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# THE CHRONICLE

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## SELMA 50 YEARS LATER



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

President Barack Obama, fourth from left, listens to Rep. John Lewis, (D-Ga.), as he speaks about "Bloody Sunday" as they and the first family, civil right leaders, and members of Congress, walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., for the 50th anniversary of the landmark event of the Civil Rights Movement, Saturday, March 7. From left are Sasha Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Lewis, Obama, Amelia Boynton Robinson, who was beaten during "Bloody Sunday," and Adelaide Sanford, also in a wheelchair.

# Obama marks Selma March milestone

### Butterfield participates in history

BY JAY REEVES AND DARLENE SUPERVILLE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SELMA, Alabama—America's racial history "still casts its long shadow upon us," President Barack Obama said as he stood near the Edmund Pettus

Bridge in solidarity and remembrance with civil rights activists whose beatings by police a half-century ago galvanized much of the nation against racial oppression and hastened passage of historic legislation guaranteeing voting rights for minorities.

Tens of thousands of people on Saturday joined to commemorate the "Bloody Sunday" march of 1965 and take stock of the struggle for equality.

One of thousands in attendance was U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield of North Carolina's First District, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

"It was one of the highest honors of my life to join President Obama, President Bush, and dozens of congressional colleagues in commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday that led to the passage of the Voting Rights

Act. As Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I had the privilege of sitting in the front section during the ceremonies at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Alabama State Capitol, 16th Street Baptist Church, Brown Chapel AME Church, and First Baptist Church. Butterfield said.

Under a bright sun, the first black U.S. president praised the figures of a civil rights era that he was too

young to know but that helped him break the ultimate racial barrier in political history with his ascension to the nation's highest office. He called them "warriors of justice" who pushed America closer to a more perfect union.

"So much of our turbulent history—the stain of slavery and anguish of civil war, the yoke of segregation and tyranny of Jim Crow, the death of four little girls in Birmingham,

and the dream of a Baptist preacher—met on this bridge," Obama told the crowd before taking a symbolic walk across part of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the same bridge where the 1965 marchers were attacked by police.

"It was not a clash of armies, but a clash of wills, a contest to determine the meaning of America," Obama said. He was three years old at the

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## Loretta Biggs becomes U.S. judge

BY ERIN MIZELLE SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

GREENSBORO — On Friday, March 6, 2015, history was made.

At the United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina, at 324 West Market St. in Greensboro, the Honorable Loretta Copeland Biggs, a

Winston-Salem resident, became the first African-American woman appointed to the federal bench in North Carolina as a U.S. District Court judge.

She had been appointed by President Obama to fill a vacancy left open when Judge James Beaty Jr., also a Winston-Salem resident, took senior status last year.

Biggs was a partner at Allman Spry Davis Leggett

Crumpler. The Spelman and Howard Law School graduate was a corporate attorney — with Coca-Cola — before serving as an assistant Forsyth County district attorney. She served as a local district court judge for nearly a decade.

The swearing-in ceremony on March 6 was one Biggs spoke of as "glori-

See Judge on A7



The Honorable Loretta Copeland Biggs, left, becomes the first African American female appointed to the federal bench in North Carolina as a U.S. District Court judge on Friday, March 6, 2015, at the United States District Court, located at 324 West Market St. in Greensboro, N.C.

Photo by Erin Mizelle

# NBTF announces celebrity co-chairs

BY CHANEL DAVIS THE CHRONICLE

The city received its first taste of purple and black for the year on Monday afternoon in the Garden Terrace of Embassy Suites Hotel with the announcement of the 2015 National Black Theatre Festival's (NBTF) Celebrity Co-Chairs.

"We are very excited about this year's festival, and we think that you'll love the things that are to come," said Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, executive

producer of NBTF.

The faces for this year's event are multiple-grammy winning "All My Children" co-stars Debbi Morgan and Darnell Williams.

"This coming season is going to be so wonderful because submissions are coming from, not just all around the United States and Canada, but from Japan, China and Africa. It is going to be so exciting," Morgan said. "It is also especially gratifying to so many theater-goers who travel far and wide to see stupendous theatre here at the festival."

Morgan, a Dunn, N.C. native, has appeared in "The Hurricane," opposite Denzel Washington, and "Eve's Bayou," opposite of Samuel L. Jackson. She has also appeared in the movie "Love and Basketball."

In television, Morgan was featured in the Showtime television drama "Soul Food" and in the late '70s could be found on "Good Times" and "What's Happening."

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