

Collins

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Charlie Wilson, Kem, Tyler Perry, John Legend and Robin Thicke.

Known as the "Ultimate Party With A Purpose," the Tom Joyner Foundation Fantastic Voyage is the signature fundraiser benefitting the Tom Joyner Foundation, which provides scholarships to help students attending historically black colleges and universities. Since 2002, Denny's has supported more than 300 students and contributed more than \$525,000 to the Tom Joyner Foundation's programs and scholarship funds. This year, through its Hungry for Education



Joyner

program, Denny's will be awarding more than \$200,000 in deserving high school and college students.

For more information on Denny's Hungry for Education program or to apply for a scholarship, visit www.dennyshungryforeducation.com.

Richardson

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too, always emphasizing the importance of teaching in a way that makes students love what they are learning. It worked.

"He taught me how to teach science," McGregor said. "Our scores skyrocketed."

Benika Thompson, the school system's program manager for science, said Richardson is a strong believer in students' ability to achieve.

"Through the spirit of professionalism, he reminds us all to allow students the opportunities to learn science and demonstrate what they 'know, understand, and are able to do,'" she said.

Earlier this school year, Steve Overholt became the school system's second elementary science coach, and, in the months since, Overholt has been learning as much as he can from Richardson. What makes Richardson good at what he does?

"It is his passion – a passion for science and a passion for the kids," Overholt said. "I'm trying to be as much of a sponge as I can."

Richardson, who will turn 64 in April, grew up in Winston-Salem. His father, also named Alexander, inspected tobacco for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., and, his mother, Mary, took care of the house and family. Richardson was one of 11 children. Growing up, space was so tight his older siblings told him that there was a time when he slept in a dresser drawer.

He is not the only educator in the family. His older sister Annie Hairston went on to become an assistant superintendent. His sister Modine R. Shaw retired from the school system as a teacher at Philo Middle School. His brother Willie was the assistant principal at Kernersville Elementary School when he retired. Another sister taught in New York.

Richardson graduated from Anderson High School in 1968. At Winston-Salem State University, he earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education. For a while after graduating in 1973, though, he resisted his calling to go into education. With those older siblings already teachers, he said to himself, "I don't want to do what they're doing."

UNCG alumnus in Best Picture-winning film

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

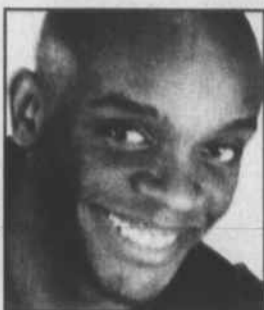
The film "Twelve Years A Slave" received the Best Picture award at the 2014 Academy Awards Sunday evening.

Chris Chalk, a 2001 alumnus of UNCG Theatre, is featured in the film.

He plays the character Clemens Ray, who was included in a clip compilation of great movie scenes about an hour into the telecast.

The actor spoke of some of his gut-wrenching "Twelve Years a Slave" scenes in a recent LA Times article.

Chalk's screen acting career so far has included such productions as Showtime's "Homeland," HBO's "The Newsroom" and the film "Rent." He won a Theatre World Award for his Broadway debut in "Fences."



Chalk

He returns to UNCG on occasion to conduct master classes and speak with students.

UNCG Theatre Professor Michael Flannery – who as a UNCG graduate student was a cast mate of Chalk's and later taught him in a class – was pulling hard for his fellow alumnus and the film. He explains that Chalk was "such a vital part of the theatre department when he was in school." He adds that in the years since, "He's been a great friend to the school."

The Oscar-winning movie is based on the historical 1853 narrative "Twelve Years a Slave," which UNCG professor Dr. Noelle Morrisette spoke about in a recent article. In the narrative, Solomon Northup writes of being a free man from New York state taken hostage and sold into slavery,



where he labors and survives under brutal conditions for 12 years in Louisiana. His freedom is finally restored.

Teachers

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performance evaluations) to receive \$500 per year raises for the next four years in exchange for ending their tenure early and signing a four-year contract. After the four years, school districts would have to cover the pay increases themselves or return teachers to their pre-contract pay level.

School boards across the state are struggling with how to fairly select teachers for the raises; some – including the Guilford County and Durham County boards of education – have refused to comply altogether and are readying legal challenges.

"It's not a good way to enact the change," said WS/FCS Superintendent Dr. Beverly Emory.

The WS/FC Board of Education passed a resolution expressing to the General Assembly its opposition to having to pick the top 25 percent of teachers and urging legislatures to come up with a better way to pick educators.

While Emory said she applauded Guilford County's move, she didn't want to devote the school system's money and resources to a lawsuit. Instead she came up with a proposal, passed unanimously by the school board last week, to offer all the 2,500 teachers in the county who qualify an opportunity to receive the raise. If more



Motsinger

than 625 – or 25 percent – of them accept the money and contract, then a lottery system will be used to offer the contracts.

Emory said from what she's been hearing from teachers, she expects most will not accept the offer. Tenure means job security for teachers. Those with it can't be dismissed without due process.

"In exchange for not being able to pay teachers the salary of most professions in the private sector, they had a little more job security," said Emory, describing the history of teacher tenure.

Many Republican lawmakers believe that tenure is the reason why bad teachers remain on the payroll. Emory said she's never seen a problem with holding teachers accountable, even those with tenure protections.

"I worked in the state as a teacher and then returned as an administrator and have never felt that the tenure laws in North Carolina made it difficult to get rid of someone who wasn't doing the job," she said.



Emory

School Board member Elisabeth Motsinger is concerned that the state won't be able to maintain its commitment to teachers who do accept the offer. Funding for the raises has only been approved for the first year. If legislators refuse to fund the program in future sessions, local school systems will be left to foot the bill, said Motsinger, who called the law divisive and badly written.

She is urging teachers not to accept the raises.

"I personally think it's terrible for us to pick and choose teachers considering they're supposed to be working together in a collaborative way," said Motsinger, who is also opposed to ending tenure.

School board vice-chair John Davenport Jr. does support the eventual end of tenure, saying he believes it will help administrators get who they need in the classroom. He doesn't think the end of tenure will lead to the arbitrary firing of teachers.

Davenport doesn't like the roll-out of the

plan. He said forcing school districts to single out their "best" teachers is not ideal.

"I don't feel like that's the best way to end teacher tenure ... there are some very valid questions raised about how you determine who's the best and who's not the best," he said.

Forsyth County Association of Educators President Ann Petitjean said that the implementation of the policy by the board was the "least harmful way" to do it, since selecting the top 25 percent would have pitted teachers against one another. She will be turning down the offer and will urge all teachers to do the same. The FCAE opposes the end of tenure, as does its parent organization, the North Carolina Association of Educators, which has filed a lawsuit to halt the plan.

"There's certain things we say, 'OK, we'll do this job for less money than our education would warrant necessarily in order to have certain guarantees,'" she said. "We want to be able to stand up when we see something is wrong in our classroom or in the school district; if we need to stand up for the kids or for other educators, we don't want to get fired for that."

Petitjean said she believes the state will lose more teachers if it ends tenure and fewer will consider entering the field.


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