

Beaty gets honorary degree from WCU

CULLOWHEE - Western Carolina University conferred degrees on its brand-new graduates Saturday, and took time out to honor three graduates from the past, including federal judge James Beaty Jr., a Winston-Salem resident.

Before 680-plus members of the university's spring 2002 graduating class received their degrees, the university conferred an honorary doctorate upon Beaty.



Beaty

Beaty earned a bachelor's degree at Western in 1971 and a law degree from the School of Law at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1974, and then went on to a distinguished career as a Winston-Salem attorney. Beaty was appointed a Superior Court judge in 1981, when he was just 31 years old, and in 1994 he was appointed by President Bill Clinton, and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, as U.S. judge of the Middle District of North Carolina.

Beaty's life of service has extended past the courtroom doors to include a dedication of time to organizations that benefit young people, including Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Salvation Army Girls Club Advisory Council, and the Youth Opportunity Home Council.

"This is indeed a great honor for me and one that I take humbly and with pride," Beaty said after receiving his honorary doctorate.

Beaty told the crowd at WCU's Ramsey Regional Activity Center that coming back to Cullowhee reminded him of his days on the Western campus, when he was a member of Black Students United for Liberation, WCU's first organization for African-American students.

Members of the group were few in number, Beaty said. "We didn't want our voices to be missed among the chorus of concerns about the activities taking place after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. But we were heard by a caring community," he said.

"It's been said that it takes a village to raise a child," Beaty said. "I like to extend that further and say the village of Cullowhee has been part of my extended community, and I can think of no greater village to be in than Cullowhee, N.C."

Jefferson descendants exclude relatives of slave Sally Hemings

Descendants of Sally Hemings, a slave owned by Thomas Jefferson and reputed to have borne several of his children, will not be welcomed into the organization for Jefferson relatives or the ancestral graveyard.

In a closed meeting, the Monticello Association voted to continue to restrict membership to Jefferson's descendants through his daughters Martha and Maria.

This excludes Hemings' descendants. Hemings was a slave at Monticello.

The association cited a panel of scholars who concluded there was insufficient evidence to establish that Jefferson fathered Hemings' children.

Lucian Truscott IV, a supporter of the Hemings claims, displayed a photograph of a black man with a zipper across his mouth, which he said John Works Jr., a former Monticello president, e-mailed to him during the meeting.

Works later said he regretted sending the photo, which he called insensitive. He says his intention was to remind Truscott of a pledge association members made not to discuss the Hemings issue with the media.

"I just sent that as a reminder to keep his mouth shut," Works said. "I regret that it was a black face. If it had been a white face, I would have used that instead."

DNA tests have shown a male in Jefferson's family fathered Hemings' son Eston. But the 24-page study, commissioned by Works, argues that Jefferson's younger brother Randolph was the likely father.

The association, created in 1913 to promote the nation's third president and preserve the cemetery where he is buried, represents more than 700 lineal descendants of Jefferson and his wife, Martha. The association also rejected a proposal to create a separate group for descendants of slaves at Monticello, but has offered a separate burial plot on the Jefferson estate.

NAACP shuns senior black legislators

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Two senior black legislators should be shunned after undermining South Carolina boycott efforts, a letter from NAACP state President James Gallman to local branches says.

The letter targets U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., and state Sen. Kay Patterson, D-Columbia, for actions and comments that undermine the three-year-old boycott of the state's tourism industry by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.



Clyburn

"The time has come for us to communicate in a clear and collective voice our displeasure with these elected officials and others who oppose the NAACP's policy on the Confederate battle flag," Gallman wrote in an April 22 letter.

Clyburn and Patterson helped convince hip-hop group OutKast to honor a commitment to play at Columbia's 3 Rivers Music Festival in April. That came as the NAACP had almost successfully lobbied the group to break the date.

Tennis star Serena Williams stayed away from a 2000 tournament, but played at this year's Family Circle Cup.

Gallman says Clyburn gave Serena Williams' managers "misinformation" that led Williams to come to the state.

Clyburn responded to that in a two-page letter sent to NAACP branches, saying he never spoke to Williams, her family or her managers about the 2002 Family Circle tournament. His letter says Williams told national NAACP President Kweisi Mfume that she was under contract to play the Charleston tournament.

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636 Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

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Photos by Charles Watkins

U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. tells N.C. AT&T State University graduates to hold on to their faith.

Congressman returns to alma mater

Jesse Jackson Jr. tells graduates to fulfill the rights of the Declaration of Independence

BY FELECIA P. MCMILLAN
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Dr. James C. Renick, chancellor of N.C. Agricultural and Technical State University, reminded the 111th class of graduates, "To whom much is given much is required. Just as your success reflects upon our success, so does our success reflect upon you. We intend to remain worthy of your confidence and respect."

The Class of 2002 was the largest class in A&T's history. More than 960 graduates marched across the stage on Saturday, May 11, at the Greensboro Coliseum.

The speaker for the hour was Jesse Jackson Jr., who began service in the U.S. House of Representatives on Dec. 12, 1995. He was sworn in as a member of the 104th Congress, and he is the 91st African American ever elected to Congress. Jackson sits on the House Appropriations Committee, serving on the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs. Through legislative initiatives, Jackson has led the push to end the death penalty, curb the scourge of HIV/AIDS and set a new framework for mutually beneficial trade in sub-Saharan Africa. He creatively combines both in his HOPE for Africa Acts of 1999.

Jackson began his message by giving a shout-out to his classmate Sybil, who recorded the hit song "Don't Make Me Over" in 1989. The audience joined in as Jackson sang this memorable number. He explained to the graduates that this song was considered "new school" when he was at A&T during the 1980s, but it's now considered "old school." "It is a great song, great music to dance to....In another year, students will look at you like you are old school, but remember you are the greatest class that A&T has ever produced, so you will get the greatest challenge."

Jackson honored the parents who have prayed and hoped for this day.

"Your hearts must be blazing with overwhelming pride today....Many of you worked two jobs, multiple jobs so you could see this day. Many have been on their knees many hours,



Photo by Felecia McMillan

Nearly 1,000 people graduated Saturday during the ceremony.


even rose early and caught the early bus to work in order to see this day. Many of you are single parents, but you wanted to ensure that your progeny had this opportunity. You have fought a good fight."

Jackson thanked the ancestors who fought for the liberation of African Americans from slavery. He reminded the audience members that their faith was based on the Scripture from the book of Hebrews: "Faith is

the substance of things, hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen."

He explained that this kind of faith enabled the black leaders of the 19th century to chal-

See Jackson on A5



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