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Gantt rolls to victory in U.S. Senate run-off

History-making campaign sets the stage for November bout with Senate incumbent Helms

By TRACY L. PROSSER
Chronicle Staff Writer

"We delivered! We delivered," were the ecstatic cries at Harvey B. Gantt's Winston-Salem campaign headquarters Tuesday night shortly before 9 p.m., when Gantt was declared the winner in Forsyth County.

Excitement was running high, victory hugs were abundant, and celebration was in the air as local Gantt supporters celebrated his victory over Michael F. Easley in Tuesday's run-off election for North Carolina's Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate. Gantt will square off against Sen. Jesse Helms for the seat he has held the last 18 years on Nov. 6.

Soon thereafter, NBC and the Associated Press officially declared Gantt the statewide winner, remind-

ing North Carolinians that he is the first Afro-American to run for the U.S. Senate from this state.

The unofficial statewide statistics with 99 percent of the vote counted gave Gantt 272,824 votes, or 57 percent of the vote, leaving Easley 206,950 votes, or 43 percent. Statewide voter turnout ran at about 25 percent, down from the estimated one third who voted in

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Enthusiastic Gantt supporters celebrate his victory over Mike Easley in the run-off Tuesday night. Pictured from left are Denise D. Adams, Jean Irvin, Alderman Virginia Newell, Elizabeth Elkins, Sylvia Penyan, Commissioner-elect Earline W. Parmon and Susan Law.

Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.



Police Were Justified

DA: Shooting was necessary

By TRACY L. PROSSER
Chronicle Staff Writer

District Attorney W. Warren Sparrow has released his long-awaited statement regarding the SBI investigation about the shooting of Tommie Joe Witcher on April 20. The report, released late Tuesday afternoon, holds that there was no wrongdoing by law enforcement officers in this case.

A statement released from the Forsyth County District Attorney's office begins, "Law enforcement officers used reasonable force when they fired at an armed suspect April 20 in a Winston-Salem neighborhood."

The statement also read, the SBI report was complete and no criminal charges would be filed against the officers. "Under the laws of this state," Sparrow said, "the officers had every right to use deadly force against Witcher when he pointed his gun at them."

Hazel Mack, a resident of the house where Witcher died said, "People have evidence that they will turn over to the press that will prove [the DA's evaluation] to be not true."

"We were waiting to see if the system would work," she continued.

R.B. Nicholson, a co-chairman of the group interested in forming a citizen's review board, said, "We looked to the elected officials to provide a solution. Sparrow has chosen to contribute to the problem."

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Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.

Mourners of the dead draw attention to victims of violence with candlelight.

Victims remembered in vigil

By TRACY L. PROSSER
Chronicle Staff Writer

At 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 31, almost 50 people gathered for a candlelight vigil in remembrance of Tommie Joe Witcher and all the other victims of violence in the community.

The vigil took place in the front yard

of 2915 N. Patterson St., the yard where Witcher crashed his car and was shot to death. It was held in the hope that there will be a fair resolution of the Witcher incident. District Attorney W. Warren Sparrow has an SBI report concerning the incident. Sparrow issued a statement Tuesday stat-

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Local group fights to reduce high infant death rate

By RUDY ANDERSON
Chronicle Managing Editor

Afro-American and other minority-born children in Forsyth County are twice as likely to die before age one than are white babies according to statistics from the Forsyth County Health Department. Several state medical studies have shown that the number of infant deaths generally is on the rise.

A group calling itself the Reduce Infant Death Foundation has organized to try to turn the tide of sobering statistics. For example, R.I.D. officials said county health department figures revealed that in 1987 the death rate among white babies in the county was 7.5 per 1000 live births, for Afro-American babies the figure was 14.5 per 1000 live births.

In 1988 the figures jumped dramatically according to R.I.D. In that year, the year for which the latest statistics are available, the death rate for babies generally increased to 13 per 1000 live births and for

Afro-American babies the figure jumped to a staggering 26 deaths per 1000 live births.

G. Michael Mason, executive director of the foundation, cited three reasons for the high death rates. He said low birth weights (3 1/2 pounds or less), high teen pregnancy, and a high rate of drug abuse were major contributing factors. "We are trying to identify just what part drug abuse plays in these statistics," Mason said.

Mason said the 15-member board, chaired by Dr. Robert G. Dillard Medical Director of Intensive Care Nurseries at Baptist and Forsyth Hospitals, will concentrate its initial efforts on Forsyth County. "Our mission is to reduce general infant mortality in this county by 30 per cent over the next five years," he said. The group held its first planning session at Forsyth Hospital Monday June 4.

The group plans to expand its operation into other counties statewide to address the problem.

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City pool openings delayed two weeks

By TRACY L. PROSSER
Chronicle Staff Writer

Recent violence in two Afro-American communities has led to a staff shortage at two city-owned swimming pools. As a result, these pools have delayed their openings forcing local children to find other ways to cool off during the delay.

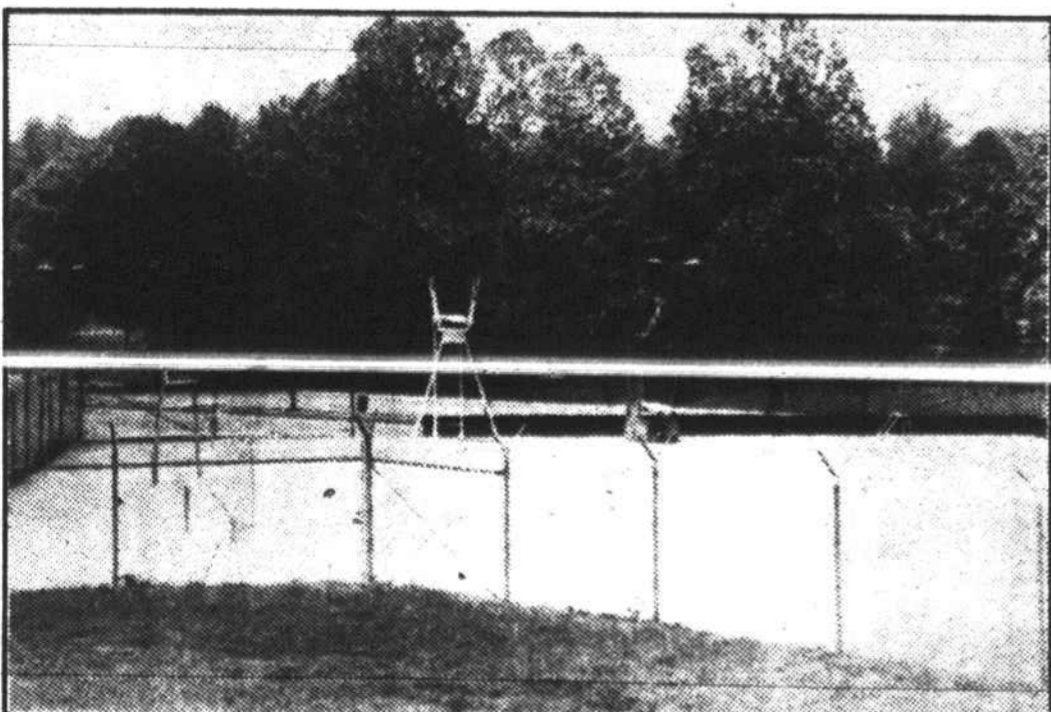


Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.

Pools at Happy Hill Gardens and Winston Lake will remain closed until staff can be hired.

Sharon Anderson, the personnel analyst in charge of recruitment for the city, said that most of the vacant staff positions were lifeguard positions.

The message heard on the city/county job vacancy information line begins: "The city of Winston-Salem is now accepting applications for the following summer positions: lifeguards, swimming

When asked why Winston Lake and Happy Hill pools were chosen to be closed, Winston-Salem Recreation Department Aquatic Supervisor Richard C. Butler said, "Some of the lifeguards who have

worked there in the past don't want to work there now due to problems like the ones in the past month." In addition to several earlier incidents of violence, last Sunday shortly after 12 noon, Barry Bethea was shot several times at a house on the 3500 block of Old Greensboro Rd.

"The recreation facility has programs for people to come and enjoy

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Winston-Salem Chronicle NewsUpdate



Liberian evacuation under way
MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) - A Liberian child wheels his belongings through the deserted streets of the capital city of Monrovia recently. U.S. warships have been sent to protect the 2,000 Americans remaining in the country during the rebel incursion.
More state and national news
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Aldermen annex despite protests

By TRACY L. PROSSER
Chronicle Staff Writer

On Monday, June 4, the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen voted in favor of annexing two areas of Forsyth County, which many Afro-American leaders believe would dilute the strength of the Afro-American vote in city elections.

The ordinance to annex parts of Old Town, to the northwest of the city, and Sedge Garden, to the southeast, was accepted at the first reading despite vehement protests from residents of these areas. Because the proposal is an ordinance instead of a resolution, it will have a second reading at the next Board of Aldermen's meeting, on June 18.

In Monday's meeting, three aldermen voted against the ordinance: Aldermen Vivian H. Burke, Nelson Malloy, and Larry D. Womble. Alderman Virginia K. Newell was the only Afro-American member of the board to vote to accept the annexation.

The proposed areas for annexation would be incorporated into the Southeast, Northwest and North Wards. The aldermen for these wards are Womble, Nancy T. Pleasants, and Malloy respectively. The entire Sedge Garden annexed area would be added to the Southeast Ward, but the Old Town area would be

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