



Boxers hope to make marks

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Millions go to Bennett College

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Urban League honors seniors

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Miss N.C. Latina crowned in the city

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THE CHRONICLE

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Student defies odds to graduate

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Anyone at Forsyth Vocational High School will tell you that Tenisha Watkins is a special girl with a kind spirit. Some might say that being mentally disabled means facing a lifetime of challenges and obstacles. But the straight A student who is senior class president has proven to be anything but challenged.

Spend a few minutes with the shy 19-year-old and her big smile will prove why she is so loved by friends and faculty at school.

"I like being around babies. There's one student who always runs to me and hugs me every time she sees me," said Watkins, who has developed a reputation for being one of the most helpful students.

On Saturday, she will receive an occupational diploma - something many people including her family didn't believe she could obtain. She has even been selected to introduce the graduation speaker, Winston-Salem Fire Chief John Gist.

"I've liked the teachers and I have a lot of friends who go here," said Watkins, about what she'll miss about high school. Even though some people lacked faith in her, she says she loves them all the same.

Watkins lives with her aunt, Phyllis Searcy, who happens to be a teacher's assistant at Forsyth Vocational. Searcy became her guardian in 2000 after Watkins dealt with the loss of several relatives, including her mother. She says that her

See Watkins on A9



Black Achievers Gala Chairwoman Barbara Hayes and program coordinator Curtis Hunter present Louise Smith with a Lifetime Achievement Award during the gala celebration last week.

OVERACHIEVERS

Y program sends off its latest batch of young people

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

It has been several years now since Regina Watkins Brim took it upon herself to become an unofficial recruiter for the Winston Lake Family YMCA's Black Achievers program.

There is hardly a day that goes by that Brim doesn't find herself promoting the program to teenagers she comes into contact with. Last Thursday, Brim brought three teenagers that she had sold on the program to the Seventh Annual Black Achievers in Business and Industry Awards Gala at the M.C. Benton Convention Cen-

See Achievers on A10



Regina Watkins Brim introduces Jared Paige to the Y's Richard Daniels before last week's gala.

See RV'ers on A4

NAACP, Tom Keith meet in the middle

Two sides have openly disagreed on many issues

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

One is a white conservative district attorney whose tough stance on crime is applauded in some circles and deplored in others. The other is a black police sergeant-turned-NAACP chapter president who often says that the criminal justice system is especially hostile to African-Americans. They have had more than their share of differences in the past, but now the two have agreed to a verbal pact to jointly fight crime in the city.



Keith

Though it sounds like the plot to a lame television crime drama, it is for real. Stephen Hairston, the still fairly new president of the city's chapter of the NAACP, says that his office wants to pay more attention to the concerns of victims of crimes and focus less on concerns of those who commit crimes. Hairston's office is inundated with letters from incarcerated people and those facing court dates. In the past, the chapter has tried to respond to those concerns to the best of its ability. But oftentimes, the stories of those affected by the crimes that those people commit go unheard. That is what Hairston wants to change. Hairston said his office will begin to work with black victims of crimes by, among other things, helping them communicate their concerns to the office of District Attorney Tom Keith. Hairston said the NAACP will also start "hitting the streets" to try to save young people on the edge of falling into the criminal justice system.

Hairston said the NAACP will offer these young people alternatives. The NAACP has talked with Forsyth Technical Community College about offering skills training and to some local contractors about possibly hiring some of these young people. It is a new, tougher stance on crime from the NAACP. Hairston said those who refuse to



Hairston

See NAACP on A10

Call her Dr. Brown



Geneva B. Brown, longtime educator and current school board member, is hooded by Professor Ed Hendricks Monday. Brown received an honorary doctor of humanities degree during Wake Forest's commencement address. To read about the event, see page A4.

Black RV'ers roll into town

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

The nation's miles and miles of open road and highways are as synonymous with freedom as the bald eagle. Nobody knows that more than the men and women who have abandoned the worries and frustrations of everyday living for a life on the road in recreation vehicles (RVs) that have all the comforts of home.

"(RVs) are freedom," said Meredith Anding. "You could be here today. I can be somewhere completely different tomorrow and somewhere else after that."

Anding and members of the New York Ravens, an RV club that Anding heads, were among about 400 black RV enthusiasts in town last weekend for the National African American RVers Association Eastern Region's sixth annual Camp Rally held at the Dixie Classic Fair Grounds. RV owners drove their vehicles from places as far away as Maine and New Hampshire for the rally for three days of cookouts, dances and even



Photo by Kevin Walker

See RV'ers on A4

RV lovers from New York chat during the rally here over the weekend.

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