

Rams on the Move

Staff, students and alumni of WSSU are accomplishing great things

Dedication: On September 16, Winston-Salem State University dedicated its \$13 million Computer Science Center and named the facility in honor of Dr. Elva Jones, long-time chair of WSSU's Department of Computer Science. The facility is a 62,000 sq. ft. building that contains nine classrooms, three computer laboratories, and eight education-research laboratories. Hundreds of people attended the dedication, including members of Jones's family, friends, faculty, students, and community and state dignitaries.

Appointments: Three new members have been added to the Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees. The three are local bank executive Scott Bauer, Winston-Salem pastor James C. Hash, Sr. and student leader Quentin DeBerry. Bauer is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Southern Community Financial Corporation. Hash is senior pastor, chairman of the board, and chief executive officer of St. Peter's Church

and World Outreach Center. Both will serve four-year terms. DeBerry, who is the president of WSSU's Student Government Association, will serve a one-year term.

Appointment: Dr. Peggy Valentine, associate dean of Howard University's College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, has been named dean of Winston-Salem State University's School of Health Sciences. As dean, Valentine will shape all current and future academic programs in the WSSU School of Health Sciences, which currently ranks as the fourth largest producer of professional nurses in North Carolina. Her appointment will become official on January 1, 2006.

New and Improved: In case you haven't seen it yet, Winston-Salem State has a new Web site. Check it out!

Internship Success: Ashley Watson, a part-time junior at Winston-Salem State University, was selected from a pool of thousands of nationwide applicants to work this past summer as an Honors Intern for the FBI in Washington, D.C. She was assigned to the Personnel Recruitment Unit during her 10-week internship, which was coordinated through the National Association for Equal Opportunity, an organization that assists HBCU students during an internship. At the end of the Washington-based internship, Watson relocated to the Charlotte Field Office of the FBI for full-time employment, and starting in December she becomes a permanent

employee with the Support Management Development Unit in Washington, D.C.

Grant: The university has received a \$600,000 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant to help to further the activities of the Simon Green Atkins Community Development Corporation (CDC). The focus of CDC, a community outreach arm of the university established in 1998, is to spur community revitalization efforts that address the needs of community residents, along with several other organizations and local agencies. The grant will help provide homeownership counseling for first-time homebuyers with emphasis on post-purchasing counseling, and technical support for the Community Knowledge Centers housed at area churches. It will also let allow the CDC to continue its ongoing affordable housing plans to complete 12 houses by December 2006, according to Carol Davis, executive director of the S.G. Atkins CDC.

Open House: Winston-Salem State University will host its annual Fall Open House on October 15. The event is expected to attract hundreds of prospective students and their families, and will include campus tours, an academic and organization fair, Admissions/Financial Aid presentations, and music auditions. Guests will be served lunch and given complimentary tickets to the WSSU vs. North Carolina Central University football game.

DELL, from page 1

are in Austin and Nashville, (you'll see) we're very active with the campuses on different programs by looking at the curriculum that they provide and how it best fits opportunities here," said Komn.

"We've talked to Winston-Salem State, we've talked to other universities around town and we're looking for opportunities. Those opportunities will develop as the facility becomes more mature."

Before the ceremony, WSSU's Marching Ram Band drumline performed. Later, at a press conference following the grand opening ceremony, Michael Dell reflected on the company's success.

"I started young," he said. "If you look at our business, we identified a discontinuity in the way the computer business worked. Computers were very expensive, there was not a great deal of support, the distribution channels for computers were very inefficient, and so we



Photo Garrett Garms
Gov. Mike Easley (left) welcomes Dell founder Michael Dell to the Triad.

thought there was a better way-selling directly to the customer, providing great local service, providing great performance, providing great value and that model has been very successful."

North Carolinians are

hoping to benefit from some of that success, as the regional economy has been hard hit by a slate of the closures in the manufacturing industry.

Managing Editor Tiphane Deas contributed to this story.

Acclaimed playwright August Wilson dies at 60

By Michael Phillips
KRT WIRE SERVICE

August Wilson, who expanded the reach of African-American dramatic literature more than any other playwright in history, died Oct. 2 in Seattle's Swedish Medical Center of liver cancer, diagnosed in June, according to his personal assistant Dena Levitin. He was 60.

When he went public with his diagnosis in August, the Pittsburgh native said simply: "I've lived a blessed life. I'm ready."

His early work as a poet shone through everything he wrote, making him the most lyrical African-American dramatist since the heyday of Tennessee Williams.

This summer Wilson continued revising his final play, "Radio Golf," prior to and after a production at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Wilson enjoyed steady and mutually beneficial relationships with many of the country's major nonprofit regional theaters, including Chicago's Goodman Theatre. In January 2007 the Goodman will host a production of "Radio Golf," prior to the play's spring 2007 bow in New York City.

"Radio Golf" is the coda of Wilson's signature achievement: a 10-play chronicle of black life, "in all its richness and fullness," as Wilson liked to say, across a 20th century longer on promises made than on promises kept.

The decade-by-decade cycle introduced a memorable array of African-American characters to the world stage. The cycle's later plays, including "Gem of the Ocean,"

were met with mixed critical and audience favor. The sum total, however, marks a unique, soaringly expressive achievement in the American theater. Wilson's plays have received thousands of productions worldwide, cementing him as an economic as well as cultural force.

Though he often spoke in favor of a healthy circuit of black-run and black-aimed theaters, Wilson's steady presence on the mainstream, largely white regional theater circuit served to integrate those theaters' seasons more so than the work of any other writer.

The plays include two Pulitzer Prize winners, "Fences" and "The Piano Lesson."

"What those plays did for the black theater community was tremendous," said Lloyd Richards, the man often credited with discovering Wilson. At Richards' invitation, Wilson, who was living in St. Paul, Minn., and working as a cook for Little Brothers of the Poor, took part in the 1982 Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwrights Conference in Waterford, Conn. His play "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" received a staged reading there. Following the conference, Richards, who also ran the Yale University drama school, staged a full production of "Ma Rainey" in New Haven, Conn., and then on Broadway.

Richards and Wilson went on to five more collaborations: "Fences," "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," "The Piano Lesson," "Two Trains Running" and

See WILSON, page 4

ALUMNI, from page 1

percent at Elizabeth City, according to Gregory Hairston, who works in the advancement office on campus and is a member of the class of '83.

"If current students don't become active alumni, the opportunities and advancements they enjoyed won't be available to future students," Hairston said. He further stressed the importance that every graduate maintain contact with the university, because the association allows for an "immediate bond with

other alumni and current students."

The university is working to increase alumni giving by sending out postcards to graduates on a regular basis. Students will handle calls during the university's annual telephone fund campaign this year.

University officials are hoping that this change will

help reach up to 80 percent of the alumni.

The largest monetary gifts received by the university totaled \$1.3 million from Rufus and Mary Hairston (no relation to Gregory Hairston). The Hairstons are the namesake of the new residence hall on campus. However, Gregory Hairston said that a contribution of any amount is welcomed.

"One gift a year is fine, as your abilities increase so will your gifts," he said.

"If current students don't become active alumni, the opportunities and advancements they enjoyed won't be available to future students"

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BURKE, from page 1

performance of the original song at the WSSU clock tower on Monday, Oct. 3, as part of the university's continuing effort to help the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Jeffrey Brantley, a physical education major, applauded the performers

and their efforts to honor Katrina's victims. "It touched me," he said. "It truly covered the issue."

Gardin described "Cries of Katrina" as spiritual. Davis, a sophomore sociology major, said "writing gets out emotions." She added that she had no hesitation in making the lyrics so political. "People need

to know...I haven't threatened anyone, (except) maybe their frame of mind."

The event, titled "We're Gonna Stand," was sponsored by the Gamma Phi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Donations of non-perishable items were collected as part of the program.

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