

# 1988 Curator of Afro-American Arts & Culture

## Larry Leon Hamlin: A 'marvtastic' enthusiasm for the theatre

He's a man with artistic vision, whose favorite word is "marvtastic" and who would rather engage you in a conversa-

tion about the black theater than do just about anything else. It didn't take him long to realize that what the Twin City sorely

needed was a vehicle for exposing Afro-Americans to the black theater. Thus, the North Carolina Black Repertory Company was born.

His seed did not immediately take root, and Hamlin confidently waited for three years for his theater company to take hold in the

The company was the first Afro-American organization to be funded by the Arts Council of Winston-Salem.

"For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf," "Home," "Master Harold and the Boys," "Sizwe

In 1986, he was chosen to appear in the Home Box Office premiere movie, "Florida Straits," which also starred Geraldine Page, Gary Busey and Antonio Busey.

Hamlin played a Cuban renegade in the picture.

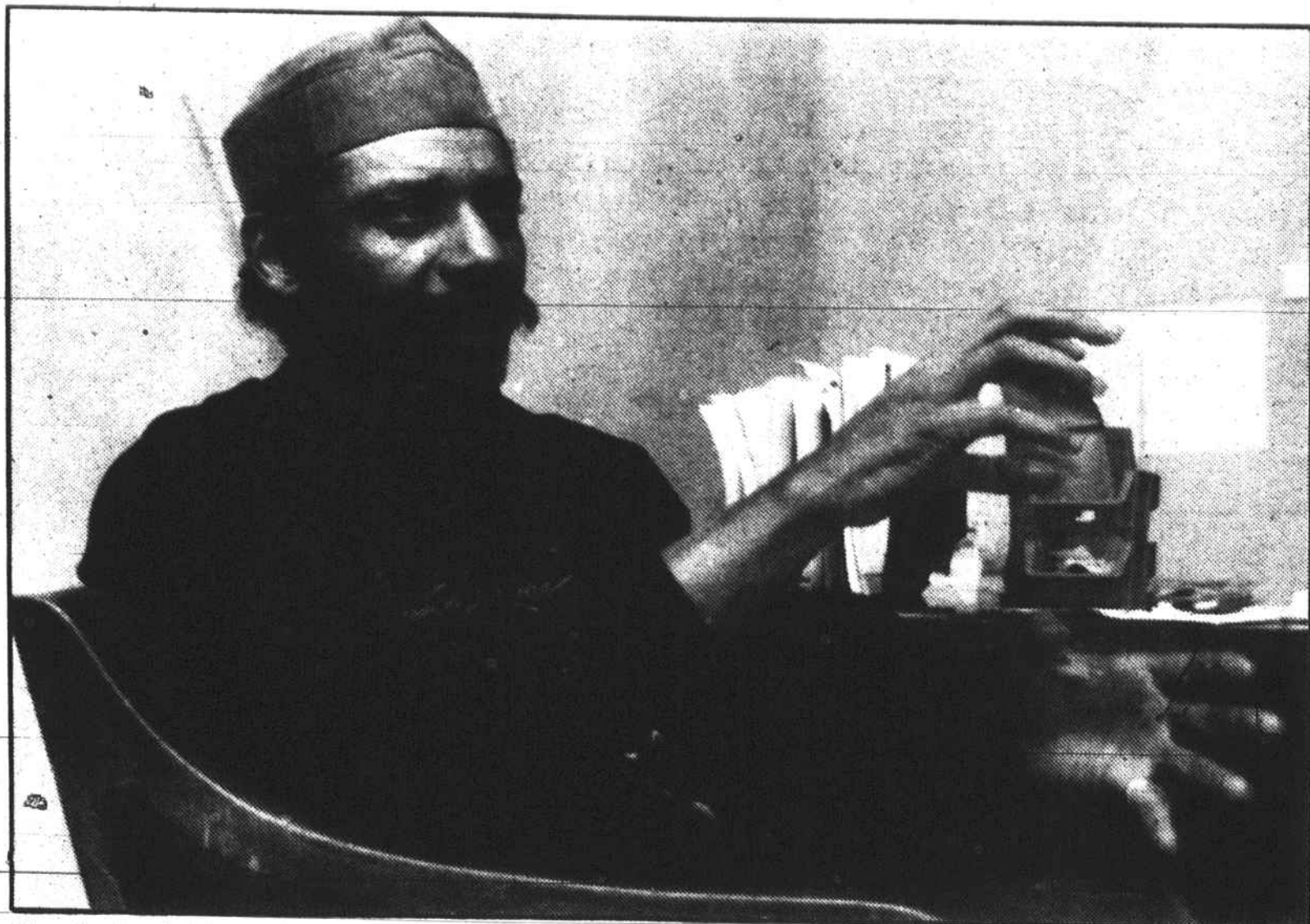
Under his guidance, the NCBRC was selected to participate in the North Carolina Touring Program of the North Carolina State Arts Council and the Touring Program of the Southern Arts Federation.

In August, Hamlin and the Black Repertory Co. will undertake their largest venture yet as hosts and producers of the national Black Theater Festival, which will bring more than 200 black theater companies to the city for the six-day event.

"In the beginning, the goal was just to put blacks in Winston-Salem in touch with theater. But I think we did that in three years," Hamlin said recently.

"I do have to have challenges. I've never been more excited than now. Around the country there is an excitement going on about the festival.

"...This (the festival) is it. This is the pinnacle of the contributions that I can make to black theater. I don't know if I can do any more than this. This is the type of contribution all of us wish we could make."



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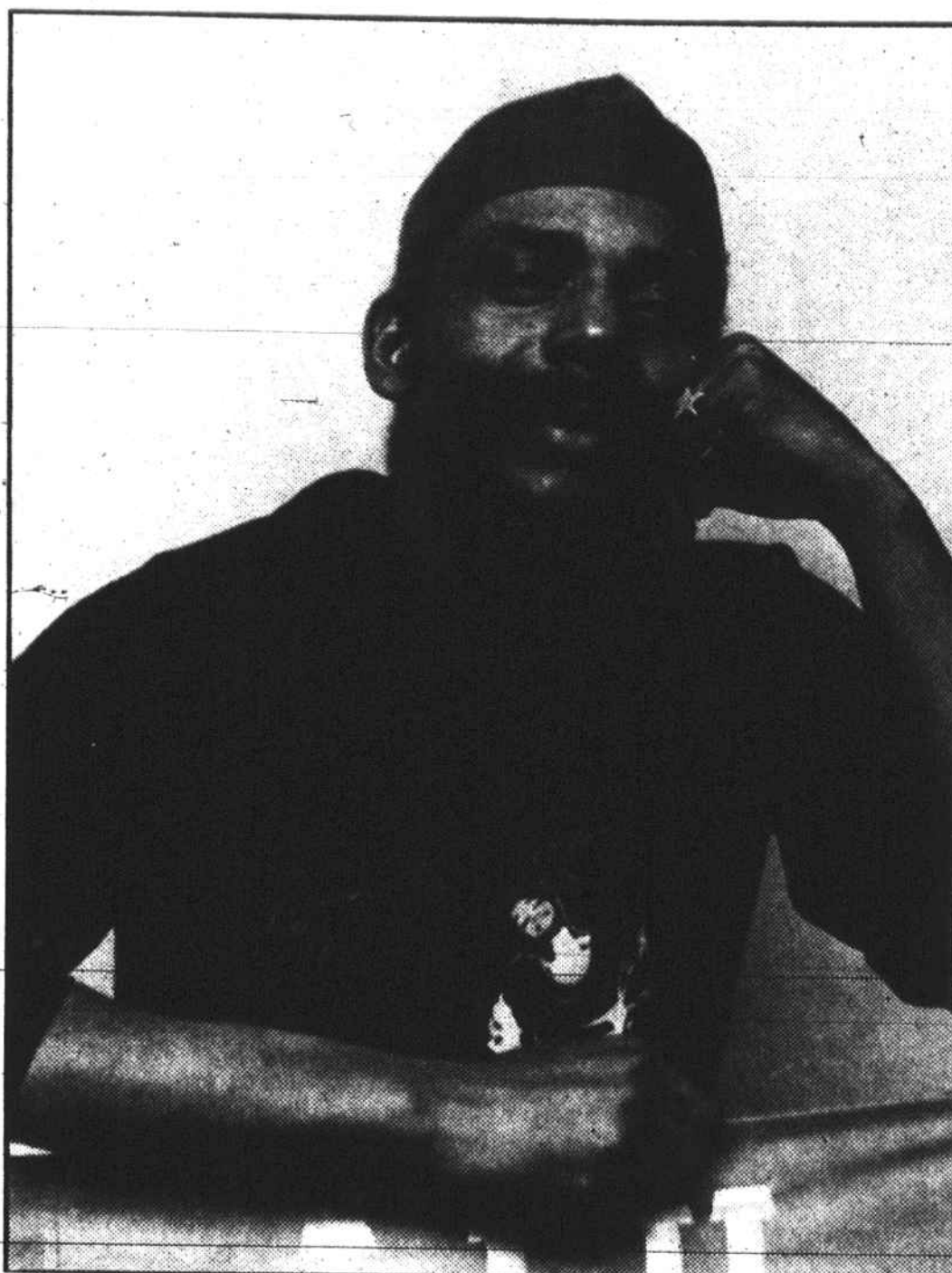


Photo by Charmane Delaverson

Hamlin has directed more than 100 productions including "Bansi is Dead" and "The Amen Corner."

# 1988 Drug Awareness Award

## Willis Miller: 15 years of helping addicts get over their problem

By ANGELA WRIGHT  
Chronicle Managing Editor

After nearly 15 years of counseling addicts, Willis Miller still gets a gleam in his eye when he speaks of his work. He gets excited when he talks about the healing process for substance abusers.

He readily admits that his is not an easy task. Addicts often don't want to admit they have a problem. Even when they will admit to a problem, it's still extremely difficult for them to overcome it. That's where Miller comes in; he sees them through the difficult stage.

A clinical drug counselor for the Step One drug abuse program, Miller has been with the program since its inception as the Council on Drug Abuse 15 years ago. He started volunteering for the program one summer while a student at Wake Forest University.

Because he was a Winston-Salem native "from the other side of the tracks," Miller says he was able to help the program reach out to addicts.

"I started out working the streets, going into drug houses, clubs and bars," said Miller. He sought addicts to tell them about the new drug treatment program that had begun in the city.

It was not long before Miller was offered a permanent part-time position. "My first case was a guy I grew up with," said Miller. "I talked him through heroin withdrawal and massaged the cramps out of his stomach -- some of them were as big as my fist. Here was someone that I grew up with and used to hang around with. The only thing that separated us was college."

A graduate of Atkins High School, Miller went to Wake Forest University on a football scholarship. He majored in psychology and minored in religion. He is the third of seven children and, although he has never had a drug or alcohol problem, his dedication to the treatment of addicts comes from a lifetime of watching such abuse.

"I grew up in a neighborhood infested by alcoholics," said Miller. "My father also had a drinking prob-



Photo by Charmane Delaverson

lem. It took me a while to come to accept the fact that his problem was not my problem."

Miller says it's personal gratification that keeps him involved in an effort that pays little and offers few success stories.

"If I have one out of ten clients make it, I feel good," he said. "In the past year there have probably been seven or eight people that I've seen

"We have this notion that all addicts steal or look a certain way, but you can't tell who is an addict. It might be someone you work with every day."

-- Willis Miller

who have gotten their lives back together, and I've probably seen a hundred people or more last year."

Miller often spends his weekends counseling children and some of his clients outside of his office. It's something he says he does because he feels he owes something to his community. He says he believes the

problem of drug addiction could be helped along more rapidly if area churches got involved.

"We have over 200 churches in Winston-Salem," he said. "Imagine if they would just sponsor the treatment of one addict each, we can go far in solving the problem."

Miller says it takes patience to work in his field and a genuine admiration for people. "Most people come in during a crisis -- there is no more money or a family member pressured them into treatment," said Miller. "What usually helps a client get better is achieving a balance in life -- that spiritual aspect. Once they figure out that spirituality part, they realize they don't have to use drugs."

Part of the larger problem in curing drug addiction, says Miller, is public perception.

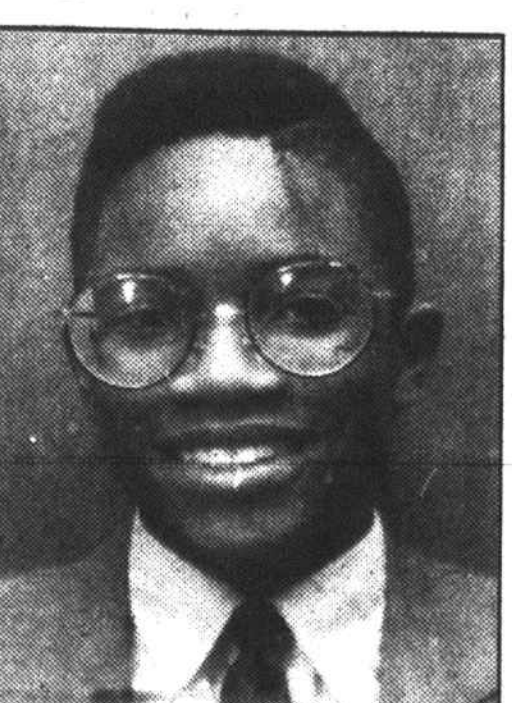
"We have this notion that all addicts steal or look a certain way, but you can't tell who is an addict. It might be someone you work with every day," he said. "Until we start looking at drug addiction as a disease, we can't solve the problem."

# 1988 Student Journalist

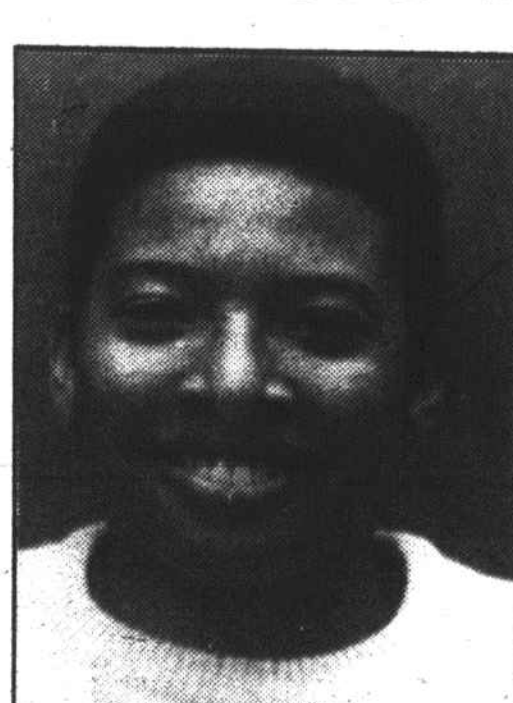
## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. essay contest winners featured



**Laura Wingo, First Place**  
Our first place winner is Laura Wingo, an 18-year-old senior at Parkland High School. She is the daughter of Chiri Wingo of Winston-Salem. Laura plans to go to college, but she has not yet decided where or in what she will major. Her favorite high school courses are English, Photography and Newspaper. Her hobbies are photography, drawing and traveling. She says she likes to write because sometimes she has a difficult time expressing her self verbally. "Sometimes it's easier for me to express my emotions and feelings on paper," she said.



**William Turner, Second Place**  
William Kenyatta Turner is our second place winner. He is 15 years old, in the 10th grade at Carver High School, and is the son of William Hobert and Vivian Turner. William says he wants to go to college, but he is not sure where. He does know, however, that when he gets there he will major in architecture. His favorite subjects are English and Biology and his hobbies are reading, drawing and running track. "I like writing because I like being creative and being able to put things on paper that you have in your mind," he said.



**Marlon Millner, Third Place**  
Our third place winner, Marlon Millner, is 15 years old. He is in the 10th grade at Glenn High School and is the son of Harry and Jeanette Millner of Winston-Salem. He plans to go to college, and, although he does not know where, he says it will "probably be a private school." Marlon plans to major in something concerning science or journalism. He says his favorite high school subjects are chemistry and journalism. His hobbies are reading, writing, weight lifting and playing piano. "I like writing because it's a chance to be creative in expressing yourself," he said.