA folks.'"

"I was obviously delighted to be a part of our team approach."



Kerry

15 years of Post newsmakers

After 15 years, The Post's Newsmakers of the Year could have their own alumni reunion.



Rembert

Since Harvey Gantt's selection in 1990, the list has included individuals who have grown into national political leaders (Mel Watt) to advocates for community issues (James Barnett and Dee Sumpter). And of course, there have been the controversial figures, like former Transamerica executive Bill Simms, who was later forced out for lying on his resume.

The editorial staff's criteria for choosing newsmakers is simple. We look for people who have had a major impact on shaping Charlotte and the African American community during the calendar year. For those of you haven't been around since 1990 or just to review The Post's picks, here they are, with the newsmaker's contribution.

Herbert L. White
Editor

2004 Mecklenburg County Commissioner
Wilhelmenia Rembert

2003 Charlotte Bobcats owner
Bob Johnson, the first African

American owner to hold majority stake in a major league U.S. professional sports franchise.



Tennant

2002 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools superintendent
James Pughley, who instituted a pupil assignment plan devoid of court-ordered busing.

2001 Charlotte Housing Authority executive director
Harrison Shannon and Charlotte Convention & Visitors Bureau president
Melvin Tennant opened the city's tourism industry to open recruitment of more African American events.

2000 Arts & Science Council executive director
Harriet Sanford led the non-profit to record growth by expanding programs and outreach.

1999 Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board chairman
Arthur Griffin, first elected African American to the top position.

1998 Northwest Corridor community Development Corp. executive director
Isaac Heard for his role in developing housing and shopping in northwest Charlotte.

1997 Civil rights attorney
James Ferguson spearheaded high-profile civil rights cases in the Carolinas.

1996 Mint Museum official
Dawn Womack organized the

slave ship *Hennetta Marie* exhibit in Charlotte and United Way of Central Carolinas Executive director
Gloria Pace King was the first African American named to the position.

1995 Transamerica Insurance executive
Bill Simms raised the company's profile through its charitable giving.

1994 Mothers of Murdered Offspring founder
Dee Sumpter brought national attention as an advocate of victims' families.

1993 Stop the Killing founder
the Rev. James Barnett launched a regional fight against violence and crime.

1992 U.S. Rep. **Mel Watt**, who became the first African American (along with Eva Clayton) elected to Congress from N.C. since Reconstruction.

1991 Charlotte Hornets head coach
Gene Littles, the NBA franchise's first black coach.

1990 U.S. Senate candidate
Harvey Gantt, who lost a close - and controversial - campaign to Jesse Helms.

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