

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

We remain committed after 41 years

FROM THE DESK OF ERNIE PITT

In the spring of 1974, what had been no more than a dream for me, began to materialize. As I approached graduation from the School of Journalism at UNC-Chapel Hill, it was like D-Day. My thoughts: Either you're going to do it or you're not. I decided to take a job with The News and Record in Greensboro and scout out Winston-Salem as the place to sow some seeds.

Knowing absolutely nothing about Winston-Salem except that it was the fourth largest city in North Carolina without a Black newspaper. I took the first exit off of Business 40 not wanting to miss the city altogether. I exited at the WSSU campus. I drove onto campus by mistake and turned into the parking lot in front of the Alumni Building. I went in and met the first person in the city to discuss my master plan. Her name was Dr. Greene, the alumni chairwoman. She was perhaps the one who confirmed my desire to start a newspaper here. She was very encouraging where others had laughed and scoffed at my idea.

On my days off I would come to Winston and see who would help me get my penniless idea going. Here again, I found one individual who saw the vision which God had given me. This man's name was Frank Murrell. Mr. Murrell was an entrepreneur with only a third grade education but he was a man of God and could see the idea of what a black-owned newspaper could do in a city as racially segregated as Winston-Salem, whose black population at the time was just under 50 percent - hardly a minority.

Later on I discovered that there had been another black newspaper here in the '40s owned by my other mentor, Mr. Carl Russell, Sr. owner along with his wife, of Russell Funeral Home. Between the two they kept me focused on my dream. Mr. Russell was almost elected mayor of Winston-Salem by write-in ballot had not the white establishment not thrown in another black candidate to split the black vote. Sound familiar?

Mr. Russell knew the power of the press. He also learned that that power combined with advocacy could be dangerous to your freedom. I came to learn that as well.

I was dating Elaine at the time who was working on her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at UNC-Chapel Hill, and visiting on weekends, helping to sell newspapers and typeset copy. She became a steel beam of support to me. We were married 4 years later. She and I sold newspapers; I wrote stories (the first being one about a man who sued his next door neighbor because her rooster crowed too early and too loud). That was the last story for the first issue written on a brown paper bag and published Thursday, Sept. 5, 1974.

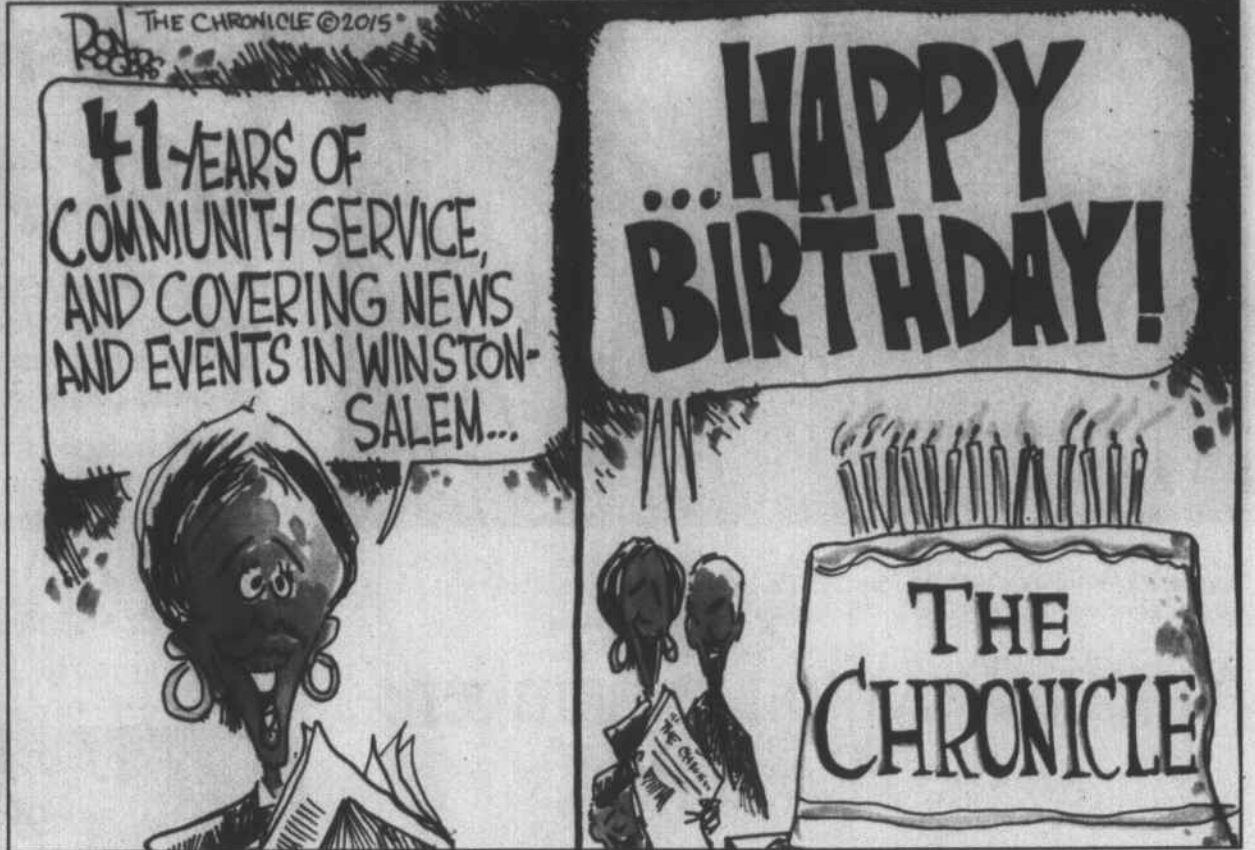
There were many more stories involving issues that would only be told by The Chronicle, and many excellent editors and journalists who would help me tell them: Like the case of Sheila McKellar who was arrested, taken to the magistrate's office and when she left that office she was immediately pronounced dead. The many other stories like the castration of a black man in the Washington Park area that not for The Chronicle would never have seen the light of day.

Even The trial, conviction and incarceration of Daryl Hunt was tainted by the inaccuracies of the few stories done in the daily. The Chronicle did the only interview with Daryl Hunt to get his side of the story out. Ask Larry Little. At the time, under the leadership of Allen Johnson, editor, The Chronicle received the Community Service Award for coverage of Daryl Hunt. The NC Press judges indicated that without The Chronicle's coverage, Hunt's side would have gone uncovered. All told when the facts came out 18 years later the same daily that was a part of the conviction also took credit for his exoneration.

I wore many hats in the early days including publisher, editor, and reporter, advertising salesman and circulation manager.

John Templeton, our first editor, wrote a 13 part series on the history of black Winston-Salem. When he left The Chronicle he went to become the editor of the nation's oldest black newspaper, The Afro American in Richmond, Virginia. Who can forget Azzie Wagner who wrote a column called "Social Whirl"? Her portrait hangs in the lobby of The

See Committed on A7



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Funnel frustration about Officer Kerrick's case into positive action

To the Editor:

I am disappointed by the North Carolina Attorney General's decision to not retry the Randall Kerrick case [in the shooting death of Jonathan Ferrell] and hope this decision will not lead to greater mistrust within our community.



Adams

While many of us are frustrated by today's decision, we must funnel that frustration into positive and productive action that includes serious dialogues about criminal justice reform, greater diversity in jury selection and the underlying prejudices that have an undue influence on our criminal justice system.

"I urge people to come together peacefully to unite and heal our city. I remain committed to working with the community, law enforcement and local leaders to ensure tragedies such as this never occur again.

My heart breaks for the [Jonathan] Ferrell family; they will remain in my thoughts and prayers.

U.S. Rep. Alma S. Adams (NC-12)
Washington, DC

Roy Cooper, let 2nd jury decide case of police officer

To the Editor:

[Attorney General] Roy Cooper should not block a new jury of 12 Mecklenburg [County] citizens from deciding the case where Jonathan Ferrell was shot 10 times and killed with three police officers present on the scene. Roy Cooper should retry the case.

Quite frankly, a politician running for higher office should not make a unilateral and political deci-

sion in place of the people of Mecklenburg County. Political ambition clouds the public trust when the administration of justice is short-circuited. Jury decisions create more trust and faith when they are allowed to move forward, even if a new trial is necessary.

Divided juries are not uncommon and the same jury more often than not resolves their differences. Second juries also produce unanimous results. For Roy Cooper to interfere with the continuing proper administration of justice in this case is wrong and unconscionable.

Roy Cooper's office already has a very spotty record regarding the proper administration of justice as it related to his supervision of the SBI [State Bureau of Investigation]. Subsequently, the SBI was removed from his office. Once again, Roy Cooper is not living up to his leadership responsibilities for our state.

Cooper should let the jury decide.
Ken Spaulding, Democrat
Candidate for Governor
Durham, NC

Work to pass laws against dog chaining

To the Editor:

The Old Farmer's Almanac is predicting an unusually harsh and bitterly cold winter for much of the country, including below-normal temperatures for the Northeast and above-average snowfall in the South.



As much as we might complain about having to shovel or drive in the snow, no one has it worse than dogs that are forced to spend the winter outdoors, on the end of a chain or in a backyard pen. Constant

exposure to cold temperatures puts dogs in danger of hypothermia, even if they have a doghouse. Every year, chained dogs and even newborn puppies are found frozen to death inside their doghouses after succumbing to the cold.

But even in the best weather, spending day after day confined, with no exercise, no companionship, and nothing to do is no life at all for "man's best friend." Many chained dogs sink into severe depression or become aggressive and a danger to children who wander too close.

Let's work to pass laws restricting or banning dog chaining - as more than 200 jurisdictions nationwide have already done, including Clayton and 19 other municipalities in North Carolina - and be good neighbors by checking on chained dogs in our community, encouraging people to let their dogs live indoors and always reporting abuse and neglect immediately.

Christina Matthies
Clayton, N.C.

Ways to make school year successful

To the Editor:
Three simultaneous actions will make this school year successful! Students and parents must plan together, do homework together, have family discussions and make education the first priority for the next 10 months in their home.

The school system must do a better job of educating "all" of our students. The teachers are trained and must be allowed to teach. The administration must start cleaning house starting with many unnecessary high-paying jobs in central office and use that money to bring back more teachers assistants.

The church must become activity-involved in education. Jesus and all the other spiritual leaders were teachers. Every church that has a building should use it Monday-Friday as an afterschool safe haven and tutoring outreach center for the "neighborhood children." We could help eliminate discrimination and increase knowledge in that under-used consecrated building.

Proverbs 27:17 (Paraphrased)
"As iron sharpened iron one person sharpens another."

James Hankins

We Welcome Your Feedback

Submit letters and guest columns to letters@wschronicle.com before 5 p.m. Friday for the next week's publication date.

Letters intended for publication should be addressed "Letters to the Editor" and include your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep letters to 350 words or less.

If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our website, www.wschronicle.com.

We reserve the right to edit any item submitted for clarity or brevity and determine when and whether material will be used.

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Also, go to our Facebook page to comment. We are at [facebook.com/WSChronicle](https://www.facebook.com/WSChronicle).

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