

**YWCA**

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of shifts, and it was leveraging the skill set and the years of experience to put folks in key growth areas."

But Corpening, who retired after 17 years at the YWCA's helm, said the business development plan Respass referenced did not include anything about reshuffling employees' duties.

"The switching of people's duties at the Gateway was not part of that plan," Corpening stated.

According to several letters sent to the paper, Robin Ervin, the branch director of the Gateway YWCA facility, is one of the black employees who has seen her duties stripped since Respass arrived. Instead of leading the Gateway, Ervin, who has been a YW employee for more than 15 years, now reports to a white male colleague with a fraction of her longevity, according to the letters.

Respass declined to say which employees had their duties "shifted," saying that doing so would be a violation of employee privacy. Ervin declined to comment, saying Respass is the spokesperson for the organization.

Respass said she believes the complaints are driven by a



A YWCA bus touts the agency's mission.

misunderstanding. With the exception of the letters — which she confirmed were also sent to her — Respass said employee feedback on the restructuring efforts has been positive.

"I think there was confusion at first ... but I'd say from the board, from employees, there's just been a lot of excitement about how we can go forward with the growth," said the Wake Forest University alumna. "The response I got was so positive."



Miller Jones

A second employee, who commented anonymously for fear of being fired, said the situation runs far deeper than a simple misunderstanding, and that the shifts Respass implemented has created racial tension at an agency that has prided itself on building bridges.

"We're divided, black and white. It's to the point where I come in and they (the Caucasian staffers) just look at

me," the employee commented. "It's like a standoffish-type thing, where (as) before, everybody was so happy-go-lucky. It's like they're waiting to see what's going to happen."

Sandra Miller Jones, who became chairperson of the YWCA Board on July 1, said the board has not met since Respass took office, but expressed confidence in the new CEO's leadership based on her experience serving alongside Respass on the board. Miller Jones, a founding partner of Segmented Marketing Services Inc., said her informal conversations with YWCA employees have revealed some "mixed feelings" about the changes. She said the anonymity of some of the complaints makes them difficult to tackle.

"I wish they were not anonymous so that we could address them directly," said Miller Jones, who added that she plans to meet with top executives one-on-one in the coming weeks. "If I have no idea who has the problem, we can't address it."

Former Board Chair Drewry Nostitz, who led the Board when Respass was hired, could not be reached for comment.

City Council Member Molly Leight, who has served on the board for several years, said she had heard that some people were unhappy with the restructuring, but she was surprised to learn about the racial implications.

"At first I thought nothing of it and then I began to worry about the way it was being seen," Leight said of the complaints. "It's just so unfortunate. I hate it for the people involved, and also it's the perception that there's any sort of bias (on Respass's part). I have an awfully hard time thinking that way."

Corpening said she has received numerous phone calls from her former staffers about the restructuring and a leadership structure that some say favors Caucasians. She said she is disheartened by the reports.

"I am really concerned that it seems that the African American staff — except for maybe one person — has been treated very unfairly. We pushed so hard to be so inclusive and for everybody to have the opportunity to shine," she remarked. "It hurts my heart to see the YWCA where it is right now, and it seems to me that there are some serious racial problems there that had never existed during my whole 17 years there."



Devin Davis (far right) is sworn in by Chief Justice Sarah Parker as a member of the Governor's Crime Commission, along with Kathy Dudley of the Division of Juvenile Justice and Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Douglas Sasser.

**WSSU student named to Governor's Crime Commission**

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Devin J. Davis, a rising sophomore at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU), has been appointed by Gov. Beverly Perdue to a three-year term on the Governor's Crime Commission.

The Commission serves as the chief advisory body to the governor and the secretary of the Department of Public Safety on crime and justice issues. Davis will serve on the Commission's Juvenile Justice Committee along with judges, senior law enforcement officers, Secretary Al Delia from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Schools.

"I have a strong desire to create the positive change I believe we need in the world today," Davis said. "I hope that by being a member of the Governor's Crime Commission that I can bring a common man's voice and a young man's perspective to how we can reduce the juvenile crime rate."

Since entering WSSU, Davis has been involved with the Student Government Association and served as a student representative on the Dining Hall Development and the Tuition and Fees Committees. He is an active member of Black Men for Change on campus and has served as master of ceremonies for university events. Davis serves as a social media specialist with WSSU's Office of Marketing and Communications and also works as a sales lead with Foot Action, USA in Greensboro.

Davis is the son of Derrick and Keisha Davis of Reidsville and the grandson of the late Hertford County Commissioner DuPont Davis and Earline Davis of Ahsokie. He is a 2011 graduate of Northeast Guilford High School, where he was honored as a member of the school's football team and is a member of the East White Oak Baptist Church in Greensboro. Davis' twin sister, Dasha, is also a student at WSSU.

**Labor**

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Farmville, Va. "We feel good about the momentum we have going into the runoff."

Brooks said he welcomed the Second Primary as well.

"I think runoffs are very important to the people of North Carolina," he said. "Runoffs give an opportunity for people really to get to know these candidates better ... and the climate right now is pretty good for people understanding what the real issues are in North Carolina."

At 40, Foster — a onetime Winston-Salem resident who ran unsuccessfully for City Council in 2001 — is decades younger than his opponent, and he believes his relative youth will serve him well in the runoff race.

"The atmosphere's different on the state level, and what people are looking for is something new and fresh," Foster said. "... You have to have motivated voters, and our voters are motivated to have a younger candidate on the ballot."

Brooks, who served as Commissioner of Labor from 1977-1992, believes his training as an attorney and experience working for the North Carolina Industrial Commission's Department of Commerce for well over a decade leading up to the

race make him the most qualified candidate.

"Currently, state law prohibits the Industrial Commission from sharing with the Department of Labor data on workplace injuries, and the Department of Labor desperately needs to know where accidents are happening ... and what we need to do to prevent them," said the 75 year-old. "I know personally what businesses have what kind of record of workplace injuries. I will carry that information with me to the Department of Labor and put it to good use."



Joyner

As the state's top safety enforcer, the labor commissioner touches a wide variety of disciplines and is uniquely positioned to impact changes in the labor market, Foster said. He has vowed to make addressing the state's unemployment rate one of his chief

objectives. "What I firmly believe is that the labor commissioner can play a much more active role in helping the state address the 9.4 percent unemployment rate," Foster said. "Our campaign is very focused on connecting individuals who have been displaced or are looking for work with the community college system so they can get trained and go to work right now."

Safety is always first for the labor commissioner, and both men vowed to push for increased inspections of compa-

nies and areas of the labor market (such as migrant worker encampments) where violations are often found. Brooks said the federal government is poised to offer additional funding to the state to help boost training efforts that could lead to more jobs for North Carolinians. He says it will be an invaluable opportunity for the state and the Labor Commission.

"We have an opportunity to do something we've been needing to do for a long time, which is to put in place high skilled advanced training all across North Carolina," Brooks said. "With that kind of opportunity, I couldn't resist running for Commissioner of Labor. There's never been such an opportunity for that kind of leadership and active support for vocational education in North Carolina heretofore."

No matter whom they deem fit to hold the offices that are up for grabs during the Second Primary, Foster said it's imperative that Forsyth County residents exercise their right to vote.

"It is critically important," he said, referencing the low participation that typically occurs in second primaries. "When you have turnout like that, truly every single vote matters a ton."

For more information about Brooks, visit <http://brookslaborcomm.com>. For more information about Foster, visit <http://marlowefoster.com> or [www.facebook.com/marlowefoster](http://www.facebook.com/marlowefoster).

**Carver**

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"Our students just needed a little more structure," said Willard, who has spent more than a decade in education. "... It seemed that they were more interested in what each other were wearing and how people were looking at them than their education."

Carol Montague-Davis, assistant superintendent of Middle and High School Administration, said Standard Mode of Dress, which was first adopted in elementary schools, is becoming increasingly popular. Montague-Davis says the school system doesn't push the policy, opting instead to leave the decision up to the individual schools. Nineteen Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools have dress codes. Montague-Davis said schools that have implemented such dress codes have reported positive results.

"It helps cut down on distractions," said the former Carver principal. Proponents also say dress codes save families money and make the socioeconomic divide within the student body less easy to spot.

Ronald Travis, who took over as the school's principal earlier this year, said address-

ing distracting fashion issues — from revealing clothing to sagging pants — is one of the most time consuming issues administrators grapple with.

"We just waste an enormous amount of time and it's daily. You're not dealing with teaching and learning when you're dealing with that," Travis said. "Now, teachers are going to be able to spend more time teaching, and administrators are now going to have time to go into the classrooms and supervise the teachers."



Willard

Willard said the uniformity of the dress code will increase safety measures on campus as well.

"The standard mode of dress will help identify who belongs on campus and who doesn't. It will also help us keep an eye on the gangs. We're not allowing any navy blue (the color of the Crips gang) in the building at all," she explained. "... I think it's really going to help classroom behavior and classroom management. There's not going to be anything left to argue about."



Brim

Before administrators made the decision to approach the School Board, they first sent surveys to parents. Ninety-two percent of parents voted in favor of the dress

code, Willard said.

Carver student Beayohnna Smith, 16, said she has mixed feelings about the new dress code. Smith, the fourth of five children, says she has always prided herself on having her own sense of style.

"I like the idea, I just think it's maybe too specific on colors and stuff like that," she commented.

Smith, a member of the school's track and field and basketball teams, said she is doubtful that the dress code will impact her peers' behavior overall, but she figures it is worth a try. She added that she is already thinking of ways to make the wardrobe her own.

"I'm going to have the uniform, but I'm going to (have) my own flair," the rising junior remarked. "As long as I have my jewelry, I'll be fine."

Lucas Brim, a rising junior, believes the change will be a good thing for the school.

"I think it'll make it a lot easier on kids to pick out their clothes and make it a lot more simple to get up in the morning," said the 16 year-old. "Then the teachers won't have to tell them to pull up their pants or have their parents bring clothes for them (because their attire is inappropriate)."

Brim said he has seen his share of inappropriate clothing at the school, and such sights were an interruption.

"It actually takes a lot out of what you could be learning," said the varsity football player.

Travis, who has served on the administration of several schools with similar dress codes, said making academics the top priority is the chief objective of the new rules.

"I just want the parents to

understand that every decision we make here at Carver is driven by teaching and learning," he stated. "We want most of our time spent on teaching and learning."

Willard said school leaders are expecting some bumps in the road as students and parents get used to the new dress code, but she believes the benefits of the transition will pay off in the long run.

More information about Carver's SMOD policy is available on its Web page at [wsfcs.k12.nc.us](http://wsfcs.k12.nc.us) or by calling the school at 336-727-2987.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Proposed Front Yard Parking Restrictions**

The Winston-Salem City Council wants to collect public opinion about a proposed ordinance that would allow residents to petition the city to restrict parking in front yards in their neighborhoods.

- Vehicles parked in the front yard would have to be on a driveway or a permanent parking pad.
- No more than 30 percent of the yard could be taken up by the parking area.
- The ordinance would be in effect only in areas where 70 percent of the residents request it.

**Public Hearing**  
Monday, July 16, 7 p.m.  
City Hall Council Chamber  
101 N. Main St. Winston-Salem

The full text of the proposed ordinance is posted on the city website ([CityofWS.org](http://CityofWS.org)).

For more information call CityLink 311.

**CF L**

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