

City's newcomers get black history lesson with tour

By DAMON FORD
The CHRONICLE Reporter

With 12 stops on the itinerary, the Winston-Salem Convention and Visitors Bureau took 43 business executives who are new to the area on a VIP Tour of Winston-Salem last Friday.

The Diggs art gallery at Winston-Salem State University was the tour's only stop at a predominantly black institution. However, through the course of the eight-hour tour, new residents did receive a introduction to Winston-Salem's black culture and African-American heritage.

The tours are held four times a year. VIP participants are members of organizations or

companies who need to know more about the attractions and history of the city to tell visitors or other new residents.

Deciding on which stops to make stops at can be tricky, says Matthews, the manager of the WSU Visitor Center, said the tour sites change every time.

"We try to have a balance of all the major attractions," said Matthews.

The tour also gave 10 African American VIP's ideas and a history lesson of the African American community in Winston-Salem. Black executives, who comprised about a fourth of the tour participants, represented companies such as the Hawthorne Inn, Residence Inn by Marriott, Courtyard by Marriott, the WS Fire Department, Sawtooth

Center for Visual Art and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

According to Bill Hunter, an information specialist and the main tour guide, "Five Row" was the name given to homes off of Silas Creek Parkway that were occupied by African Americans who worked in Richard Reynolds' home. Reynolds is the founder of RJR Tobacco Company and his home is now the Reynolds House Museum of American Art.

When the residents of "Five Row" had to find new homes, the Reynolds family bought houses for each family. Hunter said that Ed Lash, a resident of "Five Row" still occupies the home Reynolds bought.

"My older brothers were good friends of

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VIP Marie Thompson of the Courtyard Marriott studies a photo called "Baptism, Reverend Tom Mock, Stamps Lake."

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Alston: Beware of 'code words'

At a town meeting this week, state NAACP President Skip Alston denounced the Guilford schools' redistricting plan

GREENSBORO — There was standing room only at Bessemer Elementary School as community leaders and parents came to listen and voice concerns to Guilford County School officials.

"The way it's going now, I'm afraid it's (redistricting) going to set us back 40 years back to the Brown vs. Board of Education ... separate but equal," said County Commissioner and N.C. NAACP President Melvin "Skip" Alston at a Town Meeting Monday night.

He added, "That's the mind set of the Redistricting Committee at this point, and I'm very upset about this and I hope you all are very upset about that tonight too."

In a room full of administrators, teachers, parents, children and community leaders, Alston urged the audience not to fall for what he calls 'code words' such as

N.C. NAACP President and Guilford County Commissioner Melvin "Skip" Alston was one of eight panelist at the Town Meeting at Bessemer Elementary.

neighborhood schools and community schools given by the committee.

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Ministers waffle on Triad baseball

BY AURELIA HILL
Special to THE CHRONICLE

Baseball Yes! Baseball, maybe?

Local black ministers are up in the air as whether to give baseball full support or not. During a lunch meeting Tuesday, March 24, about 40 African-American Winston-Salem ministers decided to give support for Major League Baseball. But just a couple of hours later, they recanted, saying they would hold their endorsement until important issues are

addressed.

The luncheon meeting was a gathering of the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity. They met with Walt Klein of Klein and Associates Inc., the public-relations firm hired by Don Beaver to launch a campaign in favor of the professional baseball initiative.

Beaver heads the baseball ownership group. He also was the guest at a second meeting on Tuesday, where ministers were joined by other black leaders to discuss the issue.

At the first gathering, the min-

isters asked questions about the specific number of jobs the black community could anticipate and expressed concerns about the 1 percent tax on prepared food. Klein answered questions as best as he could but stated that he was not the man who could make a commitment. Nevertheless, the clergy still issued a statement in support for Major League Baseball.

Television cameras and reporters were on hand to witness the verbal commitment to the baseball effort.

Less than two hours later,

though, several of the ministers expressed a change of heart. Some of them were still wearing their Baseball Yes! caps when they arrived at a meeting, called by J. Walter McDowell of Wachovia Bank.

But the "Yes!" turned into a clear "maybe" as Ben Ruffin of RJ Reynolds voiced concerns directly to Beaver and Fred Starr, the chairman of the stadium authority. Ruffin stated that after "three meetings Beaver, still had not come to the African American group with a commitment."

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Disabled blacks and public education

How to get help

By DAMON FORD
The CHRONICLE Reporter

This is the final part of a three part series on disabled students and their rights to receive help through Section 504 policies. Section 504 is a broad civil rights law that came about through the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. However, the WS/FC school system did not adopt these policies and procedures until October 1997. Last week, The Chronicle addressed the problems that one black parent had in getting

help for her two sons. This week we discuss how a child is considered for the help this statute provides.

Like most aspects of public education, the evaluation of a student's disabilities varies from school to school.

Emily Simeon, the division Director for Exceptional Children Services says that the School Association Team (SAT) evaluates potential Section 504 recipients. "Teachers can refer (a) child through this committee," said Simeon.

SAT is made up of administrators, teachers and other staff such as guidance counselors, speech pathologists, etc.

After a child is referred, SAT develops a written plan to see what the needs of the child are. If the child needs and meets the service requirements of Section 504 or IDEA (Individual's With Disabilities Education Act), then student's curriculum is adjusted to meet those needs.

It is up to the Section 504 contact person in each school to educate teachers on Section 504 and to show them what to look for in a potential recipient. When asked if all Section 504 contact persons are doing this, Simeon said, "I would hope so, there are so many issues to look out for."

Since there is such a high rate of African-American students

being suspended in WS/FC schools, parents as well as teachers may need to know this information. According to Simeon, some students who are suspended may be suffering from a disability. Consequently, some — or even a majority — of these students might need Section 504 services, yet they remain undiagnosed.

Barry Tesh, a Licensed Professional Counselor in N.C. says that an undiagnosed disabled child is more apt to behave negatively because he does not know how to deal with the problem.

The Section 504 policies and procedures manual says that "A school should give consideration

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Students are center of changes at WSSU

BY SHARON BROOKS HODGE
The CHRONICLE Editor

The relationship between Winston-Salem State University students and administrators is no longer as turbulent as it once was.

Students, faculty and staff expressed optimism about improving the campus environment last week as Chancellor Alvin Schexnider unveiled a "Strategic Framework for Change," which has been on the drawing board for nearly two years.

"When I arrived at Winston-Salem State University in January 1996, it was the fulfillment of a lifelong ambition to lead an historically Black institution committed to undergraduate education," wrote Schexnider in an introduction to the 11-page strategic plan that was presented to the WSSU Board of Trustees on March 5.

He continued, "Upon my arrival, I announced that we would develop a strategic plan in order to 'focus like a laser' on what we aspired to do and how we intended to get there."

On Friday, March 20, Schexnider stood on a stage adorned with the red and white balloons as the WSSU marching band played the school's fight song.

"This is truly a collaborative effort of the entire university family," Schexnider said, adding that each portion of the plan was created with input from various voices from the university community.

Over the next five years, the university hopes to:

- create a student centered environment

- offer select and excellent academic programs

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