

Our answer to Gov. Mecham

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Winston-Salem Chronicle

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AN ENCOURAGING SIGN



Sign maker Paul Howell and Kathy Harris, a maintenance worker for the city, put the finishing touches on the street signs for the new Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The signs were posted Wednesday (photo by James Parker).

MLK Drive reality; new signs going up

Claremont soon will bear a new name

By CHERYL WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

THE Board of Aldermen voted unanimously last week to rename Claremont Avenue Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

The resolution, made during a special Wednesday night meeting, makes Winston-Salem the first major North Carolina city to name a street for the civil rights legend.

As soon as new signs can be placed -- city workers began placing them Wednesday -- the stretch of Claremont Avenue from Stadium Drive north to File Street will become King Drive, a prospect that seems to please all parties involved.

"I think this speaks very highly of our board," said East Ward Alderman Virginia K. Newell. "It speaks to the sensitivity of the members of the board, contrary

to the people who feel we are very selfish.

"Martin Luther King should have had this honor a long time ago," she said. "But he got it now, with both black and white support. There was no dissension on the board. I'm real pleased with them."

Mrs. Newell said that the street's new name also says a lot for the Alpha Pi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the organization that began efforts to rename the street almost a year ago. King pledged the fraternity, which is the oldest black Greek-letter organization in the nation, while an undergraduate at Morehouse College in Atlanta.

North Ward Alderman Patrick T. Hairston said the street's renaming sends the same message to the public that the aldermen sent in unanimously making

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NNPA pullout should be a beginning, says publisher who attended meeting

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

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Angered that Arizona's governor rescinded that state's Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, the nation's black newspaper publishers canceled their winter meeting in Phoenix last week. But one local publisher, who had flown to Phoenix to attend the convention, hopes the issue won't end there.

"The black press has the role, the responsibility and the obligation to make the community aware of struggles and to be an impetus to solving them," said Ernest H. Pitt, publisher of the *Chronicle* and a board member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. "I hope this is not the end of the issue." Pitt said that this state's black publishers in particular should remember that North Carolina is one of only 10 states that has yet to declare a King holiday.

Pitt and the other publishers attending the NNPA's 1987 Mid-Winter Workshops cancelled their meetings to protest Gov. Evan Mecham's reversal of an executive order by his predecessor, Bruce Babbitt, to establish the King holiday in Arizona.

In a prepared statement issued last Wednesday, NNPA Presi-

"This is a good opportunity for the NNPA to ... record that the struggle is still not over."

—ERNEST H. PITT

dent Christopher H. Bennett criticized Mecham's actions and asked his fellow publishers to encourage others not to spend their money in Arizona until the holiday is restored.

Pitt, however, feels that the organization can, and should, do more.

"The traditional black press has been in the thick of the civil

rights movement all along," he said. "This is a good opportunity for the NNPA to ... record that the struggle is still not over."

In a telephone interview Tuesday from his office in Seattle, Bennett said that the purpose of the Phoenix pullout was "to support the black community there" and that any further action will be decided by the NNPA board members at a scheduled meeting in March. He said the organization was successful in making a strong statement opposing Mecham's actions.

Bennett declined to speculate on the economic impact of the cancellation, but Pitt estimated that the total amount lost in concessions, lodging, transportation and tourism could total as much as \$250,000. Pitt said the boycott not only cost the city of Phoenix, but the black publishers as well.

"We met with the local people and they encouraged us to leave," he said. "It was a tremendous sacrifice for us because

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From King holiday cancellation

Some fear loss of tourism in Arizona

By WILLIAM F. RAWSON
Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX, Ariz. -- Tourism officials say Gov. Evan Mecham's cancellation of Arizona's Martin Luther King holiday hasn't had a major impact on the state's travel-dependent economy but disagree over whether it will.

While one industry observer predicted a "snowballing effect," the state's tourism director said he was confident individual tourists would continue to flock to Arizona.

An organization representing black newspaper publishers and a Democratic Party committee already have canceled meetings in

Arizona, and a tourism official said that at least two other groups have expressed concern over Mecham's Jan. 12 rescission of the state holiday, which had been ordered last year by Mecham's predecessor, Democrat Bruce Babbitt.

Also, a spokesman for the Rev. Jesse Jackson said last week that Jackson canceled a scheduled trip to protest cancellation of the holiday. Entertainer Stevie Wonder said previously that he will boycott the state.

John Marks, president of the Phoenix and Valley of the Sun Convention Bureau, said that he knew of no other groups that have canceled plans to come to Arizona but that at least two

organizations have expressed concern over the issue.

"The only big group is one that we don't even have yet," Marks said, referring to a statement by the leader of the National Baptist Convention of America, who said in November that the organization might drop Phoenix from the list of cities being considered for its 1989 meeting.

"We're still a finalist city bidding for that (convention)," Marks said. "They will actually make their decision at their annual meeting in February."

Marks said that as many as 10,000 people are expected to attend the convention, which would pump an estimated \$4

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Local residents hold vigil in support of Ga. march

By CHERYL WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

About 25 black Twin City residents held a one-hour vigil last weekend in support of civil rights marchers in Forsyth County, Ga.

The vigil on Jan. 24 was held in front of the old courthouse building on the corner of Fourth and Main streets from noon until 1 p.m., said Southeast Ward Alderman Larry W. Womble.

The vigil was held the same day that nearly 25,000 demonstrators

marched in the all-white county to protest the disruption of a march the previous Saturday by about 400 counterdemonstrators who threw rocks, bottles and mud.

Womble, who participated in the vigil, said that the event wasn't sponsored by any particular group or organization but stemmed from concern by elected officials, ministers, community leaders and citizens.

"Since we couldn't go down to

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NAACP: Cut off Ga. county's funds

By DAVID REED
Associated Press Writer

COLUMBIA, S.C. -- The NAACP will ask a federal court to cut off federal funds to Forsyth County, Ga., unless the county takes action to integrate, Executive Director Benjamin Hooks said last Thursday.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will resort to the courts because civil rights marches alone won't be enough to "eliminate the white racist attitude in that county," said Hooks. Nonetheless, Saturday's march through the nearly all-white county "is of psychological importance to prove that the KKK can't break up a civil rights march ... by just throwing some rocks," Hooks said.

About 400 Klan members and their supporters threw rocks and debris at 75 civil rights marchers in Forsyth County the previous Saturday.

But the civil rights marches alone "will not bring down the walls of segregation and discrimination that surround Forsyth County, and after the marching is done, the county cannot be permitted to go back to its old ways," Hooks said.

The NAACP is preparing a lawsuit against the county that will be filed soon in a federal court in Georgia, said Hooks.

The NAACP suit will cite the county for its "long-standing policy of discrimination toward black people which has either been sanctioned or condoned as county policy," he said.

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Let It Snow

While most motorists struggled through the city's first major snowstorm in years, sisters Sherice, left, and Tonika Barnes welcomed the opportunity to build castles in the mounds of snow (photo by James Parker).