



Former Ram starts... NORTH CAROLINA ROOM FORSYTH CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY 660 W 5TH ST WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2755

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# THE CHRONICLE

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## NAACP frowns on bond package

Members say voters should say "no"

BY LAYLA FARMER THE CHRONICLE

As the Nov. 7 election approaches, the \$250 million school bond referendum is becoming an increasingly contentious subject.

Just a week after the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and CHANGE announced their endorsement of the bond, the Winston-Salem Branch NAACP has decided to oppose it.

Chief among the NAACP's concerns is that bond money would be appropriated for improvements that the organization feels will not answer the school system's most important issues.

"The poor schools are not meeting the requirements at the end of the year," commented Stephen Hairston, the president of the NAACP Winston-Salem Branch. "The schools in the poor communities are just not working, according to the state data, according to the data from our own school system."

Hairston says money should be used to put an end to what he sees as educational inequality at inner-city schools. If passed by voters, the bond would mainly pay for new schools and renovations, things that Hairston said won't alleviate the learning gap.

"The reason we are taking that stand is that we believe that the school system here is practicing socioeconomic discrimi-

See NAACP on A11



Hairston

## BIBLE LESSON

One of nation's best preachers gets fired up

BY T. KEVIN WALKER THE CHRONICLE

Newsweek has called the Rev. James A. Forbes Jr. one of this era's most well-spoken religious leaders.

He lived up to that lofty distinction Sunday as he delivered a spirited sermon before a crowd of several hundred in the august sanctuary of Wake Forest University's Wait Chapel. Forbes made himself at home behind the chapel's oversized pulpit, engaging the crowd with his bread-and-butter sermon - his take on the story of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at Jacob's Well. Forbes believes the themes of the scripture - the tensions between Jews and Samaritans - are relevant to so many issues today.

"It is a trick of the enemy to always have us polarized," said Forbes, the pastor of New York City's Riverside, a interdenominational, interracial mega church that was founded more than 75 years ago by philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr.

The devil was the only "enemy" that Forbes called out by name. He hinted at others, including those who benefit from pitting

See Forbes on A10



The Rev. James Forbes holds the audience captive Sunday as he gives his sermon.

Wake Forest Photo



## RAM ROOMS

Photo by Todd L. Rick

Winston-Salem State University Interim Chancellor Michelle Howard-Vita is all smiles as she prepares to break ground on the school's newest dorm, Foundation Heights. She is standing next to WSSU trustee Nigel Alston and State Rep. Larry Womble, a WSSU alum. To read more about the new building, see page B16.



## Rep. Parmon to help to boost graduation rates

BY LAYLA FARMER THE CHRONICLE

The number of North Carolina students who drop out of high school before they earn diplomas has reached near epidemic proportions.

North Carolina ranks 45th in the nation in the percent of ninth graders who graduate in four years. In Winston-Salem/Forsyth County a whopping 10 percent of high school seniors dropped out of school during the 2004-2005 school year.

"Obviously, we are not doing something right. We have failed students that drop out of school," said State Rep. Earline Parmon. "We clearly need to refocus on what we need to do to re-engage students in the educational process, and give them a desire to want to be in school and ... prepare them to

have a meaningful life." The N.C. House of Representatives recently formed a committee to further investigate the problem statewide, naming Parmon and Thomas Wright (D-New Hanover County) as co-chairs.

"A student who graduates from high school is less likely to grow up and live in poverty and has a much greater chance at a prosperous and rewarding future," Parmon said. "I'm hopeful this committee will discover how to increase graduation rates and, by association, how to improve the lives of the young people of North Carolina."

The committee will explore various contributing factors involved in the state's shameful dropout rates. Once armed with



Parmon

See Parmon on A11

## Bill Gates Sr. pays Bennett a visit

Dad of world's richest person heads son's mega foundation

BY TODD LUCK THE CHRONICLE

GREENSBORO - The father of the world's richest man called the lack of free, quality education one of the nation's greatest failures.

"Public schools should be an agent of social justice but too often they simply help perpetuate injustice," William H. Gates, Sr. said Sunday during his keynote address at Bennett College's Founders' Day Convocation.

He told the crowd that a third of those in ninth-grade won't finish high school. The numbers are even worse for minorities with about half of African-Americans not graduating from high school, he said. Gates added that the struggle for a bet-

ter education is a continuation of the Civil Rights struggle. He cited Mississippi civil rights activist Bob Moses who compared the importance of transforming math education for African-Americans to winning the right to vote. Gates said that the most successful schools engage every student in one-on-one relationships with caring adults and that the Gates Foundation is working to make that the norm.

Educational parity it is among the many problems that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is working to address. William H. Gates, Sr. is the co-chair of the foundation, which was started by his son, Bill, and his daughter-in-law. The foundation operates with a \$31.9 billion endowment, mak-



Cole

See Forbes on A10



William H. Gates, Sr. addresses Bennett students and staffers.

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