

WSSU alumni, friends to ask for meeting with chancellor

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Rather than point fingers or watch silently from the sidelines, a group of Winston-Salem State University alumni say they want to take proactive steps to combat the university's current woes.

A small group of about 10 alumni, and a few concerned citizens, decided last week during a meeting on the university's campus to request a face-to-face meeting with WSSU's chancellor in order to address what it sees as

mounting problems at the school.

"We owe it to Dr. (Alvin) Schexnider to give him the opportunity to sit down and talk with us," said Delores Smith, president of the Urban League of Winston-Salem.

Smith was one of several community leaders who attended the meeting. Others included: Bill Tatum, president of the local NAACP chapter, and WSSU alums County Commissioner Walter Marshall and State Rep. Larry Womble.

The meeting came just weeks after Clementine Cone, WSSU's vice chancellor for finance and administration, was relieved of her financial responsibilities. Philip Gilley, an audit supervisor for the Office of State Audit, is now the university's chief financial officer. Gilley came to WSSU by way of University of North Carolina President Molly Broad, whom Schexnider had asked for help in correcting the university's ongoing accounting problems.

The length of Gilley's stint at

WSSU is indefinite, and he will report directly to Broad.

A possible meeting with Schexnider did not sit well with a few people at the meeting. Some advocated bypassing the chancellor and taking their complaints directly to Broad and even Gov. Jim Hunt.

But Smith urged restraint, telling the group that addressing its concerns to Schexnider was the logical initial step.

"Let's deal with our own first," Smith said.

Animosity toward Schexnider and his administration ran high for much of the meeting. Some of those who attended said they felt that they were being denied a voice at the school and that the university's administration has done more harm than good.

Bernice Davenport, Beaufort Bailey and other alumni have set up a hot-line where those concerned about the university's future can cast a vote of "no confidence" in the school's current

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THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 1999

Wellman gets vote of confidence from board

By JERI YOUNG
THE CHRONICLE

Experiment in Self-Reliance Executive Director Twana Wellman received a strong vote of confidence yesterday from the group's board of directors in a statement issued after a board meeting.

According to the statement, the board "gave its strongest vote of confidence" to Wellman "regarding all aspects of her management of the not-for-profit agency that assists persons transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency."

The vote of confidence came after a member of the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen grilled Wellman about the organization's finances during a public hearing last week.

Directors from the nonprofits pitched their agencies to the board in an effort to get funding from the city during the hearing.

Minutes before Alderman Vernon Robinson's outburst, members of the board had voted to save its questions on specific funding requests for a later meeting.

Among other things, Robinson criticized Wellman for having a membership at the Piedmont Club, an exclusive uptown meeting place used by city leaders and executives.

See Wellman on A9

Family raises questions in Lewis shooting

By PAUL COLLINS
THE CHRONICLE

People attending a recent meeting of the Black Leadership Roundtable of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County raised questions about whether a 6-year-old boy could have fatally shot his 11-year-old sister, Taquisha Lewis, with a 12-gauge pump shotgun in the way that police supposedly have reported.

At the May 20 roundtable meeting, James "J.R." Rollinson Jr. said that, according to news reports he had heard or read, the 6-year-old told police at first that a man shot his sister and ran away, but the boy later said that he himself shot his sister, accidentally.



Taquisha Lewis

Rollinson said he didn't see how a 6-year-old boy would have the strength to hold a 12-gauge shotgun on his shoulder and shoot someone, and even if the boy did, Rollinson figures that the impact from firing the gun would have knocked the boy down.

Walter Marshall, a county commissioner, said he

See Shooting on A10

LIFT's financial woes due to underfunding

Parmon says charter school working with state to overcome deficit

By PAUL COLLINS
THE CHRONICLE

The LIFT Academy will run a budget deficit of about \$60,000 this school year through June 30 largely because of a discrepancy in the number of students the school actually served and the number of students the school

received funding for, said Earline Parmon, executive director of the public charter school.

"We were funded for 140 students and we've actually had an enrollment of 250 with an average daily membership of 167," she said. "I had written to DPI (the N.C. Department of Public Instruction) and tried to renegotiate with them to be reimbursed for the actual number of students...LIFT was reimbursed for 16 additional students."

"We are soliciting from local businesses and corporations for monies to help us defray the cost

See LIFT on A11

Tearful tribute



Photo by Paul Collins

John Thomas of American Legion Post 220 plays 'Taps during a Memorial Day tribute to fallen veterans at Piedmont Memorial Gardens. More than 100 gathered for the ceremony which included songs, scripture, prayer and 21-gun salute. The event was sponsored by Hooper Funeral Home in conjunction with Piedmont Memorial Gardens. For more pictures, see page A8.

Black Repertory Company loses in budget talks

BRC director says city's failure to support festival baffling

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Aldermen continued this week with their tedious crawl toward a budget that will carry the city into the next millennium.

Board members crunched figures at a finance committee workshop Tuesday afternoon, trying to please an unlimited number of people with the limited contents of the city's coffers.

Perhaps nowhere is the board's need to please greater than among the more than one dozen non-profit agencies that have come to the aldermen with a slew of worthy

causes and open hands.

The budget proposal put together by the city manager's office and presented to the board in early May allocated only \$1 million for such agencies, but the non-profits have asked the "city for double that amount this year."

Therein lies the problem.

Before members of the board's finance committee began to nickel and dime their way through the non-profits' requests, Robert Northington, the chairman of the committee, warned that it's impossible to please every group.



Hamlin

"I've been here for 22 years...Nobody has been successful yet in terms of what way to handle this issue," Northington said.

The four members of the committee voted on how much city money each agency should receive. The committee's votes will serve as recommendations to the full board when it passes a budget Monday night.

Among the many requests that the committee downsized was that made by the N.C. Black Repertory Company. The organization had requested \$150,000 to help cover some of the costs for its 1999 National Black Theatre Festival, which will begin here on Aug. 2.

The amount requested was \$100,000 more than the amount the organization received from the city during the 1997-98 fiscal year, the last time the organization received

city money.

Tuesday, the committee unanimously voted to recommend that the organization receive \$50,000.

Larry Leon Hamlin, the executive director of the company, said Wednesday that he wasn't surprised by the committee's move.

"I know it was a long shot, but I wanted this organization to be on record formally asking for what we needed," he said.

Hamlin said more funds are needed each year the festival is staged because it grows consider-

See BRC on A8

'Three the Hard Way'



Actor and former NFL star Fred Williamson shows an Easton Elementary School student the moves that made him a '70s icon during a visit to school last Friday. Williamson was in town for The Crosby Golf Tournament. At right is actor Kenny Davis.

'We can't afford to hide

Congressman touts need for blacks to participate in census

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Ignoring the census is like kissing millions of dollars goodbye, says a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

"There has been a tendency in the past that when census people came and knocked on the door, people just turn and walk away," U.S. Rep Mel Watt said at a news conference Tuesday on census fairness. "It is important that we do a better job in 2000 counting

those people."

The 1990 census missed almost 130,000 North Carolinians, according to some estimates. The undercount cost the state \$68.3 million in federal funding, Watt said, money that could have gone toward education, community development and highway transportation.

"We can't afford to hide," Watt said of those who do not return census forms and ignore the census counters.

Historically, those who have been left out of the census count are minorities, immigrants and young children. According to Watt, the 1990 census missed nearly 1,500 children in Winston-Salem alone - enough young peo-

See WATT on A9



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