



U.S. Rep. Mel Watt

Mel Watt summarizes the 1997 Congress

By MEL WATT
Special to THE CHRONICLE

The 1997 session of Congress (the first year of the 105th Congress) convened Jan. 7 and was gavelled to a close Nov. 13. Compared to the first year of the 104th Congress (which convened Jan. 4, 1995, and did not end until Jan. 3, 1996), the 1997 session was like a leisurely walk in the park. The House took a record-low 284 recorded votes in 1997, compared to 885 in 1995 (the average over the last 20 years was 584).

While several things were accomplished in the 1997 session of Congress, the session will probably be remembered most for the number of things left to be acted on later. Amidst all the smoke, mirrors, dust

and rhetoric, here is my quick summary of things that passed, things that failed and things that were left undone.

Things that passed

The Balanced Budget Deal: Every analysis I have seen lauds the balanced budget deal as the No. 1 achievement of this Congress. The notion that partisan and philosophical differences could be put aside to pass a bill which will both reduce taxes and increase domestic spending, yet still balance the federal budget in 2002, is clearly a major achievement. There are good things about the deal: it expands health coverage for children, it restores some benefits for legal immigrants which were taken away last year,

and it provides tax cuts (\$500 per child tax credit, education tax credits and capital gains and estate tax cuts). But there are also some bad things about the deal: the tax cuts disproportionately benefit the wealthiest people, and despite the hype, the combination of tax cuts and increased spending delays balancing the budget until 2002, when the budget would have balanced in 1998 or 1999 without the deal. I voted no.

Appropriations: Congress approved the 13 appropriation bills that provide funding for all federal agencies and operations. Congress also passed emergency supplemental appropriations to provide disaster relief for flood victims and for peacekeeping

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WINSTON-SALEM GREENSBORO HIGH POINT

Vol. XXIV No. 16

THE CHRONICLE

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THURSDAY DECEMBER 18, 1997

Forsyth United Way continues to ignore Sickle Cell group

By SHARON BROOKS HODGE
THE CHRONICLE Editor

The United Way in Forsyth County is raising more money, but an agency dedicated to serving people with a disease that affects mostly black people still is not a recipient of those funds.

"Forsyth is the second largest county in our service area, yet it contributes nothing to help pay for the services people living there receive from us," said Gladys Robinson, executive director of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of the Piedmont.

According to Robinson, Forsyth is second behind Guilford County in the number of people who turn to the Sickle Cell Association for clinics, nursing services and transportation for medical care. The Guilford County United Way has included the Sickle Cell group in its budget for next year, as it has done since 1989.

Even Alamance County, which has fewer residents relying on the Sickle Cell Association, has found money to support the organization's efforts.

The agency's mission is to educate the community about the disease "and see to it that those affected with the disease receive effective health care, and to provide assistance to their social, physiological and psychological well being," said Jo Heather Layton, who handles the group's public relations.

"According to our records, the Sickle Cell organization approached us two years ago, but at the time we were not accepting applications from health care groups," said John Conrad, marketing coordinator for the Forsyth United Way.

He could not explain why the United Way had not been funding the organization before that time. Calls to United Way president, Ron Drago, seeking comment on the matter were not returned.

According to the proposed spending plan for 1998, the United Way does not intend to change its relationship, or lack of one, with the Sickle Cell Association of the Piedmont anytime soon. However, Conrad said that the United Way may reconsider its decision not to fund any new health organizations.

"We may do another needs assessment in 12 to 24 months," said Conrad.

Such a decision probably would not change spending allocations for next year, he added.

Without financial support from the Forsyth United Way, said Robinson, "We have to use our federal funds and funds that come from other communities to provide services for people who live in Forsyth County."

The fact that the Forsyth United Way gives no money to the Sickle Cell Association is more important now than it has been in the past, explained Robinson recently. That's because the National Institutes of Health has decided not to renew a \$50,000 grant the organization had received through the Duke Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center.

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Woman in Charge: Blacks expect much from Katie Dorsett

Δ Delivering isn't always easy

By SHARON BROOKS HODGE
THE CHRONICLE Editor

GREENSBORO — For 32 years, Dr. Katie Dorsett taught at North Carolina A&T State University. This week, Dorsett, who is the highest ranking African American employed by the state, returned to her alma mater to deliver a few words of wisdom.

Dorsett is secretary of the Department of Administration, and graduate students in A&T's School of Education invited Dorsett to share the mission and vision of the agency she runs.

"It is our goal to connect the theories we have discussed in class with real life practices that occur every day in her department," said Dr. Gloria Hope Blue.

"My agency is the most diverse agency in the state," Dorsett said in reference to the plethora of responsibilities that fall under her direction.

From building construction to facility maintenance or purchasing, as well as maintaining state and federal surplus property, if it's necessary for



Secretary of Administration, Katie Dorsett visited N.C. A & T on Monday.

operating the state government, then it falls into Dorsett's jurisdiction.

She has a \$97.8 million budget and some 850 employees to manage. Consequently, said Dorsett, some people believe she has an obligation or responsibility to make sure some of those jobs and contracts benefit African Americans.

"And I do accept that responsibility," said Dorsett, who made history five years ago when Gov. Jim Hunt appointed her to the post. In 1992, Dorsett became the first black woman to hold a state Cabinet position. Currently, she is the only

African American among the nine Cabinet secretaries.

"Let me tell you about this guy who called me. I think it really brings this home," recalled Dorsett. "I got in one Saturday, and there was this man on the phone. He said, 'What are you doing down there in Raleigh? I don't have any contracts yet. We put you down there, and I haven't gotten any business.'"

Dorsett said she asked the man what kind of work he did. Trucking was his response. According

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Committee member Kathy Spicer

Welfare reform no easy task in Guilford County

By SHARON BROOKS HODGE
THE CHRONICLE Editor

GREENSBORO — Welfare reform has a price. And Guilford County residents on the citizens' committee charged with overhauling the system have already realized that determining what must be sacrificed could divide both the panel and the community.

Commissioner Chuck Winfree believes the Department of Social

Services should start by reducing the amount of money it spends on administration. According to Winfree, Guilford county spends \$1.67 million in administration. That figure is greater and is a larger percentage of the entire Work First budget than what is spent in Durham, Forsyth and Wake counties. Only Mecklenburg spends more on administering the welfare reform initiative.

Even though Mecklenburg has a higher administrative budget, Guilford has more full-time employees assigned

to the Work First program. There are 37 full-time employees in the Guilford Work First program, 35 in Mecklenburg 21 in Wake and 25 in Forsyth.

Under guidelines set by the state, counties may not spend more than 15 percent of their block grant allocation on administration.

"My concern is that while we have 65 percent of the TANF (Temporary

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Carole B. Weatherford conducts children's workshop for Delta's adopted community

By FELECIA P. McMILLAN
Community Correspondent

The Winston-Salem Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority held a Christmas party for the children of Lakeside Community on Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Delta Arts Center on East Third Street. Carole Boston Weatherford, a local children's author, poet, essayist and jour-

nalist, conducted a program entitled "Reading, Writing, and Rhythm." The party was the culmination of many activities the sorority has held throughout the year in the Lakeside Community as a part of their adopt-a-family committee project.

Weatherford began her presentation with a poem that she had written when she was 6 years old. The children in the

audience, ranging in age from 6 to 13, chanted poetry, sang, and played some of the percussion instruments Weatherford brought with her. Weatherford wanted the children involved in her presentation, so she had the children read a poem or a story and dramatize what they felt about each work.

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Pepper spray stays

FROM STAFF REPORT

Pepper spray was probably not what caused Warrick Lee Patton's death in October.

That was the conclusion reached by a state medical examiner. The results of Patton's autopsy were released on Monday, only hours before the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen backed away from a resolution to support the

According to Dr. John Butts, who performed the autopsy, Patton's life was taken by either cardiac arrest or cocaine

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Children's author Carole Boston Weatherford demonstrates how one can create a reed instrument from paper during her children's workshop at the Delta Arts Center.