

Kinder, gentler Williams touts family values

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

He came in like a lamb and left the same way. Armstrong Williams, a nationally known black conservative, kept his much criticized political views to himself during a weekend speech he delivered at a youth summit.

A kinder, gentler Williams touted the value of a good spiritual upbringing, gradually winning over a small crowd during his 15-minute, sermon-like speech.

"I never thought that growing up in 1999 with a mother and a father would be a luxury," Williams said Saturday during the Second Annual C Kids Day Summit.

Williams, 40, often referred to his own childhood in order to draw stark parallels between the way things were and how they are now.

He told the audience that he grew up on a tobacco farm in Marion, S.C., where his parents — James and Thelma — never argued or took opposing sides in front of

him and his siblings. His parents' marriage was based on respect and a mutual commitment to raise morally responsible children, he said. Williams said his parents remained committed to each other until the day James Williams passed away.

"Marriage is too easy today," Williams said, drawing "amens" from the crowd. "We marry because somebody looks good or has a nice body."

Williams did tread lightly into a heated political topic when he told the crowd about the many

guns his parents kept in their house.

In Washington, the city Williams now calls home, Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives have been rumberling for the past week over a bill that would make it tougher for young people to get guns.

"We had guns, but my father never had a safety lock or a glass case," he said. "My parents said if you touch them...you'll loose a

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Photos by T. Kevin Walker

"I love a good fight. Too bad the challengers didn't show up."

— Armstrong Williams

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1974 - Celebrating 25 Years - 1999

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1999

Robinson sparks fireworks at budget meeting

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Add City Hall to Winston-Salem's growing list of playhouses. The drama, or comedy, that premiered there this week could easily rival any currently showing at The Little Theatre.

Alderman Vernon Robinson stormed out of the board of aldermen budget hearing Tuesday night after the chairman of the board's finance committee said he was "out of order" for suggesting financial malfeasance was rampant at a local nonprofit agency. Robinson's departure came after he unleashed allegations from an unnamed source that accused Twana Wellman, the executive director of Experiment in Self-Reliance, of misusing funds.



Robinson

"Ms. Wellman, it's been alleged that as ESR director, you used ESR credit cards for (use) other than ESR purposes," Robinson told Wellman, who had just pitched the agency's successes to the board.

Robinson alleged that Wellman purchased tires on the agency's credit card, a charge he says an ESR

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Hundreds attend rally for schools

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

The city's most famous resident urged hundreds of people to actively work to better the racial climate during a rally Monday.

"It is better to light a match than to curse the darkness," Maya Angelou said at an anti-school redistricting rally at Reynolds High School. The rally was billed as one of the first grassroots challenges to the school system's controversial redistricting plan.

Rally organizers say they fear that the redistricting plan, which replaced cross-town bus-



Angelou

See Rally on A4

A Capitol matter



Photos by T. Kevin Walker

Elvis Hoggard passes out picket signs to members of the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont before last Thursday's rally. LOP joined Liberian organizations from across the nation at the event, which organizers hope will raise awareness of the plight of refugees from the small African nation.

Local Liberians take battle to Washington

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Their bloodlines shaped and molded the latter part of the century, and their last names have become synonymous with progress and equality.

For thousands of Liberian refugees facing the possibility of deportation from this country, U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy, D-R.I., and Martin Luther King III are among the only voices of hope left in a nation determined

to force them out.

The two men spoke here last Thursday at an outdoor rally aimed at persuading Congress to pass legislation that would grant more than 9,000 Liberians permanent resident status in the United States.

Kennedy is the nephew of the late John and Robert Kennedy and one of the youngest members of the House of Representatives. King is the son of the slain civil rights leader and the new president of the Southern Christian Leader-

ship Conference.

They awakened the sleepy crowd of several thousand and whipped it into a frenzy during their back-to-back speeches. Evoking memories of the legacies from which they come, the men spoke with passion and conviction, often making references to liberty, equality and justice.

"I want to make sure that we in this country live up to the greatness of this country...The Liberian community has more than earned its right to be called

Americans. The Liberian community has paid the price," Kennedy said from a makeshift stage erected in front of the elaborate water fountain in Center Park.

The rally, which stretched for nearly five hours, was originally scheduled to take place in the Upper Senate Park, but due to a scheduling conflict the location was changed to the nearby location at the last minute.

The crowd, which was made

See Liberians on A10

Lowrance grads look forward to future

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

Graduation day is always a special day as parents and students alike celebrate the work that has been achieved and look forward to the future.

That feeling was no less evident in the voice of Robin Allen, who was getting ready to watch her son R.J. graduate Monday from Lowrance Middle School, a school designed for special needs children. R.J. and 26 of his peers said goodbye to classmates at Lowrance and hello to the new challenges that lie ahead at South Park High School, another special needs educational institution.

"I feel pretty good," Allen said. "I'm confident with where he's going."

Allen first met R.J. while she worked at Lowrance seven years ago. "He just grew on me," she said.

A couple years later, with the approval of the state as a thera-

See Grads on A13



Photo by Damon E. Ford

R.J. prepares for graduation Monday at Lowrance Middle School. The rising ninth-grader was one of several students who received degrees and trophies during the ceremony.

Tearful goodbyes for graduates, faculty at Hill Middle School

By JERI YOUNG
THE CHRONICLE

Graduation day was bittersweet for students at Hill Traditional Academy.

During the almost two-hour-long ceremony, students from all grades were honored for a host of achievements, from perfect attendance to participating in Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association's annual essay contest.

The awards came as no surprise to most of the winners. Dressed in their Sunday best, a large portion of Hill's 400 students were seated on the floor of the school's gymnasium. As flashbulbs from proud parents lit the bleachers, one by one the students marched up to receive

See Hill on A13