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## DCABP Founder's Day Banquet Honors Becton, Webb-Bledsoe

Contributed By: Sandra Duse, Speaker/ Author

The excitement in the room was palpable as old familiar faces, and 1st time attendees arrived at the 81st Annual Founder's Day Banquet for the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People. Over 500 attendees of all colors and hues of brown arrived at the Durham Convention Center on the evening of Sat., Aug. 27. From politicians to clergy, educators and entertainers, all who attended walked in "proudly looking like royalty," while the women were ushered to their seats by the distinguished young gentleman of the Union Baptist Church Boy Scout Troop 411.

The Mistress and Master of Ceremony were Radio One On-Air personalities, Karen Clark from Foxy 107/104, and Brian Dawson from K97.5. Karen Clark is a native of Durham and graduate of UNC Chapel Hill. Brian spoke affectionately about the great relationships and support he has received from the Durham community throughout his career. The mood was set as the 100 Men in Black Ensemble opened up the program with a soul stirring rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

On the tables sat black stones as part of the décor serving as a reminder of the event theme, "Turning Stumbling Blocks into Stepping Stones." After a greeting by Durham Mayor William Bell, there was an invocation by Rev. Mark Anthony Middleton and words of exhortation from DCABP Chairman, Omar Beasley. Elected officials were invited to stand and briefly address the audience. They each expressed their passion and commitment to serve the state of North Carolina. Throughout the night, we enjoyed dynamic performances from talented local artists, such as the Empower Dance Company, Violinist Dextroist Timmons and The Hillside Dance Company.

This year's honorees included Durham, North Carolina native, Ms. Mayme Webb-Bledsoe. In her speech she recounted fond childhood memories, and the joy of having her 1st grade friends present to share in this moment with her. She encouraged us to get back to being a family and to support our community which was the value system that allowed her to achieve her accomplishments in life. The Honorable Charles Becton was also an honoree. He shared his journey and closed with words from his heart through a poem he penned years ago with wisdom that read, "The most treasured gift is giving."

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Michael Palmer, chair Civic Committee, Durham Committee, left, is shown with honoree Charles L. Becton, center and Omar Beasley, Durham Committee Chair.(Photo by RobertOxedine)



Michael Palmer, chair Civic Committee, Durham Committee, left, is shown with honoree Ms. Mayme Webb-Bledsoe.

### NC chapter of NAACP starts 15-stop voter registration drive

RALEIGH (AP) - The North Carolina chapter of the NAACP is concluding its series of actions commemorating the 1963 March on Washington with an event to mark the start of a voter drive.

The Rev. William will lead the start of what he's calling the "Moral Marches to the Polls" on Monday evening (Aug. 29) at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh. It's the first of 15 stops to encourage voter registration.

During the weekend, NAACP branches were asked to hold statewide held voter registration drives, and faith leaders were asked to hold services with the theme of voting rights.

Barber is president of the state chapter of the NAACP and leader of the Forward Together Moral Movement.

### Elijah J. 'Pookey' Fisher, III Dies, Fisher Funeral Parlor

Elijah J. "Pookey" Fisher, III owner operator of Fisher Funeral Parlor, Inc. died Aug. 30, at Duke University Hospital.

He was born June 6, 1938, a son of the late Rev. Dr. Miles Mark Fisher and Mrs. Ada M. Fisher.

In 2016, Fisher celebrated his 60th Hillside High School reunion. This "Golden Eagle" graduate of North Carolina Central University, majoring in Business and Commerce went on to the Cincinnati School of Embalming in Cincinnati, Ohio where he graduated with honors returning home to Durham, NC to operate his funeral service which has provided "Service for all within the means of all" for over 50 years.

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## US government, lawyers want voter ID ruling enforced

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - The federal government and others who sued to overturn North Carolina's voter identification law told the U.S. Supreme Court on Aug. 25 that keeping the photo ID mandate and other rules in place for the November elections would harm black voters and increase confusion.

Their lawyers also want early in-person voting restored to 17 days in the fall election season because the 2013 law, which had reduced it to 10 days, was struck down justifiably for racial discrimination. They were responding to last week's request by Republican Gov. Pat McCrory and other state officials to delay a ruling by a lower appeals court striking down several sections of the law.

Last month, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the Republican-led General Assembly enacted the 2013 law with intentional discrimination in mind by targeting black voters more likely to support Democrats.

"Once an electoral law has been found to be racially discriminatory, and injunctive relief has been found to be necessary to remedy that discrimination, the normal rule is that the operation of the law must be suspended," wrote Ian Heath Gershengorn, the acting U.S. solicitor general. He warned that failing to suspend the law "would inflict irreparable injury on minority voters."

State officials disagree. If the state's delay request is successful, the voter ID requirement would be enforced and early voting would remain covering 10 days in North Carolina, a presidential battleground state. The delay is needed, the attorneys for the state argue, while they ask justices to consider weighing legal issues in the case.

State officials wrote Aug. 15 that orders to revert to old election rules before the 2013 law would make it difficult for both voters and election officials entering the election season, which also includes races for governor and U.S. Senate. The voter ID requirement already was used in this year's primary elections. Ten days of early voting began earlier.

In two filings Aug. 25, the plaintiffs wrote that more trouble for voters would come by keeping the 2013 law's requirement in place, especially since election officials are already re-arranging voting plans based on the result of the 4th Circuit decision July 29.

Elections boards in all 100 counties have been ordered to approve new 17-day schedules for early voting sites and hours. The State Board of Elections held a training conference recently to plan for the adjustments. And a state-mandated voter guide getting mailed to 4 million households soon has been changed to remind people a qualifying ID no longer will be necessary to vote, according to a filing for the state NAACP, League of Women Voters and other groups and registered voters who sued.

"The state has already taken a number of critical remedial steps to implement the 4th Circuit's decision," the groups' lawyers wrote.

Chief Justice John Roberts, who receives such appeals for North Carolina matters, had asked for a response from the plaintiffs' lawyers by Thursday afternoon (Aug. 25). Outside lawyers for the state could yet file another brief countering Thursday's arguments. A ruling date is unknown.

Legislative leaders and McCrory, who is seeking re-election this fall, have said the 4th Circuit decision was wrong. McCrory has said voter ID is a common sense requirement to increase the integrity of elections. The appeals court judges pointed out the state provided no evidence of the kind of in-person voter fraud the ID mandate would address. A trial court judge in April had upheld the 2013 law.

The office of North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper, a Democrat challenging McCrory in November, is no longer helping defend the voter ID law after the 4th Circuit decision.

## ACT scores show many grads not ready for college-level work

WASHINGTON (AP) - The latest scores from the ACT college entrance exam suggest many of this year's high school graduates aren't ready for college-level course work.

In its annual score report released Aug. 24, the testing company said only 38 percent of graduating seniors who took the exam hit the college-prepared benchmark in at least three of the four core subjects tested - reading, English, math and science. That compares with 40 percent last year. The benchmark is designed to measure a strong readiness for college.

The average composite score also declined a bit, down from 21 to 20.8 this year. The four tests are scored on a scale of 1 to 36. The composite is the average of the four scores. Many colleges use the composite in admissions.

ACT's Paul Weeks says the declines were expected, given the growing and changing demographics of the testing population.

Sixty-four percent of the 2016 graduates took the ACT, meaning nearly 2.1 million students, compared with 59 percent the year before. That increases the share of test-takers who aren't necessarily college bound, said Weeks, senior vice president for client relations, in an interview.

By comparison, 1.7 million graduating seniors in 2015 took the SAT, the other major college entrance exam. The College Board expects to release updated 2016 numbers for the SAT in the fall.

Of the ACT-tested high school graduates this year, 61 percent met the English benchmark of 18 points, which indicates a student is likely ready for a college composition course and would earn a "C" or better grade.

In reading, 44 percent met the 22-point mark that suggests readiness for a college-level social-sciences course. For math, 41 percent met the 22-point threshold that predicts success in an algebra course. And in science, 36 percent reached the 23-point score that predicts success in an entry-level biology course.

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President Barack Obama watches a virtual reality film captured during his trip to Yosemite National Park earlier this year, in the Outer Oval Office, Aug. 24, 2016. Personal Aide Ferial Govashiri sits at her desk on the left. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)