

# Changing Relationships Will Help Shape Workplace Of The Future

BY SUSAN USHER

Fred D. Hall urged audience members to "embrace the future" and help create a more innovative, productive and inclusive workplace in the 21st century.

At the annual Martin Luther King Jr. birthday observance at Brunswick Community College, he looked into a sociologist's "crystal cube" to explore three "master" trends in the workplace and how they relate to the late Martin Luther King Jr.'s efforts on behalf of human rights and economic justice.

"It was the despised and rejected of the world—regardless of why they were—that he channeled his energies toward," said Hall, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill whose research interests are race relations and industrial relations.

He addressed what he called a "wonderful mosaic" of about 75 people Friday night, representing the UNC-Chapel Hill Bicentennial Speakers Bureau. A program of gospel and patriotic music set the tone for his remarks on inclusiveness in the workforce of the 21st century.

The program was one of at least three countywide observances honoring the slain civil rights leader. A freedom march was conducted Sunday afternoon in Southport from the ILA hall, while on Monday afternoon a children's observance was held at the Public Assembly Building at the Brunswick County Government Center.

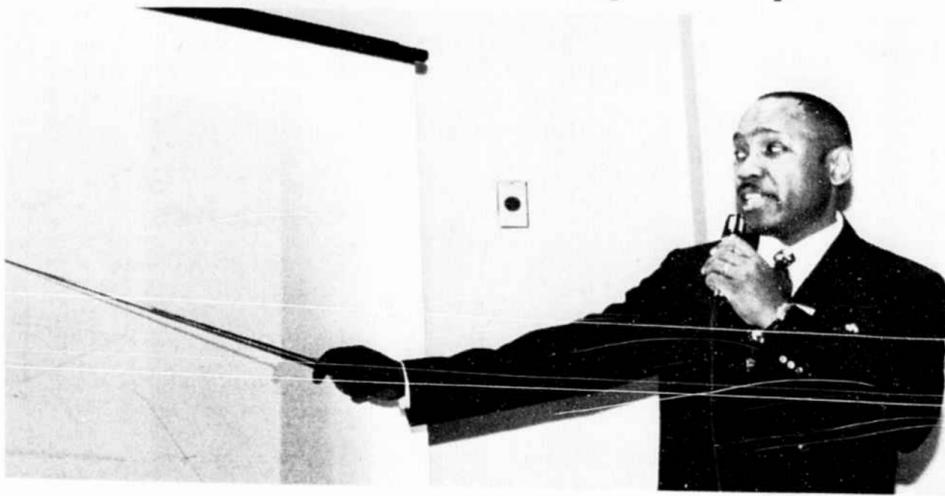
As America and its workforce become increasingly diverse, Hall said economic pressures or desire have five groups pressing for greater representation and participation in the economy: women, blacks and other "persons of color," the young, the elderly who cannot afford to quit work, and immigrants.

Most of those jobs must come from the growing service sector and its increasing reliance on information and information exchange.

How and whether those five groups find a larger role in the workplace depends greatly on the convergence of three master trends that to some degree "are under our control as human beings," Hall said, citing the study, "The Social Organization of Work," by Randy Hodson and Teresa A. Sullivan.

He placed these three trends along continuums within a see-through or "crystal" cube:

- organization and technology are



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

**FRED HALL, speaker at last Friday's Martin Luther King Jr. birthday observance at BCC, sees three master trends—and how they converge—as having a strong impact on the workforce and workplace of the future.**

used to increase productivity by complementing the abilities of skilled workers or are used to replace workers and deskilled jobs;

- innovation and productivity increase or productivity stagnates; and
- women and minority groups approach equality with majority men or they disproportionately occupy low-wage and part-time jobs.

Hall recalled his early days in the fast food business, when cashiers needed to know product prices, how to calculate taxes and compute change. Today the cashier doesn't have to know the "three R's of reading, writing and reckoning," he suggested as one example of the "deskilling" of a job through technology.

Stagnating productivity results when "everybody is trying to get something for nothing," he said. "In the South I was raised that if you don't work, you don't eat. That's not true in the Northeast with its hustlers..."

"That (Northeast trend) is not the direction we want to go. It creates problems like we're seeing now that we don't need."

Evidence of some people's dissatisfaction is the growing level of violence in the workplace by "people who feel they have been taken advantage of."

"They are venting their anger and frustration in a way that makes the world less safe for all," he cautioned.

To move society in more positive

directions along those continuums of the cube requires changing attitudes, a letting go of the past and embracing

ing of the future, moving toward inclusion not exclusion, toward love the "creative force" rather than hate,

which leads to dissolution.

"The answers to our problems lie in the fruit of our womb," he said. "That means we have to put our children on the right path, and we can't do that if we're not on the right track ourselves."

"We need to rush forward and

embrace the future, seeking innovations in workplace relations and a renewal in all of us, toward the day when we are judged only 'by the content of our character,' he said, recalling King's often-quoted words.

"Only then we will be able to say 'Free at last, free at last.'"

## Lewis Speaks At King Observance

District Court Judge Ola M. Lewis spoke about the roots that anchored Dr. Martin Luther King's vision and courage last Friday as the keynote speaker at Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal's King birthday observance.

Lewis, who serves the 13th Judicial District, spoke to employees of the 1303rd Major Port Command in the Community Services Center at Sunny Point.

"I can only imagine what Dr. King would say today about poverty, crime, homelessness, but I am sure he would tell us to anchor ourselves in love, truth and religion," Judge Lewis said.

"We must prepare ourselves and never accept complacency with the demon of discrimination," she con-

tinued.

Col. Larry M. Curtin, 1303rd MPC Commander, said that Dr. King succinctly described his civil rights struggle during the Montgomery (Ala.) bus boycott when he said:

"We are not just trying to improve the Negro Montgomery. We are trying to improve the whole of Montgomery."

Judge Lewis was escorted by her father, Mose Lewis, a retired soldier and educator.

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## Grant Boosts Turf Grass Research

A grant from the Cape Fear Golf Course Superintendents Association to N.C. State University will be used for research and education projects in a three-county area.

Bruce Williams, area Cooperative Extension Service specialized agent for turf grass, received the \$2,000 check at the annual meeting of the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina held Jan. 6 in Winston-Salem, N.C. State is the home of the state's

Cooperative Extension program.

The money will be used for research and education projects in the three counties Williams serves: Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender.

The Cape Fear Golf Course Superintendents Association is a non-profit organization that promotes professionalism and environmentally sound agricultural turf grass management in southeastern North Carolina.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on the 1st day of February, 1994 at 7:15 P.M. at the Shallotte Town Hall, the Board of Adjustment will hold a hearing for the purpose of discussing the following variance:

Boddie Noell Enterprises (Hardees)—Sign Variance on NC 130 West.

The public is invited to attend.

Mary Etta Hewett, Town Clerk  
 Town of Shallotte

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