

# Ben Ruffin Speaks to Housing Authority Youth About Respect

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Chronicle Staff Writer

Benjamin Ruffin told the young people at the Housing Authority's basketball games that he did not come to them as the Vice-President of Corporate Affairs at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco. He said he came to them as another African-american who has had similar experiences.

"I didn't come to you as a big shot," he said. "I came to you as your brother trying to communicate with you."

Ruffin was the guest speaker at a basketball affair hosted by the Winston-Salem Housing Authority.

Ruffin told the youth about his humble beginnings, growing up poor and constantly listening to people say he wasn't going to make it because of where he lived. He reminded the youth who attended they they are in control of their destinies.

"Your future is in your hands," he said. "It doesn't matter what people say or do."

Housing Authority basketball teams and cheerleaders representing Durham, Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Burlington, Greensboro and High Point played in games on Saturday.

Housing Authority Executive Director Arthur Milligan said Ruffin was an appropriate speaker for this crowd.

"Ben has been where these



Benjamin Ruffin

who always told him he could become whatever he wanted. However, he told young people he knows of the struggles some of them are going through.

"Life is hard, especially when people find out where you live and put a cross on your back," he said. "I know what it's like to have people say 'you can't make it.' They said it to me."

Ruffin congratulated the young men for playing the game without fighting or cursing. But he cautioned that there is more to life than basketball, and success in the classroom should be just as important as success on the court.

"It's time to realize that basketball is not the end of life it's just a small part of taking your future into your hands," he said.

"There's no crime brothers with playing basketball and making A's. In fact there's a lot right with it."

Young people must realize, Ruffin added, that not to do well in school is more than just a reflection on themselves. They also disappoint those who love them.

"If you go to school and don't do your best you're not only letting yourself down, you're letting people down who didn't have the opportunities you have."



## Forest Park Students Clean up School Grounds

More than 16 Forest Park Elementary students took one of their Saturdays to come to the school and clean the grounds. The one afternoon of work resulted in more than 20 bags of trash and leaves collected. The students efforts are connected to the Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful campaign.

The participants pictured are: Shaddy Wolfe, Lonnie Chamberlain, Bobby Bennett, Tony Smith, Jerry McMillan, Chris McDonald, Kyle Vasquez, Terrance Leggette, Kimberly Smith, Chris Ross, Keyanta McArthur, Erica Gore, Ashley McMillan and Danielle Edwards. Participants not pictured are Tony Vasquez and Karanina Puckett.

## Watt Announces 12th District Town Meetings

During the April district work period, Congressman Watt has scheduled town hall meetings in each of the ten counties in the 12th District. The meetings are scheduled to give citizens the opportunity to express opinions and ask questions about the first

100 days of this term of Congress. While the House considered and passed of 25 bills, most of them part of the so called "Contract With America," only two of those bills have been signed into law by the President Congressman Watt stated.

According to Watt, "the real question everyone should be asking is, has this Contract improved the lives of hard-working Americans and lifted their standard of living?" Watt will be in Winston Salem on April 19, 7 pm at the Anderson Center.

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