

BLACKS & BANKS

THESE TWO JUST DON'T SEEM TO GO HAND IN HAND

OPINION

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"Power concedes nothing without a struggle." — Frederick Douglass

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Banks Get Bad Grade in Loans to Blacks

▲ Southern National, First Citizens and BB&T receive poorest ratings

By RICHARD L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Executive Editor

Some of the state's largest banks received a failing grade when it comes to making mortgage loans to minorities.

The Community Reinvestment Association of North Carolina's 1992 study of 14 banks, mortgage companies and the state's largest

credit union has Southern National Bank of North Carolina in Winston-Salem and Branch Bank & Trust of Wilson at the bottom of the list. Both received grades of F+.

"The study shows that for the second year in a row, a group of banks has lagged behind the market in their mortgage lending performance in these communities," said

Irvin Henderson, president of CRA. "We had hoped to see significant improvement from the banks in the bottom tier in 1991, but the results, relative to the market, just are not there."

Of the 14 lenders, black-owned Mechanics & Farmers Bank, the State Employees Credit Union and United Carolina Bank earned the

highest marks.

"This report shows that there is still a great deal of work to be done in the mortgage lending area in order to ensure that all consumers, regardless of income or race, have an equal opportunity to buy a house," said Deborah Warren, executive director of CRA.

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BANKS REPORT CARD	
NationsBank of NC	B
First Union Mortgage Co.	B
First Wachovia Mortgage Co.	B
Wachovia Bank of NC	C
Central Carolina Bank	C
NationsBank Mortgage Corp.	C
First Union National Bank	D
Central Bank	D
First Citizens Bank & Trust	F
Branch Banking & Trust Co.	F
Southern National Bank	F

Source: Community Reinvestment Association of North Carolina

On the Rebound

Former Central Piedmont Basketball Player of the Year Acquitted of Murder Attempts to Turn His Life Around

By RICHARD L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Executive Editor

For years, the world was a playground for James Edrington. He was a star basketball player at West Forsyth High, winning the Central Piedmont player of the year in 1982. He went on to play at Winston-Salem State University under famed, former head Coach Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines from 1982-84.

Edrington left WSSU after his sophomore year and moved with his then-girlfriend to Dover, Del. He kept in playing shape, eventually landing a tryout with the Charleston (W. Va.) Gunners in 1988. But shortly thereafter, the cheering stopped and Edrington's life hit rock bottom. He moved back to Winston-Salem and became a drifter in the same city where he once entertained crowds young and old with his basketball prowess.

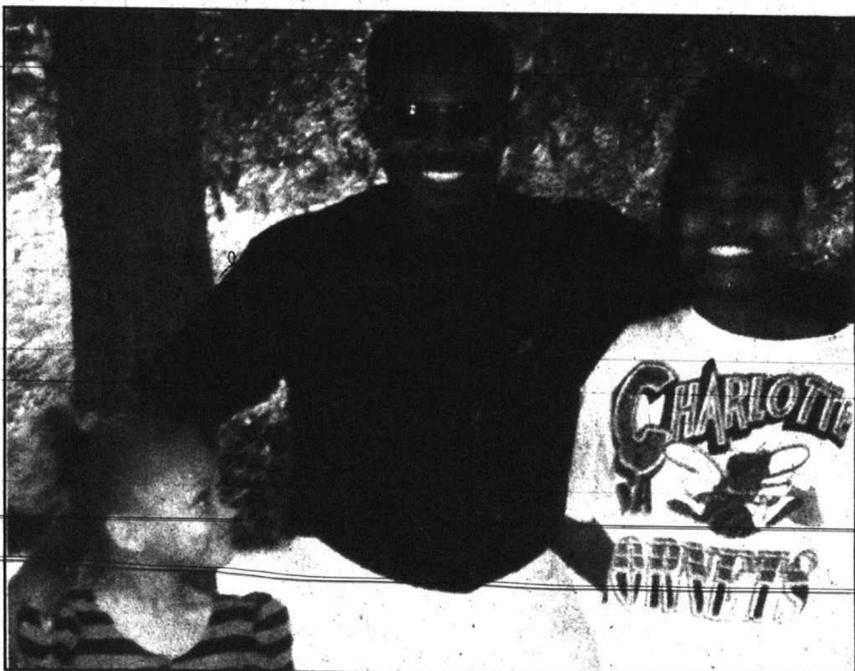
He began living on the streets and hanging out at drink houses. It wasn't long that his lifestyle steered him in a direction that ran afoul of the law. He forged checks and used and sold cocaine. He said he even "ran" a drink house.

"That was the life I was living," the soft-spoken Edrington, now 30, said recently. "I was like a failure to myself..."

But none of Edrington's vices prepared him for what was laid on him next — a murder rap. On Nov. 28, 1992, the Winston-Salem Police Department's investigation into the stabbing death of 62-year-old Janet White Garland, a white woman, led them to Edrington, a black, homeless man who was in the vicinity at the time of the crime.

Although police had no concrete evidence, they charged Edrington with first-degree murder. The woman was leaving Centenary Methodist Church on Fifth Street about 7 p.m., according to police reports. As she approached her car, Garland was accosted by a man who asked her for money. She refused, an argument started and the man stabbed her in the neck, police said.

On Oct. 7, 1993, nearly a year later,



James Edrington is relying on support from his "friend" Cheryl Brim and his 14-year-old daughter, Shameika Allen, in order to get his life back on track after being found not guilty of murder.

Edrington was tried for four days in Forsyth County Superior Court, and the jury took less than 30 minutes to find him not guilty, according to court records.

"I almost did life for something I didn't do," he said. "That 30 minutes could have been my life."

Police Lt. Deneille Johnson said the case will not be reopened just because the jury found Edrington not guilty. "We don't have any control of what the jury does," she said. "We just do the best we can in solving the crime. We felt we had the right suspect."

Edrington said that while serving time for forgery and drug possession at Nash Correctional Institute outside Rocky Mount, he turned his life around. He said he needs to get

"a little stronger because I'm out in the real world now."

Since his release in April, he said, his new "friend" Cheryl Brim has been a constant support to him. He also said he spends time with his 14-year-old daughter Shameika Allen.

Edrington lives with his brother, Alphonso Gilliam, on Indiana Avenue and works at Gilliam's painting company. He occasionally volunteers with youths at the Brown and Douglass Recreation Center on Indiana Avenue.

Does he feel lucky to again have freedom? "Freedom feels good," he said, with a trace of bitterness in his voice. "It's just a crooked system we deal with. I don't feel lucky because I didn't do it. I feel blessed, because I have my mind, body and soul back."

School Board Contracts With Diversity Team

▲ Hickory-based multicultural company to train teachers at six pilot schools in August

By DAVID L. DILLARD
Chronicle Staff Writer

The city-county school board voted this week to allow a consultant to train teachers in ways to include African-American history into the regular curriculum.

Forrest Toms, president of Hickory-based Training, Research and Development Inc., will begin the African American Curriculum Infusion Project at six pilot schools in August to help introduce teachers to African-American history. Current plans are for African-American history to be infused into social studies classes.

"I think it's an investment in the future," Toms said yesterday in a telephone interview. "If you look at the numbers (of minority students) it's inevitable to start infusing cultural diversity into the curriculum."

Toms, 42, started his management and diversity training firm in 1984. He has done diversity training for Wake County, Chapel Hill and other large school systems. He also helped the city of Winston-Salem and the East Winston Community Development Corporation prepare its application for the enterprise community zone.

Toms said African and African-American history will not replace the existing curriculum, but will be infused into regular social studies classes.



Forrest Toms

"We're increasing their knowledge base and also looking at teachers' attitudes and beliefs to see where they are," Toms said. "They are already well-prepared social studies teachers so we're just trying to help them infuse African and African-American history into the curriculum. The administration took time to develop it along with community input and all those things created a readiness and preparedness for it."

Fred Adams, associate superintendent for instruction, told board members Monday night that the program could help refine the current curriculum.

"Each of the schools felt good about it," he said. "In my opinion,

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Health Center Director Wants Minority in Assistant's Post

By VERONICA CLEMONS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Dennis Magovern, director of the Reynolds Health Center, said when he is permitted to hire a new assistant director — or directors — he will hold fast to his commitment to diversity.

"If I am able to choose the people I want, there will definitely be a minority assistant," he said Tuesday.

The assistant director's position at Reynolds Health Center has been vacant since Frank Dulin retired in 1992. Magovern

said amid the interviewing process for a new assistant, the position was frozen because of budget constraints. During that time, Magovern said he has received a number of qualified minority applicants. Currently, 60 percent of all employees at Reynolds are African American and 80 percent are female. Magovern added that a number of the positions blacks hold at Reynolds are in managerial and professional areas, and he believes Reynolds is a pacesetter for county government as far as diversity is concerned.

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This Week In Black History
June, 1906
John Hope became the first black president of Morehouse College

WHERE TO FIND IT

Board Members Divided Over Program For At-Risk Children

By VERONICA CLEMONS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Whether a program for 4-year-old at-risk youth will be implemented in the city-county school system is still wait and see as school board members are divided over the issue.

Some school board members say they hope to see the program implemented as soon as possible, while others are hesitant because of numerous concerns such as space and future funding.

"I would have liked for it to have started yesterday," board member Nancy Wooten

said. She said she was supportive of the project from the beginning but is relying on staff members to advise the board on the earliest practical time for implementation.

Geneva Brown and Walter Marshall, the two black members on the board, also favor it. Brown said she thinks the program is something that is needed and supports the program being implemented by January.

"I think we should move forward as soon as possible," she said. "Space is going to be a problem no matter what."

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