

Sidney Locks: Continue to seek knowledge

By C.B. HAUSER
Special to the Chronicle

Sidney A. Locks, Baptist minister and six-year N. C. House of Representatives member, challenged Afro-Americans to "keep up the fight to inform yourselves and your children of their history, and continue to fight to make America really free."

Speaking before an audience of 300, Locks was the keynote speaker for the 115th Annual Emancipation Day Celebration held at the First Baptist Church on New Year's Day.

The Emancipation Day Celebration is sponsored by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Emancipation Association. Friday's program was to help raise scholarship funds for local college bound high school students. Approximately \$400 was raised for the effort, said Association president Harold L. Kennedy Jr.

"Emancipation is God's open door," Locks told the audience. "You must use the two hinges of participation and determination if you would enjoy what is beyond that open door," he said.

The Emancipation Proclamation, which legally abolished slavery, was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on Jan. 1, 1863. However, more than 800,000 Afro-American slaves were not directly affected by the Proclamation, said Locks, pastor of Sandy Grove Baptist Church in Lumberton.

Locks said the Emancipation Proclamation was as much a product of military necessity as it was an act of justice. "It was issued," he said, "when the war was going bad for the North and it was designed to maximize the effect of the slaves on the war effort."

Locks cited instances where participation and the non-participation of Afro-Americans today and in the past made a difference in the struggle for freedom. "You will be free today only if you fight for your freedom. Anything which is given to you will only be worth what you pay for it -- nothing," he said.



Participants in the Emancipation Day celebration, from left, included the Rev. S.L. Hodges, Harold L. Kennedy Jr., Arlean D. Gill, Reba Hayes and Sidney A. Locks (photo by C.B. Hauser).

During the program, Emancipation Association members honored Thomas J. Elijah for outstanding and dedicated service to the citizens of Forsyth County. Before his recent resignation, Elijah had served as president of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Urban League for 10 years.

Kennedy said that in previous years community organizations were recognized by the Association, "but this is the first time we've honored an individual."

Reba Hayes, one of the city's youngest attorneys, read the Proclamation during the program. Arlean D. Gill, served as mistress of ceremonies. The Rev. Harry A. Smith made the annual statement and financial appeal. The Rev. S. L. Hodges, Association vice-presi-

dent, gave the invocation.

In keeping with a practice initiated a few years ago, the family of the late Rev. C. H. Gill was recognized. Gill, who served as president of the Association for more than 10 years, was scheduled to be honored at last year's celebration. That celebration was cancelled because of inclement weather.

The music for the occasion consisted of patriotic and civil rights songs which evoked spirited audience participation. Solos were sung by Raymond H. O'Neal and Patricia Bitting. Evon Reid served as organist.

Kennedy said in addition to the Association's annual scholarship program, the purpose of the Association is to "constantly remind us of where we are and which way we need to go." Last year the Association contributed to the NAACP's Tutorial Program.

Kennedy said scholarship winners have not yet been named, but will be selected in the spring.

Staff writer Angie Martin contributed to this report.

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Woodruff denies

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about the issues and concerns of the blacks and what I can do to help if I am fortunate enough to be elected," said Long.

He also identified Dr. Cleon E. Thompson, Jr., chancellor of Winston-Salem University, and Willie E. Grissom, vice chancellor for business affairs at WSSU, as two of his major supporters in the Afro-American community.

Long switched his party affiliation from Republican to Democrat in December, a move which makes it necessary for him to run as an independent candidate. Election laws requires a candidate to be registered with a specific party for at least 90 days in order to file for office as a member of that party.

Long issued a prepared statement explaining his decision to change his political affiliation. He stated, "When I registered to vote in Forsyth County in 1975, I registered as a Republican primarily because of my position at R.J. Reynolds and the political beliefs of others in management then. I was not active in a partisan sense at that time. I voted for and contributed to candidates of both parties, based upon their positions on the issues."

"However, as I contemplated running for office, I looked back on the candidates I had supported and realized that most of them were Democrats. Given the opportunity to do some political soul-searching, I have chosen to register as a Democrat, to vote Democratic, and to work for the Democratic Party."

When asked if his campaign would specifically target the Afro-

American community and focus on issues of importance to them, Long said, "The answer is unequivocally 'yes'; I'm supporting blacks."

He said he had established a good relationship with the Afro-American workforce, partly because RJ Reynolds employs three and a half thousand Afro-Americans in Forsyth county.

"I'm interested in making better opportunities for the blacks," said Long. "I will work to improve job opportunities, economic development and education."

Long said he supported Woodruff as County Commissioner because he had known Woodruff for several years, admired her, and had developed a good relationship with her.

He said he believed there should be a minority on the County Board of Commissioners and that there should also be female representation.

"The fact that Mazie is both of those things makes her a double-header," he said. "Mazie and I share a mutual interest on the issues. I think she can win," said Long.

He said that he and Woodruff would bring a "level of maturity to the issues."

Woodruff would not discuss the issues on which she planned to focus her campaign, saying only that it would be a "different kind of campaign."

"We're getting some stuff together," she said. She said she was not ready to discuss her campaign strategy or to divulge the names of her supporters. She said her supporters came from all over Forsyth County.

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