

2001

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the District Court bench.

With the three new judges, the court grew to 15 members. Biggs became the third African American on the court and the fourth woman.

"It was an honor to be selected by former Gov. Hunt, and I look forward to serving as long as the law and the people of North Carolina allow me to do so," Biggs said in February.

In 2002, Biggs will have to not only win over voters in Forsyth County but residents all over the state in order to keep her spot on the court.

An ambitious group of mostly religious and community leaders unveiled a new group that would work on ways to jolt economic and residential development in East Winston. In a symbolic move, The Nehemiah Initiative held a coming-out party on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The group let the city know that it too has a dream, a grand vision for East Winston that includes revitalization and financial empowerment. Members of the group vowed to work with the private sector to secure sound investments for East Winston and solid partnerships that would benefit all parties involved.

Months before he would become the center of a debate that would engulf the black community for weeks, political commentator Tavis Smiley returned to Winston-Salem to promote his latest book. During a stop at Special Occasions, Smiley, known for his strong political views, was in rare form. He criticized black leadership and raised doubts about the nation's soon-to-be president.

"Some of us still do not want to call him the president-elect," Smiley said about George W. Bush to a crowd of more than 100, "but the president-select because he was selected by the Supreme Court."

A few months later Smiley was axed from his talk show-hosting duties on Black Entertainment

his wallet to many worthy organizations and causes over the years, including the Winston-Salem State University Foundation and the YMCA.

February

The Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity came to the defense of William Brandon, the owner of the Eastway Plaza Shopping Center, after banks threatened to foreclose on the property.

Brandon's center had been a crown jewel in East Winston when he first opened it. He received funds from the city and a loan from a consortium of 12 banks in 1993 to open the shopping center. But times got tough. He lost a major clothing store and struggled to find new tenants. Brandon and the ministers claimed they did not know why the banks moved to foreclose on the property. Brandon said he had made regular payments on his loan.

The ministers helped to broker a temporary fix for Brandon. The foreclosure was pushed back for a short time, but Brandon's fight to keep the shopping center played out throughout 2001. Brandon prevailed, though, and is now one of several owners of the plaza.

Mayor Jack Cavanagh also found himself in a familiar place—in hot water with the African-American community. Cavanagh added his two cents to the controversy surrounding Brandon by telling a reporter that black entrepreneurs seek City Hall financing for business ventures that are not fully thought out. The ministers demanded an apology; they got one.

The city spent thousands of dollars to create a new logo for the city and thousands more on a mass marketing campaign to make city residents aware of the logo. "O! Winston-Salem, Now that's Living" was selected by residents as the city's logo after a series of focus groups. The logo was to be used to help market the city to outsiders. The logo and its cost became a running joke



Dan Besse addresses a crowd at Miller Park on the day he announced that he would run for Southwest Ward alderman. About 100 people were on hand for the announcement.

in Winston-Salem were livid at Chief Linda Davis for leaving a captain in charge while she was away from the department. At the time, the department had one assistant chief, African-American Mike McCoy. Many people thought he should naturally be in charge in lieu of the chief.



Davis

The perceived slight did not come long after Davis demoted three African-American sergeants for what she called failing to control a rowdy concert at Joel Coliseum.

McCoy had publicly cried foul when Davis was named chief in 1999. He was a top contender for the job. Later in the year, McCoy applied for the chief's position in Wilson but did not get the post.

March

The city got its second African-American assistant police in Patricia Norris, a 24-year veteran who had run the department's professional standards division before being promoted. With Norris' appointment, the hierarchy of the city's Police Department bucked tradition, with a female chief and two black assistant chiefs.

Norris, at the time, said being a woman is not important in her line of work. Being at the top of one's game, she said, is very important, however.

"I think we have gotten to a point where it doesn't matter what sex a person is as long as they can do the job," Norris said.

The results of a nationwide survey that gauged the level of social interaction among residents in a variety of cities found that folks in Winston-Salem do not mind digging deep into their pockets to give to charities but avoid interaction with neighbors.

The local survey was conducted by the Winston-Salem Foundation, which months earlier had started a special fund to help bring residents closer together through a variety of initiatives.



Green

Among the results of the survey were that most whites in the city have at least one black friend and most blacks have at least one white friend. The survey also revealed that Hispanics in the city were slow to trust non-Hispanics.

Members of the Black Leadership Roundtable and the Winston-Salem Bar Association protested in front of the Forsyth County Courthouse to try to save the life of Willie Fisher, a Winston-Salem man on death row. Local opponents of the death penalty had won a big victory a few months earlier when the city's Board of Aldermen voted to support a death penalty moratorium.

"I believe that there are alternatives of punishment," said Todd Melver, the then-president of the Winston-Salem Bar Association, which is made up of local African-American lawyers. "Life in prison will have as much effect, plus it will keep them from committing other crimes in society." But the momentum the anti-death penalty movement was gaining came too late for Fisher, who was convicted in 1993 of stabbing to death his girlfriend. He was put to death a few days after the protest.

Forsyth Technical Community College announced that it had found a new president after an exhaustive search. Gary Green came to the school from Calhoun Community College in Decatur,

Ala., where he served as executive vice president. Green officially took over the reins of the retiring Desna Wallin in July.

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon came to Winston-Salem, not to perform one of his infamous mass weddings but to lead a national tour for world peace and religious solidarity. The "We Stand Together Tour" reportedly visited all 50 states, with Moon, the founder of the controversial Unification Church, calling for people of various faiths to come together.

Moon's appearance drew hundreds, although the 80-something Moon did not do much talking during his stop here.

For a quick second, CIAA officials considered bringing the popular basketball tournament back to Winston-Salem. A city delegation had put together a decent package to try to lure the tourney back to the city, where it was staged for six years in the 1990s. But the CIAA announced that the grass in Raleigh was much too green to leave the capital city. In making its decision to extend its stay in Raleigh, the CIAA cited that a record 75,000 fans attended the February 2001 tournament, an all-time record. The last year the tourney was in Winston-Salem, about 42,000 people attended.



Maxwell Christine Banks Grier

April

The school system began to tout initial plans for a multimillion school bond referendum by holding talks at several county schools and taking part in forums such as one held by the Black Leadership Roundtable. At the time, the system had hoped for a \$200 million bond referendum (it was later pared down to \$150 million), and plans for a new school in the African-American community were not set in stone. At the roundtable meeting, members expressed concern that new schools were being proposed while half-empty ones, such as Kimberley Park Elementary and Atkins Middle, could still accommodate students.

The first annual Piedmont Jazz Festival was in the Triad. The festival was the brainchild of N.C. A&T State University Chancellor James Renick, a longtime jazz enthusiast.

The four-day festival brought many well-known and rising jazz artists to Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem, including Rachelle Ferrell and Nnena Freelon, who did an artist workshop at Winston-Salem State University for students interested in pursuing careers in music.

WSSU got another visitor soon after Freelon. Novelist and rapivist Sister Souljah drew a nearly packed house at the K.R. Williams Auditorium on the university's campus, where she spent close to two hours talking about everything from the tone of gangsta rap to middle-class black folks.

"The problem nowadays with us as black people is that America has taught us to be individuals whereas in the African culture, 'I' means 'us,'" Souljah said.

Souljah's career as a novelist

has been much more successful than her brief career in music. Her latest novel, "The Coldest Winter Ever," was a best seller and is being made into a cable movie.

Souljah, known for shooting from the hip, gained national recognition after then-presidential hopeful Bill Clinton criticized her for comments she made about the Los Angeles riots.

A \$13,000 check was presented to Cook Elementary School Principal Pamela Pele by a group of African-American churches that collected the money during their revival services.

"We are thrilled to pieces. It means that we can get things for the children that otherwise we would have to do without. It is a blessing," Pele said during a special assembly at the school where the check presentation took place.

The school planned to use the money to buy classroom computers, books and new chairs for the gymnasium. Officials from the churches said they wanted to help the school because it is located near the churches and most of the students who attend the school come from low-income families.

The Rev. Joseph Parks, pastor of Grace United Community Church, told students and the staff of the school, "We pray that all of you know today that all seven of

these pastors, who represent probably more than 10,000 other people, are concerned about you and you are great in all of our lives."

The other churches involved were Mount Pleasant Baptist, Philips Chapel Baptist, Saint Mark Baptist, Saints Home United Methodist and Union Chapel Baptist.

May

The interim chancellor of Winston-Salem State University became the permanent chancellor after serving at the helm for 16 months. The Board of Governors for the University of North Carolina system easily approved Harold Martin for the job.

WSSU's board of trustees had launched a national search for a chancellor but in the end, board members decided that Martin was the best man to lead WSSU into the new century. One of Martin's first official duties as chancellor was to preside over WSSU's 109th commencement exercise, where WSSU's largest class ever graduated.

Across town, Wake Forest University honored Dolly McPherson during its commencement. McPherson, the first African-American woman to join Wake Forest's faculty, retired earlier in the year after 27 years of teaching at the university. The New Orleans native became a favorite of students and popular among fellow faculty at the school.

McPherson was an educator for 51 years before she retired. She told The Chronicle that she enjoyed every minute of her teaching career.

"I have challenged and I have been challenged. I have taught and I have been taught. I have no regrets. I have enjoyed it," she said.

More than a hundred people lined their cars along Carver School Road in the wee hours of the morning hoping to get the chance to snatch up \$1 a gallon gasoline at Jones Chevron. The tiny station was a madhouse as people tried to make it to the pumps before the one-hour sale expired.

The gas at the station was the cheapest in town at the time. A

neighboring station had the same grade of gasoline for \$1.75; other stations had gas prices approaching \$2. The \$1 gas was part of a national promotion sponsored by "Tom Joyner Morning Show." Selected stations from New York to Dallas offered up cheap gas to a willing public fed up with escalating gas prices.

Allen Joines, officially announced his plans to run for mayor. He did so by visiting several sites throughout the city to discuss issues with residents. Joines said that he would rely on his background to help him win over voters. He served as a city administrator for 30 years and had developed a close working relationship with a cross section of people and organizations through his work with the city.

"These folks know me. They know my ability to do projects and bring together groups on very complex issues," Joines said during a stop on his day-long tour.

June

More than 100 people that live in the neighborhood near North Cherry Street and Indiana Avenue were up in arms over talk of converting an empty building in the community into a halfway house for former inmates. The idea came from a private company that operates many such facilities across the country. During early discussion with city officials, the company stated that the facility would not be a threat to the surrounding neighborhood. But neighbors were not buying that. Led by their alderman, Nelson Malloy, residents began a letter-writing campaign and a petition drive.



Malloy

Malloy said he and his constituents were not against the former inmates or efforts to reform them but believed that other areas would be better suited for a halfway house.

"Everybody deserves a second chance, but the issue at hand is about the appropriateness of where they want to locate this facility," Malloy said.

The building that was in question, located at 4508 Cherry Street, is still vacant.

The proposed cafeteria in East Winston was still being proposed after a two-year effort to raise money through the selling of stocks to East Winston residents. But many investors began to tire of the promises and began asking questions and asking for their investments, which ranged from \$10 to \$3,000 in some cases, to be returned.

Concerned residents' fears were not calmed by the fact that David Capital—a group created by the East Winston Community Development Corp. to spearhead the building of the cafeteria—had spent nearly all of the \$434,300 it had raised but had not yet even purchased the land for the proposed cafeteria. Most of the money was spent on consultants, advertising and professional services, according to a finance report given to shareholders.

James Grace, who heads the East Winston CDC, said the CDC underestimated how much money it would take to raise capital for the project; therefore, more money had to be spent on things such as a promotional video and brochures touting the project. The last time Grace spoke to The Chronicle on the record, he said he was moving forward with plans to locate the eatery in Eastway Plaza in the old Cato building that has been vacant for some time.

Candidates began to situate themselves behind the starting gate for the September primaries and the November election. Dan Besse, a lawyer and environmental advocate, officially threw his hat into the ring for the Southwest Ward alderman seat. Besse held a kickoff rally at Miller Park, in the heart of the ward, to announce his decision to run.

The event was attended by many loyal Democrats, including Marlowe Foster, who had made his intentions to unseat South Ward Alderman Vernon Robinson known early in the year.

Besse told the crowd that victory was within his grasp.

"I believe that we need repre-



Fans wait to get their books signed by Tavis Smiley.

Television, reportedly because he was a bit too outspoken for BET chief Robert Johnson. Smiley's friends on the "Tom Joyner Morning Show," where he is a frequent guest, urged blacks to voice their displeasure over Smiley's dismissal. Special Occasions started a petition drive locally and garnered the names of dozens of people. In the end, though, Johnson did not budge and Smiley found bigger mountains to scale at networks such as ABC.

Well-known local philanthropist Marshall Bass started out the year by lending a helping hand to parents who want to enroll their children in the highly acclaimed Best Choice Center. Bass started a \$50,000 endowment for grants to help parents pay tuition at the center, which runs an after-school and summer program that gives youngsters lessons in everything from computers to math.

Bass made the decision to start the endowment after the center's board of directors raised tuition. A retired R.J. Reynolds executive and head of his own consulting firm, Bass has opened

among some aldermen and residents, though. Some claimed it was a waste of money; others said it was simply tacky.

The nephew of School Board member Geneva Brown came to town to take part in a fund-raiser held by his aunt. Thomas Brown was seeking the most visible sheriff's job in the country at the time. In November 2000, the last man elected sheriff of De Kalb County, Ga., was shot down as he walked from his driveway to his home.

Brown had added his name to a packed field of candidates seeking to replace the murdered sheriff. Brown, who was serving as interim sheriff as he ran for the office, said during his visit that there were suspects in the murder but he could not reveal information about leads because the investigation was ongoing at the time. Brown won the election in a landslide a few weeks later, and later in the year a prominent official in the De Kalb County Sheriff's Department was charged with the murder of the former sheriff. He will stand trial soon.

News broke that some African-American police officers



The Rev. James Sloan and the Rev. Micheal Williams hold a news conference at Eastway Plaza Shopping Center.