

Ex-cop wants to head NAACP

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Retired Winston-Salem Police Sgt. Stephen Hairston is running for the office of president of the Winston-Salem Branch of the NAACP for the 2002-2004 term. Current branch president Bill Tatum was to meet with board members Tuesday before releasing a statement regarding whether or not he would seek another term.

For the past two years Hairston has served on the executive board of the Winston-Salem Branch of the NAACP. As a teenager, his father bought him a lifetime membership to the NAACP. During that time, a great-uncle of Hairston held the same position that he is seeking.

Hairston, born and raised in Winston-Salem, is a graduate of Winston-Salem State University, where he received degrees in education and accounting, and a graduate of Appalachian State University, where he obtained an MBA.

Hairston says that if he is elected he plans to focus on accountability, particularly where city leaders are concerned. The plans to extend Research Park to the downtown area of Winston-Salem is expected to bring 10,000 jobs, but Hairston questions how many of those new jobs will be given to minorities in the community who are often over-



Hairston

looked yet qualified.

"I am going to try to reach out to minorities and let them know there are agencies who can help them train for jobs," Hairston said. "If we're going to get on business leaders to offer jobs to the poor, then we have to make sure the poor are trained for jobs. It is a two-way street."

Hairston also believes that education coupled with available jobs will dissuade more people of color from turning to lives of crime as a means of economic gain. As a police officer with the WSPD, Hairston frequently observed the metamorphosis criminals would undergo by the time they reached their trials. With cut hair, clean shaven and suited up, many young people were making a turn for the better but it was too late once they were

sentenced to prison, instead of being given a second chance.

"Eighty percent of the males are in county jail who want help now that they (have been) arrested. I want them to know that they can get (that same) help before they get arrested," said Hairston, who is convinced that those on the brink of criminal activity still possess the urge to turn their lives around. And he is willing to steer them in the right direction even if it means "being on the block at 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning."

While with the WSPD, Hairston was instrumental in initiating several youth-oriented community programs to help at-risk children become better citizens. Hairston has also worked as a volunteer throughout the area in a number of capacities.

Hairston made local headlines in 1999 when he and two other African-American police sergeants were demoted because the police chief said they failed to adequately secure a rap concert at Joel Coliseum.

The demotions caused outrage in the black community because coliseum officials, who booked the act, were not immediately reprimanded because of the incident. Black members of the Board of Aldermen strongly urged the city manager to overturn the demotions, which he did. Hairston retired soon after the controversy ended.

Study to test soy pill seeks participants

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Could lowering your cholesterol be as simple as taking a pill containing the plant estrogens found in soy? Researchers at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center are conducting a research study to find out.

Researchers already know that the naturally occurring plant estrogens, called isoflavones, in soy protein make it effective at lowering cholesterol. That's why the Food and Drug Administration has authorized the use of health claims on soy products. Now, researchers want to find out if removing the plant estrogens from the soy - and putting them in pill form - will also be effective.

"We believe that the isoflavones must be connected to the soy protein to be effective," said Mara Vitolins, a study investigator. "But it's important to find



Soy protein comes from soy bean plants like these.

out for sure because people take isoflavone pills believing there are cholesterol lowering benefits."

The study will involve 51 people who have low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or bad cholesterol, that is mildly or moderately elevated (140-200 mg/dL). They will attend a nutrition education session and will follow a heart-healthy diet for six weeks. Then, for 10 weeks at a time, they will take either isoflavone pills or a soy powder that can be mixed into beverages. Researchers will compare the effectiveness of both treatments at lowering cholesterol.

Soy protein - found in tofu and other products made from soy beans - has been linked to a variety of health benefits. People who live in countries where substantial

amounts of soy are consumed, have lower rates of heart disease and cancer. Participants in the study will take about 100 mg. of isoflavones per day, levels that are common in Asian diets.

In previous research at Wake Forest, it was shown that soy containing isoflavones was effective at lowering cholesterol. In a group of participants who took 62 milligrams of isoflavones in soy protein, cholesterol levels dropped by 10 percent in those patients whose LDL levels were moderately high. In the same group, total cholesterol dropped by 9 percent.

The current study is supported by the Centers for Disease Control. For more information, including eligibility requirements, call 713-5198.

Commissioners

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tion in the N.C. Senate for the past 20 years, has served on many committees, including improving achievement for minority and at-risk students, Senate Select Committee on Tobacco Settlement, Subcommittee of the Joint Legislative Mental Health Oversight Commission, Committee to Improve Ethics in Racial Relations.

Rep. Larry Womble accepted the award for Martin, who was unable to attend because of previously scheduled commitments.

Finlater has chaired the N.C. Advisory Committee, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

"He is also well-known for his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, his opposition to the death penalty, his defense of the principle of the separation of church and state, and his advocacy for the underdog," Ferguson said.

Finlater said, "If you want to do anything in this country that is of substance, you've got to do it politically.... Politics is everything. Politics made slavery, and politics has almost removed the vestiges of slavery. It hasn't happened yet...."

By the end of Bridget Wall's second year as assistant to the secretary for HUB Outreach, the amount of business that the state of North Carolina did with minorities increased from 4 percent to 10 percent.

"Wall has been recognized nationally by the National Black Chamber of Commerce for leadership in this area," Ferguson said. "Ms. Wall's office provides training to minority vendors, educating them on the process of how to do business with the state. As a result of her efforts, minorities now have a better opportunity to compete for business with the state."

A tearful Wall said, "I became overwhelmed when I think about how passionate I might feel about minority business development." She accepted the award in honor of her grandfather James Edward Wall, a business owner and entrepreneur who in the 1970s grew his business to \$1 million, having started with a \$300 investment.

Butterfield was elected a state superior court judge in 1988 in that capacity until 2001 when Gov. Mike Easley appointed him to the N.C. Supreme Court.

Butterfield said, "When Dan Blue and I were in college 35

years ago, along with Terry Garrison and Ben Ruffin and a few others, there were no African-American county commissioners," legislators or justices. Today there are 52 African-American judges in North Carolina, 90 African-American county commissioners (including 14 who chair their boards) and 25 African-Americans in the General Assembly.

"Let's stay vigilant," Butterfield said. "There is an all-out assault from the Republican Party in the state to make sure that we reverse much of the progress that we have made. The Democratic Party has been very busy and has assembled and we are assembling a team of seven appellate judicial nominees that will be on the ballot this fall. At least three of those seven will be African-Americans without a doubt (including Judge Loretta Biggs of Winston-Salem and Judge Wanda Bryant for N.C. Court of Appeals, and Butterfield for N.C. Supreme Court). Of the Republican nominees, there will be no African-Americans on the ballot.... This is an important judicial election...."

Ruffin is the former director of the N.C. Human Relations Commission, where he was responsible for ensuring equal rights for all N.C. citizens, investigating discrimination, complaints in housing, employment and other areas of concern. He served as special assistant to Gov. James B. Hunt, working to include minorities in all aspects of government. Ruffin served as vice president for public affairs at R.J. Reynolds in Winston-Salem and is a past chairman of the UNC Board of Governors, responsible for establishing policies for the 16 constituent universities under the UNC system.

Ruffin, quoting Frederick Douglass, said, in part, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

Ruffin added, "We have a responsibility to extend our services, to extend our work, to make sure that we leave no stone unturned, to tell every person who will listen and those who won't listen to tell them about the folk who are running (for political offices), not for us, but they are running for unborn generations. If we don't leave a legacy for our children, we have failed history.... We shall continue to know progress if we continue to familiarize ourselves with struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did, and it never will."

N.C. Rep. Dan Blue, a Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, was the keynote speaker. He talked about the budgetary crunch that counties have been facing and said it's irresponsible for state government to either not provide adequate state funding or to deprive county governments of revenue sources to pay for programs mandated by the state. He said he was one of the most conservative speakers of the House of Representatives that North Carolina has ever had - conservative in the sense of not spending money that's not there. He said, "I'm running to make a difference in the lives of average North Carolinians," and he said he's the only candidate with substantial legislative experience.

The award program was held at Adam's Mark hotel in connection with the N.C. Association of County Commissioners 95th annual conference.

"The issues that really matter are those that most affect children, women, families, older adults, neighborhoods and our environment. I've spent my life working as their advocate."

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