

Chronicle Profile

College Grad Makes The Best Of His Situation

By EDWARD HILL JR.
Staff Writer

When Ronald Gray graduated from Parkland High in 1978, he had his life all mapped out. He would go away to college, get his degree, return home and help himself and his community. But few things go according to plan in this life, as Gray would eventually find out.

"After I graduated from high school, I wanted to get away from home and attend a black school," says Gray, 22. "I decided on Morgan State University because some friends said it had a good reputation of graduating blacks and getting them into jobs.

"When you're young, you deal a lot in idealism. I figured by getting a college degree, I would be in a position to help my people. Sometimes reality can wipe out idealism."

While at Morgan State, Gray made good use of his time by involving himself in the student government and various other activities on campus that he felt would help him achieve his goals.

"I learned of a co-op program at Morgan that dealt with the penal system," says Gray, who has a bachelor's degree in psychology. "It was at the Jessup Correctional Facility (Jessup, Md.), one of the toughest penal institutions in the country. I met brothers and sisters in there with all types of psychological problems. Coming from the South, I

had never been exposed to that type of thing before. The main thing I learned was that you can't be overly compassionate because no matter how sorry you may feel for people, you can't always help them."

Gray adds that living in the inner city of Baltimore also aided his maturation process ("You learn how to survive in Baltimore").

By attending summer school and gaining extra credits through several programs at Morgan, Gray

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was able to graduate in only three years.

"The main thing that is stressed to students at Morgan is that if you get a degree, there will be a job out there for you if you want it," he says. "People kept saying to me, 'All you've got to do is want it and you'll get it.'"

"But when you get out there in the real world and you find out that people don't always hire you on ability and what you know; it can be a very rude awakening."

Gray returned to Winston-Salem last year in hopes

of securing a job and "giving something back to the people who helped me and my family."

Instead, he found himself working at pizza restaurants and in other jobs that didn't require a college degree. So while searching for something more "meaningful," Gray became reacquainted with Patrick Hairston, local president of the NAACP.

"I had known Patrick before I went away to school, but I just couldn't relate to him at the time," Gray recalls. "I used to say, 'All this guy wants to do is make trouble.'"

"But my view of him changed when I came back. After having the experiences that I had at Morgan, I was more politically astute and I began to really understand the things he was trying to do for black people here in Winston-Salem. He is now my mentor and my friend. Sometimes when I get a little hyper on things I want to do, he brings me back down to reality."

Gray is presently a volunteer office manager at the NAACP office, handling grievances and various other duties. Although he is not being paid for his services, he sees other benefits.

"Being under Patrick's tutelage has helped me tremendously," he says. "I've become much more politically conscious. I get exposed to things many black people at my age don't get a chance to. I also meet a lot of influential blacks who can help me in

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As the volunteer office manager for the local NAACP, Ronald Gray hopes to donate his time and service to the black community (photo by James Parker).



Krista Marshall (left) and Kecha Lee (right) look on as Lt. Gov. James C. Green signs a bill making Jan. 15 a legal public holiday in North Carolina honoring the birthday of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Marshall and Lee were selected as legislative pages for a week.

Local Teen Serves As N.C. House Of Representatives Page

A Forsyth County high-school student spent last week in Raleigh as one of the first black N.C. House of Representatives pages for the 1983 General Assembly.

Krista Marshall, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Marshall, called her one-week stint in Raleigh a "learning experience."

"The most exciting part of the page position was

witnessing the assembly ratify a bill making Jan. 15 a legal N.C. public holiday in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday," Marshall said.

She said she was also excited about meeting Lt. Gov. James C. Green and House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey.

"North Carolina's General Assembly making King's birthday a holiday

shows how much they care about King," she said.

Marshall, who views her experience as a page as a continuation of her classroom work, said she did not mind missing a week of school.

C.B. Hauser, a 39th District House Representative, recommended Marshall for the page position. A page's main responsibility is to deliver messages and

run errands for the House members.

During her spare time in Raleigh, Marshall said she visited the capitol city and toured North Carolina State University.

Marshall is a junior at East Forsyth Senior High School and a member of the National Honor Society, the College Club and the Afro-American Club.

Clark Addresses Bar Meeting

Willie Clark Jr., one of the 33 regional directors of the National Labor Relations Board and the only black regional director, was the speaker recently at the local Winston-Salem Bar (black lawyers) meeting.

Clark spoke on the work of the National Labor Relations Board and presented an overview of the functions and jurisdiction of the board. He discussed how the board is administered and the role of the private practitioner in practicing

before the board. Clark

also outlined the proceedings before the board and the employment opportunities for lawyers with the board.

The Winston-Salem Bar meets the second Tuesday of each month. Officers are as follows: James L.

Lassiter, president; Beverly Mitchell, vice-president; Wanda Pate, secretary; Willie Clark, assistant secretary; Gary Henderson, treasurer; and Clifton Graves Jr., reporter. Members of the program committee are Roland

Hayes, Davida Martin and Willie Clark.



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