



The fire that gutted Saints Delight Church last week was intentionally set. Investigators found traces of chemicals in three areas of the tiny church.

# Fire that destroyed church ruled arson

By DAMON FORD  
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem Fire Department officials say a fire that destroyed a church in East Winston was intentionally set.

The fire swept through tiny Saints Delight Church March 14, causing more than \$20,000 in damages.

"We've determined that the fire is incendiary and intentionally set," said Assistant Fire Marshall K.R. West.

Fire investigators discovered traces of chemicals in three areas of the church.

West says anyone with any information about the Sunday morning blaze can give the 24-hour arson hotline a call at 773-7997 or Crimestoppers at 727-2800.

West says no timetable on keeping the case open has been determined.

"Sometimes we run out all of our leads and we close the case," he said. "But later if we get some

information then we can open it again."

While investigators continued to look for clues, Bishop Evelyn Timmons and members of Saints Delight moved Sunday services to Beasley's Funeral Home, which is located around the corner from the burned building on Old Greensboro Road.

"It was a positive day (Sunday)," Timmons said. "Probably the most (positive) since last Sunday."

About half of the two dozen

people who normally attended Sunday services were on hand but Timmons says it was still uplifting.

The service featured a performance by a youth dance team from Greensboro. Timmons said she expects a musical team from the Virginia District to come down this weekend.

"Somebody said to me (Sunday) 'You can be assured in this Christian walk there will be struggle.'"

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WINSTON-SALEM GREENSBORO HIGH POINT

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## Controversial appointment

### Davis ready to meet challenge

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

It was a day where the spotlight shined radiantly on the 19 newest officers on the Winston-Salem police force.

But a department veteran with more than 29 years experience unwittingly stole a bit of the rookies' attention.

With the word "interim" freshly axed from her title, Police Chief Linda Davis attended a graduation and recognition ceremony last Friday at Winston-Salem State University's Anderson Center to watch as the city's latest batch of cops was sworn in.

Davis - who was joined by numerous city leaders, hundreds of the rookies' family members and friends and other members of the department's top brass - briefly addressed the new officers during the nearly two hour event, but much of her time before and after the ceremony was spent receiving congratulatory handshakes and words of encouragement.

Less than 48 hours earlier, Davis had helped the city that she's lived in all of her life take a progressive leap forward as she was made the Twin City's first female police chief. Davis was promoted to assistant police chief in 1994, a position she held until her retirement on Dec. 31, 1998. Davis' departure from the force coincidentally collided with Chief George Sweat's exit.

After a little persuasion, City Manager Bryce Stuart convinced Davis to come out of retirement in January to become the interim police chief, while he interviewed four other candidates who wanted to be top cop.

But last Wednesday - in a move that surprised some and angered others - Stuart appointed Davis chief, although she never applied for the job.

"I believe Chief Davis is the person best suited to take on this responsibility," Stuart said in a statement. "We are at a time in Winston-Salem where we need to strengthen our key relationships; relationships between the police department and the community it serves as well as relationships within the department. Chief Davis possesses the character, training and experience to provide the leadership we need."

Although she knows that many obstacles lay before her, Davis says she is ready to lead the department's 600 employees into the 21st century.

"This is a tremendous responsibility," Davis

See Davis on A11



Assistant Chief Michael McCoy, second from right, looks on as new Police Chief Linda Davis talks with city officials. Davis beat out four other officers, including McCoy, who applied and interviewed. Davis, who retired from the force in December, did not apply for the job.

### Officials miffed over selection process

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

It was not the history that many hoped City Manager Bryce Stuart would make last week when he appointed Winston-Salem's new police chief, but it was historical nonetheless.

Stuart named the city's first female chief, Linda Davis, last Wednesday during an afternoon press conference in front of the Public Safety Center on Cherry Street.

Davis had retired from the department on Dec. 31, 1998, but was talked into serving as inter-

im chief when Chief George Sweat left the department in January to work for Gov. Jim Hunt.

Many African American leaders had hoped that the city would follow the lead of its neighbor Greensboro and appoint the first African American to head the department. Among the four candidates who applied and interviewed for the job were two African Americans, veterans Patricia Norris, a captain, and Michael McCoy, an assistant chief.

With 30 years on the force and a dedicated legion of allies, Davis' ability to lead the depart-

ment has not become an issue; however, the method in which she was selected has raised concerns from some and objections from others.

Davis, in fact, was made interim chief because she was not interested in the job permanently. Having Davis in position would allow Stuart to evaluate the candidates who did want the position. Stuart had told at least one member of the board of aldermen that he would not give the interim chief the position permanently.

Davis had planned to return

See Controversy on A11

## Mayor, Chair 'out of loop' on resignation

Hazzard's statement to paper baffling, officials say

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

When Ellen Hazzard decided to resign from the city's Housing Authority Board of Commissioners last week, she contacted a local newspaper and described how unbearable the position had become.

She told of a board that is fueled by politics, where she was often left "out of the loop," because of the board's dictator-like leadership.

But seemingly, Hazzard only vented her frustrations to the Winston-Salem Journal. Four days after the article appeared in the paper, both William Andrews, the board's chairman, and Mayor Jack Cavanagh say they have not yet received her resignation.



Hazzard

See Hazzard on A10

## Guilford to hold additional school forums

By DAMON FORD  
THE CHRONICLE

Two hundred people packed into the auditorium of Southwest Guilford High School in High Point Monday night for the first of two public forums on the Guilford County School System redistricting plan scheduled for this week.

Because of pressure from the community, specifically the N.C. Racial Justice Network, an interracial civil rights group, the 11 member school board decided to give citizens an opportunity to voice their concerns.

Board members were encouraged to give their personal opinions on issues. Keith Green, one of four black board members said the proceedings went well.

"The public stated their opinion and we took it in," he said. "To me it's no different than speaking to someone one on one."

See Guilford on A12

## Rams finally on the road: New vanity tags a big hit

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

As Bernice Davenport shuffled through her mail last Friday, she had no idea that a much anticipated surprise was hidden in the mountain of envelopes and circulars in her mailbox.

"I get a lot of catalogs from companies, and I felt something stiff underneath one of the catalogs, and I screamed," Davenport said with a laugh.

Davenport's reaction jolted her husband, John, but she said she couldn't contain her excitement.

She was one of hundreds of people who received the first batch of Winston-Salem State

University's very own collegiate license plates. With the plates carefully secured on cars in cities throughout the state, the school has seen the realization of a five year dream.

Although larger schools like Duke University, Wake Forest University and UNC - Chapel Hill have had collegiate plates for quite some time, WSSU is the first and only historically black college or university in the state to snag its own plate.



Davenport

"It is truly gratifying to put the 'Rams on the Road' and it is even more significant because we were first," said Gregory Hairston, director of alumni relations and coordinator of the license plate campaign.

Davenport said when she first saw her plate - with the name of the university distinctly etched on the left side in white letters over a red background - she couldn't wait to get it on the back of her vehicle.

"My husband said 'when do you want me to put this on your car' and I said yesterday," she said.

She was equally eager to show off her new tag at her church -

See Plates on A12



Hundreds of WSSU fans received a special delivery last week. The first batch of collegiate license plates hit the streets.

THE CHRONICLE

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