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THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2004

Schools land big names for ceremonies

Everyone from entertainers to history-makers will speak at area graduations this month

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Actor and director Forest Whitaker is the last name added to a stellar lineup of high achievers who will speak at commencement exercises for local college and universities this month. Whitaker, whose acting credits include films as diverse as "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," "The Crying Game" and "Panic Room," will speak to N.C.



Forest Whitaker made his directorial debut with the film "Waiting to Exhale."

School of the Arts college graduates on May 29.

English stage and screen actress Rosemary Harris will speak to NCSA high school graduates during their commencement exercises on that same day. Perhaps best known for her role as Aunt May in "Spider-Man," Harris is the mother of Tony-winning actress Jennifer Ehle,

who is an alum of NCSA.

"What a double bill we have for our graduating students and their families," NCSA Chancellor Wade Hobgood said in statement. "Forest Whitaker is a dynamic young actor who has had remarkable success directing and producing. Rosemary Harris is the epitome of all that is a 'star' of stage and screen. We are delighted to have them with us on our special day."

Whitaker, a Texas native, made his directorial debut in 1995 with the highly popular film version of the Terry McMillan book "Waiting to Exhale." He also directed the film "Hope Floats." He has produced films such as "Green Dragon" and "Chasing Papi" and is currently in post-production with "First Daughter," a film he directed and executive produced.

Whitaker starred in and co-produced 1991's "A Rage in Harlem," which was associate produced by Ron Stacker Thompson, a faculty member in the NCSA School of Filmmaking.

See **Speakers** on A10



Melissa Dunlap (from right) Tiffany Smith, Kim Brooks, Chiquita Funderburk and Kiyhrea Robbins finished their CNA training last week at the Astor Park Community Center.

Photo by Kevin Walker

BEYOND THE BRICKS

HOPE VI community provides residents with free CNA training

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

This week, five Astor Park residents are looking to put the skills they learned in a certified nursing assistant class to use. The residents were applauded by friends and family members last Friday during an informal graduation ceremony that marked the completion of the two-week CNA training class that was offered at the Astor Park Community Center.

The class is the first of many job-training programs and classes that will be offered in the community. The training will be funded with money from the federal HOPE VI grant the Housing Authority of Winston-Salem received several years ago to construct Astor Park, a sprawling community of new town homes that sit on the site of the former Kimberly Park Terrace housing projects. HOPE VI, a program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, stipulates that grants not only be used for brick and mortar projects but also on programs that promote self-sufficiency and self-empowerment among residents of the revitalized communities.

Faye Brice, a HOPE VI case manager at Astor Park, said the CNA class was proposed because there was a great demand among residents for relevant job training programs.

"Our residents were unemployed, and we tried to think of a field to try to help fill a void,"

See **CNA** on A10



Lee Washington presents Melissa Dunlap with her certificate of completion for the training class.

Minority women in business honored

Honorees have made names for themselves in many different areas

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Lenora Fluit is what you would call a busy woman. Between her three jobs, she is still a wife, mother, grandmother and

great-grandmother. Fluit also is an active member of St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church,



Burke

a member of the National Council of Negro Women and the queen mother of the Midtown Red Hat Society.

She was one of nearly a dozen active local businesswomen honored last Thursday at the 2004 Outstanding Women in Business Leaders reception for their significant contributions to the community. Southern Community Bank and Trust along with the city of Winston-Salem and the Winston-Salem Convention & Visitors Bureau sponsored the event. Mayor Pro Tempore Vivian Burke, who has worked to open doors for female and minority business owners in the city, hosted the awards reception.

Fluit says she is inspired by her grandchildren, whom she hopes to leave a legacy to. She also encourages young women to go after their dreams in life no matter what obstacles may come their way.

"It was a shock. I really was surprised. I'm busy but I didn't know that anybody noticed. I enjoy what I do and I just continue to do it. I am honored. I'm very honored," said Fluit, owner and operator of The Hat

See **Honorees** on A5

Personal Chef (Hat)



A young girl puts her own special touch on a chef's hat over the weekend at an event held to kick off a series of Charles the Chef storybooks. Several young people took part in activities at the event Saturday. See story on A5.

Photo by Kevin Walker

Gregory inspires laughter, thought at NAACP banquet

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Dick Gregory told a crowd of several hundred last Friday that the countless opportunities made possible by the Civil Rights Movement are often taken for granted today by young people not old enough to remember what it was like before and old folks who simply choose to forget.

Four decades ago, there were no African-American flight attendants, police chiefs, presidential cabinet members, and Black History Month - even though it's the shortest month of the year - was unheard of, Gregory said. He spoke to a packed house at the Adam's Mark Grand Pavilion for the local NAACP's 2004 Freedom Fund Gala.

Gregory told the crowd that freedom was not free. It was paid for with the blood and sweat of



Photo by Kevin Walker

See **Gregory** on A9 Dick Gregory talks with fans after his speech.

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