

**Carter**

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tion. The five-year cancer survival rate for African American women is 71 percent. For white women, that figure is almost 90 percent.

This year more than 18,000 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in the African American community. Six thousand black women will die of breast cancer in 1999.

Those are facts Carter never thought about.

"I would see things about breast cancer on television," she said. "I heard all of those numbers, but I just didn't think about it."

Carter's odyssey began during a routine checkup in late 1997. Her doctor asked if she'd had a breast exam. Carter's answer was a resounding "no."

Walter Ezeigbo, Carter's physician, actually made an appointment for a mammogram for Carter and followed up with her to make sure she kept it.

Ezeigbo says his days are filled with women in their 40s who have never had a breast exam or mammogram.

"It's almost a tug of war - a constant battle - telling women they need to have mammograms and that they need to do their exams," Ezeigbo said. "Some of them even think that by having a mammogram they can induce cancer in their breast. That's a fear they have. What I really try to do is destroy the stereotypes people have about screening for cancer."

Ezeigbo says a second challenge doctors face is convincing black women that they need to take time to care for themselves.

Often black women are stretched almost to the breaking point, caring for their families and others. Medical care for themselves takes a back seat.

At one time Carter felt the same way. Now she gets angry when she hears women say they don't have the time or the money for doctors appointments.

"I have a hard time now convincing women that it's worth it to spend money on doctors if they're not sick," she said. "I used to be like that too. But

what I tell people is that you're worth \$200 a year. You're worth much more than that."

Lack of preventive care is one reason why black women may not fare as well as white women in their treatment. Often the cancer is detected later when it's more difficult to treat.

"The main reason we have a tough time dealing with so many types of cancer is that we don't access medical care very early," Ezeigbo said. "Most of the time when cancer is diagnosed in our women, it's usually very late. That decreases the chance of them doing very well."

Early detection often increases a patient's chance for survival. The American Cancer Society recommends that women over age 20 conduct a monthly breast self-exam following the completion of the menstrual cycle to check for irregularities in the breast.

"I think it's important that doctors have an interest and realize (they) have a role to play," Ezeigbo said. "Your job as a physician is to provide your patients with enough information to make an informed decision. Whether I've been seeing a patient for five years or whether it's the first time I'm meeting them, it's something I bring up. I don't wait for them to bring it up."

And two years later Carter is glad he did.

"Cancer really taught me to value the right things," she said. "I take care of myself better now. I just don't want anyone else to have to go through what I did to realize that they matter."

**Tips for early detection**

- The most common sign of breast cancer is a lump in the breast or armpit. Other symptoms include clear or bloody discharge from the nipples, swelling, skin irritation or dimpling; and nipple pain, scaliness or inversion.

- In addition to the self-examination, the ACS recommends regular clinical examinations and mammograms every one to two years and annually for women over 40. These X-ray screenings are useful for finding

tumors that cannot be felt.

- Although breast cancer in women under 40 is rare, the National Cancer Institute recommends that younger women who have higher risk consult their doctors about getting screened before age 40.

- Ezeigbo recommends women over the age of 18 complete monthly breast self-examinations.

"Always check yourself at the same time each month," he said. "That's the only way you're actually going to find what your breast feels like normally."

Ezeigbo added that women should use the pads of their fingers rather than their fingertips during the examination.

"The pads are more sensitive," he said.

- The Breast Cancer Coalition of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County will celebrate National Mammography Day on Oct. 15 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Hanes Mall. Experts will be on hand to provide information about breast cancer and early detection.

**THE CHRONICLE**

**News  
Deadline is  
Monday at  
5 p.m.**

**"Golden" occassion**



Photos by T. Kevin Walker  
As part of its 50th Anniversary Celebration, The Arts Council provided birthday cake to hundreds of people last week at Bellsouth Friday Night Jazz. Mayor Pro Tem Vivian Burke also presented David Hudson, president of The Arts Council, with a special citation from the city.

**Letters**

from page A6

lems are often caused by our attitudes, attempts at manipulation, and certainly by procrastination. I look askance at the idea that there is little for which to apologize.

I couldn't agree more with Martin when he says, "We must expect high achievement from all our students." I know from experience in the classroom that teachers get very much of what they expect from students. High expectations should be the norm. I am dismayed, however, by the mindset of some teachers and administrators when they have lower expectations for so-called minorities, denying them the love, attention and education they deserve.

It should be pointed out that in the very near future America will not have a majority of any race or group. We will be a nation of minorities. This calls for a re-evaluation of our goals and motives and priorities. Consequently, let's get over busing and neighborhood schools and get on with teaching just children. We have lost one generation by failure to educate, and we can't wait until the present generation reaches adulthood and is able to buy a house in our suburban neighborhoods in order to integrate our schools. That is "pie in the sky by and by" if I ever heard it.

We should alter the present program to fit the present situation and needs. Let us make it happen in our classrooms today. After all, in the long run, whatever is going to happen will happen in the classroom. Diversity there should be our strength, not our fear.

Virginia Sams  
Winston-Salem

**To the Editor:**

Schools and communities across the country will celebrate The Month of the Young Adolescent in October. I encourage all citizens in Forsyth County to join Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in drawing special attention to the academic and developmental needs of our 10- to 15-year-old students.

This time in a young person's life is one of the most critical periods in his or her development and perhaps the last best chance to shape a life. All of us - educators, parents and others in the community - must work together to help them succeed academically, while helping them understand their changing social needs.

The Month of the Young Ado-

lescent has four major objectives:

- The importance of parents being knowledgeable about young adolescents and being actively involved in their lives.

- The understanding that healthy bodies and healthy minds equal healthy young people.

- The realization that the education young adolescents experience during this time will, in large measure, determine the future for all citizens.

- The knowledge that every adolescent should have the opportunity to pursue her or his dreams and aspirations.

Our children are, indeed, our future. Please join us in celebrating and honoring The Month of the Young Adolescent.

Gregory Thornton  
Assistant Superintendent,  
Middle Schools

**To the Editor:**

I commend you on your coverage of the log raising ceremony for St. Phillips Moravian Church in Old Salem on Sept. 25.

This ceremony raised awareness of the monumental, historical event of 1823 when 30 slaves embarked upon establishing the first African Moravian Church. This continues to show that Africans and African Americans have and are still contributing to many aspects of American mainstream life. For several decades, our contributions have been excluded from history books and even now are undermined by a society that refuses to accept the fact that we are not criminals, welfare candidates and general burdens on an otherwise exclusionary system. The coming together of the 30th District of North Carolina Prince Hall Masons and Moravian officials illustrated a commitment to preserving this historical site and highlights that despite popular beliefs we are represented in more venues than just simple social clubs and trivial pursuits.

Also, thanks go to Mel White, the African American program director at Old Salem. Hopefully, our community will continue to support Mr. White's efforts to shed light on the history of African Americans in Old Salem and Happy Hill communities.

As well, we need to recognize our heritage and continue to bring to the forefront the positive contributions of African Americans to the welfare and benefit of the Winston-Salem community at large.

Jerry C. Hinson,  
Past Master, Olympic Lodge  
No. 795, 314 Elm Drive

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