



With help from the community, Kwame Cannon is learning how to live on the outside. Cannon, 30, has spent the last 12 years in prison.

Photo by Damon Ford

# Cannon adjusts to life outside prison

## After 12 years in prison, former inmate is ready for freedom

By DAMON FORD  
THE CHRONICLE

GREENSBORO - It's been a tough three months for Kwame Cannon.

In March the 30-year-old was pardoned by Gov. Jim Hunt, after serving 12 years in prison.

In 1986, Cannon, then only 17 years old, received two life sentences for a teenage crime spree.

Over the last three months, Cannon has had a little trouble adjusting to life "on the outside."

He couldn't figure out how to work his microwave, dishwasher or VCR.

Even the simple task of using a washing machine at a coin-operated laundry can turn into a trial-by-fire situation.

"I got in front of that (machine) and I said, 'Excuse me,

ma'am, could you come here for a minute? So I got the lady to come over and help me out," Cannon said.

"Things have changed so much. It's like the kid in the wheelchair who sits around and watches the other kids play, wishing he could play too. Then one day he's granted that opportunity, but now he's faced with the task of learning how to play. That's exactly where I'm at."

Cannon is also adjusting to life with his mother and younger

brother, who was only 11 years old when Cannon was carted off to jail in 1986.

"We're going through a transition period at home," he said. "For 13 years they got used to living without Kwame there, and now that I've come there, I didn't realize it but I kind of got used to living without them also, so we're having these frustrating moments where we're trying to work through it."

See Cannon on A13

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THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1999

## WSSU board discusses restructure

### Trustees give thumbs-up to controversial plan; reps share concerns with Broad

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

In a show of solidarity, Winston-Salem State University's Board of Trustees unanimously voted last Friday to support efforts to get the university's financial house in order.

The vote came after Brenda Diggs, chairperson of the board's finance committee, gave board members a brief description of some of the areas where Philip Gilley will be working to make improvements. Gilley, who took over as the chief financial officer at the university after Chancellor Alvin Schexnider asked UNC President Molly Broad for assistance in fixing WSSU's financial troubles, will keep tabs on the university's key accounts, making sure that all funds are properly classified and are in the appropriate accounts, Diggs said.

The school's former chief financial officer, Clementine Cone, who still works at WSSU, came under fire for shifting a quarter-million dollars from WSSU's endowment fund to another school account earlier this year.

Diggs warned that WSSU should not be singled out. She said the university is neither the first nor last institution to have financial glitches.

"These are not areas unique to WSSU," Diggs said. "It's important how we got here in the first place, but it's far more important what we do about it (now)."

Gilley, an employee of the Office of State Audit, was introduced to the board for the first time. Some board members did not learn of Gilley's presence at WSSU until he had already arrived.

Schexnider introduced Gilley as he called out the names of those on his staff. Gilley reports directly to Broad.

"(Gilley) has hit the ground running, getting his arms around issues we are trying to tackle," Schexnider said.

Schexnider went on to say that some of the issues the school is currently faced with stretch back to 1990, six years before he became chancellor. Schexnider also defended his move of asking Broad for help.

"I'm not shy about asking for help if I need it," he said.

Schexnider announced that the school's athletic department is getting a compliance director. Paul Cloud, a professor in the department of business and economics, will serve as compliance director on a full-time basis this fall.

The announcement of a full-time compliance director comes more than a month after it was revealed that the National Collegiate Athletic Association will look into charges made by a WSSU alumnus that grades of some basketball players were changed.

In other news, Lee Hampton, vice chancellor for university advancement, confirmed that Schexnider has met with concerned alumni. A group of alumni and friends of the university announced plans to ask for a meeting with the chancellor several weeks ago in order to address their concerns about the state of WSSU.

At a meeting last Monday at the Winston-Salem Urban



Schexnider

See WSSU on A12

## Star gazing

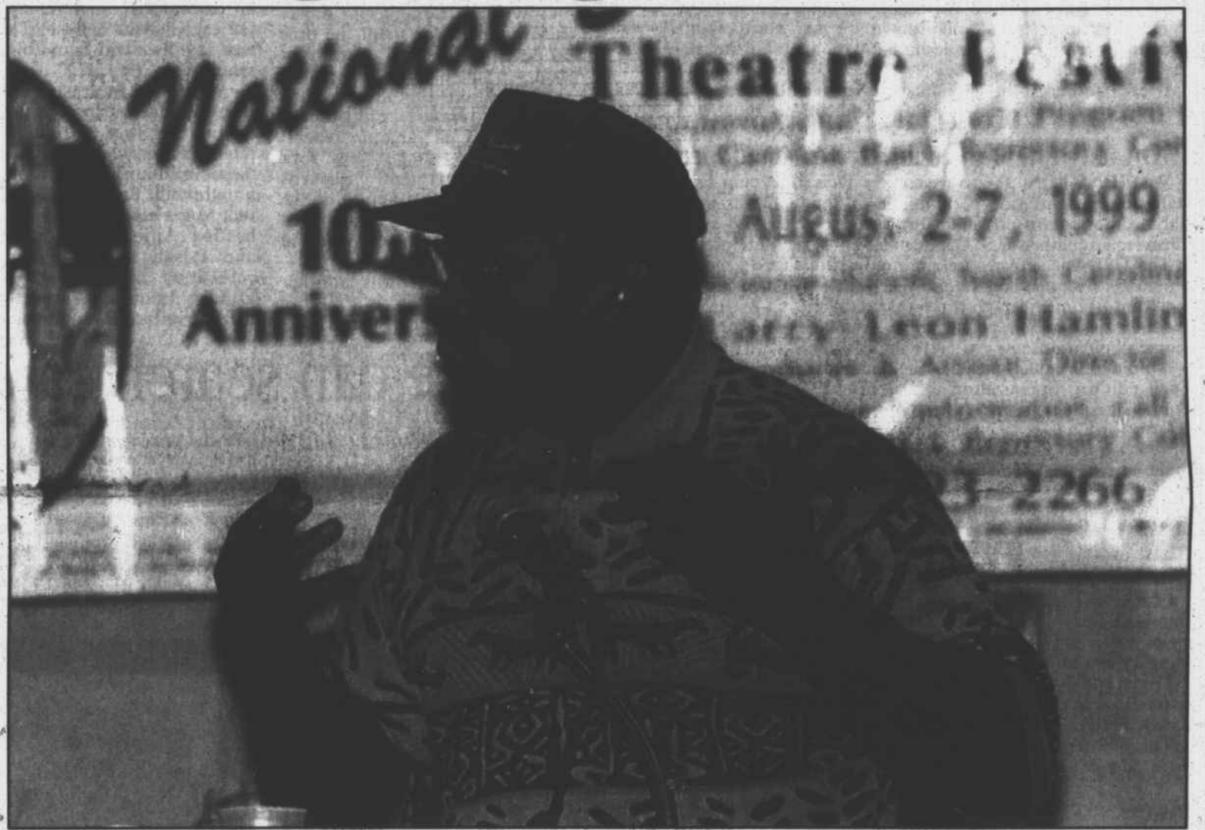


Photo by Bruce Chapman

Actor John Amos was in town Monday meeting with supporters of the National Black Theatre Festival. Amos, who starred in the television series "Good Times," "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and the mini-series "Roots," joined a host of celebrities for the festival kickoff. For more photos, see page A13.

## BRC gets funding; Burke questions Stuart

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Hours after corporate bigwigs and well-known celebrities announced some of the highlights of this year's National Black Theatre Festival at a midday news conference, some members of the board of aldermen successfully haggled their way to the city's largest single financial contribution to the festival ever.

Before approving a budget for the 1999-2000 fiscal year Monday night, the board voted 5-3 to grant the N.C. Black Repertory Company (BRC), which stages the biannual event, \$100,000 to help with costs associated with

this year's festival, which will be held Aug 2-7.

BRC was one of more than a dozen non-profit agencies that had requested funding from the city this year. The \$100,000 amount is \$50,000 less than what Larry Leon Hamlin, the executive director of BRC, had requested, but it is also \$50,000 more than the amount the



Wellman

finance committee unanimously recommended BRC receive during the committee's budget talks three weeks ago.

Alderwoman Joycelyn Johnson moved to fund BRC at its original \$150,000 request. Johnson said because the city has "underfunded" the festival in the past and because the festival has pumped more than \$25 million into the local economy since it began in 1989, the city would be making a sound and a minuscule financial investment. Board members Vivian Burke, Fred Terry and Nelson Malloy agreed with Johnson that the festival should be granted its full request.

It was a change of heart for Burke and Malloy, both of whom voted to grant BRC \$50,000 as members of the finance committee.

"It's really a modest request," Malloy said of the \$150,000 Monday. "They've been underfunded for the last 10 years."

But Mayor Jack Cavanagh - who casts the deciding vote when the aldermen tie - gave the \$150,000 request the thumbs down. Cavanagh, however, told Johnson that he would support a motion for \$100,000. The mayor's vote was unnecessary on Johnson's \$100,000 motion;

See Budget on A12

## Liberian ambassador to attend BLR anniversary

### 'That is a major coup for us,' roundtable official says

By PAUL COLLINS  
THE CHRONICLE

Ambassador Rachel Gbenyon-Diggs of Liberia will attend the Black Leadership Roundtable second year anniversary celebration July 9, N.C. Rep. Larry Womble, convener of the roundtable, announced during the group's June 17 meeting.

"It's a testament and feather in our cap that ... (the ambassador wants) to come to the Black Leadership Roundtable anniversary. That is a major coup for us," Womble said.

Womble attributed "the coup" to the roundtable's ties to James Hunter, the president of the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont. On

See Liberian on A10

## Who will fill his shoes?



Photo by Damon E. Ford

Greensboro leaders talk about who will fill the void left by the death of noted activist Ervin Brisbon. Brisbon died of an apparent heart attack two weeks ago. For more see page A4.

## Commissioners settle on county budget

### Marshall, Parmon vote for extra funds for schools with reservations

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

In less than 45 minutes the board of county commissioners approved a 1999-2000 budget last week that included extra funds for schools and continued support for non-profit groups. Commissioners agreed to a 4 percent hike for the city-county school system, more than 2 percent less than officials with the school system had asked for.

Additional funding for the school system had come under fire this year from the NAACP and black religious leaders who oppose the school system's redistricting and theme school plans.

See County Budget on A12