

Carolina Fund offers private school scholarships for local students

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

The Carolina Educational Opportunity Fund is looking for parents who want to send their children to private school, but can't afford it.

The Winston-Salem based foundation will provide a \$1,000 scholarship to 200 children in four counties around the state, including Forsyth and Guilford County.

The program is open to any child who will be attending school in grades K-8 in the fall of 1999. CEOF organizer Vernon Robinson says the group is making a concerted effort to reach out to black children from low income families.

"I'm excited," Robinson said. "You can see it's hope in an envelope. These parents want to give their children the opportunity to get an education. I just thank the good Lord for giving me the tools to be able to help others."

To be eligible for a scholarship children must reside in one of four counties: Forsyth, Guilford, Durham or Wake and must qualify for reduced or free lunch.

Parents also must agree to pay the other \$1,000 needed to cover the other tuition cost for attending a private school in addition to any other fees that may arise.

Though Robinson says it's a good investment in a child's education, the thought of shelling out \$1,000 can be a daunting task for parents who are scraping to keep their bills paid. But according to Keith Bryant, a CEOF volunteer, parents will be able to pay in low monthly installments.

"If they could pay the \$1,000 up front they wouldn't need the scholarship," he said.

Some parents whose children are too old are even willing to help others make payments. Bryant says he received one such offer when he talked to a parent in a High Point housing project.

The 28-year-old, who resides

in Greensboro plans to continue to go door to door in housing project areas with students from N.C. A&T State University and Winston-Salem State University to pass out applications and answer questions about the scholarship fund.

"It's a chance for hope and opportunity," he said. "It's important we go to the grass-roots areas because they're the ones that need it."

Winston-Salem resident Detrice Ingram can't help but smile when she thinks about the opportunity the scholarship is giving her grandchildren.

"Ever since her daughter died last October, Ingram has been a little skeptical of how she and her husband would come up with the money to keep their grandchildren in private school next year.

"(The scholarship) will take some pressure off because I wasn't sure if I could keep them all in now," she said.

Three of Ingram's grandchildren, who range in age from 6 to 8, attend Quality Education

Institute while a fourth one, who is 11 is a student at Quality Academy.

The 47-year-old is just ecstatic at the chance to continue her grandchildren's education at the private school.

"The classes are smaller and I like that," Ingram said. "I really enjoy it."

She enjoys it so much that she has passed scholarship forms on to her friends.

"It's great for me," she said. "(The kids) really enjoy going to school and they love their teachers."

Robinson says scholarship applications can be picked up from various businesses and churches in the Triad and are also available at The Chronicle.

All applications must be returned to CEOF by March 31. In April all eligible applicants will be put in a pool and 50 children from each county will be chosen to receive \$1,000 for school for up to five years.

For more information about CEOF call Vernon Robinson at 768-3567.



Robinson

Group plans to open new black-owned bank

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREENVILLE, N.C. - Hoping to tap customers they say mainstream banks have passed by, a group of black entrepreneurs plans to open the state's first minority-owned bank in more than 20 years.

"Mainstream banking goes after the top 20 percent," said T.F. "Butch" Congleton, president of the proposed Millenia Community Bank. "Well, guess what: The other 80 percent are hardworking people who need banking services. That's what we want to be as a bank."

Millenia's twofold mission is to make money for stockholders and build wealth among minorities and others by taking their investments, then plowing them back into the community.

Twelve of the board's 13 directors are black, but Congleton said Millenia will go after everybody's business, no matter

what color they are.

"We want to be there for all people, not just one race," he said.

Since 1994, the formation of minority-owned banks has slowed, according to Creative Investment Research, a Washington investment firm that tracks minority financial institutions.

Just three other minority-owned banks are being organized nationwide: one in the Midwest, and two on the West Coast, said William Michael Cunningham, the firm's president. There are four other minority banks in North Carolina.

Congleton, currently BB&T's vice president of small business lending for Greenville and Pitt County and a banker for 15 years, has raised about \$1.9 million. The bank must raise \$5.5 million before it can

open its doors, and half of that amount before the Banking Commission's March meeting.

"My goal is to have 100 percent going into the commission's meeting," he said.

Donald Dixon, 44, showed up in work clothes Wednesday to help Congleton and his board chairman, Herb Gardner, erect a sign at the site of their future headquarters. A former factory worker, Dixon now operates his own landscaping company.

He plans to buy 100 Millenia shares at \$11 a share, he said.

"A lot of banks have been in business a long time, and they don't really care if you get a loan or not. But these people will probably do a little extra for you, try to help you out," he said.

Congleton expects Millenia to turn a \$170,000 profit in its third year and a \$1.29 million

profit in its fourth. The first step is to build the main office. Groundbreaking is expected sometime this year.

Behind the board's determination to launch the bank are stories like Gardner's.

Now owner of one of the largest bail-bonding companies in eastern North Carolina and other businesses, Gardner said one of Greenville's largest banks several years ago rejected his application for a \$2,500 loan to get established. He said the next applicant, a man he knew had just filed for bankruptcy, got a million-dollar loan.

(The loan officer) "did everything she could to push me out the door so she could help this other individual, who happened to be of another race," he said. "Unfortunately, we're still judged by the color of our skin rather than the content of our character."

Senate votes to close debate on witnesses

By DAVID ESPO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - House prosecutors pleaded with the Senate on Tuesday to issue subpoenas for "a pitiful three" impeachment trial witnesses - Monica Lewinsky and two others - and to request that President Clinton answer questions under oath.

As the Senate went behind closed doors to debate the witness issue, the White House said Clinton has no intention of submitting to questioning, even if the Senate votes to request it.

"It's time to wrap this up," presidential spokesman Joe Lockhart said of the trial, in its third week.

Clinton's lawyers, joined by Senate Democrats, also warned that the issuance of any subpoenas for witness depositions would raise the possibility of long delays in the proceedings.

Lewinsky, summoned to Washington over the weekend to be interviewed by the House prosecutors, checked out of her hotel and flew home to California. Her lawyer said she would return if ordered to answer further questions.

The prosecutors said they had trimmed their list to pass Senate muster.

"A pitiful three, and I would think you would want to proceed with that minimum testimony," said Rep. Henry Hyde, the lead prosecutor.

Democratic leader Tom Daschle conceded that the Republicans, with a 55-45 majority, were likely to prevail, forcing approval of subpoenas for Ms. Lewinsky, presidential friend Vernon Jordan and White House aide Sidney Blumenthal. "I think it's going to be virtually a party-line vote, unfortu-

nately," he said.

All witnesses would be questioned under oath at private depositions about the facts concerning allegations of perjury and obstruction of justice by the president in connection with his efforts to conceal a sexual relationship with Lewinsky. Guidelines for the questioning remain to be worked out.

Tuesday's closed-door Senate session was the second in as many nights.

As was the case on Monday, a request by Democratic Sens. Tom Harkin of Iowa and Paul Wellstone of Minnesota to open the doors was rejected.

The winnowed list of three witnesses marked a concession by the House prosecutors, who were fearful that a more extensive request would cost them the support of wavering Republicans and seal the defeat of their effort for testimony.

"We're down from thinking we ought to have 10, 12, maybe 15 witnesses, to three," Rep. Bill McCollum of Florida said during a four-hour legal argument on the Senate floor during the afternoon.

Said Hyde: "We have a good case, we have an excellent case without the witnesses, but the

See Senate on A11

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HIS 121-49W	Western Civilization I	3	S	8:00-12:50a.m.	124 (DLC)
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HUM 121-49S	The Nature of America	3	MW	9:00-10:50a.m.	124 (DLC)
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