

A WSSU student participates in last week's cardiovascular health screening.

WSSU Photo by Garrett Garris

Former NFL star helps WSSU tackle heart disease

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Dr. Archie Roberts' visit to Winston-Salem State University last week was a busy one.

Roberts, a former NFL player and retired cardiologist, spent Thursday helping WSSU conduct health screenings on nearly 100 students. Friday morning, he spoke at the university's Founder's Day Convocation along with Leonard Wheeler, another retired NFL player who is now a motivational speaker. Former Carolina Panthers Players Terry Cousin and Deveron Harper were also on hand to talk to students about the importance of health.

Roberts also spent time on Friday helping with 100 health screenings for members of the community at the Community Care Center.

On Thursday, Roberts took part in a forum about the health screening program and health disparities in general. He said he was excited about the screenings, which will be part of a year-long program at WSSU on cardiovascular health called "Rams Have Heart."

"At the end of the day, I think we'll be proud of what we've accomplished," said Roberts.

Last week's screenings focused on determining cardiovascular risk factors. The series of tests included an echocardiogram, which produces an ultrasound image of the heart.

Students and community members who are found to have risk factors will be teamed up with trained student health coaches who will act as their mentors, educating and encouraging them to take steps to improve their health. At the end of the year, patients will be screened again to see their progress. Roberts said college isn't too early to check for cardiovascular risk factors, which are increasingly being found in younger people.

"A certain number will have high blood pressure, a certain number will have high blood sugar consistent with diabetes, some will be obese - I think we'll find all of these problems on some level," said Roberts.

Roberts, who lives in New Jersey, was a quarterback in the 1960s for the Miami Dolphins and the Cleveland Browns. He later became a cardiologist, performing more than 5,000 open-heart surgeries and trained thousands of students in cardiovascular health. In 2001, he founded the Living Heart Foundation, which provides screenings to NFL players. In 2005, he co-founded Living Healthy Partners to combat minority health disparities.

Thursday was Living



From left: Dr. Archie Roberts, WSSU School of Health Sciences Dean Dr. Peggy Valentine, Dr. Sylvia Flack, Dr. Jemehl Demons and Dr. Eddie Hoover.

Photo by Todd Luck

Healthy's first screening program. Similar programs will be conducted at other Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the future.

Staff from Living Healthy worked with faculty and students from WSSU's School of Health Sciences for the screenings. Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center also provided two cardiologists, lab technicians and equipment.

The forum Thursday spoke to the need for such screenings.

"I've been tracking data for 25 years about where we stand in terms of numbers of minorities and how we interact with the health care delivery system in this country, and you know it's not good," said Dr. Eddie Hoover, an associate with Living Healthy who helped with the screenings.

The lack of African American doctors are a part of the problem, Hoover said. For many years, black people have only made up around three percent of medical providers. Judging from the number of black students who are currently in medical school, that statistic could get worse, Hoover said. He hopes programs like "Rams Have Heart" will encourage students to consider medical careers.

Dr. Jemehl Demons, a local geriatrician whose patients are usually over 75, told the audience she knows most of her patients are Caucasian.

"I don't see many minorities in my practice, and that's the biggest disparity, because they don't make it to my practice," said Demons.

Cardiovascular disease, a

leading cause of death in African-Americans, is a big reason for that, Demons added. She called the amount of African American adults who die from such diseases "astonishing."

Dr. Sylvia Flack, director of WSSU's Center for Excellence in the Elimination of Health Disparities, said many factors cause health disparities.

"When you really drill down into this problem, it's poverty; it's levels of education; it's genetics; it's lifestyles, and we could go on and on and on," said Flack.

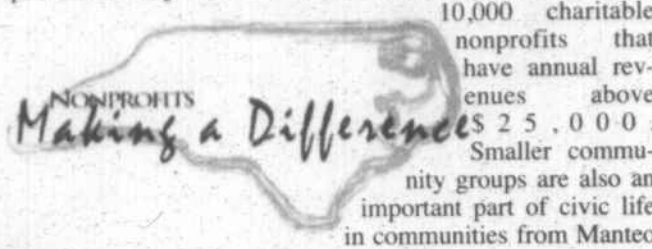
It will take many collaborative efforts like "Rams Have Heart" to make a difference, said Flack, whose Center hosted a conference on health disparities this week that drew such notables as Dr. Sanjay Gupta and Dr. Cornel West.

Month highlights work of nonprofits

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

November is Nonprofit Awareness Month in communities across North Carolina. This statewide initiative celebrates nonprofits and educates the public about how nonprofit organizations enrich and enliven communities throughout North Carolina.

According to N.C. Center for Nonprofits, the nonprofit sector also provides more than 400,000 jobs in North Carolina - almost 10 percent of all jobs in the state. North Carolina is home to



to Murphy.

"Nonprofits are doing herculean work every day in communities all over our state," said Trisha Lester, vice president of the N.C. Center for Nonprofits. "Now more than ever, we need to recognize and celebrate their impact. Most importantly, we need to help everyone understand the value of nonprofits. Where would our communities be without nonprofits' mission-driven work that touches the lives of all North Carolinians?"

The N.C. Center for Nonprofits is collaborating with local nonprofits, educational institutions and individuals across the state to celebrate Nonprofit Awareness Month.



Photo by Kevin Walker

The Rev. Stacey L. Frazier, front, and Rev. Jackson make a call for discipleship on Sunday.

Jackson

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so exorbitant that banks are "hustling our children." Jackson conceded that the powers that be likely will not welcome his ideas with open arms and minds. He says '60s-style protest marches may be needed, and he wants church-folks to step out of their comfort zones and march and "speak truth to power."

"We come to church to learn how to adjust, not to change our objective situation," he told those in the packed sanctuary.

He went even further, stating that while Jesus was a true fighter of oppression, most of his followers choose to admire who Jesus was instead of following in his footsteps.

Jackson did not place all of the blame on corporate America. He said consumers should realize that the low price items they buy from Wal-Mart and other retailers are so reasonable because they are likely made overseas by people doing jobs that Americans once did.

"We get a cheap product and lose a good job," he said.

Jackson's appearance at Friendship was part of the church's 95th anniversary celebration. He praised the congregation for choosing the Rev. Stacey L. Frazier as its pastor.

"He has intelligence ... he has vision. You should not take him for granted," Jackson said of Frazier, one of the pastors he has recruited for this new campaign. "Young people like him don't come in bunches like grapes."



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