

Black History



community." The Elizabeth City native won the National Southern Christian leadership's Conference's Oratory Contest last summer.

Sutton spoke too, on the importance of education, criticizing young people "who are more about a drink than a book," and whose chief concern was "the next outfit they're going to wear on the yard."

"If we know who we are, then we can be honest. Let us stick to our values, our black families, and hold fast."

Sutton said that if students think positive, their future will be positive, adding that with the help of God and the reclaiming of respect and values they can reach their goals. "We are 2 legit 2 quit," she added, quoting a Hammer song. Sutton ended by stressing the importance of students' having faith in themselves and their goals.

"If we think positive, then our future will be positive," she said. "Renew your vision by knowing what you want to do in life. Think success."

"Let us stick together as a black family."

Sutton, an Elizabeth City native, is an Incentive Scholar. She won the National Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Oratory Contest last summer. She is the first North Carolinian to win the national competition during the 13 years it has been sponsored by the organization.

A criminal justice major, Sutton plans to be a lawyer "to serve my community." During the assembly, the ECSU Gospel Choir performed "In my Heart," with Lakeisha Hoggard as soloist and Monique Rountree, as director.

Dr. Willie Sullivan, chair of the Black History Month Committee, presided at the event.

A Time To Be Proud...

Grandmother's spirit lives on in Danielle

By Danielle Fleming

My great grandmother was always taught to be a strong black woman. I was told many stories of the things she would do to protect her family. I would like to tell you my favorite one.

One day about 35 years ago, my mother and her older brothers were with my great-grandmother in church. This church was way back in the woods and several sharecroppers owned land all around it. This particular Sunday was very rainy and foggy. My mother, who was about three years old, wandered off into the woods all alone. My great-grandmother, who was ill and very old, would not go home until she was found.

The church people contacted the sharecroppers and told them to be on the lookout for a small African-American child who might wander onto their property. Many people began to hear gunshots for it was hunting season. Because it was so wet and foggy no one wanted to go looking for my mother, everyone was afraid of the hunters. They began to say things like: "What if I am mistaken for a rabbit or a deer?"

My great-grandmother got up and began to walk toward the woods yelling, "Agatha!" "Agatha!" at the top of her feeble lungs. None of the other people could stop her. That was her grandbaby in the woods, and she was going to save her. My great-grandmother really didn't know these woods very well. When she did manage to find my mother, she was shivering in the cold. Terrified by the gunshots around her, she had bundled herself up in a big tree trunk.

My great-grandmother grabbed her and spanked her for wandering off like that. She then began to realize that she didn't know how to get out of the woods herself.

She took my mother and began to walk in the direction she thought she had just come from. They were walking in circles for about three hours. Finally, she took a different direction and came across an old abandoned shack, where they stayed the night.

By this time, my mother's parents had informed the sheriff of my mother and great-grandmother's being lost. Bright and early the next morning, the sheriff and several others began their search for my mother and great-grandmother. They found them sound asleep on the floor in the old house.

My great-grandmother had a lot of courage to go into a dangerous, unfamiliar area to rescue someone she loved. That is that kind of courage that has been instilled in me from the moment I first heard this story. I feel that it has made me a stronger person. Growing up as her namesake has made me realize that no matter what happens, you can find a way.

My grandmother has always said that I am like her in so many ways. Because of her I am determined to succeed at whatever task I have before me. Once I saw some older kids picking on my little brother; even though they were all bigger than me I stood my ground. Although I was afraid of them they thought that I was not. I hid my fear so that they would not hurt us.

I help people whenever they need my help and I encourage people to be honest with one another.

I feel like she (my great-grandmother) has been the greatest influence my life. She is my guardian angel and I love her.

My great-grandmother died three months before I was born. They say that I was born in her spirit and frame of mind. In me "Mattie Daniel" lives on, and in me "Mattie Daniel Fleming," she will rise.

POETRY

Little Lost Lamb

Little black child, lost at sea;
drowned by chaotic reality.
Was forced to live alone,
taught to misinterpret its' own,
suffocated by a system of poverty.

Little black baby, boy or girl,
abandoned in a white man's world.
They encouraged you to imitate,
but failed to properly educate,
this precious and rare black pearl.

Sweet nubian princess; so insecure,
too many trials for one pearl to endure.
Her heart wanting to give up,
her soul waiting to erupt,
and so many goals left to procure.

Young nubian prince; noble and proud,
a confused mind screams out loud.
To dream is to sin,
there's no way he can win,
accepts the dark angel's sacred shroud.

The chosen flock, these lost sheep,
no time to repent or to weep.
A great kingdom under seizure,
a false nation nestled with leisure,
The Lord's lost lamb will safely keep.

L.W.D.