



For 10 years, Alton Pollard has guided students through the maze of religion and society.

# After 10 years, Pollard calls it quits

By JERI YOUNG  
THE CHRONICLE

Over the past month, popular Wake Forest University religion professor Alton Pollard has slowly but surely cleaned off the bookshelves that lined his office in Wingate Hall.

Gone are the history books that detailed the black experience in America. Gone are tomes on religion that he used to teach hundreds of Wake Forest students the power of an open mind and religion.

"All I've ever wanted to do in my classes is make the case that in all of our differences we are all very much alike," Pollard said. "When you begin to see

that the Quaker, the Unitarian and Muslim are doing something that you can resonate with, then you can make the connection that the black and the white, the Asian, the male and female also can connect. You don't have to put a label on that. You realize we're all part of the same human family. Sometimes we have to prod each other to go out and make that kind of discovery."

After 10 years in Winston-Salem, Pollard is calling it quits. This week he heads to Atlanta's Emory University where he will be Director of Black Church Studies. He'll be joined later by his wife, Jessica and children Brooks, 17 and Osha, 10.

And while he's happy about the promotion, Pollard says he regrets he "has to leave." He met sever-

al times with university and divinity school officials several times but says nothing could be worked out.

"I didn't make the decision to go until well after the semester was over," Pollard said. "These things happen and these opportunities come along. This is the first time in five or six years that I have taken an opportunity seriously."

"In Alton's case I don't think (salary) was the overwhelming factor," said religion department chair Charles Kimball. "He simply had a wonderful opportunity at Emory. We certainly talked about salary and future opportunities."

Kimball says at this point the university is not sure who will replace Pollard, the department's only

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75 cents  
Vol. XXIV No. 40

WINSTON-SALEM GREENSBORO HIGH POINT

Vol. XXIV No. 49

# THE CHRONICLE

The Choice for African American News and Information

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THURSDAY AUGUST 6, 1998

## 5,000 sign to save New Evergreen

### Petition organizers plan rally to save cemetery

By KEVIN WALKER  
FOR THE CHRONICLE

Flanked by elected officials, concerned citizens and hundreds of beautifully carved headstones, the Rev. Jimmie Lee Bonham announced Tuesday plans for a New Evergreen Cemetery awareness rally.

"This rally, is a community rally in support of expansion of (the) cemetery," Bonham said at a press conference held at the cemetery. "We the concerned citizens of this community would like to see the cemetery expanded, and we would like to see the Mayor (Jack Cavanagh) be a mayor to all citizens."

The rally will be held August 15 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at Mr. C's Ice Cream Shop, located directly across from the cemetery. Besides refreshments and balloons, the event will offer members of the community a chance to sign a petition in support of the cemetery's expansion.

The Minister's Conference of Winston-Salem, the Black Leadership Roundtable and the NAACP are sponsoring the event and leading a drive to have the city's Board of Aldermen revisit the expansion issue.

In May, the board tied 4-4 on a proposal to expand the cemetery by about 700 grave sites. The vacationing Mayor Jack Cavanagh was not present to break the tie. Without a majority of votes the proposal failed; and without an expansion the cemetery will reach maximum capacity by 2001.

Many board members who rejected the expansion, did so even after the city's property maintenance staff presented projections showing that an expanded New Evergreen could operate in the black for the first time in many years.

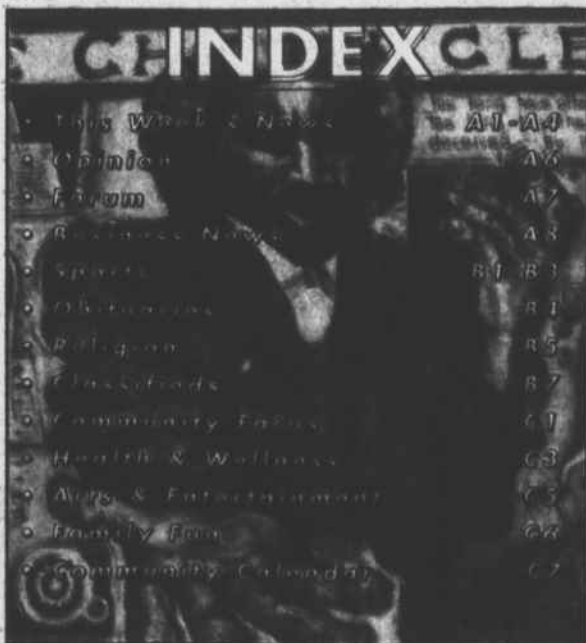
In order for the proposal to be brought back before the board, a majority of the board members must agree to a revote.

With that purpose in mind, the Roundtable began the petition in early June, placing them in designated locations around the city.

To date, the group has acquired over 5000 signatures, according to N.C. State Rep. and Roundtable Co-convenor Larry Womble, who attended the press conference.

Although New Evergreen is a cemetery that holds the distinction of being the city's first publicly-owned

See Rally on A4



## Good news



The amount of money blacks spend is growing faster than the national average, a new study says. Black shoppers, like Alicia McKay (above) will spend almost \$600 billion in 1999.

## Black spending increasing

By DAN SEWELL  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA - The spending power of black consumers is growing faster than the national average with gains in all 50 states, according to a survey released last week.

The study found black consumers will account for 8.2 percent of total buying power next year, compared with 7.4 percent in 1990. It defines buying power as after-tax personal income.

Blacks in North Carolina ranked 8th in overall spending power and are projected to spend \$24.1 billion in 1999. The state also came in 8th in market share. Black spenders will account for almost 15 percent of spending next year.

"It illustrates the growing importance of African Americans as consumers," said Jeffrey M. Humphreys, a University of Georgia econom-

ic forecaster who wrote the study for the school's Selig Center for Economic Growth. "That's important to those who market and those who pay for advertising."

Every year since 1990, the percentage gain in black buying power has been greater than the growth rate for consumers overall, Humphreys said.

The black population is growing faster than the U.S. population overall - 14 percent for blacks this decade compared with the nation's 9 percent, according to estimates based on Census figures.

Humphreys said black buying power will rise from \$308 billion in 1990 to \$533 billion in 1999, up 73 percent in less than a decade, compared with a national increase of nearly 57 percent.

Using government statistics and economic

See Spending on A4

## Employees file discrimination suit with EEOC

### Five blacks allege firings related to age

By KEVIN WALKER  
FOR THE CHRONICLE

After efforts to settle the matter out of court proved futile, five Winston-Salem residents filed suit against a local corporation last week charging age discrimination.

The suit, filed July 28 in U.S. District Court in Greensboro, alleges that Experiment in Self-Reliance, Inc., a local non-profit organization, terminated the employment of the plaintiffs even though they performed their job duties in an "outstanding fashion."

The plaintiffs are Mae Davis Green, Willie Mae Kirby, Catherine Gainey, Mary Carter and Lester B. Spears Jr. They are all African Americans over the age of 50 with seniority ranging from four years to 31 years at ESR.

According to the complaint, the plaintiffs are seeking reinstatement to the positions they formerly held, back pay, benefits and damages from the defendant for its "reckless disregard of plaintiffs' rights to be free from age discrimination."

On September 11, 1997, according to the complaint, the plaintiffs were notified their employment would be terminated at the agency in order to comply with a "strategic plan" that the organization was implementing.

Two weeks later the plaintiffs were relieved of their duties at ESR.

The plaintiffs contend that at least a portion of the organization's "strategic plan" included getting rid of older employees and replacing them with younger workers.

"That study is the genesis of this suit," Romallus O. Murphy, the plaintiffs' attorney, said Monday about the strategic plan. "It is our position that the report targeted individuals because of age. It assumed that they were old and burned out and unable to be retrained."

With funding from grants and agencies like the United Way, Experiment in Self-Reliance, Inc. helps the working poor become self-sufficient.

Besides operating an emergency shelter, ESR assists needy, working individuals with rent payments and school tuition.

Murphy says because of the nature of the work the organization does, it assists a number of older individuals, which makes the charges against ESR, he says, even more appalling.

"It's really an affront to their purpose; this agency is turning out their older people when they should be sensitive to the plight of older people."

Willie Mae Kirby worked at ESR for over 30 years, most recently as a case manager. The 67-year

See ESR on A4

## A step further: Teen changed by program

By DAMON FORD  
THE CHRONICLE

GREENSBORO - Franklin Lamont Young Jr. enjoys many of the things that typical teenagers do. Images of being the next Michael Jordan dance through his head while shooting jumpers on asphalt basketball courts in Greensboro.

He cruises around the neighborhood on his bike since he doesn't have his drivers license yet.

He describes himself as "caring." "I think I'm an alright person," he said. "I think I'm kind to a lot of people."

But the quiet young man with neat haircut and baggy khaki pants, has worked his way through problems.

He once skipped 10 days straight from school. He made zeros on tests. And he's the first to admit he never saw a fight that he didn't like at Dudley High School.

"I always had an anger problem," the 16-year old said. "Fighting and skipping were my biggest prob-

lems."

He also had trouble with the law. At 14, he was charged with assault and faced a criminal record. Instead of jail, he chose to attend a program to help him better manage his anger. He says it was the best decision he ever made, although he didn't want to do it at first.

"I had one assault that's on my record," Young said. "It was a court order to do 10 weeks of this."

"I didn't think it was going to be as fun as it was. I'm glad I came."

Young enrolled in One Step Further, which targets at-risk youth between the ages of nine and 16. The program's curriculum focuses on self-development, peer counseling skills, conflict issues, employment planning

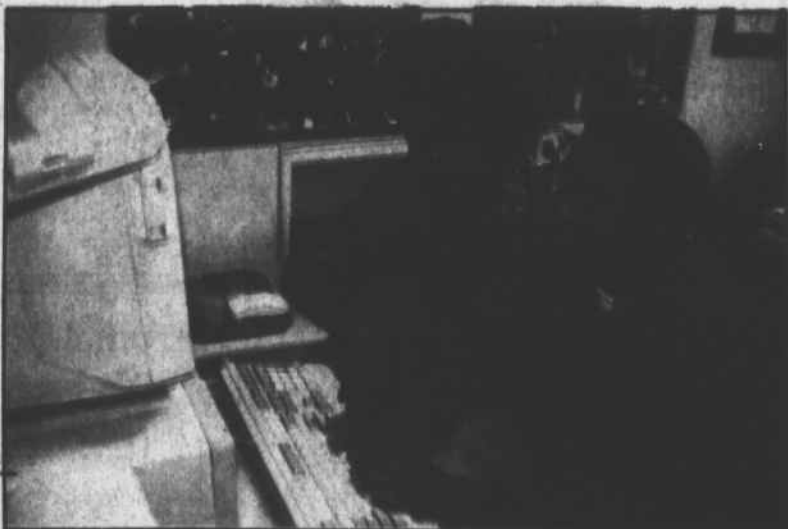


Photo by Damon Ford

See One on A4 Franklin Young Jr. works with One Step's Sandra Lee.