

# Watt presents overdue medals to veteran

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Rep. Mel Watt recently presented military service awards to Harry Gaston of Charlotte.

Gaston, a Vietnam veteran, had never received the medals he had earned during the Vietnam War and had contacted Rep. Watt's office for assistance.

Watt assisted Gaston in obtaining a total of eight military service awards, including the Purple Heart, the Air Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Defense Service Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge 1st Award, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon with Device, the Parachutist Badge-Basic and the Sharpshooter Badge and Mortar Bar and Rifle Bar.

Rep. Watt said: "It is an honor to pin a Purple Heart on someone who served his country so valiantly and to be able to obtain all the medals and honors such a deserving person richly merits."



U.S. Rep. Mel Watt serves the 12th District.

File Photo

# Local LISC office will close

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem office of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) will close after eight years of working to revitalize underserved neighborhoods.

The decision came from LISC's national office after a recent assessment by LISC's Winston-Salem local advisory committee and the national LISC office determined that LISC's community revitalization model was no longer the best system for neighborhood change in the metropolitan area.

"Despite our successful efforts here, we think the area's limited philanthropic resources could be applied more effectively through other community redevelopment strategies," said Greta J. Harris, LISC's program vice president.

Since coming to Winston-Salem in 1999, LISC has invested nearly \$10 million to help local community development corporations create 582 affordable homes and apartments and 100,000 square feet of commercial space.

Although LISC will not be accepting new business between now and when the

office closes, the company will continue working with its partners until all current initiatives are completed. But LISC's departure does not mean that the work it fostered will end. The many foundations and businesses that brought LISC to

Winston-Salem, and guided its success, will continue in their efforts to make neighborhoods better and stronger.

"The affiliation with LISC has been an education for all of us," said Gerald Church, chairman of the LISC Winston-

Salem local advisory committee and first vice president of SunTrust Bank. "And the LISC resources - the financial ones and the incalculable contributions of the staff - would have not otherwise been available. We will continue our commitment to design alternative community development strategies that align Winston-Salem's needs with its resources."

Church extended his thanks and praise to all of the LISC employees who staffed the Winston-Salem office, including Paula McCoy, the current program director.



McCoy

Photos by Layla Farmer

The limosine sits in front of the nursing facility as Mrs. Foster makes her way toward it.

Below: Mrs. Foster gets help down the steps of the nursing facility.



## Foster

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"He just thought she needed to be where others could keep an eye on her .... She was living in her home by herself (with) no known family members," explained center Administrator Felicia Thompkins. "We're her family now."

Doss still visits Foster regularly, and was on-hand for her special day as well.

Foster has made a name for herself at the Reynolds House not only because of her sharp wit and quick tongue, but because of the sweetness and tranquility she exudes.

"The other residents love her," Vinson said. "All the residents call her Grandma and look out for her."

Resident Sivinnee Glenn walks Foster to her meals at the cafeteria three times a day. Foster has been an inspiration to her, Glenn says.

"She doesn't bother anybody, and no matter what happens, she's always the same," she commented. "It seems like she has a calm, a peacefulness about herself. That's something that I want to obtain."

Her serene nature has had a positive effect on many of the residents at the Reynolds House, according to Thompkins.

"All the residents here who might have some type of behavior concern, in her presence, she's very open in saying, 'Stop that! What's wrong with you? We don't have that here.' Sometimes the ones who are a disturbance, they calm down and look at her," she related.

"We all look up to her as being a very strong, energetic leader."

Thompkins also commented on the optimism that is a staple of Foster's personality.

"She is just a delight - she's a wonderful person, and the Lord has blessed her to be able to see this day, especially in her right frame of mind, and having a very positive attitude about life," she stated. "Every day is a good day for her. She has inspired me."

Foster has also made an impression on others with her quiet spirituality and obvious devotion to the church.

"She's devout Christian. She enjoys any gospel program," said Resident Director Charlene Flemming. "She never has a cross word to say to anyone. You will find her just humming spiritual music."

Despite her age, staff members say that Foster is very independent, using only a walker, and has virtually no health problems.

"She's still in reasonably good health - able to hear, able to take care of herself, able to walk, just with her walker," Flemming commented. "She is, by far, our oldest resident, and our most precious cargo."

Foster's birthday celebration kicked off in earnest, upon her return from lunch, when center residents and staff gathered for an afternoon worship service led by Pastor Connie Robinson of Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. The service was followed by an ice-cream social.



## Jazz

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Owens is an eclectic jazz artist. His eclecticism encompasses all facets of the artistry and business of jazz music. His accomplishments are significant. Not only does his artistry as a musician, composer and arranger reflect tremendous depth, creativity and beauty, he continues to be an articulate, outspoken advocate regarding the rights of musicians and the important role of jazz music in America's culture.



Wiggins

including Wes Montgomery; Freddie Hubbard; Slide Hampton; Thelonious Monk; Dizzy Gillespie; Dinah Washington; Duke Ellington; Gerald Wilson; Randy Weston; George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars and many other internationally known musicians.

"We encourage everyone to attend, support, get involved, and help others to recognize an understand part of their cultural heritage," said Dr. Ira Wiggins, director of the NCCU Jazz Studies Program.

For further information, contact the AAJC by e-mail at AFAMJzCaucus@aol.com or by telephone at (212) 979-0304.

Ridley began performing professionally while still in high school. He has toured, recorded and performed with many of the historical legends

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