

CANDIDATES SEEK SUPPORT FROM SENIOR DEMOCRATS

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

Political hopefuls addressed members of the Forsyth County Senior Democrats on Wednesday, Feb. 5 during the group's regular monthly breakfast meeting at the Golden Corral on University Parkway.

Although the event was billed as a candidates' forum, Senior Dems Vice President Delmas Parker said the meeting was actually intended to be more of an informal discussion with candidates who had expressed interest in addressing the group.

Attorneys Valene Franco and Donna Taylor, both of whom have filed to fill the newly-created Forsyth County District Court judgeship, spoke. Taylor, who had been tapped to serve as the meeting's keynote speaker prior to its transition to an impromptu forum, first spoke on the importance of "Reaching Back to Build the Future." She then addressed the merits of her candidacy. Taylor, who has handled everything from personal injury and civil to domestic and business cases since opening Donna Taylor Law PLLC in 2011, told attendees that her life experience would be one of her greatest assets on the bench.

"I remember from firsthand experience what it's like to be an abused spouse, to go through law school as a single parent and get it done," she said. "...I wish to serve you on the bench as the ear of experience, real life experience, the real life experiences of everyone who will come before judges on the District Court bench."

Franco, a longtime managing attorney for



Delmas Parker tout's W.E.B. DuBois' "The Souls of Black Folk."

Photos by Layla Garms



Alma Adams, Valene Franco and Donna Taylor speak.

Legal Aid of North Carolina, believes the lessons she has learned from representing indigent clients over the years have given her a unique perspective that would serve her well on the District Court bench.

"I have 15 years of legal experience, 12 of which are with Legal Aid," said Franco, who was recognized last month as one of the City of Winston-Salem's two 2014 Martin Luther King, Jr. Young Dreamers Award winners. "I have been a foot soldier in our court system, day in and day out in our District Courts, practicing before the judges there and helping my clients as much as I possibly can."

State Rep. Alma Adams, a candidate for the 12th Congressional District seat that is up for grabs, made one of her first Winston-Salem campaign stops at the breakfast.

"I do have the experience," noted the retired Bennett College professor. "...I want to be the voice for the people, to speak not only for educators, but for people who are working hard every day, as well as you, the seniors, because I am one as well. I've been an advocate all of my life, and I will continue to do so."

Gov. Pat McCrory's decision not to hold a special election to replace former 12th District rep-

resentative Mel Watt prior to the November general election has drawn criticism from Adams and others. They contend that it is unfair to leave the district without representation for the better part of a year.

"I'm the only candidate in this race that spoke out against the governor," she told attendees. "You've got to be able to speak truth to power."

Gardenia Henley, whose several unsuccessful campaigns include a 2013 bid for mayor, spoke briefly at the meeting, stating that she is considering a bid to unseat Rep. Virginia Foxx, who represents the Fifth District in the U.S.

House. The Senior Dems are planning a more formal forum after the Feb. 28 filing deadline, said Senior Democrats President Jim Shaw.

"We just want to know about each candidate, and we don't want to be partial towards anyone," Shaw explained. "We want to do the right thing, give them the opportunity to hear what they're talking about, what their platforms are."

In the interest of fairness, the Senior Dems do not endorse primary candidates; however, they will make their opinions known once the general election rolls around, Shaw said. Voter turnout is going to be a crucial factor in both instances if the state is to see any real change this time around, Shaw believes.

"Getting out the vote - that's the important thing, and we ... have to make sure people are free to vote," he said. "Let's don't set up roadblocks to block people from voting; let's make it easy for people to vote."

The Senior Democrats voted last week to move their meeting day to the first Thursday of every month. The next Senior Dems meeting is slated for Thursday, March 6 at Golden Corral, 4965 University Parkway, at 9 a.m. For more information, contact Jim Shaw at 336-287-5053 or JamesWShawSr@gmail.com.

Emmons at WFU TEDx talk

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Robin Emmons, a Huntersville fresh food advocate, will be among the speakers at a Feb. 22 TEDx event at Wake Forest University.

Emmons and eight other thought leaders will deliver talks

on longer than 18 minutes on topics ranging from sustainable urban farming to sports and education from noon to 5 p.m. in Wait Chapel.

The TEDx program is designed "to give communities, organizations and individuals the opportunity to stimulate dialogue through TED-like experiences at the local level."

Emmons is founder and executive director of Sow Much Good, a non-profit supporting urban farming initiatives in underserved communities. She was recently honored as a CNN 'Hero' for her work.

Doris Páez, executive director of Forsyth Futures, will also speak.

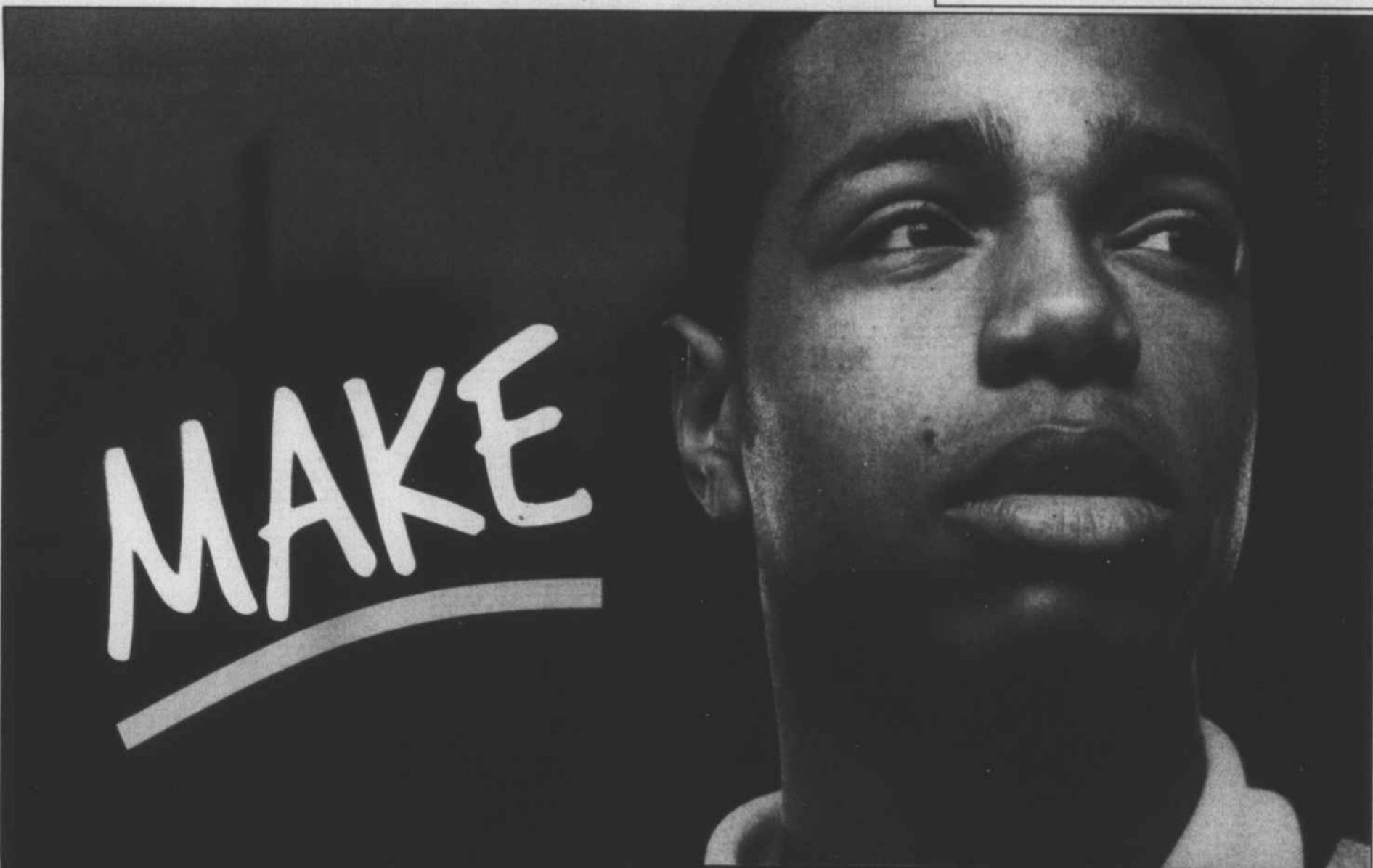
A complete list of speakers, registration information and tickets are available at <http://tedxwakefor-estu.com>. Tickets are \$10 for the general public, \$5 for non WFU students, and free for Wake Forest University students, faculty and staff.



Emmons

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