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THE CHRONICLE

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Juneteenth Festival hits home with all ages

Segers encourages children to wake up and turn dreams to reality

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

On Saturday, June 22, Triad Cultural Arts Inc. invited the city to come out and celebrate African American history and culture during the 15th annual Juneteenth Festival.

Juneteenth is the celebration of the country's longest-running observance of the abolition of slavery. On June 19, 1865, soldiers rode into Galveston, Texas, to announce that slavery had been officially abolished, nearly three years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

According to representatives with Triad Cultural Arts, the annual festival held at the Wake Forest Innovation Quarter is a time of reflection and celebrates the roles and contributions African Americans have made to enrich our society. Along with dozens of vendors, performances, and of course food, the festival also included health displays and information sessions, a fashion show, arts and crafts for children, and several motivational speakers. The festival also featured a Safe Bus, which provided transportation for African Americans from the 1920s until the early 1970s.

One of the most widely attended events was the Geno Segers Talk Back session. For more than an hour, Segers, a native of Winston-Salem who is an actor and voice artist, talked to children about his journey to pursue a career in acting, which led to him to play the role of Mufasa in Disney's Australian stage

production of "The Lion King." As the children in the auditorium listened intently, Segers told them to stop dreaming, hoping and wishing, but instead to wake up and put something real down on paper.

"Because to believe in a dream, you have to be asleep to believe it. You have to wake up and put something real down on paper. Now it's real, you can follow steps to get that goal accomplished," said Segers. "It sounds simple, but if you write it down and look at it daily, it will echo in your mind what it is you want and how you want to do it."

Segers, who is a graduate of East Forsyth High School, told the children there will be obstacles along the way, but it is important that they don't make themselves an obstacle as well. Before making a name for himself as an actor, Segers played football at Western Carolina University and later played professional rugby in the American National Rugby League.

In the mid 2000s at the suggestion of a friend, Segers auditioned for a job doing voice ads for a radio station in New Zealand where he caught the attention of producers for an on-stage production of The Lion King and the rest is history. Segers is also credited for appearances on "Henry Danger," "Stuck in the Middle," "Teen Wolf," "White Collar," and several others.

"The world is going to create obstacles for you. There are so many obstacles and pitfalls out there you can't even count them, so don't be one of the obstacles in your way," continued Segers.



Photos by Tevin Stinson

The 15th annual Juneteenth Festival hosted by Triad Cultural Arts Inc. on Saturday, June 22, had something for everyone to enjoy.

"Be active in the steps towards your goal; whatever it is, write it down. Put steps in place to achieve it and check it off."

If the Talk Back session wasn't for you, there was surely something at the festival that you would find intriguing. Janet Willis, who has been attending the festival for the past five years, found solace watching the performers take the stage. Willis said she was excited to see how the festival has grown since

2014.

"I've been coming to the festival for a while now and the performances are always great," said Willis. "To see how the support for this event has grown is just amazing. It just gives me a warm feeling to see our people coming together for something positive like this."

Despite heavy rain showers throughout the day, the festival continued inside and outside until 8 p.m. While making her way

to her car, first-timer Carolyn Davis said she has already marked her calendar for next year's event. Davis said what she enjoyed most about the festival was the vendors and minority-owned businesses that were showcased. "This was my first time coming, but it definitely won't be my last. This event is truly a show of black excellence," Davis said.

Yo Gotti's \$6.6 million judgment upheld

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

About a month after the initial ruling, Forsyth County Superior Court Judge Todd Burke upheld a ruling ordering Memphis rapper Yo Gotti to pay a local talent manager \$6.6 million.

During the initial trial on May 28, Judge Burke ruled that Yo Gotti engaged in "unfair and deceptive trade practices" in his dealings with Michael Terry, a local talent and event manager, and recording artist Young Fletcher. Although legal representation was not present for the trial, Yo Gotti was ordered to pay \$6.6 million in damages to Terry. The original ruling was \$2.2 million, but the N.C. Statute that



Photo by Tevin Stinson

Memphis rapper Yo Gotti makes his way out of a Forsyth County courtroom on Monday, June 28.

pertains to unfair and deceptive business practices gives judges the power to triple the amount.

According to reports, Terry paid Yo Gotti, whose legal name is Mario Mims, \$20,000 to appear on a song with Lamont Fletcher, who performs under the moniker Young Fletcher.

Terry says after recording the verse for the song with Fletcher and agreeing to promote the song, Yo Gotti never signed paperwork allowing the song to be released and recorded the verse on a different song. Terry also said Mims tried to persuade Fletcher to leave him and join his

record label, Collective Music Group, also known as CMG.

On Monday, June 28, Yo Gotti and his team of attorneys found the time to make their way to the Forsyth County Courthouse. Yo Gotti and his attorneys, James Cooney and Brent Powell, argued that he was never served with the legal documents with Terry's complaints, therefore he had no way to defend himself. Representatives for Yo Gotti also argued that the song was released and currently has 29,000 views on YouTube.

Terry's attorneys said that after trying to serve Yo Gotti with the lawsuit multiple times through his lawyers, they decided to deliver the documents personally.

After his performance at the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds on March 6, 2018, Sgt. Joel Gilbertson with the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office approached Yo Gotti as he was leaving. After extending his arm to

hand Yo Gotti the papers, Lamont Wynne, a hired security guard, took the papers and walked away.

While on the stand, Sgt. Gilbertson said, "When I went to serve Mr. Mims, I was stopped by his bodyguards or security detail." Gilbertson said after announcing "I have a civil paper for you," someone reached in front of Yo Gotti and took the papers.

Yo Gotti denies ever even coming in contact with Sgt. Gilbertson. While on the stand, Yo Gotti said he didn't know anything about the lawsuit until he saw it on social media three weeks ago.

When Terry's attorney, Clarke Dummit, questioned Yo Gotti, he continued to refer to an affidavit where Yo Gotti gives his account of what happened on May 6. In the affidavit, Yo Gotti only accounts for the time period when he was leaving the stage and walking to his car, the same time Sgt. Gilbertson said he approached him.

Dummit argued that he only focused on that time period because he knew exactly when he received the lawsuit.

When Wynne took the stand, he said he recalled taking the papers from Gilbertson but he didn't know they were legal documents. Wynne said, "He said he had papers for Mario."

Wynne said after taking the papers from Gilbertson and leaving the area, Yo Gotti got in a different vehicle and he never gave him the legal documents. Wynne said if he knew they were court documents, he would have given them to Yo Gotti's manager.

In the end Judge Burke didn't see enough to overturn the ruling. Although they declined to comment while leaving the courtroom, Yo Gotti's attorneys did mention an appeal.

When asked about Burke's decision outside the courtroom, Dummit said, "Slam dunk for us."

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