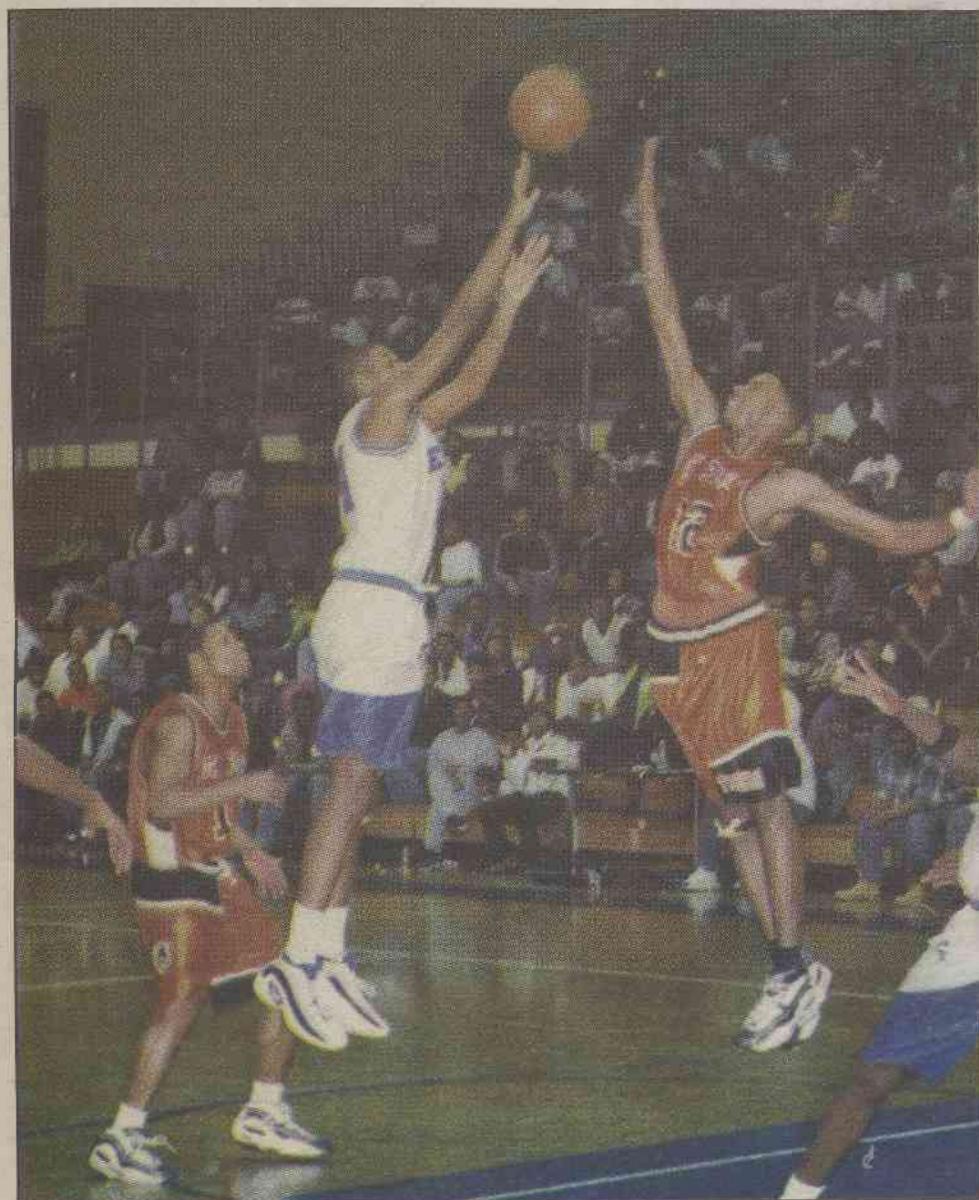


THE COMPASS

Elizabeth City State University's award-winning student newspaper



photograph courtesy of Eugene O'Neal

Marcus Riddick, left, shoots over the outstretched hand of a St. Paul's College defender during last year's action. He is expected to be one of the key contributors this year as the Vikings make to the 1998-99 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) tournament.

ECSU Hosts Forum On Race

By: Artelia Covington
Editor

Race relations is a concept that has been mishandled and misunderstood for years. Recently a number of University representatives and city officials came together to discuss the seemingly age-old dilemma which continues to confront all of America.

Their aim was to make sure that the notion of race relations in Elizabeth City and on the campus of Elizabeth City State University is better understood.

On Nov. 10 The Black Issues Forum, a program produced by University of North Carolina Television (UNC-TV) was held in the G. R. Little Theatre on the ECSU campus.

The program was taped in two twenty five minute segments and featured as panelists Rev. Whittie Bass, pastor, Cann Memorial Presbyterian Church, Dr. Deborah C. Fontaine, ECSU Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Mr. Raymond Rivers of the Pasquotank County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter.

The forum was moderated by Mr. Jay Holloway of UNC-TV.

Mr. Holloway's first question to the panelists was whether or not they perceived racial tension in Elizabeth City as being a different from that in other areas of the state.

"Things have not changed here in Elizabeth City. There is a good ol' boy mentality that still remains here. We (African-Americans) are still disenfranchised from the rest of the community," the NAACP's Mr. Rivers said.

According to the other panelists, however, things continue to change and have changed over the years, if only slightly.

Rev. Bass said that Elizabeth City is a small enough city and one in which the citizens and students have a real opportunity to bring about measurable change.

"We do have a segregated commu-

nity here in Elizabeth City, but there are people who wish to see that abolished," he said."

Holloway then asked : How are the students dealing with these issues?

According to Vice Chancellor Fontaine, student participation in meaningful dialogue is a key element in the change process.

"Dialogue is (very) important. Students should get involved in the community and take a more active role in what happens around them," she said.

Still, Rev. Bass characterized the meeting as one which "reveals race tension in African-American students seeking education."

"I think that students are dealing with race relations and that they understand the reasons surrounding the necessity for change," he said. "So far feedback has been positive, but there are still issues."

Another issue of concern for the audience, comprised of students and local officials and community people, was how they felt about white students and their impact on ECSU's racial balance.

Ms. Deanna Moring, an ECSU sophomore, said she did not see a problem with white students becoming a more integral part of campus life.

The program concluded with a summation by Ms. Denise Whimbly, a diversity trainer for UNC-TV, who accompanied Mr. Holloway.

"We have a problem naming things; we need to learn how to call things exactly what they are and then deal with them. "We haven't gotten to the point where we call things what they are," she said."

The forum was open to the general public and was one of eleven Black Issues Forum town hall meetings taking place on UNC system campuses throughout the state. nationwide outreach campaign on race issues.

The "Black Issues Forums" will be broadcast over UNC-TV Dec. 11 and 18.

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