

Curtiss Little, A Man With A Charge To "Pass it On"

The African Proverb, "It Takes A Whole Village To Rear A Child" has historically been echoed throughout Black America. It has been the foundation on which black children have been reared, and has never been an issue or a grueling task to love, nurture or direct someone's child. This same proverb has its roots in Curtiss Little, Principal of Independence High School, a local alternative school on the South side of Winston-Salem for six years. He has been with the Winston-Salem Forsyth County School System for 24 years and has been in administration for 22 of those years. He is also a product of the same. He graduated from Reynolds High and then attended Fayetteville State and received a BS degree in History. He later attend NC A&T State University and received a Mater's Degree in Administration. Little also has a EDS from Appalachian State University, and attended the Principal's Executive Program at

UNC Chapelhill. Little moves quietly touching the lives of others as he fulfills his charge to pass on what he has earned and what has been provided for him—the resources and support to be the best that he could be. What emerges is a portrait of a compassionate man who exemplifies what the proverb means; "It takes a Whole Village".

Sartia: I see you have been in the school system for 24 years and 22 of those years are in administration. That is impressive. How did you manage that?

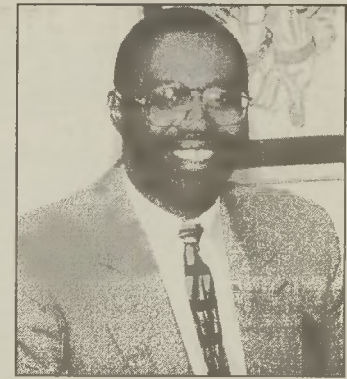
Little: Accidentally. I was teaching history at Hanes Middle School and coaching. The Assistant Principal got sick and did not return to school until two months later. While he was out, I was asked to fulfill his duties. When he returned to school, he retired, and I was offered the position. While going through the internship program, I continued to do double duty-teaching & coaching and administrative

duties. I accepted the challenge and I started to like the results of what I was doing. I saw the affect overall instead of the effect on a part.

I love my job at Independence High School.

Sartia: What makes you love it? In addition, what is your drive?

Little: The quick gratification of seeing the fruit of my labor. My staff and I are able to watch the growth of students because most of them have specific problems and their stay is normally a temporary stay. Therefore, we can see improvements sooner than if we were in a normal school setting. Our classes are smaller, and students get an opportunity to get more attention and more one on one assistance with their academics. I see it as a school where relationships are built between an adult and the child. Relationship building is strength of Independence, and in most



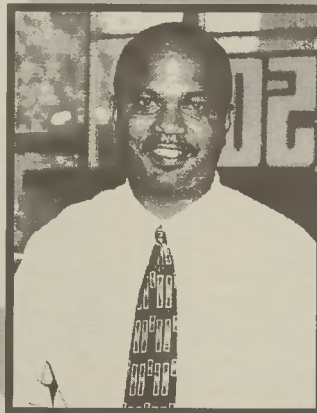
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cases, it is a need in our school population. The child needs somebody he can trust, somebody to motivate him and someone to help steer him in a positive direction. The personal devotion exemplified by me and the staff solidifies relationships; thus, we get positive results. You ask, what is my drive? Well, I was only two steps from them in another direction. If it were not for the caring adults in my life, who pushed me, motivated me, and gave me the support I needed, I would not have been where I am. Some of my experiences give

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