



Wood: LIFT Academy addressing financial problems

By PAUL COLLINS
THE CHRONICLE

The LIFT Academy has been taking measures to address its financial problems, Dr. Frank Wood, chairman of the school's board of directors, said Monday. He said the situation has stabilized, and "we expect no further problems the remainder of this school year."

He declined to discuss the situation in detail until after the board's meeting yesterday after The Chronicle's press time.

The Chronicle contacted Wood after Ansylene Mitchell, a former teacher at LIFT Academy, told The Chronicle that her 403-B retirement account with the school was, according to her calculations, \$1,379.13 short. She also said that on several occasions she had been paid late by the school or her paychecks bounced because the school had insufficient funds, and on one occasion the school paid her in cash.

The LIFT Academy is a public charter school in Winston-Salem

that is geared toward at-risk students, but accepts any students.

Richard Klontz of the Office of Charter Schools of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, said that LIFT Academy receives state and local tax funds. This school year, the school received about \$3,200 in state money per student.

Kerry Crutchfield, director of finance for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, said the LIFT Academy received about \$1,642 in local tax money for each student

this school year. He said the average number of students at LIFT Academy this school year was about 167.

Mitchell took a layoff from LIFT Academy effective March 31 after Earline Parmon, executive director of LIFT Academy, gave her a choice of either taking a 39 percent pay cut or layoff. The 39 percent pay cut would have reduced Mitchell's salary from \$903 before taxes every two weeks to \$550. In January, the staff had to "temporarily" take a 15 percent pay cut,

which reduced Mitchell's before-tax salary from \$1,000 to \$903 every two weeks, Mitchell said.

"I have two kids and a husband," Mitchell said. "I have seven years of experience. Getting \$550 every two weeks, that's not me. I'm a professional. I went to college for a reason."

Mitchell said her 403-B retirement account with LIFT Academy was short. On Monday, Wood said he had talked with Parmon, who told him that "everything is right

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WINSTON-SALEM GREENSBORO HIGH POINT

Vol. XXV No. 36

THE CHRONICLE

1974 - Celebrating 25 Years - 1999

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The best of times



The Class of 1999 at Winston-Salem State University are all smiles as they received their diplomas Saturday at Lawrence Joel Coliseum.

WSSU graduates largest class ever

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

For more than two hours Saturday morning, they were celebrities.

Flashes from cameras recorded their every move. Messages of adoration, scrolled across colorful banners, dangled from railings and balconies.

And their names were yelled out by thousands as they made a dramatic march into the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum while a band played a protracted version of "Pomp and Circumstance."

More than 550 Winston-Salem State University students walked away with bachelor's

degrees this past weekend. They made up the school's largest graduating class ever. The graduates formed a sea of black caps and gowns as they sat anxiously in chairs on the coliseum floor, waiting for the official words that would finally transform them from students to alumni.

But before that transformation would come, they were treated to a host of speeches. The speakers spiced their addresses with talk about the "real world," "taking risks" and other typical graduation spiel.

The chairman of the university's board of trustees, Theodore Blunt, told grads to keep WSSU in their hearts wherever their careers take them. The

city's mayor, Jack Cavanagh, urged them to keep their addresses in Winston-Salem.

Cavanagh used some of his time to ask the the students not to say good-bye to the city just because they are leaving WSSU.

Keeping Gen-Xers here has become one of Cavanagh's crusades.

"I hope you will remain here because we need you here in Winston-Salem," Cavanagh said.

But it was commencement speaker Chuck Stone, a nationally renowned journalism professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who brought them to their feet and awakened their Ram pride.

"You are a bad class!" Stone

said to thunderous applause. "I hold these truths to be self-evident that to be a Ram is the highest power....A Ram will buff an Aggie into bad health."

Stone bought their attention with his knowledge, wit and even his money. During his speech, Stone gave one graduate a crisp \$50 bill after he correctly guessed the origins of the phrase "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times."

The phrase is the opening lines of the Dickens classic "A Tale of Two Cities."

Stone used the famous phrase to describe the state of blacks in America seven months before the millennium. The high-

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Blaylock makes mark on Wall Street, golf course

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

Ronald Blaylock is a busy man. After watching his company, Blaylock and Partners, clinch an \$8 billion bond deal for AT&T along with financial bigwigs like Merrill Lynch and J.P. Morgan last month, the Winston-Salem native is ready to wind down.

This weekend he'll put up his suit and tie and trade his briefcase for a golf bag during the first James E. Blaylock Senior Golf Tournament.

Blaylock says attending the event, named for his father who passed away last year, is a pleasure.

"I'm just immensely excited about it that they decided to do something that substantial," he said. "It means more than any business deal."

That's saying a lot. The AT&T deal was the largest in history. Because of deals like this and others, including a \$300 million bond deal for the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1996, B&P has garnered national acclaim in the business industry, including Black Enterprise's Financial Company of the Year award last summer.

"We raise money primarily for Fortune 500 companies on Wall Street," Blaylock said.

First-quarter returns this year have the company ranked 23 in under-



James Blaylock

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Black leaders ask commissioners to deny school request

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

African American leaders are asking one local elected body to throw a wrench into a controversial plan conceived by another elected body.

NAACP President Bill Tatum, the Rev. Carlton Eversley and other concerned citizens asked the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners Monday to deny a request by the city-county school board for \$1.25 million to support the system's theme schools.

Overall, the school board is asking commissioners for \$4.5 million more than the nearly \$75 million budgeted for the system by the county this year.

In a brief, rapid-fire speech to commissioners, Eversley used strong words to denounce theme schools, redistricting and the school system top brass.

"It has been a sham," he said at one point, describing themes, the redistricting plan and the system's defense of both.

Themes for schools range from arts and science, to math and medi-



Eversley

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This Week In Black History...

May 13, 1871 - Alcorn A&M College opens in Lorman, Miss.

May 17, 1954 - The U.S. Supreme Court rules on Brown v. Board of Education.

Rookie finds life on the streets different

The following article is part of an ongoing series about Officer Stephen Williams, a rookie with the Winston-Salem Police Department. The Chronicle will follow Williams through his first few months on the force to see how he adjusts to life on the streets.

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Like many students, Officer Stephen Williams burned the midnight oil during his months in rookie school. There were search and seizure procedures to be learned, state and federal laws to be memorized and weekly tests and quizzes.

After becoming a Winston-Salem police officer in March, Williams, like many graduates, has

come to the realization that a classroom and textbooks can never fully prepare one for the real world.

"You learn certain things in school, but then you get out on the street and it's not really how it works," Williams said. "The book scenario is always perfect and peachy-keen...and it just doesn't work like that on the streets."

But even though he received his law enforcement certificate weeks ago, his full acclimation into the force could take several more weeks or months.

This week Williams will enter the second phase of his post-rookie school training. All rookies in the department must complete 12 weeks of on-the-job training. Rookies shadow a senior officer for the first six weeks, observing the procedures

they use and picking up helpful hints. During the last six weeks, rookies are assigned to a different senior officer, and they take on a larger share of the policing duties while the senior officer closely monitors their every action.

Williams was scheduled to begin the second phase of his training on the day of the interview. Although he says he still has much more to learn, he was confident and ready to complete his training.

"So far it has been a challenge. It's kind of a juggling act. You're answering calls, you're writing reports, you're helping back up the other guys on calls, and you're trying to get a bite to eat in edgewise. I think I've lost a couple pounds because I've missed some meals," he

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Officer Stephen Williams flips through one of his textbooks from rookie school. Williams says he often refers to his books, even though he is now receiving on-the-job training.