



THE CHRONICLE

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Photo by Kevin Walker
Maj. John Gregory III stands near picture of one of his role models, O.H. Leak.

Respected officer headed to Rock Hill

John Gregory will become city's first African-American police chief

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

HIGH POINT - Maj. John Gregory III is about to leave behind the city in which he was born and raised and the only job he has ever known. But with an office filled with partially stuffed cardboard boxes and phone calls every minute from well-wishers and old friends, Gregory has had little time to contemplate what he is giving up in order to make history 150 miles away.

"I am too busy right now to realize the impact. This police department is the only job and only career that I have ever had," Gregory said Monday from his office at the High Point Police Department.

Last week Rock Hill, S.C., a burgeoning city just outside of Charlotte, named Gregory its new chief of police, ending a months-long intense search process. Gregory, who spent 30 years in the High Point department, will be the city's first African-American chief.

"Each candidate brought strengths, and I just felt that John Gregory was the best fit," Rock Hill City Manager Carey Smith said in a statement. "We are bringing to Rock Hill a superb professional whose proven leadership skills and human qualities will propel our policing services into a new era."

Gregory, a 48-year-old with a youthful face and down-home disposition, feels he was destined to end up in Rock Hill. He was offered the chief's position in a small Texas town when he found out he was one of the three finalists in Rock Hill. He held off on the Texas job and put all of his energy into securing the Rock Hill position.

"(Rock Hill) is a good place to live," Gregory said. "It fit all that I said I wanted."

See Gregory on A4

West Point state of mind



Photo by Bruce Chapman
Alberto Marquez has excelled in the JROTC program at Carver High School.

Student receives appointment to prestigious military school

BY FELECIA P. MCMILLAN
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Carver High School senior Alberto Marquez is a native of Mexico, but his love for JROTC has fueled his desire to serve in the armed forces of the United States. For Marquez, his native country and his country of residence offer no conflict of interest.

"I look at it as I am a citizen of the United States. My father has been a citizen for a long time. You grow to love the place you live in," Marquez said. "I have great respect for the United States although I am a native of Mexico. I find no contradiction in serving my country. I have a true love of this country."

Marquez's love of country has opened a door for a free college education at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. For Marquez to be accepted into West Point, he had to be a U.S. citizen. West Point adheres to its motto "Duty, Honor, Country" by preparing young men and women to serve their country.

"The nation's conflict with Iraq has had no impact on my decision to serve my country. I am still determined to join the U.S. Army," Marquez said.

His mother, Maria Cook, is a legal resident of the United States, having moved from Mexico in 1995. However, she is "100 percent Mexican," she said. "My son is an American and his father

See Marquez on A10

Board not done with talks over VIP plan

Program spurs communication between teachers and parents

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

The two African-American members of the city-county School Board said the benefits the school system's VIP (Victory in Partnership) program provide are worth the extra efforts that teachers have to give.

The School Board voted Tuesday to once again discuss the fate of VIP. The vote came after a recent vote when the board decided to limit the scope of VIP, a program that keeps parents and teachers in contact through a series of reports that teachers are required to complete about students' progress.

Some members of the board say that it has become too time consuming for already taxed teachers to complete the reports, and those board members favor letting individual schools come up with their own ideas for building a line of communication between teachers and parents. But board member Geneva Brown fears that if the School Board leaves that up to individual schools, some parents will be kept out of the loop.

"Some schools will do it and some won't," she said. "I think (VIP) is critical. This is a program that works."

School Board member Victor Johnson said the board has had a lot of complaints from teachers frustrated over the regular progress reports. But he said if VIP dies, minority kids will feel the effects. Johnson said that he would favor a move to keep the program at only schools with high African-American populations, if it comes to that.

"Getting parents involved in the kids' education is key," he said.

Johnson and Brown went to bat to save VIP more than a year ago when the School Board also was considering doing away with the program. The School Board will further discuss the VIP program at a meeting next month.



Brown



Johnson

Teens called cure for blacks' problems

YMCA graduates another crop of black achievers

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

John Foxworth and his teenage daughter Chanel were both honored last week at the Winston Lake Family YMCA's Black Achievers in Business and Industry Awards Gala at the Benton Convention Center.

John Foxworth, a manager in the tax system and depreciation department at R.J. Reynolds, was one of 41 black professionals honored for the commitments they have made to serve as role models to high school students for the next year.

Chanel Foxworth and 24 other teens received awards for taking part in Black Achievers over the past year. This fall she will attend Winston-Salem State University, where she plans to study for a year before transferring to Johnson & Wales to study fashion merchandising. Chanel Foxworth said the Achiev-

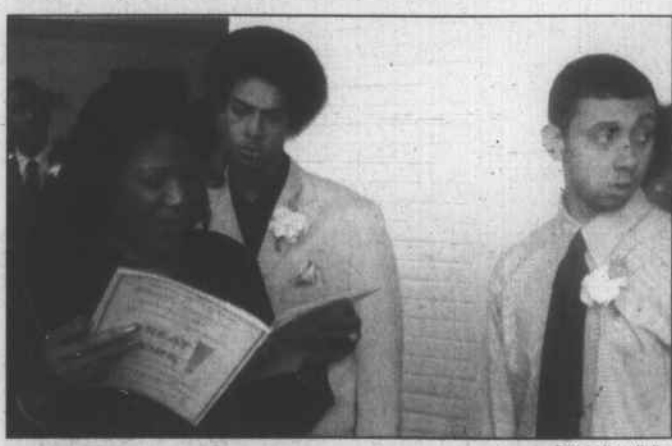


Photo by Kevin Walker
Shonnette Gardner uses a program to help get teen achievers Brandon Davis and DeVonn Crompton, right, in order for the procession.

ers program, which matches adults and teens for mentoring purposes, opened up doors of opportunity and helped improve her communications skills. She thinks her father will be a perfect fit for the program.

"I think he will do a great job," she said as her father, standing by her side, grinned.

John Foxworth is no stranger to Black Achievers, which began at the

See Achievers on A9

Deacons with degrees

New York City mayor gives grads send-off message

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Derrick Thompson and Melissa Hubbert were among the more than 60 African-American students who graduated from Wake Forest University Monday.

Thompson, a Lumberton native, said his overall experience at Wake was worthwhile and challenging. Having come from a high school that was predominantly African- and Native-American, Thompson, who received a bachelor of science degree in information systems, said that during his freshman year at Wake he experienced a slight culture shock with a less than 10 percent minority student population.

"I think Wake has prepared me for a lot of challenges. Some people are averse to change. I think the biggest thing that Wake has done is just allow me to adjust to changes and prepare myself for

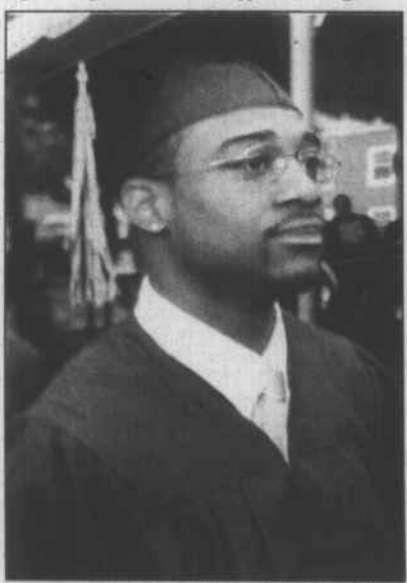


Photo courtesy of Wake Forest University
Derrick Thompson prepares to walk across the podium to receive his degree.

See Wake on A4