



Murrell (left) with renowned vocalist Tony Bennett. Bennett said that Murrell is one of his favorite singers.

Count Basie Orchestra wins 1997 Grammy Award

▲ Homeboy Chris Murrell proves dynamic vocalist

By FELECIA P. MCMILLAN
Special to the Chronicle

The Count Basie Orchestra won the 1997 Grammy in the Best Large Jazz Ensemble Performance category Feb. 26 in New York. Byron "Chris" Murrell, a native of Winston-Salem, became the vocalist for the orchestra in September 1991. He was thrilled to be a part of this great success. "This is the pinnacle of any musician's career," he said. "There was a lot of

stiff competition, and it worked out in our favor. We were very excited and very blessed."

The Basie Orchestra won the Grammy for their album "Live at Manchester Craftsmen's Guild," which features "the Count Basie Orchestra directed by Grover Mitchell — with the New York Voices." This album represents the third time in the decade of the 90's that the band or one of its members has been honored by the Grammys.

In 1996, the Basie Orchestra won the presti-

gious 61st Annual "Downbeat" magazine's readers poll in December as the best Big Band in the world. In January the Orchestra honored President Clinton at the 53rd Presidential Inaugural Festivities in Washington, D.C. Members of the orchestra received a special edition of the president's inaugural address with a gold seal and a copy of Miller Williams' "Of History and Hope."

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Fate of Reynolds Health Center Divides Community

▲ Is health care in East Winston between a rock and a hard place or in a win-win situation?

By BRIDGET EVARTS
Community News Reporter

County commissioners will decide next month to either go with Baptist Hospital's proposal to build a new facility in East Winston or accept an action plan from Reynolds Health Center's advisory committee to streamline operations.

So far, the process promises to be anything but quiet. A recent presentation by Baptist Hospital staff drew divided reviews from the community members in attendance.

Reynolds Health Center staff, neighborhood residents and community leaders gathered recently at Dellabrook Presbyterian Church to listen to Gerald Finley, vice president of operations at Baptist Hospital, present plans for a new health care facility to take the place of East Winston's existing structure.

Some say that without the medical center's support, East Winston may not have a primary care center. Others contend that county control is the best way to insure continued health care in the area.

Last year, the county dedicated \$4.6 million to assist in the health care center's operations, less than 2 percent of the overall budget. Baptist Hospital promises to invest \$5 million into a modern facility on East 14th Street and reduce county support to \$4.1 million in the first year of operations.

Increased services would be offered at the new facility in addition to existing Reynolds departments.

The new building would occupy less than one-fifth the space taken by the health center: 25,000 square feet as opposed to 142,000.

"[Reynolds Health Center] was not effectively designed as a primary care, patient-friendly facility," said Finley.

Baptist Hospital conducted a presentation for the Department of Health before the Dellabrook meeting, but has not yet submitted a formal proposal to the county staff.

"It does not make sense for an entity to invest that kind of money, time and commitment into an area and walk away."

— Peter Brunstetter

posals to the county staff.

"It's hard for me to respond to the Baptist Hospital/Bowman Gray proposal because it hasn't been pre-



NAACP president Bill Tatum speaks to the community at Dellabrook Presbyterian Church.

sented to the county manager yet," said Reynolds Health Center director Dennis P. Magovern. Magovern said that the health center's action plan includes many of the recommendations made to the county by the Towers Perrin consulting firm last year.

Magovern stressed that his staff's action plan was not a proposal to take over the health center from the county. "If the county retains control over Reynolds Health Center, the county retains control over its budget, not some third party," he said.

The action plan offered by Reynolds staff predicts a decrease in county funding, between \$3 and 3.3 million by 2001. The Reynolds advisory committee's action plan would reduce county funds by increasing



An audience comprised of health care workers, neighborhood residents and community leaders listened to a presentation by Baptist Hospital.

preventative care for at-risk patients like the elderly and pregnant women. "We have not made any drastic cuts," said Bill Tatum, president of the Forsyth County NAACP and chairman of the Reynolds Health Center Advisory Committee.

Many at the community presentation seemed receptive to the updated equipment and modern design promised in the new facility, but some leaders warned that the African-American community had been mules in the past to similar carrots.

"The reason you're seeing so much skepticism tonight," Rep. Larry Womble told Finley, "is that we've been tricked before." Many East Winston elders' memories of the old

"Katie B" hospital, built in 1938, are tinged with bitterness.

In 1959, African-American voters were promised a new hospital to replace Kate Biting Reynolds Memorial if they lent their support to a bond referendum. Just a few years after it opened, Reynolds Memorial Hospital was turned into a family health center.

Some worry that if Baptist assumes the role of health care provider for East Winston and ends up losing money, the medical center will pull out and leave the area with no major health facility.

"Once you leave something, it's hard to come back," said county com-

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School Administrators' hope: Zone 4 schools more integrated

By BRIDGET EVARTS
Community News Reporter

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools administrators hope that parents will choose differently with Zone 4 schools than they did in Zone 1.

"If everybody just chooses their neighborhood school, the plan is not going to work," said Sue Carson, program manager for the school system.

This is exactly what happened in 1995, when the school board implemented the new choice plan in the southeast. The majority of parents chose the closest schools for their children to attend, upsetting the plus or minus 20 percent racial balance the school board attempted to establish.

The 30 percent of parents who did opt to send their children out of their neighborhoods did not, for the most part, make selections helpful to integration goals.

Carson said that the school system hopes to avoid that avenue this time by presenting all four of the schools' themes at each of four meetings planned for next week.

Parents whose children are elementary students in the redistricted Zone 4 are invited to attend the meetings. Each of the meetings will feature the same presentation on the Zone 4 elementary schools, said Carson, and parents are encouraged to attend meetings at a school other than the one closest to their home.

School board member Geneva Brown doubts that this approach

will deter parents from choosing neighborhood schools. "I don't think that's going to help parents decide. I think parents already know where their children will go," said Brown. She added that the new North Hills Elementary School may be the only one with an African-American presence, due to its location.

North Hills will offer a traditional, highly structured environment in which students and teachers are required to wear uniforms. The meeting for North Hills, scheduled for March 17, will be held at Lowrance Middle School.

Old Richmond will sponsor a

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Group withdraws request to add Confederate flag

By BRIDGET EVARTS
Community News Reporter

A group who wished to have their insignia, the Confederate flag, displayed on Walkertown's welcome signs, withdrew their request one day before a town council meeting that promised to draw protesters.

Town manager Gary Looper received a message March 10 from a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans that the group would not pursue the request.

The Sons, who originally approached the council eight months ago, renewed their petition two weeks ago. The latest request drew widespread response from Walkertown's African-American community.

John R. Woodard, a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, said he was notified Monday that the group decided over the weekend to drop the proposal. "I can assume they decided because there was so much opposition raised," said Woodard. Plans to arrange a meeting between the

Sons and Walkertown's African-American leaders fell through, said Woodard.

Billy Hairston, one of the African-American leaders contacted by the Sons, said that he and other members of Oak Grove Baptist Church decided to forgo the meeting in favor of addressing the town council publicly March 11.

Council member Carol Walker stated last week that she would have voted against the request. "I don't like to see [anything], whether it be a sign or whatever, that will offend another person," Walker said.

Woodard said that hate groups have appropriated the Confederate flag and twisted its true meaning, which he said stood for state's rights, rather than slavery.

"What we're not is Ku Klux Klan, red-neck racists, Neo-Nazis who wave the flag," said Woodard, adding, "I can't stand those kind of people."

The Sons adopted the 13-starred Confederate flag emblem at the group's inception over a hundred years ago.