



**Parkland hopes to continue its win streak**

-See Page B1



**Campaign stresses health checkups**

-See Page A3



**Retiring pastor howls at dinner**

-See Page C1



# THE CHRONICLE

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## Angelou to students: Abolish N-word



Photo by Kevin Walker

World-renowned poet Dr. Maya Angelou spoke to more than 1,000 freshmen last week at Winston-Salem State University.

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Her way with words has garnered her fame and prestige around the globe. But Maya Angelou says that there are some words that not even she, or anyone else, can make sound graceful and dignified.

The world renowned poet and longtime city resident told more than 1,000 Winston-Salem State University freshmen last Thursday that the "n-word" is toxic, regardless of how it is used or who uses it.

"It is poison," she said, her words resonating through a packed K.R. Williams Auditorium. For the second straight year, Angelou was the keynote speaker for WSSU's New Student Convocation.

*"It was created to denigrate an entire people. Don't use the word. I beg you."*

- Maya Angelou

See Angelou on A5

## Program aims to decrease dropouts

Dozens of students have signed up this school year

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

It's not your traditional alternative education program, but the Career Prep Pilot Project (C3P) aims to curb dropout rates and navigate students onto a career path.

Nearly 60 students have already signed up to participate in C3P. Students enrolled in this new Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools program will spend part of the school day at the Career Center taking career technical education courses and the other half of the day in school.

The Office of Dropout Prevention Intervention and Recovery Services consulted a number of students through a series of focus groups and polls last spring. Most of the students expressed great interest in honing trade skills related to automobile technology.

Thanks to the input from the students, dropout program specialist Tony Burton says, this unique pilot program that the school system has developed may discourage ninth-graders from dropping out of school. He says the highest rate of dropouts last year was seen in the ninth grade. During the 2004-2005 academic year, 772 WS/FCS students dropped out of school. The WS/FCS rate of 3.46 percent for grades 7-12 was slightly higher than the state's rate of 3.29 percent.

"One of the main things that (students) were talking about was that school was boring," said Burton. "After talking to them, we realized



Burton

See Dropouts on A5

## SURVIVORS

Women with sickle cell have beaten the odds to live long lives

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

GREENSBORO - The doctors' words still echo in Lela Fields' mind. Each syllable was like a tiny dagger that cut through her skin to pierce her soul.

"He told me that I would die before I was 30 years old," she recalled. Fields was in her early 20s at that time. A few years earlier - after suffering several bouts of pneumonia and even a coma - she was diagnosed with sickle cell anemia.



Robinson

Fields' doctor was not being overly cruel. At the time, sickle cell was not only widely misunderstood but a virtual death sentence. Treatment options were null and misdiagnoses were common.

Fields knew the odds were against her if she stood alone. So she decided to stand by a higher power. She says when she left the doctor's office that day, a presence walked by her side and began talking to her. It said that everything would be OK. Fifty years later, Fields still believes in what she heard that day.

"I just say, 'What will be, will be,'" said Fields, who is now 70.

Faith is a common trait

among a small group of women who have lived to 70 and beyond with sickle cell, a chronic ailment that causes red blood cells to mutate into sickle-like shapes, making blood flow difficult. The Sickle Cell Disease Association of the Piedmont (SCDAP) has identified six such women in the Triad (five in Greensboro and one in High Point). The women will be lauded later this month at the agency's banquet at the Airport Marriott. SCDAP holds its banquet each September, which has been designated National Sickle Cell Month.

The women have become unofficial ambassadors for the agency, showing others living with the disease that it is possible for them too to live long, productive lives.

Sickle cell claimed the lives of Vera Nell Moss' brother when he was 33 and one of her sisters when she was 25. Moss, who was diagnosed with sickle cell in the 1950s, is 71. Her older sister, who also has the disease, is an astounding 83 years old.

Mary Albea and Ida Johnson are both 71. They both spent decades knowing that something was not quite right with their health but not

See Sickle cell on A11



Lela Fields (clockwise from center), Ida Johnson, Mary Albea and Vera Nell Moss.

Photo by Kevin Walker

## Three Democrats vie to replace Fred Terry

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

In the uncertain world of politics, one thing is guaranteed this election year: There will at least be one new face on the Winston-Salem City Council after the Nov. 8 election.

The new council member will come from the Southeast Ward, which Fred Terry has quietly represented for the past

eight years. Terry decided months ago that two terms was plenty for him. He is the only current member of the council who has

decided not to seek re-election.

Three Democrats and one Libertarian want to fill Terry's shoes. Among the group of contenders is his wife, Evelyn. In the Sept. 27 primary, she will face Antonio Jermaine Baxter and Jimmy Lee Boyd. All three candidates say they are the right fit for the Southeast, a ward that is one of the city's most racially diverse. The winner of the Democratic primary will face Libertarian Thomas Leinbach in November.

Weeks before the Board of Elections opened the candidate filing window, Antonio

Baxter announced his intentions to run for the council. A few years shy of 30, Baxter is no novice when it comes to campaigning.

Last year, he ran unsuccessfully in the Democratic primary against popular incumbent Linda Garrou for the N.C. Senate.

"I learned a lot from that campaign," he said. Timing is one of the lessons he learned. Baxter, who commutes to Chapel Hill each weekday to work as a budget analyst for the town's

See Primary on A10



Baxter



Boyd



Terry

### DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN



Photo by James Pitt

Mayor Allen Joiner, from right, talks with Chancellor Harold Martin and Stedman Graham last week at Diggs Gallery. Graham was the special guest at a business diversity conference held at WSSU.



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