

Commissioner Urges Self-Help As Key to Improving Public Housing

▲ Civil rights head spoke at KPCH Anniversary in Winston-Salem last week

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Chronicle Staff Writer

A new trend for improving the condition of public-housing neighborhoods is to improve the condition of its people, Civil Rights Commissioner Arthur A. Fletcher said.

Fletcher, who grew up in a public-housing community, said emphasis should be put on developing self-pride in the residents and in turn they will take care of their own property.

"They have to improve themselves if they want to see a better environment," Fletcher said in an interview. "I'm living proof."

Fletcher was in Winston-Salem

last week to address the first anniversary of KPCH Inc., a group of residents from the four housing communities who have incorporated themselves to get maintenance contracts from the Housing Authority of Winston-Salem.

As a young man, Fletcher couldn't choose where he wanted to live. He said blacks were forced to live in substandard housing.

"I had to live in the ghetto," he recalled. "Either a housing project or a run-down house that should have been condemned — and I had to pay five times what it was worth."

Since the 1960s, civil rights legislation has paved the way for blacks to live in better homes, but Fletcher

said racism and shame of using the legislation is still a problem.

"We haven't used the legislation in place, and with racism being the mountain that it is... we have a long way to go," he said.

Art Milligan, director of the housing authority and who works closely with the group, said KPCH Inc. is a positive move, because the residents are taking responsibility for the neighborhoods while running a small business at the same time.

"Anytime they (residents) get involved with things that affect economic development in their neighborhood, it's positive," Milligan said. "Once those individuals develop new skills, they will be able



Arthur Fletcher

to hire others from the neighborhood."

Fletcher has targeted all of the more than 3,300 housing communities in the country as places to set up teaching programs that will help residents fully utilize their resources.

"There is nothing contaminated about the land, nothing contaminated about the buildings, and hopefully nothing contaminated about the people who live there," he said. "When nobody shows them how to use their skills and how to organize them, they think nobody cares."

Fletcher said that in Omaha, Neb., public-housing tenants pooled their resources and formed a company that makes windows for all housing projects throughout the nation.

Fletcher was equally impressed with the residents of housing communities in Winston-Salem who formed their own coalition.

"It is an early step toward empowerment," he said. "I hope it spreads all over North Carolina."

Fletcher said those in government should be willing to offer advice to help the communities, but the best solution is for the business community to fund programs the residents deem necessary.

"They don't need somebody to preach to them about what they should do; they live it everyday," he said. "If R.J. Reynolds and the banks ... really want to help and to keep government out, they should hire firms to come in at the (residents) request to show them how to improve their neighborhood."

Youth Shot to Death After Dispute Over Gold Chain

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killed. He hadn't even begun to live. He's dead over a necklace."

Residents on Pendleton Drive reported hearing about a half dozen shots early Thursday morning. Many said that they saw Williamson's body after police arrived at the apartment complex. The path on which Williamson died was been cordoned with yellow tape. He became the city's 22nd homicide victim this year, 14 of whom were African Americans.

"I heard about four shots," a neighbor said. "I saw the body. It's a crying shame; it doesn't make any sense. They said he got killed over a necklace."

Another resident said she saw the suspect walk away after the shooting. She said the man said

"come on" three times before firing about five shots. She had often seen Williamson on Pendleton Drive visiting Abrams who lives on the next street.

"I saw Rainal back there dead," she said. "He would make you laugh a lot. I have been scared ever since then."

A Family Grieves

The Williamsons are a close family. Gwendolyn Williamson lived with Rainal and his two younger brothers at their home on East Fifth Street. His older brother Jettress, 21, also lives in Winston-Salem. His grandparents live in an apartment across the street.

As the grief-stricken mother



Rainal Williamson

was visibly pained Monday as she remembered the youthful-faced son she had lost, her 3-year-old son, Jerriod, happily rode his bike along the

sidewalk, oblivious to the tragedy that has shaken his family.

"I'm trying to hang on," she said. "It's unbelievable. Now I know how these mothers feel when they lose a kid."

Rainal went to Independence High School until he dropped out in the tenth grade. He was nicknamed "Ray Dog" by some of his friends. He drew pictures in his spare time. He had a girlfriend who is expecting a child.

"I feel bad," said his 12-year-old brother Roberto, also known as "Jamar," before presenting an intricate diagram of a heart that his older brother helped him make for his science project last year.

"We used to play basketball in the backyard. He took me to my

football games," he said.

Annie Mae Lindsay, Rainal's grandmother remembered seeing her grandson sitting on his porch the day of his death. That was the last time

she saw him alive.

"He was a good boy. He was never sassy," she said, briefly sobbing. "I don't feel right; he didn't die right."

Black Lawmakers Wield Power

Oldham, who along with Kennedy are the two African Americans from Forsyth County. "We got a lot of people to understand things that were important to the black community," he said.

One issue was education. Oldham supported Gov. H. Hunt's 12 billion experimental day-care programs in each of the 12 districts and a pay raise for teachers. Oldham also saw his bill passed that gives teachers and all state employees ability to transfer unused annual leave to sick days instead of losing them.

"They recognize the fact that we have a block vote on a lot of issues," Oldham said. "We get a great deal of respect."

According to Ballance, black lawmakers didn't always agree on every issue, but the black caucus allowed them to take a strong stance on those issues affecting blacks including \$16 million to the state's black colleges and economic development.

"We took a position on the (proposed \$750 million) bond issue that historically black colleges and uni-

versities must have additional funding," Ballance said. "We also believe that if black businesses were given a fair shake, they could create job opportunities in their own areas."

Kennedy and Oldham sponsored a bill to give the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen subpoena power for the Police Review Board but it did not pass. Originally, the bill would have given subpoena power to the review board, but even after amending the bill "Republican

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legislators from Forsyth County" shot it down, Kennedy said.

Family Holds 39th Annual Reunion

The 39th Roseboro-Harris-White family reunion was held Aug. 6-8.

The gala began at the home of Eugene Roseboro in Tobaccoville with a "womanless" fashion show. Models were Eugene Roseboro, Ray Robinson, Harold Roseboro, Grant Vinson and Alton Gamble, who was crowned "Miss Family Reunion." He was presented a bouquet of screws, nails, and a window scraper and screwdriver. Nearly 150 guests attended.

Family members traveled to Myers Lake Campground in Davie County on Saturday to swim, boat and enjoy other outdoor activities. More than 200 members and their guests attended.

Clell Roseboro Sr. was the guest speaker when the family worshipped Sunday morning at Friendship Baptist Church.

The Sunday afternoon awards dinner was held at Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center. The program was dedicated to 16-year-old Kejuan Vinson, who is a resident at Horizon Center. Danita Roseboro was mistress of ceremonies. Alice M. Roseboro gave the welcome. Charlie delivered the response. Samuel Roseboro led the prayer and grace. Alice D. Joe read a scripture. Charlene Griffin and Ashley Roseboro led a prayer. James Griffin III gave words to the next generation. Samuel Roseboro gave inspirational words to the youths. John P. Roseboro gave reflections of the past year. The Rev. Ardeal Roseboro led the memorial service. Azalee Vinson chaired the awards and recognitions committee.

The following family members were recognized for academic achievement: John P. Roseboro, Bobbette Gamble, Sendra Rose-

boro, James E. Vinson, Terry Ingram, Kevitt Roseboro, Ray Robinson, Tia Gamble, Benita Parks, Danita Roseboro and the Rev. Ardeal Roseboro.

Other awards were given to: Dock Roseboro, Orlander Roseboro, Earl Roseboro, James Griffin II, Daisy Warren, Gabriella Johnson, Ruth Roseboro, Diane G. Roseboro, Creola White and Ronnie G. White.

Tekeya Vinson received an award for being the youngest member present. Harold "John" Roseboro received an award for the oldest member present. Alice M. Roseboro and Viola P. Roseboro received awards for being recent retirees. James Griffin III received a sports award. Ruth Roseboro

received a "Money Robe" from Earl Roseboro's children.

Special recognition was given to each family by their children and grandchildren. The fourth edition of the family cookbook, edited by Thailia Griffin, was distributed along with other souvenirs and door prizes.

Eugene and Archie Roseboro, James Vinson Sr. and James Griffin II furnished homemade ice cream at the home of Eugene Roseboro in Tobaccoville.

Out-of-town guests included: Harold and Mary Roseboro of Langhorne, Pa.; Thailia and Brian Griffin of Arlington, Va.; Anthony Roseboro of Newark, N.J.; and Clell Roseboro of Clinton.



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