

# COMMUNITY FOCUS

Winston-Salem Greensboro High Point

1974- Celebrating 25 Years - 1999

JUNE 10, 1999

SECTION C

## Teaching others to see



Left, Regina Elcock at 8 years of age, relaxes on a bench in front of the Red Hook Projects, where Elcock was raised in South Brooklyn. Right, Here she takes pride in the toy sewing machine her granddaughter Deonica Reid gave her for a Christmas present, a symbol of her ministry.

## Legally blind woman regains sight through surgery

By FELECIA P. McMILLAN  
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Sewing is what Regina Elcock loves to do. For 33 years she's quietly sown wedding gowns, dresses and choir robes.

And while many people sew, Elcock's accomplishments are special. She has built her career despite being labeled "legally blind" at birth. During a recent presentation at Kimberly Park School job fair, Elcock displayed a triptych that described her as entrepreneur, reader, accountant, scientist, creator, mechanic, advertiser, mathematician, designer, banker, problem solver and seamstress.

"You have to have all of these skills to minister to others with the skill of your hands. My sewing work is not a business, but a ministry. I walk by faith and not by sight," she said.

Now after years of wearing thick glasses and contacts, Elcock can add another title to her triptych - sighted.

Last March, the New York native underwent surgery that helped her regain her sight. She looks at her life as having three phases: the original diagnosis that she would be completely blind by puberty, the turning point

of crisis and the final deliverance through the help of LASIK surgery.

Dr. Gregory P. Temas performed the surgery at the TLC Winston-Salem Laser Center. Her eye doctor, Dr. Grady Elliott, believed that she could benefit from LASIK surgery since it has proven to be effective over the three years it has been available.

Dr. James D. Branch, an ophthalmologist in Winston-Salem, has performed this type of surgery on various patients. He defined the LASIK procedure as a form of cosmetic surgery that can reduce or eliminate astigmatism or nearsightedness.

"The advantage of this procedure is that patients can go without wearing their heavy glasses," Branch said. "This type of surgery benefits people with nearsightedness who are 22 or older with stable vision. This means that they have had no change in their prescription for two consecutive years," he said.

Branch notes that the people who benefit most are those ages 22-40 because after 40 presbyopia, or the "inability to magnify detail," begins to develop.

Branch also noted the risks involved, which include the chance of losing vision or of developing infection. "When the eye is cut, the procedure creates a flap or a trap door which can cause an infection in the cornea from having the trap door open," he said. In addition, scarring could develop in

See **Blind** on page C2

*"I walk by faith and not by sight."*

— Regina Elcock



Members of the Senior Choir at United Metropolitan Baptist Church in Winston-Salem proudly wear robes prepared by Regina Elcock after her laser surgery. From left, Edna Sigers, Lisa Irby, Lisa Faulk, president Yvette Hatcher and Minnie Davis.

**Summer Employment For Youth**  
The Employment Division of the Winston-Salem Urban League, in collaboration with the Department of Labor, will sponsor a "Career Blitz and Youth Employment Seminar" on Friday, June 11, at the Urban League offices starting at 8:30 a.m. Youths between the ages 13 and 18 seeking summer employment will be involved in a variety of pre-employment workshops. Other topics of discussion will deal with child labor laws and ways youths can become their own boss. Several representatives from local companies will also be on hand to share job opportunities. Participants are asked to come dressed to impress with a resume in hand. For more information call 725-5614.

**WSSU Radio Station Sponsors A Dance**  
WSNC-FM, Winston-Salem State University's listener supported jazz radio station, will end its fund-raising effort with "The Prom for All Ages," on Saturday, June 12, at 7 p.m. in the Benton Convention Center. The music-packed, fun-filled, swing dance event will feature the sounds of the Vintage Orchestra, a local 18-piece big band orchestra, and other modern musical standards. The Benton Convention Center will be transformed into the perfect prom setting for dancers of all ages during this special family oriented gala. All proceeds from the event will go to the non-profit radio station. For more information on tickets and event activities, call 750-2304.

**Health And Political Initiatives Forum**  
The Black Leadership Roundtable and the Winston-Salem Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority will sponsor a health and political initiatives forum for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. This event will take place Saturday, June 12, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Anderson Center on the campus of Winston-Salem State University. Congressmen Mel Watt and Richard Burr as well as local physicians from Twin City Medical Society and Wake Forest University Baptist Center and many others will be on hand to talk about health and political issues as they relate to local, state and national perspectives. For more information call 650-0845, 724-2971 or 659-4709.

**Free Summer Swim Program In High Point**  
The High Point Human Relations and Parks and Recreation departments will sponsor their annual free summer swim program starting the week of June 13 until Labor Day. This program provides passes for youngsters 16 years old and under of low-income families to swim one day each week at Washington Terrace Swimming Pool. Youths whose families are not receiving any social services assistance are also eligible for the program, but must bring documents to verify eligibility. Parents interested in enrolling their children in the program should contact the Human Relations Office at 211 South Hamilton Street in room 117. For more information call 883-3124.

See Page C10 for more of this week's Community Calendar