

Someone You Should Meet...



(photo by James Parker)

Name: Jeanette Watts Myers
Job Title: Media Consultant
Hometown: Winston-Salem
Describe Yourself in one word: "Ambitious"
Hobbies: Singing, computers and outdoor sports
Favorite Book: "Native Son" by Richard Wright
Favorite Movie: "The Grapes of Wrath"
Person admires most: My parents, Richard and Dorothy Watts, the Rev. Jerry Drayton and my boss, Jim Warren
Career Goal: "To run my own advertising agency or promotional business."

(If you are single, at least 18 years old, doing something positive in the community, employed and interested in appearing in this column, or if you know someone who meets these criteria, please send your name and daytime telephone number to: Someone You Should Meet, Winston-Salem Chronicle, P.O. Box 2151, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.)

NEWS DIGEST

National, state and local news briefs compiled by Greg Brown

Three arrested for sit-in at embassy

WASHINGTON -- The District of Columbia's delegate to Congress, Walter Fauntroy, and two other national black leaders were arrested last week after staging a sit-in in the South African Embassy to protest that government's detention of 13 black labor leaders.

Fauntroy was arrested with Mary Frances Berry, a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, and Randall Robinson, director of the black lobbying group, TransAfrica. They were taken from the embassy in handcuffs. Fauntroy declined to invoke congressional immunity and the three demonstrators were released on personal recognizance after spending a night in jail.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, a Georgetown University law professor and former head of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, entered the

embassy with Fauntroy, Berry and Robinson last Wednesday afternoon for an appointment with the South African ambassador. After an hour, Norton said her companions intended to remain inside the embassy until the black labor leaders were released. The labor leaders were detained earlier this month after a two-day strike by hundreds of thousands of black laborers protesting South Africa's policy of racial separation.

"Ours was an act of conscience in response to the repressive action of the South African government with respect to the noble, nonviolent protests of black South Africans over the last few months," Fauntroy said after his release from jail. He and the others pleaded not guilty to unlawful entry at the embassy and are to have a hearing on the charge next week.

Officers were ordered from Nov. 3 rally area

GREENSBORO -- A former policewoman who was in the Morningside Homes area the day five communist demonstrators were killed by Klansmen and Nazis has told attorneys for the Greensboro Civil Rights Fund that she was ordered to "clear the area as soon as possible" minutes before the Klan-Nazi caravan arrived.

The statement, in a deposition by former policewoman April Wise, appears to contradict the Greensboro Police Department's assertion that it was unaware of the approaching Klansmen and Nazis, accounting for the absence of police officers at the scene of the "Death to the Klan" rally.

Wise said that she and another officer were answering a domestic disturbance call in the Morningside Homes housing project on Nov. 3, 1979, when the police communications center instructed

them to leave the area at 10:50 a.m.

Wise said the call was unusual because domestic investigations generally take 20 to 30 minutes, much more time than she and her partner were given.

Police officials deny they gave such an order. Although a 10:56 a.m. transmission from Wise appears on tapes of police communications indicating the officers were leaving the area, the police department does not list the Wise transmission on its "administrative report" of the killings.

Attorneys for the Greensboro Civil Rights Fund are representing the families of the five slain demonstrators in a \$48 million civil suit against the Greensboro Police Department, the FBI and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The suit is to be heard in March.

Court hears racial designation appeal

NEW ORLEANS -- Lawyers for a woman who found out six years ago that her birth certificate classified her as "colored" have asked a state appeals court to allow her to change the designation to "white."

The Nov. 14 hearing before the Louisiana Court of Appeals was the second such hearing since 50-year-old Susie Guillory Phipps found out she was not legally white when she was getting a passport to fly to South America. Phipps, the great-great-great-granddaughter of a black slave and a white plantation owner, has white skin.

She failed in an attempt to have declared unconstitutional a state law classifying as "colored" anyone with a little as one thirty-second black ancestry. The state legislature changed the 13-year-

old law last year. Until the law was passed to redefine what constitutes white and black for challenges to racial designation on birth certificates, "any traceable amount" of black ancestry was enough to be designated black.

An opinion was written after the appellate court held its first hearing on the issue, but the proceeding was rendered invalid when one of the three judges on the panel resigned before the ruling became final.

Brian Begue, Phipps' lawyer, said the state already has the authority to change the racial designation on a birth certificate, but does not want to do it.

"It is a lot easier to change your sex on a birth certificate than to change your race," he said.

Black presence lags

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males, one black female and two black males, has a black representation of 42.7 percent.

And on the 11-member city-county Utilities Commission, to which the city makes five appointments, the city appointed four white males and one black male. Total black representation on the commission is 18 percent.

"I try to appoint people suited to the particular commission for a particular job," Corpening says.

Pointing to the Utilities Com-

mission specifically, he says, "This commission handles millions of dollars per year. They run the utilities, the water and sewer. So on that, you want the best brains you can get and I think we have the best setup in North Carolina."

He cites John Watlington, the commission chairman and retired chairman of the board of Wachovia Bank and Trust Co. and chief executive officer of the Wachovia Corporation (a county appointee) and city appointee

Thomas Davis, president of Piedmont Airlines, as examples of the high-caliber individuals needed to fill such posts.

"You can't hire them and you can't pay them," he says. "When you put those kinds of people on a commission, they are used to handling millions of dollars and you have to have people who can do that."

"If we do that on all commissions as much as possible, we'll be better off. You really want

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Most black aldermen expect challenge

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For the past eight years, Alderman Vivian Burke has represented that ward. Burke said she isn't sure yet, but more than likely will seek re-election. But unlike 1981, when Burke had no opposition, two black Democratic candidates are seriously considering seeking her seat.

Both Victor Johnson, assistant principal at Carver High School, and Joe Daniels, a city employee in the tax office, have expressed an interest in running for the Northeast Ward alderman's seat.

"I'm out here assessing the situation," said Johnson. "Before you stick your neck out for anything, you have to."

Although Johnson has never run for political office before, he served as Eddie Knox's local campaign co-coordinator in Knox's bid for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

Daniels said he hasn't made any formal announcement and would make public a decision one way or another in the next couple of weeks, but is leaning toward making a bid for the seat. Like Johnson, Daniels hasn't run for political office before, but he does serve as the Carver precinct chairman.

Both men say their decisions to run won't be based on the other's decision. Burke said she feels that as citizens of that ward, they have the right to run if they want to.

"An elected position is a right that people have," said Burke. "They can run if they want to. There is no lock and key on any elected position. I have no problems when people say that they are going to run."

"They aren't running against me. They are in the race running for a seat."

Burke, a Democrat, said she thinks her chances of holding on to her seat are as good as they were in 1977, the first time she ran. At that time, black Republican Rodney Sumler and two white candidates challenged her.

"My record is one that I'm proud of," said Burke. "I have represented the needs of the people."

If Burke runs for re-election and is elected to another four-year term, she may not finish that third term. Burke also is considering a bid for the state House seat now held by Democrat C.B. Hauser. Before being encouraged to run for alderman in 1977, Burke said she was approached by a number of people who encouraged her to run for the state House.

"I don't know if Dr. Hauser will seek re-election," said Burke when asked if she would run in 1986, which could be two years into her third term as alderman. "I don't know if it will be the next two years or four years

before I seek the state House."

But Burke cautions that her decision won't be based on whether or not Hauser decides to run for a third term.

Little said the one black alderman sure to be opposed is Larry Womble, representing the Southeast Ward. Unlike any other alderman, Womble has a ward that is almost evenly mixed with black and white residents.

"I automatically assume that whites will try to get that seat back and the fact that they have a slight majority makes that more attractive," said Little. "It won't be an indication of whether he has done a good job; racism doesn't look at stuff like that."

Little said he also is expecting a serious challenge in the North Ward.

"I feel I will be strongly challenged," he said.

But, said Little, while all the incumbents are expecting opposition, whether it materializes remains to be seen.

"A lot of times people see the glitter and prestige, but don't see the hard work," said Little. "But when it comes down to the hard work, they disappear. If somebody intends to run, they ought to be at the alderman meetings gathering facts and figures to use to mount an issue-oriented campaign. But I haven't seen anybody down there doing that."

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