

# OPINION/ THE YEAR IN REVIEW

## Winston-Salem Chronicle

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### The Year in Review

#### Sources of Pride

**T**he Million Man March lived up to its name, attracting more than one million dedicated African American men to Washington, D.C. and compelling countless others to stand up for their families and communities.

Attorney Johnnie Cochran WITH brilliant defense and eloquent arguments, won an acquittal for celebrity client O. J. Simpson. Regardless of what you think of the verdict, Cochran was undeniably outstanding. Local hair care manufacturer Joe L. Dudley Sr. received the Horatio Alger Award, an honor recognizing rags to riches success.

Renowned poet Maya Angelou was commissioned to write a poem marking the United Nations 50th anniversary. She delivered the word with her usual grace and eloquence.

Gen. Colin Powell, We admire you, even if you don't have the "fire in the belly" to run for president. And we respect you for considering your wife's concerns about a political career. But did you have to be a Republican?

The much-anticipated screen version of Terry McMillan's novel, "Waiting to Exhale," topped box office figures for its debut weekend, earning \$14.7 million in ticket sales. Gotta love a Whitney Houston star-vehicle, even if it does give brothers some grief.

#### For Shame

**C**hicago Congressman Mel Reynolds was convicted of sexual assault on a teenage campaign volunteer, child pornography and obstruction of justice. He resigned his political post after being sentenced to a five-year prison term.

Hundreds of (mainly young, urban) African Americans appeared as guests on trash talk shows, airing their dirty laundry and darkest secrets in exchange for 15 minutes of fame... no, make that infamy. Whatever happened to being a credit to your race?

Some community leaders organized a homecoming parade in Harlem for prize fighter and convicted rapist Mike Tyson. Fortunately, women's protest led to the event's cancellation.

#### Odd Couples

**M**ichael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley celebrated their first wedding anniversary. The Gloved One also dumped Bubbles, his pet chimp. Democratic leader, C. Delores Tucker, founder of the National Political Congress of Black Women, and Republican Bill Bennett, former U.S. Education Secretary and drug czar, joined forces against Time Warner for producing gangsta rap music which they say degrades women and promotes violence.

South African President Nelson Mandela fires his estranged wife, Winnie, from her government post, then reinstates her only to fire her again.

#### Troubling Signs of the Times

**S**ome predominantly black congressional districts, such as those represented by Mel Watt and Eva Clayton, have been challenged in court. The fate of those districts now rests with the conservative Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court ruled that federal minority set-aside programs must meet the same constitutional standards as state programs, which have also been under attack in recent years.

South Carolina mother Susan Smith set off a national manhunt after claiming that a Black man hijacked her car and abducted her two young sons. She later confessed to drowning them herself.

In an apparent hate crime, two white soldiers, Skinhead sympathizers, were charged with murdering a black couple in Fayetteville. In Harlem, a black man massacred several people in a store whose growth threatened to put a nearby black store out of business.

#### Are They for Real?

**W**ard Connerly, an African American Regent of the University of California, led a campaign to eliminate race-based considerations in student admissions, university hiring and contracting. Ironically, the lawyer and businessman himself attended the University of California at Berkeley under an affirmative action program.

New York subway murderer Colin Ferguson defended himself in an absurd trial that was a stark contrast to the O.J. proceedings. Better Late Than Never

The Mississippi State Legislature voted to abolish slavery. The Southern Baptist Convention issued an apology for having perpetuated racism in the past.

To Make a Difference in 1996...

Elect Harvey Gantt to the U.S. Senate and retire good ol' boy Jesse Helms.

## Bond Issue, Million Man March Headline News Stories

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schools. The city gained the bid over Greensboro and Charlotte.

Lawrence Joel Memorial Veterans Coliseum will host the tournament until 1999. Ben Ruffin, co-chairman of the CIAA Steering Committee, predicted in July that Winston-Salem would retain the tournament.

"Winston-Salem has been the most successful place that we have had our tournament," said Leon Kerry, the commissioner of the CIAA. "We have had two great tournaments there, and they have been the most successful in CIAA history."

The tourney generates about \$8 million to the local economy. Some black business people have complained that they don't share in the economic windfall of the tournament.

#### Million Man March

Nearly 4,000 black men from Winston-Salem participated in the Million Man March in Washington, D.C. on Oct. They joined 1.5 million men in front of the nation's Capitol, the largest gathering of African Americans in the capital's history.



Minister Farrakhan

The crowd heard Minister Louis Farrakhan tell them that they must accept God's responsibility and become community leaders.

Farrakhan called the march a day of atonement for black men. "The march was called by God, and I'm just the vessel he used to get the message to his people," he said. The Rev. Benjamin Chavis, the former executive director of NAACP, was also one of the organizers of the march.

The participants from Winston-Salem accepted Farrakhan's challenge to become community leaders. "Men must realize they must be responsible for their wives, mothers, and children," said Rev. John Mendez, a founder of Citizens United For Justice and the pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church. "Blacks have the power to reverse the negative statistics of crime, drug abuse, and unemployment that affect our community." Since the march, many community meetings have been held in Winston-Salem to devise ways of achieving the march's goals.

#### O.J. Simpson Verdict

Several African American leaders expressed satisfaction the week of Oct. 5 after Simpson was found not guilty of murdering his wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman.

"With every piece of evi-

dence, I felt a sense of connection and pain with O.J. Simpson," said Delores Smith, president of the Winston-Salem Urban League. "The victory for O.J. is not just for O.J., but it is for every African American in America."



O.J. Simpson



Laura McKinney

Two months earlier, a Forsyth County Superior Court judge denied a motion to enforce a subpoena that would have compelled a North Carolina School of the Arts professor to testify in the Simpson's double murder trial in Los Angeles.

Laura Hart McKinney, a screenwriting teacher at NCSA, had audio tapes and a manuscript of interviews between herself and Mark Fuhrman, a former Los Angeles police detective. McKinney testified that Fuhrman used many racial slurs in his descriptions of African Americans.

Local blacks expressed disbelief at the Judge William Z. Wood's decision. The N.C. Court of Appeals overturned Wood's ruling and compelled the professor to testify.

#### SAT Scores Increase

During the week of Aug. 31, African American students in Forsyth County saw a significant increase in their SAT scores in 1995 and even more of them are taking the test. Scores for black students rose 48 points to an average score of 734 in the 1994-94 school year.

Twenty-five more African American students took the test this year than in 1994. School officials attribute the rise in African American students' scores to them taking more advanced courses and the success rate of the SAT tutoring courses available to students after school.

"We were very pleased," said Bessie Allen, the director of the Phi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha and Phi Omega Inc.'s SAT/Tutorial Program. "We felt like what we attempted to do, we accomplished."

#### Black Theatre Festival

The fourth National Black Theatre Festival had a successful run from July 31 to Aug. 5 in Winston-Salem.

Guests shouted for Billy Dee Williams and Avery Brooks, cheered John Amos, and teased Isabel Sanford calling her "Weezy" and immersed themselves in the fantastic event that included plays, workshops, and communion.

"This is an effort to create our

own situation and that's important," said Williams, this year's honorary chairman. "I want to see it before I drop dead and I hope this is it." The festival boasted the theme of "An International Celebration and Reunion of Spirit." More than 6,000 attended the festival that included appearances by Geoffrey Holder, Debbie Allen, Dick Gregory, Nick Stewart, and Glynn Thurman.

Larry Leon Hamlin, the founder and artistic director of the festival, said in mid-August that he was considering moving the event to another city if the festival did not receive adequate funding in Winston-Salem.

The city's Board of Aldermen reduced funding to the festival from \$50,000 to \$35,000. Hamlin said that he would ask the city for \$150,000 for the 1997 festival.

#### City Settles Family

The city of Winston-Salem and the family of Shelia Epps McKellar reached an agreement on July 12 on a lawsuit filed by McKellar's family on behalf of her estate. The settlement called for the city to pay \$75,000 to McKellar's estate to avoid further time, cost, and inconvenience.

Ester Epps, mother of Shelia McKellar, filed the lawsuit in July 1994 for wrongful death and violation of McKellar's civil rights against the city, Chief George Sweat, and five police officers.

McKellar, 33, died in a holding cell in the Hall of Justice on July 20, 1992, 26 hours after police officers arrested her at an apartment complex on New Walkertown Road. The Chronicle was the first to report the incident.

Ms. Epps alleged in her complaint that the police should have taken her daughter to the hospital rather than arresting her and that their failure to do so caused her death. The city did not admit any wrongdoing in the settlement.

#### Afrocentric Programs

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education approved plans on June 27 to begin an Afrocentric school in the fall of 1996.

"This is a very significant step," said the Rev. A.G. Eversley, who had lobbied for a program as a member of the Coalition on African American Education. "It does, in fact, focus on the needs of black children in a way the school system has never done before."



Donald Martin

A school board curriculum committee recommended the program after two board members, School Superintendent Donald L. Martin Jr. and various administrators visited two Afrocentric schools Trenton, N.J. and Philadelphia.

Dale Folwell was the only board member to vote against the program, which will be similar to the ones in the school that were visited.

#### Post Office Ruling

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission ruled during the week of June 22 that Timothy W. Howell, an African American postal worker in Winston-Salem, was discriminated against on the basis of race when his supervisors fired in 1992 while learning his duties.

The EEOC ruled that Howell had 30 days to work toward meeting the standards of his former position and that he was entitled to back pay.

Postal officials declined to comment on the decision and denied that discrimination ever occurred at the Patterson Avenue facility.

The Chronicle has retained hundreds of documents and interviews with several current and former employees who cited discrimination by post office management.

Howell said in late August that postal officials were evading the EEOC ruling.

A postal official in Greensboro said that Howell's job no longer existed.

#### Davis Resigns Post

Floyd Davis announced his resignation on Feb. 20 as president of the United Way of Forsyth County, after serving the organization for three and one-half years.

Several heads of United Way agencies criticized Davis' leadership style and his effectiveness as president.

They also had concerns about Davis' new strategies and initiatives.

Davis said that he felt resistance to the new strategies and policies would subside once they were given a chance to work.

Delores Smith, president of the Winston-Salem Urban League, said: "I'm surprised. I'm disappointed, and I'm saddened that Floyd did not see fit to stick this out."

During Davis' tenure, agencies had experienced a 13 percent decrease in funds from the United Way.

Ron Drago of Raleigh replaced Davis as president this summer.

## VOICES IN THE COMMUNITY

Is it important to you to buy your Christmas gifts from a black-owned business? The Chronicle asked this question to several residents last week?



Eva Peoples

Definitely. It gives you a chance to learn more about your heritage. A black-owned book store is the best place for me to find a book about Kwanzaa.



Michelle Washington

Yes. If you could buy everything that you need a black business, I would not shop at a mall. I like to spend my money within the black community.



Michael Morgan

Yes. It is important because black businesses support the idea of Kwanzaa rather than Christmas. We need to know that Kwanzaa is part of our tradition.



H.B. Harris

Yes. There is a climate and a atmosphere at a black business I don't see it as a business. It see it as a celebration. It is refreshing.



Steve Rynes

Yes, I rather support the blacks during th holiday season. I like to spend my money with black businesses.