

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Melanie Campbell and Lisa Steele are two of the Wake Forest students upset about racism on campus.

## Diverse Groups Rally For Long-Term Goals

Staff Writer

A diverse group of local blacks ranging from bankers to laborers has created the Winston-Salem Improvement Association—an organization intended to devise long-term strategies for the improvement of the city's black community.

The organization, product of three months of meetings, took on its new name at a meeting Tuesday afternoon in the East Winston Branch Library.

"We see ourselves as a long-term strategy mechanism for blacks in the city," said Kenneth R. Williams, Jr., a businessman and temporary chairman of the association. "We'd like to

15 or 20 years down the road and although events might force us to change, at least we will have a plan, as opposed to reacting all the time."

"We've got to play the man's game by his rules," said Williams. "If the man tells us we need a swimming pool in 2001, we ought to be able to tell him whether we want one then, instead of waiting until opening day, 2001 to complain."

Williams emphasized that

competition with any of the other black organizations in the city. "We're not so much an action group as a research and study group. We need all the organizations we have now. In fact, we need more."

The association's origins date back to a meeting called in December by the Winston-Salem Urban League to bring together various segments of the black community for opening lines of communication.

meetings has ranged as high as 90 persons.

Prior to the adoption of a name, the organization had created task forces to work in six areas of particular interest to the black community: justice, housing, education, economic development, health and government.

The task forces have been charged with studying the issues related to each area and making recommendations for strategies.

## Wake Students Attack Racism

By Sharyn Bratcher  
Staff Writer

When Wake Forest admitted its first black student in 1962, one of his prospective suite mates blurted to a friend: "Yes, but where will we go to the bathroom if he uses this one?"

The seventies style of prejudice is more subtle, but it still exists -- and many of Wake's 150 black students have begun to speak out about it.

"We have formed a student organization, but we don't have a name for it yet," says sophomore Melodie Campbell. "A group of us got together in the library one night and compared experiences. Each of us had thought, 'Maybe, it's just me,' but things had happened to all of us."

One of the "things" that happened was a professor who complained to a student that teaching his class was like "teaching a bunch of fifth grade (blacks)."

A black woman attended a Halloween party at a fraternity where one student was costumed in blackface -- with a noose around his neck.

Several WFU fraternal organizations have held minstrel shows or performed skits in blackface. One group even did a blackface routine in a speech class.

"Racism here is under the sheets," says Lisa Slade, a sophomore from Washington, D.C. "I'll give you an example of how it is. There is a hall in another dormitory where members of a certain sorority live. We went over there a few weeks ago and just as you get off the elevator, there is one of those black jockeys that people put in their yards -- right there in the hall."

The incident which triggered the mood of protest among black students was Old South Weekend, a celebration held by the Kappa Alpha fraternity, in which members dress in Confederate uniforms and display Confederate flags from the windows of their house.

The Confederate flags appeared on campus the day that Wake Forest was holding its Equal Opportunity Banquet in Reynolda Hall. Some visitors to the campus were reportedly offended by the display.

The next day black students bought a Confederate flag and burned it in a trashcan in front of Reynolda Hall.

"We wanted to make a statement that the flag represented a racist pig attitude," said Jimmy Steele, one of the leaders of the demonstration.

Steele, who is president of the Afro-American Society at Wake Forest, explained that his group had originally



Jimmy Steele

intended to have a march of its own on Old South Weekend, showing the other side of pre-Civil War times, but the event was scheduled a week earlier than they expected, so they burned the flag as a gesture of their disapproval.

Dr. Larry Palmer, director of minority affairs on campus, commended the students for the orderly way that the demonstration was handled. "I'm glad they're waking up," he commented.

Steele noted that the reaction he has received from white students has been mostly positive, although Kappa Alphas have remarked that they "don't see what all the fuss is about."

"The Klan is for real," one member commented. "We were just doing it for fun."



Styllin... a fashion supplement like none other you've seen, is a most special feature in this week's Chronicle. The latest trends in children's, men's and women's clothing are explored in depth, with a particular slant on the preferences of black buyers.

You'll meet a top designer of men's wear from Chicago, see the absolute latest in hair styles just back from the beautician's trade show, plus the fabulous writing you've come to expect from the Chronicle. Five pages of fashion info begin on page five.



Olivia & Dave Thompkins

## UL Guild Honors 'Involved' Family

By John W. Templeton  
Staff Writer

Dave Thompkins has come a long way since his boyhood in a house with a faucet on the back porch on old Underwood Street in Boston.

However, he's always believed he had somebody else along the way - a trait shared by his wife, Olivia, and their children.

Their record of involvement in work and volunteer activities has resulted in the Thompkins family being named "Family of the Year" by the Urban League Guild of Winston-Salem.

"They've done all that's expected and added more," said Thompkins' co-worker at the local Housing Authority, William Andrews, during the guild awards reception last Friday night.

The guild also presented a special recognition award to the Winston-Salem Chronicle and a service award to Mrs. Margaret Allen, adult services worker at the East Winston Library. Appreciation gifts and certificates were presented to 15 guild members and Urban League staff.

Thompkins is deputy director of the Housing Authority; Olivia Thompkins is office manager at Reynolds Health Center. However, they're involved in much more.

He's an active board member of the Urban League, a former officer in the A&T State University Alumni Association, regional polemarch in Alpha Kappa Psi Fraternity and a member of the Social Promoters and New Bethel Baptist Church.

"We always believed you have to help somebody," Thompkins said of his family. "I was always taught, you've got

to get a piece of the pie and help somebody else get some pie too."

Olivia Thompkins is intricately involved in the process of carving out some of the political pie. She's been precinct chairman at Paisley school and James Community Center and is now acting chairman in the Hanes Community Center precinct.

She serves on the Employment and Training Advisory Council and is a prodigious fundraiser for the NAACP. Each year, the Thompkins give a benefit at their home for the association.

"I have always been involved in activities that deal with people," said Mrs. Thompkins. "My whole work life's been spent in health facilities, and although I'm in the business end, I still have that concern for people."

The Thompkins have raised a group of achievers among their four daughters. Renita, 20, skipped her senior year of high school to attend N.C. Central University and is a candidate for graduation in May.

Cheryl, 16, an 11th grader at Reynolds High School, may repeat her sister's advanced placement. Tracy, 13, is an 8th grader at Wiley Junior High. Tina, 4, is called "the boss of the family."

"We've always taught them everybody has to work; nothing is given to you," said Dave Thompkins. "That's the way we've trained our children."

Thompkins not only practices involvement, but he preaches it throughout his career as a housing counselor, manager and administrator. "I have always told the residents, you cannot sit here in this project; you must become involved. If you're going to move up, you've got to get involved."

## 'Regressive' Tax Laws Attacked

By Sharyn Bratcher  
Staff Writer

Sam Smith is a business executive who makes \$100,000 a year. In buying groceries for his family, he pays \$92.16 a year in food tax. So does Mary Johnson, who is raising three kids on a salary of \$2.90 per hour. Unfair?

The Coalition on Tax Reform thinks so.

The repeal of the food tax and a new property tax structure are the major concerns of the Coalition on Tax Reform, a group of local organizations who want to change the present tax system in North Carolina.

"The people with the burden of the food tax are the least able to afford it," said Mike Taylor of the Urban League, one of the

organizations comprising the Coalition on Tax Reform.

A family subsisting on minimum wage earnings spends 41 per cent of that income for food, and pays almost \$100 per year in sales taxes. Upper income families spend only 8.9 per cent of their income on food, spending a higher portion of their income on non-taxable items, such as personal services.

Twenty-two states exempt food from their sales taxes, but in North Carolina revenue from the three per cent state food tax accounts for \$150 million in the state budget, almost double the amount of five years ago, because of skyrocketing food prices.

"The tax structure needs to be revised," said Kate

Mewhinney, an attorney for the Legal Aid Society. "An across-the-board property tax cut wouldn't help the people who need it most."

She explained that 28 per cent of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County's taxes are paid by only 25 taxpayers, including Western Electric, Duke Power, and the R.J. Reynolds Company. A property tax cut would benefit them, but it would not benefit the 45 per cent of the county population who rent their houses, even though landlords pass on property tax costs to their tenants.

Ms. Mewhinney suggested that property taxes be charged on a graduating scale, like income tax, so that higher amounts are taxed proportionally more than lower ones.

One measure of property tax relief presently being considered in the North Carolina legislature is the circuit-breaker tax cut. The bill, which was introduced by Senator Carolyn Mathis, (D-Charlotte.) would require the state to pay the property taxes exceeding a certain percentage of their income for senior citizens and disabled persons. For example, if a family has an income of \$6,000 and owes \$240 in property tax, the family would pay three per cent of their income, or \$180, in property tax, and the state would pay the remaining \$60.

Coalition members say that the state need not lose revenue from those tax reductions, because other taxes could be modified to compensate for the differ-

ence. They favor doubling the intangible property tax (taxes on stocks and bonds); increasing the liquor tax to six cents per 3.3 oz.; increasing the corporate income tax; and increasing the tax on cigarettes.

The Coalition sponsored a seminar, held Wednesday April 4, at Glade Street YWCA, which was designed to educate the public on North Carolina tax laws. Patric Mullen, secretary for North Carolinians for Tax Reform was the featured speaker. Members of the Coalition on Tax Reform include: Legal Aid Society, Urban League, League of Women Voters, Winston-Salem Forsyth County Association of Educators, and the American Association of Retired Persons.