

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

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30 Pages This Week

## Former YMCA employee files pair of discrimination suits

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

A former secretary-receptionist with the Glade Street YWCA has filed a discrimination suit against the Y because she was denied a promotion she felt she deserved.

Jimmie Wilson, a black woman who had been employed for five years and eight months with the YWCA, filed a discrimination suit Jan. 18 after a white employee at the YWCA, who has less than six months experience there, received a promotion Wilson had applied for. After the YWCA learned of Wilson's discrimination suit, she was fired. Wilson then filed another suit against the Y charging that she lost her job because of the first suit she filed.

Patricia B. McNeil, the YWCA's executive director, said in a prepared statement, "YWCA personnel decisions are always made with proper regard to the individuals involved and the well-being of the organization. Because of the confidential nature of them, it would be inappropriate to elaborate."

Donna Oldham, the Y's public relations

director, said that the suit is a "very sticky" matter and that no official comments regarding the Wilson case will be made "until we know what's going on."

On Dec. 2, Wilson and a white employee who also was a secretary, applied for the position of business manager. After both women were interviewed for the job, Wilson received a memo Dec. 15 indicating that the white applicant had been named the new business manager.

"After I heard that," Wilson said, "I went to talk with Herman Aldridge at the Human Relations Council on Dec. 18. He (Aldridge) then told me to go to EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) and talk with them."

Because of their confidential nature, Aldridge would not comment on his conversations with Wilson, or the advice he gave her.

From the latter part of December to Jan. 24, Wilson said, she was placed on probation by her superiors. "They said I was put on probation because I didn't have the right attitude and said I wasn't smiling," Wilson said. "I wasn't smiling because I was upset about what had happened, but my job performance had not

suffered."

After the probationary period was over, Wilson said, she asked the new business manager, who was then Wilson's immediate supervisor, if she was off probation, and was told yes.

"That afternoon, when the mail came in, they received a letter that I had filed a discrimination suit," Wilson said. "I was out with the flu for a few days, and when I came back on Jan. 30, I was told that I was being fired for poor work performance."

Wilson said this was not the first time she had been treated poorly by the administration at the YWCA.

"In February 1983, I was demoted from executive secretary back to secretary-receptionist," Wilson said. "At the time, I was going through a divorce and having a hard time in my personal life. Doug Ashby, from United Way, called the executive director and said that he had friends in town and could we find a job for the wife of his friend. They demoted me and gave her my old job."

"Even though I was having personal problems," Wilson said, "I was still working."

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## Mechanics and Farmers' White resigns

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Mel White, senior vice president and city executive of Mechanics and Farmers Bank, has resigned from that position effective Feb. 29. Mrs. Julia W. Taylor, president and chief executive officer of the bank, announced in a prepared statement recently.

White, who has held his position since 1981,

is leaving to pursue business interests in New York. "During Mr. White's tenure with the bank," Taylor said in her statement, "he has been instrumental in developing a substantial core of deposits from the Winston-Salem community."

Charles McLean, chairman of the bank's local board of directors, said he regrets White's leaving and wishes him the best.

McLean also said he wants to dispel rumors

that White was asked by the board to leave because of the stance he took against the \$35 million, Nov. 8 city-county bond referendum. White, along with fellow Black Leadership Roundtable Coalition members and the NAACP, fought the bonds, charging they would do little to help address the plight of the city's poor.

"I was as much against the bonds as anybody else," White said.

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### She Made History On The Screen

Actress Dorothy Dandridge, who moved from vaudeville and nightclubs, including the legendary Cotton Club, to the screen, starred in "Porgy and Bess," "Island in the Sun" and "Carmen Jones," among other films before her death at age 43. Her star was recently implanted on the sidewalk of Hollywood Boulevard.

## Board tables parking deck, firms breathe sigh of relief

By AUDREY WILLIAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Board of Aldermen returned to the city's staff Monday night a proposal for a new downtown parking deck that would displace 11 businesses. Seven of the eight board members said they feel other alternatives should be considered before a final decision is made.

"We just cannot move people out of their businesses and move others in," said Alderman Vivian Burke.

As part of the bond package approved by voters last November, the city plans to build a 650-space parking deck on the northern section of Cherry, Trade and

Sixth streets. The deck would primarily serve the Benton Convention Center.

But after realizing that small downtown businesses would have to be relocated, all of the aldermen, with the exception of Robert Northington Jr., agreed that the present parking deck site would not be in the best interest of the businessmen.

"They continue to tell us we need more parking spaces downtown," said Burke, "but I think the city manager will be the first one to admit that we have dropped the ball and to realize that we must move in a direction that will be fair and consistent with what the board has done in the past."

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### Our Black Olympians

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## Vietnam War hero Joel was troubled, relatives say

From Staff Reports

Medal of Honor winner Lawrence Joel, a Vietnam war hero who was found dead Saturday of a diabetic coma, stopped taking his insulin because he was denied disability benefits, family members told the *Winston-Salem Journal* Tuesday.

Reginald McIntyre, Joel's nephew, found his uncle dead at his home on New Walkertown Road. An autopsy revealed that Joel's death resulted from either not taking insulin at all or not taking enough.

McIntyre said Joel, a Winston-Salem native, had quit taking insulin eight days before his death because his employer, the Veterans Administration, had denied his requests for disability as a civil service employee. He was receiving military

retirement benefits of \$1,300 a month.

Joel's mother, Mary Ellen Joel of 955 Mount Zion Place, told the *Journal*: "He just quit taking the insulin. It broke his heart when they wouldn't give him his (disability benefits)... He told me last week he didn't want to put up with it anymore. He was tired of it all. He was ready for Jesus."

Joel filed for disability in August after taking a leave of absence from his job as a benefits counselor for the VA's regional office in Winston-Salem. He began work for the VA in Connecticut in 1973 after 23 years in the Army. He moved back to Winston-Salem in 1982.

The decorated Army veteran left his job because his vision was failing, said Mike

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## Present and ex-Klansmen testify

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

A Ku Klux Klan leader testified in federal court Tuesday that the Klansmen and Nazis who attended a Death to the Klan Rally in Greensboro on Nov. 3, 1979, went there with the intention of creating a disturbance.

Christopher Dean Benson, 29, of Bessemer City, said he and Klan leader Virgil Griffin had discussed going to the rally and that, the night before, he and several other Klansmen and their families met at Griffin's house to pinpoint which Communist Workers Party members they wanted to beat up once they arrived at the rally.

Benson had become an informant for the FBI.

Nine Klansmen and Nazis are on trial here for violating the civil rights of demonstrators killed and injured during the anti-Klan rally sponsored by the CWP at a predominantly black housing project. Five CWP members were killed during a gunfire exchange at the rally.

Other Klansmen also testified about their roles in the Greensboro shootout.

Mark J. Sherer of Cramerton, who testified as a hostile witness, said he and Griffin discussed two or three times a

plan to kill another Klan member if he testified against any of the Klansmen and Nazis involved in the Greensboro shootout.

Sherer had first agreed to testify in exchange for immunity from government prosecution for the part he played in the shootout, but two weeks ago decided he did not want to testify.

Chief Prosecutor Daniel L. Bell II, who was relying on Sherer to prove that the Klansmen and Nazis were the aggressors at the CWP rally, put him on the stand anyway.

During his testimony, Sherer often changed his story from the one he had given to a federal grand jury last fall and seemed puzzled by some of the prosecution's questions. Sherer told the grand jury that he had fired the first shot, but during his court testimony said he could have but thought he heard a shot that came from the area where the CWP demonstrators were standing.

Carl Nappier, a former Klansman who now lives in Texas, testified last week before the all-white jury that the Klansmen voted at a meeting to attend the Greensboro rally but were told not to take weapons.

Nappier said he rode in the fourth car of the nine-car caravan and that the Klansmen and Nazis were attacked

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## Open Line

**Q:** It seems that every morning I get stuck in the right lane on Fifth Street behind somebody putting mail in the mail box in front of the main Post Office. Since I have to turn at the light, it's to my advantage to be in that lane. Why is that box there if it ties up traffic?

N.A.

**A:** The mail box on Fifth Street and the box on Trade Street in front of the *Chronicle* are there for customer convenience, says Don Tennant in the Claims And Inquiry Division at the Main Post Office on Fifth Street.

The box on Fifth Street collects more mail than any other in Winston-Salem, says Tennant. He suggests that it may be a good idea if the city's traffic department could place warning signs that indicate that the right lane is a slow-moving lane and that cars stop frequently there to use the mail box.

### Another Postal Question

**Q:** I operate a business in Winston-Salem, and I recently mailed a letter to another business in the city. Much to my surprise, it took the letter eight days to get across town, and this has happened to me more and more since Winston's mail is now going to the bulk mail center in Greensboro. Also, since the new system started, the mail is sometimes not in the post office boxes by 8:30 a.m., as posted. What's the problem?

E.P.

**A:** The problem you experienced with the letter is a rare occurrence, according to John Schoolfield, Winston-Salem's postmaster.

When the Postal Service put its automated sorting system into effect at the end of the year, it thought it best to concentrate the new technology in one area. Therefore, the bulk mail leaves

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