

# Aldermen call for Sweat's resignation

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occured. "It is now 13 or 14 days since her death and we are just now getting a preliminary report on her death."

Newell continued: "My freedom is in jeopardy, when information is denied."

All people are in jeopardy when this happens. Newell then called for an outside agency to be brought in to scrutinize the operation of the police department. She closed by requesting City Manager Bryce A. Stuart to "conduct a full investigation."

Vivian Burke, Northeast Ward Alderman, agreed with Newell. "What are we running as a police department?" she asked. "Are we cleaning up or covering up. We wouldn't be here discussing this if the police would have handled this matter correctly." Burke mentioned that she had asked Assistant City Manager Alexander Beaty to provide the board with police procedure and policy.

Beaty later told the *Chronicle* that he was organizing a management team which would review the operations of the Winston-Salem Police Department, but that would not be connected with on-going internal investigations. Beaty said that the team was requested by the Aldermen.

Yesterday, Burke and Newell stopped just short of calling for Police Chief George Sweat's resignation.

Burke said that had "Sweat had a different method of communications that this particular situation would not exist."

Newell said that 90 percent of the calls that she has received have been from white women. She added, "Our young black men have constantly been targets of this type of unjust behaviour, but when a woman is assaulted, then no one is safe." She also said that if Chief Sweat could get his management style together he was welcomed to stay, but if he could not then he should resign. "We have had one tragedy after another," said North Ward Alderman Nelson Malloy, Jr. "If we don't diffuse the tension and get on top of the situation, we are going to have a bigger problem later."

Southeast Ward Alderman Larry Womble said that he was working with the socio-political advocacy group, Citizens United for Justice, and conducting an independent investigation. He said, "We are not an organization of idealist or militants. We speak to the needs and concerns of our community."

Womble later added that, "An uniformed people are subject to manufacture things that may or may not have happened," and that he and the Citizens United for Justice were trying to uncover the truth.

At this point Mayor Martha S. Wood paused to give her assessment of the situa-

tion. "I believe that whenever a death occurs when someone is in police custody that it is a gravely serious manner." She later turned to the other members of the board for their comments. "The police department and Chief Sweat have my full support," said South Ward Alderman J. Hugh Wright. "Mr. Malloy said that the discussion tonight has not been police bashing, but I think it is and I don't appreciate it."

West Ward Alderman Robert S. Northington supported Wright's position. "I think that for anybody to make up their mind from the information available today, and I'm talking about accurate and complete information is totally inappropriate," he said. "The police have my full support."

Southwest Ward Alderman Lynne Harpe said that she would not judge the situation until all the facts were in.

City Manager Stuart then assured the board that a thorough and complete criminal investigation was on the way and that he would try to have the results of that review available on Friday. However he added, "As a general rule, many aspects of personnel information are not a matter of public record, but that there are some instances that would be deemed necessary by the board of Aldermen." Alderman Newell promptly replied by



City Manager Bryce A. Stuart

asking for a copy of that law.

Ms. Jocelyn Johnson, a community leader then addressed the board and said that the community is outraged. She said that the integrity of the police department was in question and requested that the Aldermen take the necessary steps to find the truth.

# Round two of redistricting fight tonight

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sit with us," Voss contested.

Board member Nancy Wooten, who along with Nancy Griffith and Mary Wood received praise from black community leaders for their disapproval of the process, told the *Chronicle*: "Their motivation (other members) is to pay lip service to the black community, inviting them in, but not listening. I believe their methods are more exclusive than inclusive."

Sources indicate that at tonight's meeting board member Dr. Gerald Hewitt's suggested compromise will be discussed. Hewitt's plan calls for the establishment of an ad-hoc committee which would include Brown, Marshall and the nine existing board members.

Marshall said he liked the proposal, but Brown has expressed reservations about the proposal because at least two of the nine members who are going off the

board in November would remain on the committee.

"I will make the motion early tonight to adopt the ad-hoc committee and I expect that it will be adopted," Hewitt said. "My motion does not speak to the tenure of any of the members, but that is not an issue because all members were elected to serve until Dec. 3 and after the election of the chairman and vice-chairman the organization of all committees can be restructured."

Since last month's encounter, community organizations have held educational forums designed to inform, educate and mobilize the black community towards becoming more involved in political affairs. More than 50 citizens, politicians and educators, crammed into Grace Presbyterian Church last Thursday for the latest of these discussions.

Co-sponsors of the event, The NAACP and Citizen's United for Justice, focused the agenda on a number of issues including: equal expectations of all students; proportionate hiring of black educators with black student population increases; multicultural educational activities; racial and cultural sensitivity training; and redistricting.

"We want these forums to result in the formation of an advocacy group for our children," said Eversely, who also mediated the forum. "We are trying to become a collection of parents for them."

Alderman Vivian Burke, Northeast Ward, said, "We need to take a serious look at the schools that have a white principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor and teacher, which leaves our children with no one to talk to."

Other issues also bounced around the room prompting one

man to discuss the cultural ignorance and insensitivity of mainstream teachers, "When a kid is labeled as a trouble maker in kindergarten and is ostracized early on they figure, 'why should I try,'" he said. "It is harder for a child who comes from the projects and is used to hearing gun shots and screams during the night to come to class and concentrate, as opposed to a kid from suburbia where the loudest noise is a barking dog. The kid from the projects is not thinking about one plus one."

Some participants thought that the emphasis should be placed on moral education in the home.

"If we don't teach our children at home, we can not expect them to be taught at school," professed the Rev. Isaac Carter, Pastor, New Zion Baptist Church.

Marshall and Brown closed the forum by promising to be responsible to the community and utilizing their powers to make changes.

"We are going to have to take a stand for our children or we are going to have to write a whole generation off," said Marshall. "If our children are educated by white female teachers then those teachers need to be sensitized to our children's needs."

"I know Mr. Marshall and I only have two votes, but they will be the loudest and strongest votes on the board," Brown concluded.

The next forum will be held August 13 at 6:30 p.m. at Kimberly Park Terrace. A fourth meeting is scheduled for August 20, but no meeting place has been designated.

# McKellar's death

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"Cocaine will cause increased activity in the body, increased heart rate, and increased metabolism, which increases the demand for air," Jason said. In yesterday's press conference. However, he told reporters that the level of cocaine found in McKellar's system was not high enough to kill her. He said that the cocaine, combined with the circumstances of her arrest, such as the struggle with the officers, only contributed to her death. But the primary factor was the position in which she was placed in the holding cell.

"This was not a regular suffocation," he said. "This was a positional asphyxia. That is, the position that she was in didn't allow her to expand her lungs for whatever amount of time that it was."

At press time, details on exactly what time McKellar was found in the holding cell, resuscitated and transferred to the hospital were sketchy. Some citizens are leery about the first police report released to the public, which also did not include the time of arrest or time of arrival at the holding cell.

Jason indicated that he waited until this week to release his report because he didn't receive the results of the toxicology test and the final police report until Monday. He told the *Chronicle* earlier this week that he classified McKellar's death as an accident based on the the final report issued by the police, in which they described the circumstances of her arrest.

The section of Jason's report which also indicated that McKellar tested positive for the HIV virus has been the focus of much media attention this week, but Alderman Virginia Newell said that her health was not the primary issue.

"Magic Johnson has the HIV virus and he's playing in the Olympics, so because she was infected did not give anyone the right to kill her," said Newell. She added that the issue was not the way she was placed in the cell, but the fact that she was treated so brutally at all.

"Ninety percent of the calls I

get come from white women in the community because the situation is scary," she added. "When woman are assaulted in this manner, then no one is safe. Our young black men have always been targets for this kind of behavior."

Alderman Burke expounded on Newell's comments by saying that she has information that indicates that McKellar's pants fell down a number of times and that she was exposed to the onlookers.

Yesterday, the NAACP, issued a statement calling for the resignation of Chief George L. Sweat, the charge of 1st degree murder for all officers involved and for U.S. Attorney General William Barr to conduct a "fair, thorough and expedient federal investigation of the civil and human rights violations against Ms. Sheila Epps McKellar." This comes on the heels of Monday night's heated alderman meeting in which community members expressed outrage.

"The idea that this person can be found handcuffed, hand and feet, gagged, and then laid faced down, which prohibited her breathing made the NAACP seek the intervention of US Attorney General William Barr," said Ms. Mazie Woodruff, a Forsyth County Board of Commissioners member and NAACP representative. The statement also criticized Sweat for releasing the photos of two white female officers to the daily paper, which ran in Wednesday's edition, when he refused to release the photos of the male officer's. NAACP officials cited his actions as being a "clear case of sexual discrimination." Sources indicate that the officers whose identities were withheld were African-American. Chief Sweat would not confirm that information, but did comment on what he was trying to do to rectify the situation.

"Obviously, whatever we can do to release complete information the sooner, the better," said Sweat. "There are also many other things that I will have to do to make the situation better. We are conducting an investigation of the officers

involved and hope to turn that information over to District Attorney Thomas Keith on Friday. Our objective is to get to the bottom of this and find the truth."

Sweat did not comment on the call for his resignation.

Captain G.C. Comatzer, Internal Affairs, said that he would try to forward all information regarding his investigation to Keith by Friday.

Many community leaders are asking why the handcuffs, flex cuffs and gauze weren't removed from McKellar as she was placed in the holding cell. When asked whether or not this was correct police procedure, Comatzer said that it depended on the situation, but that in this instance he really could not go into detail because of the investigation.

District Attorney Keith said that he is currently studying the literature on positional asphyxia to bring himself 'up to speed' on the case.

"I do not know much about this phenomenon, but after talking with the medical examiner last night and visiting the hospital, I decided to review the literature," Keith said. "Apparently there were 4500 autopsies done in Dade and Broward counties in Florida between 1982 and 1990 which identified 30 similar cases. I read this in the June 1992 issue of the *Journal of American Forensics on Pathology*. I will conduct interviews at a later date."

Keith said that he has not received one report from internal affairs and will not know what steps to take until he has. However during his discussion of the case he said that he believed it to be bad police procedure, from a prosecution standpoint, to release any information before an investigation is completed.

Keith did venture to say that this is not another Rodney King situation because things such as lacerations and contusions were not present.

"If my findings support the medical examiner's position that it was an accident then the investigation may be over," he said. "It could very well be just a freak accident."

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