

# Public housing to Ph.D.: W-S native offers map to learning

By BRIDGET EVARTS  
The Chronicle Staff Writer

Dr. Steven Lamont Ray didn't know that there was anything wrong with his public school education until he tried to use it.

At that time, the Winston-Salem native had long since graduated from Atkins Senior High. He was thousands of miles away from both Kimberly Park Terrace, where he grew up, and Vietnam, where he served a tour of duty in the Air Force.

Ray was enrolled in Los Angeles City College, almost 10 years out of high school, with the intention of taking some business classes.

But he soon learned that secondary school had not prepared him for higher education, at least not at the standards he had learned to expect in the military.



Elaine Valentine-Ray and Dr. Steven Ray

"The concept of mastering material wasn't very clear to me," said Ray. Somehow, he realized, he had made it through school without a firm education foundation.

Ray wasn't content to write off his deficiencies to his public housing background. He had made it out of high school with satisfactory grades. So what was the problem?

"It dawned on me that my skills were really, really lacking," said Ray, presently an Air Force major about to be made lieutenant colonel.

Delving into his learning history, Ray discovered that though he knew how to spell certain words, he had no idea how to correctly use them in a sentence. The consequences of this deficiency went beyond English and writing courses, though. He found himself at a loss in mathematics class-

SEE LEARNING ON A4

75 cents

WINSTON-SALEM GREENSBORO HIGH POINT

Vol. XXIII No. 45

# THE CHRONICLE

121197DA01 \*\*C012  
N C ROOM  
FORSYTH CNTY PUB LIB  
660 W 5TH ST # Q  
WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2755

The Choice for African-American News and Information

THURSDAY JULY 10, 1997

For Reference  
Not to be taken  
from this library

## Charter school bill passes N.C. House with bipartisan support

By BRIDGET EVARTS  
The Chronicle Staff Writer

In an unusual show of cross-party support, the North Carolina State House passed an amended charter school bill last week that removes the cap on the number of charter schools statewide and includes preferences for the children of school founders and employees.

The state originally set a maximum limit of 100 charters that could be granted in North Carolina. The House bill would allow additional charters to schools with populations comprised of at least 75 percent at-risk, special needs or dropped-out students.

The bill also extends placement priority to the children of charter school founders and teachers. The original legislation and current state Senate bill maintain that charter school slots are chosen by a lottery system.

The House bill's bipartisan support may be due in part to the deadline legislators are trying to meet. Some of the 34 charter schools approved statewide had set opening dates for this month.



Oldham



Womble

"A number of these provisions we really need for charter school implementation this year," said Rep. Steve Wood, R-High Point. Wood introduced the House bill earlier this year.

Rep. Pete Oldham of Winston-Salem is one of many Democrats who formerly voted against charter school legislation. Nine of the 22 Democrats who voted July 3 in favor of the bill, including Oldham, were African-American legislators.

At the prompting of several local charter school supporters, Oldham asked that the preferences be built into the amended legislation. He said that the charter school founders were concerned that parental support for charter schools would dry up

SEE BIPARTISAN ON A4



(AP Photo/Reggie Solis) An emotional mayor-elect Harvey Johnson stands at attention as the Mississippi state flag waves during the playing of the National Anthem on Monday, July 7, 1997 during the inaugural ceremonies for the mayor and seven city council members in Jackson, Miss. Johnson is the capital city's first African-American mayor.

## Jackson elects first black mayor

By GINA HOLLAND  
Associated Press Writer

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi's capital city swore in its first black mayor Monday on the steps of a plantation-style City Hall built more than a century ago by slaves.

Harvey Johnson promised to remember the civil rights struggles that set the stage for his victory last month in his second run for Jackson mayor.

"I can't forget from whence we've come because if we forget that then we stand a chance of repeating history. We're not going to repeat that history in Jackson, Miss.," he said.

More than 1,000 people crowded the magnolia tree-lined lawn for the nearly two-hour ceremony that included gospel music and a symphony performance.

"I can remember in the mid-60s we were forbidden to stand here, couldn't go in the building," Claude McInnis, a Johnson campaign worker, said of Jackson blacks. "The Deep South has changed."

SEE MAYOR ON A6

## Washington Drive: Past, Present & Future

By CAROLE WEATHERFORD  
High Point Correspondent

Funeral director W.W. Hoover has seen 'em come and seen 'em go. Businesses, along Washington Drive, that is. Hoover, 95, has been a fixture on the street since the turn of the century. He remembers the Kilby, Hinton and Henley hotels, McCloud's grocery store,

Flake's cafe and

Simmons' dry

cleaners. From

his funeral home

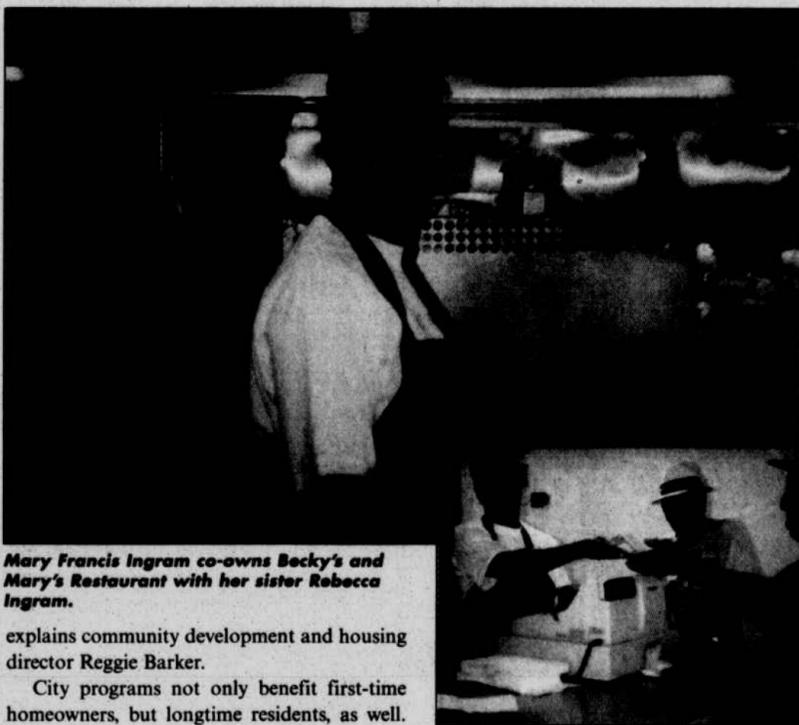
at 113 E. Washington Dr., Hoover has not only witnessed the passing of some prominent residents, but also the near demise of a once-thriving commercial hub.

Now he is seeing even more changes — this time for the better. The city of High Point is implementing a 12-point action plan to transform inner city communities like the Washington Drive neighborhood. First-time home ownership programs are key to the revitalization. Since 1993, the city has purchased and rehabilitated six substandard



W.W. Hoover

homes for sale to first-time homeowners. Further, to reduce dumping and loitering, the city built 10 homes on vacant lots in the neighborhood. "This expands the city's tax base,"



Mary Francis Ingram co-owns Becky's and Mary's Restaurant with her sister Rebecca Ingram.

explains community development and housing director Reggie Barker.

City programs not only benefit first-time homeowners, but longtime residents, as well. Twenty homeowners have received loans totaling \$428,000 for renovation and improvement. The city has spent another \$270,000 rehabilitating 15 substandard rental properties. "There is a need," says Barker, "for standard housing."

To lessen drainage runoff onto private property along Fourth Street, the city is making drain improvements. The city also funds public services like those provided by Washington Drive Resource and Enrichment Center, a decidedly bright spot that is the brainchild of funeral director Lois Powell.

While the community development and housing department funds housing initiatives, the Neighborhood Service Center encourages community empowerment. The Rev. Ron Wilkins, center coordinator, helps organize

neighborhood meetings and neighborhood watch programs. Residents' concerns, Wilkins indicates, range from crime to garbage collection. Political involvement, he believes, is crucial to community empowerment. He urges residents to attend City Council meetings, zoning hearings and public forums where decisions are made and policies are set.

Barker and Wilkins would like to see a wider variety of businesses along Washington Drive. Both cite the new Becky's and Mary's Restaurant at 731 East Washington Drive as a sign of progress.

The soul-food restaurant, owned by sisters

See Present on A4

## Robinson GOP candidate for South Ward

By BRIDGET EVARTS  
The Chronicle Staff Writer

Local nonprofit executive Vernon Robinson announced his bid for the Winston-Salem board of aldermen last week.

Robinson will seek the South Ward seat currently held by Republican J. Hugh Wright. Wright, who will not run for reelection, has publicly endorsed Robinson.

Robinson is executive director of the North Carolina Education Reform Foundation, an organization that champions the charter school movement and other remedies for problems in the public school system. He ran unsuccessfully for State Superintendent last fall.

Robinson is building his campaign for alderman on an anti-tax platform.

"I am committed to keep money with the families who earned it so they can take care of family and voluntary charitable obligations," said Robinson. He announced his bid on July



Vernon Robinson

3, dubbed by conservatives "Cost of Government Day." According to Robinson, 50.1 percent of the average family's budget goes to local, state and federal taxes and regulated fees; thus, income earned from Jan. 1 to July 3 is essentially handed over to government entities.

To date, no one has challenged the aldermen who represent predominantly African-American wards. Aldermen Joycelyn V. Johnson and Nelson Malloy Jr., of the East and North Wards respectively, have filed for reelection. Northeast Ward Alderman Vivian Burke has not filed, but indicated that she will seek reelection.

Robinson is a graduate of the Air Force Academy and a former professor at Winston-Salem State University.