

# Walking women – Wrights take final trip to Harvard

Heading to Harvard: Years of hard work have paid off for Latonya Wright (right) and her mother, Carolyn Wright (left). The younger Wright, 20, begins her senior year at Harvard this month.

By FELECIA P. McMILLAN and KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Three years ago, when Latonya Wright and her mother boarded a train bound for Harvard University, the two women traversed more than hundreds of miles.

Latonya Wright left her home in a Winston-Salem public housing complex and entered a whole new world. She left an African American working class neighborhood and entered the environment of the intellectual elite; she left behind a community of have nots and entered a world of the have plenty.

Friday, Wright and her mother, Carolyn, will take that 16 hour train trip once again as Latonya returns to Harvard for her senior year.

"I'm thinking 'how in the world am I going to get all this stuff to Boston,'" Wright said laughing, twisting her hair playfully.

If their names don't sound familiar, their faces will more than likely ring a bell. The Wrights do not own a car, so they have been walking around the city together for as long as both of them can remember.

"We just like to walk," Latonya Wright said. "Yes, we do use it to get from point A to point B, make no mistake about it, but it's also

nice to go take a walk."

Wright, a petite young woman who looks much younger than her age, says she understands the public's fascination with the famous university she attends; but Harvard, she thinks, is just a school like any other.

"I don't believe that it's any different from any other school, it's just Harvard and it's old and, therefore, it's scary to everybody."

But Wright admits that once she received her acceptance letter from Harvard, Duke, Carolina and the other schools she was accepted to, had to wait.

"The assumption has always been that if

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## Rebuilding Excelsior

WSSU CDC hopes to give life to area around university

By KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Excelsior Street has seen better days. Once upon a time, impressive structures existed where barren lots now lay. Sunlight shined vibrantly through windows that are now boarded up and many people lived happily in a community that now has been seemingly vacated.

Through its newly formed community development corporation, Winston-Salem State University wants to breathe new life into a neighborhood that appears dead by all outward appearances.

The S.G. Atkins Community Development Corporation met last Friday for its first annual board of directors meeting and community forum.



Schexnider

WSSU Chancellor Alvin J. Schexnider is president of the seven-member board which includes other notables like the Rev. Henry Lewis and Alderwoman Joycelyn Johnson. Under the board's direction, Excelsior, located across from WSSU's campus, will soon begin receiving a much needed facelift.

As part of a program to revitalize communities juxtaposed to historically black colleges and universities, WSSU received a nearly \$400,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in April.

In the coming months, that money will be used to construct new buildings, rehabilitate existing structures and even to transport a historic property onto the street.

The university and the Excelsior area are old friends. Near the turn of the century, the area was inhabited by students and faculty of Slater Industrial Academy, a small school for African Americans. In 1925 Slater became Winston-Salem Teachers College, which evolved into WSSU.

The university's CDC is named for S.G. Atkins, the man who founded Slater and who lived in the once flourishing Excelsior community, then known as Colombian Heights.

"We feel that Mr. Atkins was instrumental in community development; that's

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## Feast or famine



Bagley

"The Democrats on the school board hid the fact that African Americans were doing poorly on tests for 30 years. We (the Republicans) have brought the problem to the forefront. If we don't change this, we'll end up paying for it down the road, either through welfare or crime."

— Richard Bagley



Brown

"There should be a way to assign some kids to these schools. I'm for neighborhood schools (but) a lot of white parents are not going to send their kids to East Winston, and I don't see why. Atkins is a beautiful school."

— Geneva Brown



Johnson

"We can't continue to have three middle schools in (the East Winston) area if Atkins' enrollment increases, you'll still have a deficit at Hill. I have proposed that we bring Atkins back to a senior high school."

— Victor Johnson



Photo by Bruce Chapman

Since the implementation of the county's controversial re-districting plan, enrollment has dwindled at the newly remodeled Atkins Middle School. "I am competing with two new schools," said Atkins Principal Debbie Blanton-Warren.

## Rolls dwindle at inner-city schools

By KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Space has become an issue in the school system's controversial three-year-old redistricting plan – too much of it and too little of it.

At inner city schools, students returned to find lunch rooms less noisy and hallways more roomy. At suburban schools, students found their classrooms packed to capacity.

The under-utilization of schools was addressed by Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education member Geneva Brown at last Tuesday's school board meeting. Brown, a staunch opponent of redistricting, urged her fellow board members to nip the trend of under-populated schools in the bud before building new schools.

"My challenge to the board, before we say we need another school...we need to look at what we have going," Brown told the board.

Currently several schools have seen

their enrollment dwindle by astounding numbers since last year. Schools like J.D. Diggs Elementary, Kimberley Park Elementary and Carver High School are all under capacity, but nowhere is the problem more apparent than at the middle school level.

With the addition of two new schools, Southeast and Kernersville, all middle schools are now under the redistricting or "choice" plan. The plan gives parents the option of sending their children to any one of five or six schools in a particular zone.

But according to this year's enrollment figures, schools located in inner city have been given the thumbs down by many parents. Atkins Middle School, a mammoth building located in the heart of East Winston, has only 485 students for on its rolls so far this year.

Last year, the school's enrollment topped 820.

Hill Middle School has about 380 students – down from 627 last year. Kennedy Middle School saw its enroll-

ment shrink from 758 to 582.

"We've got a lot of empty classrooms," Brown said during an interview earlier this week. "That's what the choice plan has done."

The new middle schools, both located in Kernersville, are over capacity.

Brown said she does not understand why the board would consider building new schools to ease overcrowding when so much space is available.

"There should be a way to assign some kids to these schools, I'm for neighborhood schools (but) a lot of white parents are not going to send their kids to East Winston, and I don't see why," Brown said. "Atkins is a beautiful school."

Debbie Blanton-Warren, Atkins' principal, said the staff is using the school's decreased population to its advantage.

"I think it's great," she said. "My teachers feel like it is really good to have

See Enrollment on A11

## Former AD makes second trip through A&T

By DAMON FORD  
THE CHRONICLE

After three weeks on the job, Hornsby Howell is still working hard to learn university regulations.

"The biggest adjustment has been with the school policies – learning their procedure manuals – NCAA rules are the same," he said.

Howell, who was named interim athletic director at North Carolina Agricultural and State University last month, was for several years the head football coach and assistant AD.

Howell takes over for long-time athletic director Willie Burden who stepped down last month to accept a teaching position at Georgia Southern University.

While Howell figures he has a lot to learn about A&T's new programs, universi-

ty chancellor Edward Fort says Howell is the perfect person to serve as athletic director while the school searches for a replacement for Burden.

"Hornsby Howell is a nationally known athletics administrator," Fort said. "His storied career in the field of athletics verges on the legendary. As one of the early pioneers in the coaching of football, he became known as an expert in fundamentals and one who practically memorized the NCAA rule book and its accompanying transactions."

During his eight-year tenure, Burden was instrumental in guiding the Aggies Intercollegiate athletics programs by expanding the number of NCAA regulated programs from 13 to 16 sports. He oversaw the addition of women's cross country, bowling and swimming teams. He also increased the number of full-time coaches

while enhancing non-revenue sports and creating greater publicity and exposure for the athletics program.

But Howell, who is still called "Coach" by most A&T students and alumni, doesn't plan on making a lot of changes to the athletics department during his stint. His goal is simple. He wants to keep A&T's boat steered in the right direction so the next AD can carry the university into the next millennium.

"I thought that if I could help the institution, I would," Howell said. "But I'm not looking for a job. I threw my resume away."

The stoic 6-5 Howell graduated from A&T in 1950 after playing center for Aggie football team for four years. He later served as an athletic trainer and worked his



Photo by Damon Ford

Hornsby Howell was recently named athletic director at A&T.

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