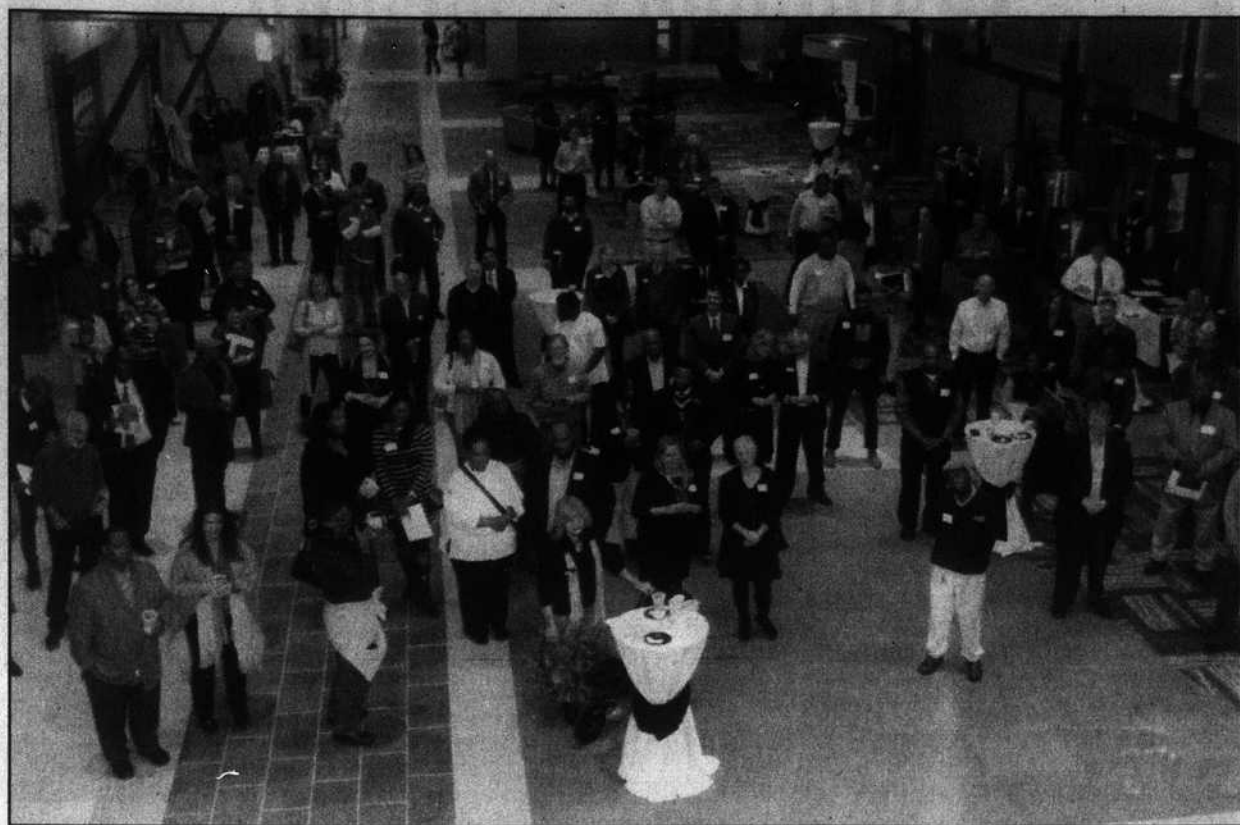


## NEWS



Photos by Tevin Stinson

More than 100 business owners and entrepreneurs gathered inside the Wake Forest Innovation Quarter on Tuesday, Jan. 10 for the Minority/Women's Business Enterprise program's annual mixer.



The Minority/Women's Business Enterprise program's annual mixer gave business owners the opportunity to sit down with city agencies and local contractors.

## Business mixer draws large crowd

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

Earlier this week more than 100 business owners and entrepreneurs gathered inside the Wake Forest Innovation Quarter for an evening of networking and learning during the Minority/Women's Business Enterprise (MWBE) program's annual mixer.

Since 1983, MWBE has worked to ensure minorities equal opportunities when it comes to contracting and purchasing programs. This year MWBE partnered with the Black Chamber of Commerce, Forsyth Tech Small Business Center, and Wake Forest Innovation Quarter to sponsor the evening of networking.

This year's event had an added twist: Along with the normal vendor set up, the casual gathering also included speed networking, which gave business owners the opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with city agen-

cies and contractors. After meeting with city agencies during the first round of scheduled sessions, Fred Salley, owner of Eco Environmental Services, a construction site cleaning service, said the mixer is great for people like him looking to get their foot in the door.

"I think the mixer is a great idea," said Salley. "Events like this go a long way when you're trying to grow your business. When you're a small business owner it can be hard to get your foot in the door, that's why we need more events like this one."

Joyce Williams, who heard about the mixer through the city's website, echoed Salley's statements when speaking with The Chronicle during the event. Williams said with more opportunity, the sky is the limit for minority business owners in the area. She mentioned in many cases, small businesses suffer because they don't know what's out there.

"Despite what people think, there is a lot of help here for small business owners but we must do our part as well," said Williams. "We can't expect everything to be handed to us. We have to do our research and find out what's out there."

Before the start of the event, Mayor Pro Tempore Vivian Burke thanked MWBE and the other sponsors for putting the event together. Burke, who has been a strong supporter of minority-owned businesses in the area since she was first elected to office in 1977, said small business is what makes the city thrive.

"We are blessed here in the city of Winston-Salem to have people who want to make small businesses grow," continued Burke. "Whenever we bring people together for a positive program like this it helps us to keep our city moving in the right direction."

## Snow and bitter cold stall life in N.C.

BY MARTHA WAGGONER  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — A bitter cold followed the weekend snow and ice storm in North Carolina, where schools, government offices and college campuses were closed because temperatures were too low to help clear the roads.

Schools were closed at least three days, including in Winston-Salem, and universities closed or had

emergency schedules.

Temperatures reached lows not seen since January 1985 when a record cold spread across the state.

Gov. Roy Cooper warned people not to be deceived by the sunshine and some clear roads. One person was killed Sunday and two injured when a car skidded off an icy Interstate 73/74 in Montgomery County, he said.

The National Weather Service said the lows were

near zero in places as far east as the Triad area of Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point.

The last time Greensboro hit zero degrees was on Jan. 19, 1994. The city has hit zero or below only 14 times since 1903, when weather record-keeping began. The lowest temperature ever in Greensboro was 8 degrees below zero on Jan. 21, 1985.

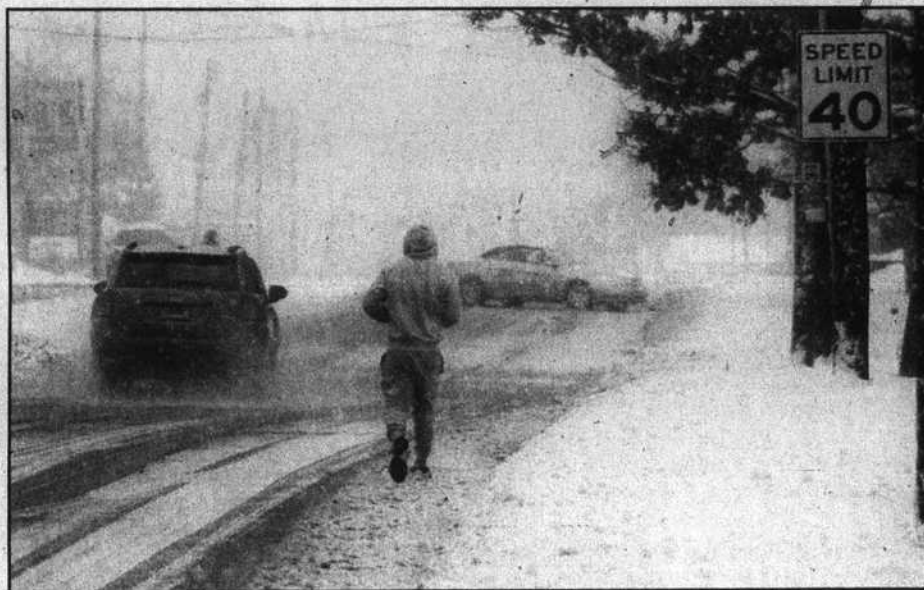


Photo by Timothy Ramsey

With the roads in such hazardous shape, some individuals stuck to walking in fear of getting stuck in the snow on West Market Street in Greensboro.

## Experts speculate on Michael Morgan as associate justice

BY CASH MICHAELS  
FOR THE CHRONICLE

On Jan. 4, Wake Superior Court Judge Michael Rivers Morgan was sworn in as the newest associate justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Morgan will serve an eight-year term on the seven-member court, and as a Democrat, his addition now shifts the court to a 4-3 Democrat majority.

Supreme Court associate justices review court records generated during lower court proceedings to determine what errors in law, if any, occurred.

To most political observers, and many Republican leaders, the expectation now is that Justice Morgan, 60, the only African-American male who will be serving, will automatically side with his party on partisan issues that come before the court.

"Not true," those who know, and have worked with Mike Morgan, say. They laud him as a skilled legal practitioner who believes in fairness and impartiality, based on the merits of the case, not politics. It is this standard by which Morgan has built and maintained a stellar judicial career, they add, and by all accounts, he is expected to continue down this path while serving on the highest court in the state.

A quick look at one of Morgan's most high profile cases, particularly in Wake County where he has presided for many

years, gives some sense of his judgment.

In July 2016, Judge Morgan rejected a petition from Republican state lawmakers to either dismiss a challenge to the 2013 voter ID law that it violated the North Carolina Constitution, or send it to state three-judge panel for a decision. Instead, Morgan signed an order sending the case, which was different from its federal counterpart, to trial.

The question before Morgan was what are the eligibility requirements to vote in North Carolina, according to the state Constitution, and did the voter ID law violate the Constitution by requiring state-issued photo ID?

By effectively maintaining control of the case through trial, Judge Morgan indicated that he felt the constitutional challenge was valid. Conservatives disagreed, and tried to force Morgan off the case before trial started in September. The Civitas institute alleged that it was a conflict of interest because he was also running for the NC Supreme Court and would benefit from the exposure of such a high profile case. But Judge Morgan got the go-ahead from the NC Judicial Standards Commission, and refused to step down.

In a statement from the bench detailing why he wasn't stepping down during a court hearing, Judge Morgan did not name his accusers, or even say that he was running for another office, as to not be accused of using the court to campaign for



Associate Justice  
Michael Rivers  
Morgan

office. The trial was ultimately postponed until the federal appellate court's decision, and an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court was exhausted.

"As a dedicated community member with a strong commitment to his church, Mike understands what ordinary families are going through and he has a track record of administering fair and impartial justice," President Obama said of Judge Morgan in October right before the election.

"He's got the experience, temperament and judgment to serve the people of North Carolina on the [N.C.] Supreme Court."

Colleague Orange Superior Court Judge Carl Fox called Justice Morgan "fair, hard working and a conscientious judge with a wealth of experience." Others in North Carolina's legal profession have lauded Morgan for his integrity and being "beyond reproach."

"I have known Justice Morgan since he became a lawyer in North Carolina," says attorney Irving Joyner, law professor at North Carolina Central University School of Law in Durham, and chairman of the NC NAACP's Legal Redress Committee. "He entered the legal profession with an outstanding reputation as a highly intelligent litigator and as a great person."

"As a youth growing up in New Bern,

he was properly seasoned as a tremendous human being by parents who expected and demanded the very best of conduct from him. Over the years, that reputation increased, and was shared by more and more people due to his outstanding legal advocacy which always evidenced an understanding of the law and the rights of people with whom he encountered," Professor Joyner continued.

For the first time in North Carolina history, Justice Morgan's addition to the state's High Court, along with Associate Justice Cheri Beasley, who was elected in 2014, means there are now two African-Americans serving there at the same time.

Even though Morgan is very much aware of the this historical significance, he said it was important in that his election added a valuable perspective to the court's deliberations — that of an experienced black male — which was certainly needed.

"In every respect, he was professional and exhibited a calming and knowing demeanor," attorney Joyner continued about his colleague Mike Morgan's legal career. "This same calm and highly skilled demeanor followed and guided his work as a Superior Court Judge. His outstanding work was recognized by citizens as he was regularly re-elected to that position."

Joyner ended by saying Justice Morgan was "the ideal person" to now join the North Carolina Supreme Court.