

After 13 years, Ruffin bids farewell to R.J. Reynolds

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Ben Ruffin will leave his position at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. later this month - closing another chapter in his ongoing success story.

Ruffin - who serves as vice president of corporate affairs - will leave the company Feb. 28 in order to devote more time to his personal life and his many other interests.

Ruffin will continue to serve as

an advisor to the company, according to R.J.R. officials.

Ruffin said Wednesday that moving to an advisory position will provide him a well-deserved breather.

"It is the right time and the



Ruffin

UNC Board chair to remain as advisor

right situation," he said. "All my life I've been in demanding situations."

Ruffin - who has had a number of formidable jobs since his 20s when he led Civil Rights campaigns - says he first thought about leaving the company nearly two years ago as he was approaching his 10-year anniversary.

"When you reach a threshold,

you start thinking about it then," he said.

Ruffin and his wife, Avon, a school system administrator, have two daughters, both of whom are enrolled at Hampton University. Ruffin said he finally made the decision after careful consideration and discussions with his family.

The 57-year-old, Durham native joined the R.J.R. corpora-

tion in 1986 as the director of corporate affairs for R.J.R. Nabisco. He made the move to his current position at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. in 1989.

"Ben has played an integral role within R.J.R. for the last 13 years and has been an invaluable part of our team," said Andrew Schindler, president and chief executive officer of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco. "We are extremely pleased that Ben has agreed to remain an advisor to the company... For many years to come, R.J.R.

will benefit from the work Ben has done and the strong, productive relationships he has established."

Ruffin's departure comes at a time when Reynolds and other tobacco companies are downsizing due to slugging cigarette sales and costly legal settlements.

Ruffin said he thinks R.J.R. will overcome its recent setbacks.

"We operate a legal business," Ruffin said. "The company will pull through."

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THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11, 1999

CIAA legend



Photo by Damon Ford

Legendary track coach Leroy Walker says black college athletics can thrive despite the loss of players to white universities. "Instead of sitting at home on Saturday watching television they are going to have to come out and support these teams at the gate," he said.

HBCU fans must step up to the plate, says Leroy Walker

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

Legendary Olympic track coach Leroy Walker has seen it all and done it all.

Given a chance, he'll talk about it.

That's exactly what Walker, who is president of this summer's Special Olympic World Games, did recently during a trip to Greensboro College.

Walker talked about everything in sports from the current bribe scandal that has marred the Salt Lake City, Utah Olympic effort to the recently resolved labor dispute between owners and players in the National Basketball Association.

"(Owners) created their own problem," he said. "You're paying an athlete \$10 million to play for half a year for two hours a day. If it wasn't for the TV money they would have been bankrupt."

In the eyes of the 80-year-old real losers were the concession workers.

"I just thought both sides were silly," Walker said.

Walker talked for two hours, winding his way through a host of topics. It's the type of tireless effort that has enabled Walker to become a coaching legend.

"For a poor guy raised in Harlem you would think I would have never made it but I've been on every continent and probably

200 of the greatest cities in the world and most of it through sport and education," he said.

During his 30 year span as Olympic coach and International Olympic Committee member Walker has seen some of the world's greatest athletes though he can't quite put his finger on who the best.

"You gotta think of Carl Lewis ... you gotta think of Bones Dillard, you've got to think of a lot of foreign athletes too in the long distances," he says while continuing down the list. "Flo Jo, Wilma Rudolph ..."

Walker, who was named the first black head U.S.A. track and field coach for the 1976 Montreal Summer Games, has also held

every major International Olympic Committee position, including treasurer, which brought along with it the responsibility of a \$350 million budget before becoming the first black to be named its president.

After serving 20 years as an IOC member and four as its chief, Walker stepped down despite being asked numerous times to stay.

"If you work at it and you do your task at the very best people will begin ... to recognize it," he said.

Walker should know. His name is synonymous with CIAA history. He was one of the greatest coaches in the

See Walker on A10

Starr to be investigated Justice Department watchdog to probe independent counsel

By MICHAEL J. SNIFFEN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - The Justice Department is inching toward opening an investigation of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's handling of the Lewinsky affair, officials say.

The department's internal watchdog agency, the Office of Professional Responsibility, recently wrote Starr that it intends to investigate Starr's office over several matters, but the office is awaiting Starr's response to that notification before starting the inquiry, according to officials who spoke Monday on condition of anonymity.

One topic of the impending investigation is the Jan. 16, 1998, offer by Starr's deputies to former White House intern Monica Lewinsky of an immunity deal conditioned on her not discussing it with her lawyer, Frank Carter.

Justice Department rules prohibit government prosecutors from discussing immunity deals with defendants outside the presence of their lawyers. Starr's office is required to follow these rules unless doing so would undermine the purpose of his investigation.

Starr has denied any impropriety in his office's dealings with Lewinsky.

The other topics of investigation could not be learned immediately. The letter to Starr was first reported by Newsweek.

Last November, the department also went to the brink of investigating Starr over the handling of the immunity deal and other matters, but he protested in a visit with top Justice officials.

After Starr's visit, Attorney General Janet Reno said Justice officials had dismissed some of the allegations against Starr but had written him a letter at that time seeking his response to other outstanding allegations. She also said then no investigation of Starr had been opened.

See Starr on A11

Clinton ordeal may be over by week's end

By LARRY MARGASAK
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - With the television cameras turned off and the public galleries emptied of spectators and reporters, senators are rising to speak, one by one, in what a participant describes as a dignified debate over whether President Clinton should remain in office.

The leadoff speaker during Tuesday's closed impeachment deliberations - the first for a president in 131 years - immediately disclosed his intentions.

"The president should be removed from office for obstruction of justice," said Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., who released his remarks following the four-hour session. On the other impeachment article, which charges Clinton committed perjury before a federal grand jury, Gorton said, "Although the president lied, this specific case of perjury does not rise to a level requiring removal."

Senators were resuming their closed deliberations today, and likely would continue tomorrow, arguing the evidence as if the outcome was still in doubt in a trial now in its fifth week.

In fact, senators from both parties acknowledge Clinton is assured of acquittal because the two-thirds margin for conviction cannot be attained.

For days, senators have been forecasting a stronger conviction vote on the obstruction-of-justice article than on a perjury count that might

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Clinton

Re-Entry Academy offer kids second chance

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

When 16-year-old Geremie Tharpe walked into the Re-Entry Academy on Jan. 20, it was the first time he'd been in school in a year.

As a freshman at Parkland High School last January, he was caught with a gun. For the next 12 months, court dates, a jail sentence and a house arrest stood between him and his 10th-grade year.

But Tharpe is on the comeback trail. He has immediate plans to enter North Forsyth High School and college is among his long range goals. But before he can return to the world of traditional high schools, Tharpe will have to pass perhaps one of the toughest tests he's ever had: he must prove that he is academically, mentally and psy-

chologically ready to "re-enter" that world.

As students' test scores continue to dwindle, as enrollment at private schools continue to climb and as horrid tales of campus violence continue to be played out in the headlines across the nation - second chances are becoming hard to come by in public education these days.

But in its first year, the Re-Entry Academy is proving to be just that - a second chance. The Academy is a program designed to provide a supportive, caring environment for students who face long-term suspensions or expulsions at their home schools.

"We get students from the eight other high schools," said Khalid Griggs, the Academy's director. "When students come to Re-Entry it is our design and intention that they

will return to their home schools."

The Academy - which is housed in a small portion of Independence High School - is home to students who have been ordered out of their home schools by principals for disciplinary problems and students who are trying to return to the education system after having run-ins with the law.

Students get the assignments they need, and hours of intensive group and individual counseling. Because they believe that the counseling aspect of the program is so important, the phrase "Academics with an Attitude" has been adopted by Academy officials as their official motto.

"We believe that attitude directly affects the academics," Griggs said.

Before the academy's existence, See Re-Entry on A11

Reading together



Photo by T. Kevin Walker

Wake Forest basketball players Craig Dawson, left, and Tate Decker read to children at Whitaker Elementary School as part of the African American Read-In Chain. For full story see page A8.

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