

# 'Po Tolo' joins other WSSU sculptures

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Assistant Editor

The weatherman was calling for cool temperatures and rain on Monday morning. The cool temperatures he could take, but Tyrone Mitchell didn't want the rain. After a year of planning and implementing, Mitchell had a project to complete. Rain would stop progress.

Mitchell, a sculptor, had come to oversee the assembly of the newest addition to Winston-Salem State University's sculpture garden. "Po Tolo," the name Mitchell gave the sculpture, is 8 feet high and 40 feet in diameter. It sits in front of the R.J. Reynolds Center, WSSU's new business school, and consists of four pieces of steel weighing a total of 38,000 pounds and a six-ton rock found in Muddy Creek in Pfafftown.

The rock, mounted in concrete, sits in the middle of a steel tube and is surrounded by three circular steel pieces. A special type of steel, called cor-ten, has been used so that the rusting process is speeded up and then stopped at a certain point. The brownish-orange color of the rust will provide color for the sculpture, said Mitchell.

The piece is designed so that viewers can walk in and around it.

Inspiration for the piece comes from Mitchell's travels in Mali, a country in West Africa. In fact, the words "Po Tolo" are Dogon,

the name given to the people living in Mali, and refer to the star Sirius.

It's hard for Mitchell to stay still long enough to complete the interview in one portion. As soon as he answers one or two questions, he thinks of something he needs to do to the sculpture's foundation and runs off to do it before he forgets. After all, somebody has to make sure the crane operator lowers the steel in just the right position and that the concrete is poured just right and that the rock is positioned in just the right place.

After completing the immediate task at hand, Mitchell returns for other questions, but it's obvious that his mind is elsewhere, mainly on the circular mass of concrete and steel rods in front of him.

Dressed in green fatigues, a comfortable blue denim jacket and a green Indiana Jones hat, Mitchell looks like the artist he is.

Mitchell's piece was not originally intended to sit in the courtyard of the Reynolds building. It was to join three others in the concrete garden between Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium and the Hall-Patterson Communications Building. After being selected for his piece, Mitchell decided he needed a bigger space than the space allotted.

"I wanted to work large and in a big area," said Mitchell. "I didn't want to have to scale the

piece back." The idea for a sculpture garden for Winston-Salem State was conceived almost 14 years ago, says Mitzi Shewmake, an associate professor of art.

"When the old auditorium fell in and plans for a new auditorium were made, I decided, why not place sculpture around the building instead of a parking lot?" said Shewmake, who seemed almost as excited as Mitchell and scurried around taking pictures of the project as each stage was completed.

Shewmake and an appointed committee presented the plan to then Chancellor Dr. Kenneth R. Williams and he in turn presented the idea to Gordon Hanes, a former member of the school's Board of Trustees. Hanes liked the idea and commissioned the first piece in 1981. In 1984, all three finalists, including Mitchell, from the second juried competition were selected to have their pieces placed on campus.

Hanes said he liked the idea of a sculpture garden because he wanted Winston-Salem State to have something it could be proud of.

"I felt with all these new buildings, the students needed something they could be proud of," said Hanes. "Something they didn't have at Chapel Hill. I wanted the professors at Chapel Hill to say, 'Today, students we are going to see an example of modern sculpture,' and get in

their cars and come to Winston-Salem State.

"The campus has been thrown over here among the railroad tracks and for years neglected by the Legislature. We needed something more. We needed something to be proud of."

The sculpture garden competition also gives minority artists an opportunity to have pieces of work commissioned, said Mitchell.

"A lot of black artists don't get the opportunity to have a piece commissioned for a public building," Mitchell said. "The problem is, when you apply for a piece and don't already have a piece they can see, you are hindered. This gives us an opportunity."

The sculpture garden at Winston-Salem State is the only one of its kind in the state. Mitchell's piece will join three others -- "Southern Sunrise" by Mel Edwards, "Arbor Spirit" by Roberto Bertoia and "Garden Ruins" by Beverly Buchanan.

"Southern Sunrise" was the campus' first piece. It consists of three huge steel circles and a thin, vertical slab. "Arbor Spirit" is a twisting wooden sculpture, and "Garden Ruins" is an arrangement of three massive blocks of rock that can be found only in Salisbury.

Campus security guard Joshua Cooley said his favorite piece is "Southern Sunrise."

Please see page A3



## Easy Does It!

Workers and bystanders watch as a crane slowly lowers a huge boulder into its appointed spot during the construction of Tyrone Mitchell's "Po Tolo," one of the latest additions to Winston-Salem State University's sculpture garden (photo by James Parker).

# Davis knew his son would be successful

By ROBIN ADAMS  
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There's a black-and-white picture of a group of doctors hanging on the wall just inside the door of James Davis' house on Third Street. Among the group of 20 or so doctors, hidden in the middle, is the only black man in the group, Davis' son Dwight.

Dr. Dwight Davis was a member of the Hershey cardiac surgical transplant team that recently implanted the Penn State artificial heart in Anthony Mandia. Davis serves as the cardiologist for the team of doctors and identifies patients for artificial heart transplants.

Though Dr. Davis has been in nearly everyone's spotlight for the last two weeks, he has always been special to his father.

"He's a gifted child," said Davis, leading the reporter to the dining room to show off another picture of Dr. Davis running in



Dwight Davis

the Boston Marathon. "I'm not saying that 'cause he's my son, but he's good. He's always doing something to make me proud."

In the middle of Davis' conversation, he stops to ask about

Mandia's condition.

"How's that man doing?" asked Davis. "I try to keep up with it, but when I have to work I get behind."

He then resumes talking about his son.

"He said he wanted to be a doctor when he was 4," said Davis. "He was always fixing on cars or operating on frogs or snakes. He seemed like the father instead of me."

At Anderson High, Fred Parker, Davis' chemistry and physics teacher, noticed the youngster's science ability.

"He was an average student in chemistry, but he was an A student in physics," said Parker. "That's unusual. Davis surprised me because I hadn't expected it of him. We had an accelerated chemistry class and he was not a part of the class. He wasn't crazy about chemistry, but physics excited him."

Please see page A12

# Woodson proposes

From Page A1

Woodson, indicate that much of the public housing in the country has become "real hell holes for poor people."

The NCNE proposal calls for residents to own and manage their housing units, which Woodson says will encourage more self-reliance in lower-income communities. In support of his project, Woodson cited several instances in which residents have taken control of public housing units and turned them into more livable places.

"In three short years we've worked with residents of some of the worst public housing units in the country and they have been able to reduce teen-age pregnancy, reduce the crime rate and increase rental income threefold," said Woodson.

Under the terms of the housing plan, residents in the test communities established their own rules and procedures for filling vacancies and appointed themselves as managers.

Winston-Salem Urban League President Thomas Elijah has had a firsthand look at the kind of housing plan that Woodson proposes and says it is a viable alternative.

"I was a consultant to the Boston unit of this plan and it works," said Elijah. "The housing plan works because the people actually want it to."

Woodson and the CBEA have recently come under attack by some black leaders because the organization has no affiliation with traditional black organizations. Woodson accepts the criticism but said that the lack of affiliation with black organizations has not been deliberate. He also said that he expects these organizations to join his group in the near future.

"Most of the groups that we affiliate with are grassroots organizations throughout the country," said Woodson. "These are groups that are successfully working with poor people in several areas. To us, it is far more important to spend that time we have working with those folks than with traditional organizations."

Woodson also draws a comparison between the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign and the CBEA, which is a bipartisan, 20-member think tank of businessmen, scholars and community leaders.

"If you will remember, the

leadership of the civil rights organizations opposed Jesse Jackson's candidacy," said Woodson, "and only after Jesse was successful did the leadership climb on board and say that it was the greatest thing that ever happened. I anticipate the same happening with our housing proposal."

Woodson and his organization have also been called "conservatives" by some black critics, a label Woodson said is irrelevant. "We are seeking non-label solutions," he said. "We have solutions and we'll let other people label them to suit their own needs."

Housing is one of the issues Woodson said he feels has gone unaddressed because the NAACP and the National Urban League have focused on issues and strategies that tend to deal more with civil rights.

"Obviously, black organizations have not effectively dealt with housing for poor people because we've still got large numbers of people in substandard housing," said Woodson.

"But I don't think the NAACP or any organization can be specifically blamed for it. It's just

that we've got to begin to address those nitty-gritty kinds of issues that don't always sound good at a luncheon speech or at a banquet. If you limit yourself to just civil rights strategies and don't address housing issues, you accomplish nothing. If racism ended tomorrow, that would not alter the plight of the black underclass."

Elijah agreed with Woodson's assessment of the Urban League's previous involvement in housing issues and said the local

Please see page A12

# Elections approach

From Page A1

Hairston faces Republican James L. Knox. Both men are seeking the seat vacated by Alderman Larry D. Little, who opted to go to law school rather than seek a third term.

Hairston, president of the NAACP, beat four Democrats during the primary, attracting 77 percent of the vote. Knox beat black Republican Diana Williams-Henry 51 to 21 votes.

Hairston said he has spent his time in the streets talking to the people and presenting his case. Hairston has also received Little's endorsement.

Still, Knox said a good turnout can help him beat Hairston.

"The higher the turnout, the more it favors me," said Knox. "Hopefully, if we get a 30-percent turnout, I will get the support I need."

Since Democrats make up 83 percent of the registered voters in the North Ward and blacks 66 percent of the population, Knox, a white Republican, faces an uphill battle. The statistics almost assure Hairston of a win unless the voters stay home. Because those odds are against him, Knox said he hasn't run a partisan campaign.

"I'm not running so much as a party man," said Knox. "I'm running on the fact that I represent change. Every registered Republican is not going to come out and vote. I need Democrats for a win."

Races in the Northeast and Southeast wards were decided during the primary. Northeast Ward Alderman Vivian H. Burke won handily in the Democratic primary over challenger Victor Johnson Jr. and, in the Southeast Ward, Alderman Larry W. Womble beat two Democrats for his second term on the board.

The only obstacle between both candidates and new terms on the board would be a successful write-in campaign. So far, no potential candidates from either ward have surfaced.

In other ward races around the city, Democrat

Frank L. Frye faces Republican Gregory B. Fountain. Frye beat South Ward Alderman Ernestine Wilson in a heated second primary. In the September primary, Wilson beat Frye by 37 votes. In the run-off election, Frye garnered 611 votes to Mrs. Wilson's 494.

In the Northwest Ward, Alderman Martha S. Wood beat Democratic challenger S. Thomas Brame during the primary, winning 88 percent of the vote. Mrs. Wood faces Republican and political newcomer Brian C. Miller in the general election.

In the Southwest Ward, Alderman Lynne S. Harpe faces Republican Ronald W. Pegram. Neither candidate had primary opposition.

The tone of this election has been set by the absence of a mayoral challenger for incumbent Wayne A. Corpening and the absence of issues, said Mrs. Newell.

"I think this shows that we (the incumbents) have all done a good job," said Mrs. Newell. "I don't think there was a lot to threaten us with. I was shocked that Ernestine lost. People are just reluctant to run against us."

No burning issues have surfaced in either the North or East wards, said the candidates. Mrs. Newell said she is making economic development and jobs an issue.

During the primary, the Black Leadership Roundtable Coalition wavered on whether it would endorse candidates for the primary. It eventually didn't.

But Roundtable Convener Ghuneem Furqan, himself an unsuccessful Democratic candidate in the North Ward aldermanic primary, said the Roundtable will make endorsements, but he's not sure when.

"We will possibly do it Wednesday night (Oct. 30)," said Furqan.

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