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Besse says he will run for Lt. Gov in 2008
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Breakfast attracts crowd of about 700
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THURSDAY, January 18, 2007

Evers' widow recalls struggles

Myrlie Evers-Williams has taken a lead role in the Civil Rights Movement

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

In the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King's famous dream, Wake Forest and Winston-Salem State universities collaborated on a special Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, held at WSSU's Dillard Auditorium Monday night.

Performances by students from both schools brought the audience to its feet, and a handful of students and faculty members from each institution were recognized with "Building the Dream" awards for their exemplary service.

Then keynote speaker, Myrlie Evers-Williams, took the stage. Her fiery eyes and warm, yet unflinching, demeanor caught the audience's attention, even before her commanding voice echoed from the stage.

"Already I have become the recipient of an uplift of spirit, a charge in the heart that says, 'Beat a little longer,'" she commented straightaway. "I'm hearing the message through song, through the spoken word, and seeing the dance, that moves me to feel that hope is very much alive."

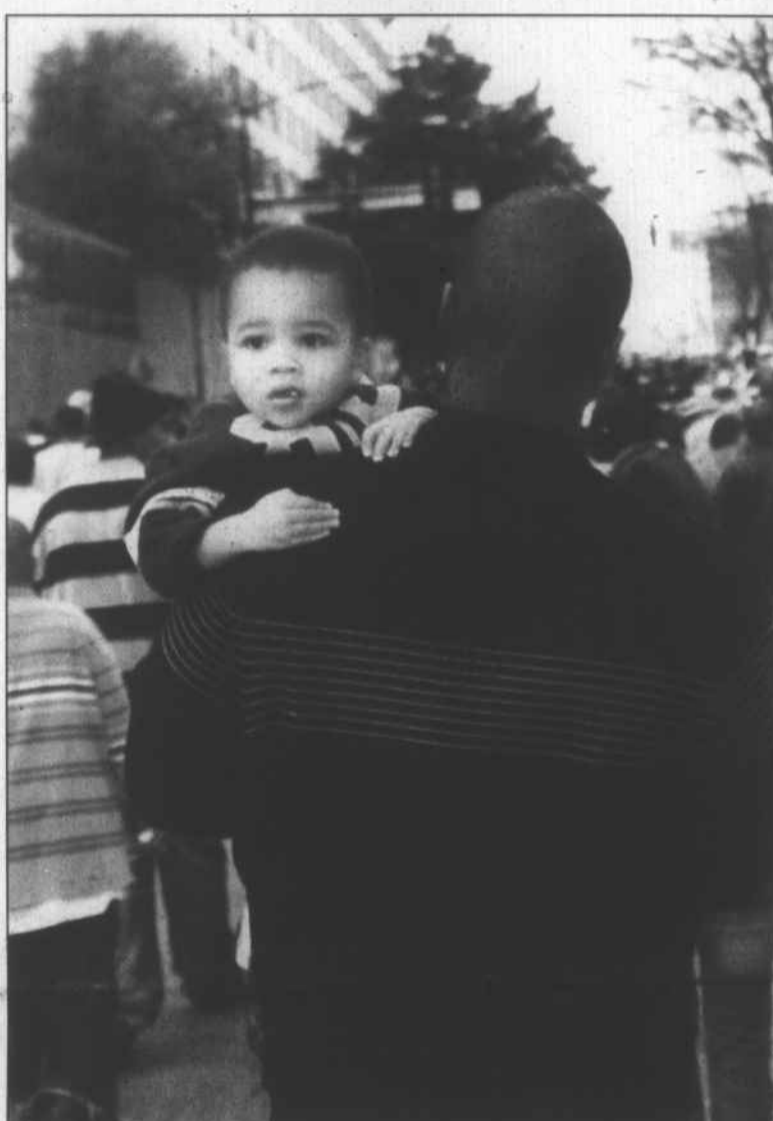
Evers-Williams is the widow of civil rights icon Medgar Evers, whose assassination in 1963 brought national attention to the movement and made him a household name. Since that time, Evers-Williams has remained active in the fight for civil rights, chairing the national NAACP from 1995 to 1998.

She spoke of her late husband, and of countless others like him, who took tremendous risks to ensure a better future for their people.

"It was a time of turmoil, when a few people whose names we may not even remember or

See Evers-Williams on A9

FREE RIDE



Christian Taylor looks, from the comfort of his father's arms, at the large crowd of people who marched Monday from Mt. Zion Baptist Church to the Benton Convention Center. The annual trek has become a MLK Day tradition.

Photo by Kevin Walker

Exhibit honors N.C. fallen soldiers

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Seventy combat boots, each representing a soldier from North Carolina who died in Iraq, were displayed last Friday in Corpening Plaza as part of a traveling exhibit on the human cost of the Iraq War.

The combat boots were tagged with the name, rank and hometown of each fallen service member and many featured items that were left by the families of the fallen. Smaller, less literal visuals on war casualties were there as well, including a pile of teddy bears made by members of Forsyth Friends Meeting to represent all the children who died or lost a loved one



Marlena Nava looks at the exhibit with her son, A.J. Pena.

Photo by Todd Luck

in the conflict. There were also a variety of shoes that had been left by volunteers who have

worked with the exhibit, each pair representing an Iraqi who

See Soldiers on A11



The Rev. Linda Beal stands with her husband, Marion, outside of her church.

Photo by Layla Farmer

MADAME PRESIDENT

Beal hopes making history will help other female pastors

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

"Always vigilante." That is the motto of the Minister's Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity, which was founded by Rev. R.M. Pitts Sr. in 1935. Since its inception, the conference has worked for equality and justice, taking stands on a variety of issues that have impacted African Americans and the county as a whole.

During its continued struggle for the equal treatment for all people, in more than seven decades, the conference has never had a female president - until now.

The Rev. Dr. Linda Beal was installed as president of the conference - which is touted as the oldest and largest predominantly black ecumenical clergy organization in Forsyth County - on Jan. 7.

"There have always been women in the conference ... but not many were in the forefront.

It's just a good thing, just a good feeling, that your peers or your colleagues recommend you and feel like you're qualified to do it," remarked Beal, who is founder and pastor of New Liberty Full Gospel Baptist Church. "I think they have learned to value the women a lot more than perhaps they once did. It's a great honor."

Beal has served the organization in several capacities over the years, including as first vice president, a title she held for the past six years.

"She's had enough time to demonstrate that she had the ability," said the Rev. Reuben Gilliam, chair of the nominating committee and pastor of North Winston Baptist Church for the past 16 years. "Plus, since that time, she went on and got her doctorate degree - Doctor of Ministry - which really helped her in more ways than one."

Beal's election was the

See Beal on A13



Gilliam

Ruffin and others honored with MLK Dream Awards



Photo by Todd Luck
April Ruffin-Adams, left, stands by while her sister, Benita Ruffin, thanks the crowd for the honor.

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The daughters of the late Ben Ruffin accepted an honor on his behalf Monday during the 27th Annual Noon Hour Commemoration, the city's oldest annual program honoring the life and work of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

April Ruffin-Adams and Benita Ruffin were on hand to receive their father's "Dare to Make a Difference" Award. Ben Ruffin, the first-ever African American chair of the UNC Board of Governors and a longtime civil rights champion, died last month, a few days shy of his 65th birthday.



Evans

Ruffin-Adams told the crowd, which was packed to capacity at the Benton Convention Center, that the best way to honor the memory of her father is by fighting for the things he held dear.

"As many of you know, my father ... was big on education," she said. "Dare to educate yourself."

Mayor Pro Tempore Vivian Burke, Poet Maya Angelo and Edwin Wilson, Provost Emeritus of Wake Forest University, were also presented with "Dare to Make a Difference" Awards. Angelou, who was in Atlanta kicking off her new Target MLK-inspired campaign in Atlanta, accepted her

award via a pre-taped video. Burke and Wilson were on hand for the event.

"I want to say thank-you to the people who believe in dreams," Burke said in her acceptance speech. One of the dreamers she pointed out was Mitter Evans, who founded the Noon Hour Commemoration and has kept the event afloat through thick and thin. Burke also used her time at the microphone to encourage the crowd to exercise their right to vote.

"We can do better," she said. Wilson recalled his early years in Winston-Salem, more than 50 years, when two of the first people to befriend her and his wife were Dr. F.L. Atkins and Dr. Kenneth R. Williams, both former presidents of

See Awards on A13

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822 Carl Russell Ave. (at Martin Luther King Dr.) Winston-Salem, NC 27101 (336) 722-3459 Fax (336) 631-8268 rushome@bellsouth.net