



Super WSSU fan inducted into hall
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Roger Sharpe gunning for Rep. Foxx
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West Fifth Street celebrating 31 Years of Community Journalism
attend networking breakfast
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THE CHRONICLE

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Nun continues fight against death penalty

Susan Sarandon won an Oscar for playing Sister Helen Prejean

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

GREENSBORO — Sister Helen Prejean, the nun portrayed in the movie "Dead Man Walking," spoke about social injustice last week at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



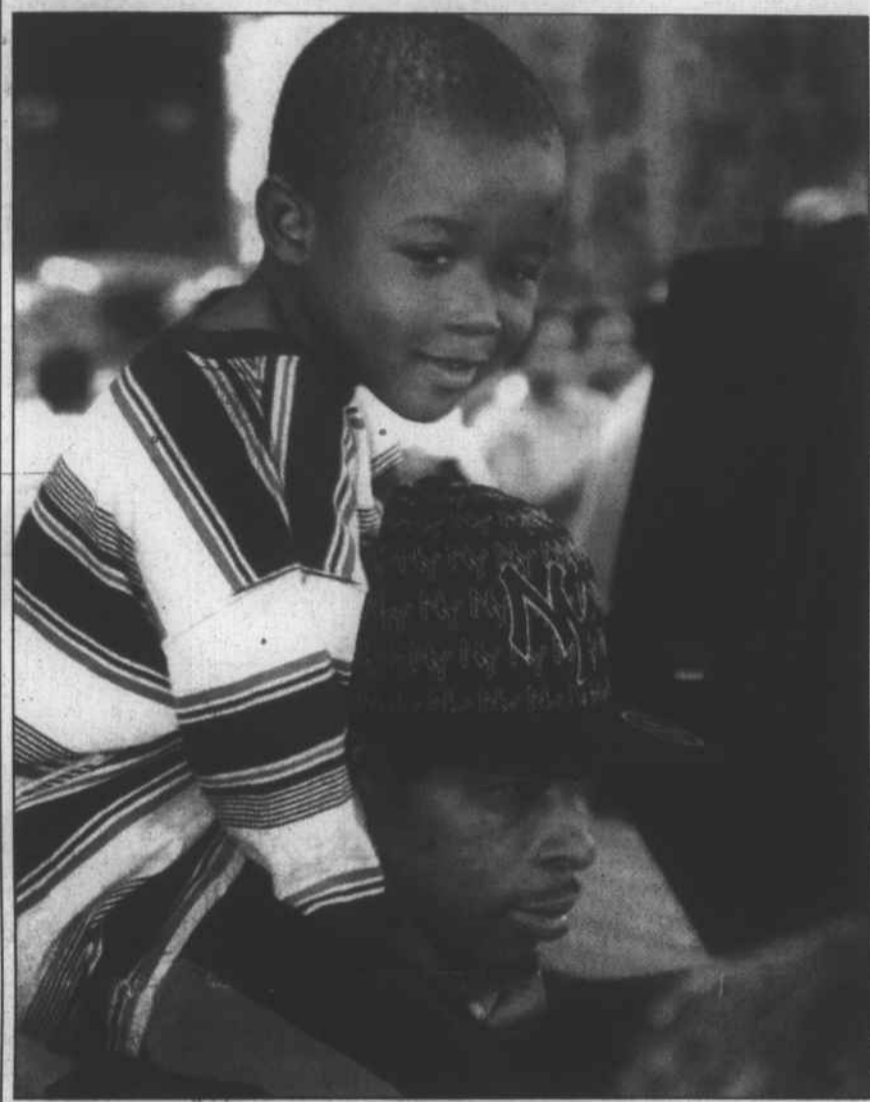
Sister Helen Prejean gives a signed book to a fan.

Prejean lives in New Orleans and authored the book "Dead Man Walking," which the 1995 film was based on. The book recounts her experiences ministering to death row inmates. Susan Sarandon played Prejean in the movie and won an Oscar for the role. The book also went on to become an opera and a play. Prejean is an outspoken opponent of the death penalty and helped shape the Catholic church's current strong stance against the practice. She founded Survive, which consoles and supports the families of murder victims. She's also very concerned about poverty and inequality, both of which she said were shown in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina hit.

"How do you have an evacuation plan for a major city and not include poor people?" she asked a crowd of several hundred. Prejean told the audience that she wasn't always a crusader for social justice. She spent years as a nun giving little thought to the poor and disadvantaged, even though half of New Orleans' population lived in poverty. "It's possible to live our entire lives without seeing the other America unless we wake up," Prejean said. A trip to hear another nun speak about social justice changed things for her. Prejean said that her burning desire to help the poor was sparked when the nun talked about Jesus' ministry to the poor, when he told them to be poor no more. Her work with the disadvantaged eventually led her to become pen pals with Patrick Sonnier, a death row inmate convicted for his role in the murder of a young couple. Sonnier was her window into the world of death row. She visited Sonnier and was there even as he was executed. Sonnier's brother was the person who pulled the trigger in the murders, but only Sonnier was executed for it. Sonnier and another death row inmate Prejean met were the inspirations for Sean Penn's character in the movie. "I'm not making him into a hero," said Prejean. "He did an unspeakable thing, him and his brother, but he was still a human being." She called the death penalty "torture," citing the psychological cruelty of the repeated pardons and appeals that cause many inmates to never know when they're going to die. The Supreme Court said that the death penalty should be used on the "worst of the worst" but nobody

See Prejean on A14

HOPE ENDURES



Corey Cameron gives his son, DiaShawn, a better view of the action.

Community still battling crime

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Residents of Cleveland Avenue Homes came out in force Saturday for an afternoon-long block party that celebrated the anniversary of a program that aims to rid the community of drugs and other evils. Hundreds were attracted to the event; it was hard to avoid. The main stretch of road in the neighborhood was shut down to accommodate a soundstage and a children's activities area. A warm, gentle breeze carried the aroma of hot-dogs, burgers and fried fish, and the Boss Drummers, the legendary Winston Lake Family YMCA performers, started the event out with a bang — literally. Residents say there was a time when an event such as the one held Saturday would not have been possible. Cleveland Avenue Homes, a public housing development off of 14th Street, had developed a well-earned reputation as a haven for drug dealers. Parents kept their young ones near, and it was nearly impossible for law-abiding residents to

walk two steps without witnessing illegal activity. "It was awful," said Mattie Young, who has lived in the community so long that she is called "the mayor" of Cleveland Avenue Homes. Young and her neighbors had complained about the drug activity for years. Police made arrests, but the same dealers returned to the community once they served their time. Last year, the Winston-Salem Police Department tried something different — the New Hope Initiative. After a protracted undercover investigation that involved photographing dealers at work. The drug dealers with the most egregious violations were arrested and charged severely. Those with relatively minor infractions were confronted with the evidence collected against them and given the choice to either stop selling or face the consequences. Police, in conjunction with local churches and agencies, offered those who chose the law-abiding path help with job training, substance abuse and even rental payments.



Young

See Cleveland Avenue on A10

Tests created to deter blacks?

Professor's book finds links between racism, standardized tests

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

African-Americans have come a long way from the days of Jim Crow — or have they?

Scott Baker, a professor at Wake Forest University, says that

racial inequality is still alive and well in the educational system, even now in the year 2006. Baker studied the histories of several schools in Charleston, S.C. — from 1920 to 1970 — for his book "Paradoxes of Desegregation." After extensive research, it is his estimation that when segregation collapsed, new forms of discrimination and racial inequality took hold.

It is Baker's belief that standardized tests were adopted to "exclude African-Americans." "The evidence that I found in school board minutes and in university archives really pointed to this subtle resistance," he said. "Letters from school officials, school superintendents and school board members said...that 'if we adopt these tests (the national teachers' examination and others), most whites are going to outperform blacks, and so what we're going to do is recreate, in a more legally defensible and rational form, the kind of system that we once had here.'"

His research found that some affluent blacks thrived on the standardized tests when they first were implemented. But unfortunately, a tale of "advantaged African-Americans" were the minority. "The majority of African-Americans, who were disadvantaged due to discrimination and lack of opportunity, became



Baker

See Tests on A11

Leaders reflect on fifth anniversary of 'day of infamy'



Chief John Gist and Pat Norris salute during the playing of "Taps."

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

City leaders used the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to praise the men and women in uniform who are ready and willing, at any given moment, to give their lives to protect and serve. A commemoration service began shortly after 9:30 a.m. on Monday. Five years ago at that time, Americans were shocked and startled as they learned of the attacks, which claimed the lives of nearly 3,000. Monday's weather matched the solemn occasion. There was not a hint of brightness above as a procession of law enforcement vehicles, fire trucks and ambulances slowly trekked down



Garrett

Fourth Street with their lights flashing and sirens muted. The scene attracted a small crowd of onlookers who stood — and often waved — as the procession passed. Children — who weren't yet born when the attacks occurred — held up homemade flags as they watched from the curb. The procession took a right at Liberty Street and ended at Corpening Plaza, where everyone from the mayor to the city's police and fire chiefs offered thoughts and reflections. They also offered praise. "We can never thank-you enough," Fire Chief John Gist said to a crowd dominated by police officers, firefighters and other first-responders. "We could never pay you enough."



Firefighter Brian Manual uses a fire truck ladder to lift an American flag.

See 9/11 on A5

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