

Smart Start holds annual awards ceremony

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

Bridger Field House was filled with dignitaries on a mission Friday - to honor businesses who help families.

The event, sponsored by Forsyth Family Focus, paid homage to businesses - small and large - who help to bridge the often difficult gap between work and home.

Forsyth Family Focus is a collaborative effort of the Forsyth Early Childhood Partnership, Greater Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce and the Work/Family Resource Center.

Several companies were recognized for their efforts to help employees strike a balance between family care and work by providing supportive benefits and services.

"(The awards) are based on known standards of creating family focused corporations," said Tom Williams, director-N.C. business committee for education. "It's an award against rigorous standards."

The awardees included Wachovia Bank with the Pacesetter Award, Wake Forest University School of Medicine for the Large Company Award, Partners National Health Plans of North Carolina won the Medium Company Award while The Enrichment Center was

given the Small Company Award. Honorable Mention Awards went to The Children's Center and Forsyth Early Childhood Partnership.

In 1995 that Forsyth Early Childhood Partnership became the county's Smart Start agency. Smart Start seeks to help N.C. children ages five and under live healthier lives by providing them with affordable child care, health care and other family services.

The three speakers at the luncheon spoke on ways their companies have provided support for employees and their families through with services such as on-site child care, parental leave and other benefits.

Edgar Murphy III, community relations manager for Nortel Northern Telecom spoke of the importance of providing today's youth with higher education.

"Our kids are not competing against kids across the street or across town, we're competing against kids from all around the world," Murphy said.

Even Governor Jim Hunt talked about the important roles companies play in their employees lives.

"Supporting families is not only the right thing to do - it's good business," he said via satellite.



Veronica Black of Wachovia accepts the "Pacesetter Award" from Smart Start.

Photo by Damon Ford

Daly nominated for minority seat on UNC board

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURHAM - A Republican lawmaker and a conservative activist have mounted an apparent challenge to a policy reserving seats on the University of North Carolina Board of Governors for minorities.

Jack Daly, a conservative activist who ran for state auditor three years ago, has been nominated by Rep. Steve Wood, R-Guilford, for a seat reserved for minorities on the Board of Governors. A state House nominating committee was to meet today to select candidates.

The board is currently chaired by retired RJ Reynolds executive Benjamin Ruffin, the first African American to serve in that position.

Many lawmakers say Daly, who has filed numerous lawsuits challenging race-based or gender-based policies, is bucking for a discrimination lawsuit against the state. Daly, who is white,

called such speculation premature.

"In all likelihood, the (Board of Governors Nominating Committee) will find that I am ineligible for one of these seats because of my race," he said. "I don't know about (a lawsuit), I am a candidate for the B O G because I think I have something to offer."



Ruffin

Daly said he's noticed over the years that there's less competition for minority seats than for at-large seats and so chose the shorter odds.

The committee will shrink the minority field of candidates from five to four people and the at-large group from 13 to 10. House members will then vote on finalists for the board slots.

Wood nominated Daly, who checked both the racial minority and women's boxes on the nomination form. The clerk's office forced him to choose one or the other.

"They're just setting the stage for a lawsuit," said Rep. George Miller, D-Durham, echoing a common sentiment inside the Legislative Building.

Wood was recently kicked out of his party's caucus for breaking with his party and supporting Mecklenburg Democrat Jim Black for House Speaker. On Wednesday, Republicans were distancing themselves from Daly's minority-slot nomination.

The 32-member UNC Board of Governors governs the 16-campus university system. Lawmakers in each chamber nominate candidates every two years, a committee pares the list, and the House and Senate vote members for four-year terms from the finalist list.

A total of five candidates

were nominated for two available minority slots this year. The committee will pare it down to four final candidates for House members to vote on, with the top two vote-getters winning seats.

"The other four people in this category are black, for sure," said Rep. Mickey Michaux, D-Durham.

Daly recently graduated from the UNC School of Law and now runs the N.C. Foundation for Individual Rights, which he called the conservative version of the American Civil Liberties Union.

In 1996, Daly lost his bid for state auditor to incumbent Ralph Campbell. In 1994, he ran in Mecklenburg County for a state House seat and lost by about six votes.

Black leaders attack testing programs

By ANJETTA MCQUEEN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Minority children, who often attend poor or struggling schools, could suffer under new efforts to make schools more accountable for their students' performance, some civil rights leaders say.

President Clinton's education proposals, which include tying a child's promotion or graduation to rigorous testing, should include plans to fix city schools and provide better teachers there, said Hugh B. Price, National Urban League president.

The civil rights organization has called for an academic bill of rights that would require school districts to prove they are giving minority children an equal education before adopting such test-based promotion plans.

"Accountability begins with quality," Price said. "Few urban districts can claim that the key ingredients are available to all students, especially low-income minority pupils."

Advocates for minority children have long complained that high-stakes testing and other changes rarely address the real needs of children: more qualified

teachers, better equipped classrooms, stronger courses and more money in general.

The Education Department's proposals to change federal law will require states to increase such resources in tandem with ending social promotion, said Judith Johnson, the assistant secretary who oversees kindergarten-through-12th grade programs.

The accountability plans, to be released in April, will include federal money and support to target poor and minority areas, she said.

Some states, such as Texas and Ohio, have resisted the idea of excluding minority children from tests, arguing that all students should be held to the same higher standards.

Studies show schools with high minority enrollments are more likely to have less-experienced teachers and older equipment, as well as lower test scores. Many, especially black children, are also more likely than white children to

have low birth weights, poor health care and come from impoverished families, all factors that usually hinder learning ability.

Memphis City Schools Superintendent Gerry House says the district, which is 85 percent minority, holds all children to the same standards, but also recognizes that many children don't have computers at home or parents who read to them, so it set up after-school programs to compensate.

"We must not literally or figuratively fail our children because it's easier than recognizing our own failures," said House.

New standards should aim to rid poor schools of low-level courses and programs, said Vinetta C. Jones of the College Board, who noted that many high-school math courses in schools with poorer students don't emphasize algebra or calculus.

Budgets and grants computed from lower property taxes and census undercounts mean less money for poor communities, said Wade Henderson, director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a civil rights law watchdog group.

"We need to compensate for years of deprivation," said Henderson.



Price

Bigotry resolution divides House

By JIM ABRAMS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - A simply worded Republican resolution denouncing bigotry of all kinds turned into a nasty exchange on the House floor and ended in defeat Tuesday.

"This bill is a ruse that is totally characteristic of Republicans who want civil rights on the cheap," thundered Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich.

"When I have had racist attacks made about me," retorted Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma, the only black Republican in Congress and the author of the resolution, "no one ran to the floor to con-

demn that."

The resolution was brought up under special rules requiring a two-thirds vote for passage. It failed to reach that, with 254 in favor, most of them Republicans, 152 opposed and 24 voting "present."

It stated that the House "reaffirms the determination of all its members to oppose any individuals or organizations which seek to divide Americans on the grounds of race, religion or ethnic prejudice."

The Republican leadership, over Democratic objections, crafted the measure as a substitute to a Democratic resolution that would have condemned a particular

group, the St. Louis-based Council of Conservative Citizens, accused by critics of having a racist agenda.

The CCC gained national attention after it was revealed that Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., and Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga., had addressed the group.

Barr said he condemned the teachings of the CCC and accused the Democrats of hypocrisy for not criticizing a fellow Democrat for addressing the same group. He alleged that Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., spoke to the group.

However, a CCC spokesman

See Bigotry on A12

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