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# THE CHRONICLE

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THURSDAY, October 31, 2019

## Panthers Speak

Winston-Salem chapter of the Black Panther Party celebrates 50th anniversary

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

In the fall of 1966, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton founded the Black Panther Party (BPP) for Self-Defense in Oakland, Calif., an organization calling for the protection of African American communities from police brutality and all other forms of injustice.

Three years later, a group of young people here in Winston-Salem, inspired by the "A&T Four," founded the first chapter of the party to be established in the southeast. And last week the surviving members of that chapter came together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of arguably the most successful chapter of the Black Panther Party to ever exist.

Although the original chapter in Oakland is no doubt the best known for establishing "survival programs" that would eventually take hold in African American communities across the country,

when you look back at the success of the programs established by the Winston-Salem chapter and the success of the members after the party ended, it's hard to argue with Dr. Larry Little when he says, "The Winston-Salem chapter of the Black Panther Party was the baddest in the country."

**The Joseph Waddell People's Free Ambulance Service**

As part of the larger Black Power movement, the party emphasized black pride. Although the party was often portrayed as a gang of troublemakers looking to cause problems for police, they are credited with starting a number of popular community social programs, including free breakfast programs for school children and health clinics in 13 different cities across the country.

The Winston-Salem chapter's list of survival programs included the free breakfast program, clothes and shoes giveaways, pest control, screening



Members of the Winston-Salem Chapter of the Black Panther Party during a march on Saturday Oct. 26.

Photos by Tevin Stinson

for sickle cell anemia, and registering people to vote. The chapter is also the only one in the country to offer a free, around-the-clock ambulance service. The service, which was provided throughout the city, was offered to those who couldn't afford to pay the county fee to use the public ambulance.

While discussing the Joseph Waddell People's Free Ambulance Service, Nelson Malloy, one of the original members of the local BPP and a graduate of Winston-Salem State University (WSSU), said they saw a need and fulfilled it. He said they started the free ambulance service after the county started refusing to transport black patients unless they paid the fee upfront.

Malloy said after analyzing

the problem, they decided to send members to Forsyth Technical Community College (FTCC) to study emergency medical care and the ambulance service took off from there.

"We didn't complain; we as Black Panther Party members saw a problem, we analyzed it and said, what are we going to do? What do we do to solve this problem?" Malloy said. "...We came up with the Joseph Waddell People's Free Ambulance program, providing emergency transportation to the hospital and doctors' appointments."

Malloy encouraged the dozens of students and community members in attendance during the panel discussion held during the anniversary event, to take a page out of the BPP's book when

they're faced with an issue and go on to fulfill their purpose. He said, "Even today, if you have a problem, you're smart, you're intelligent, you're articulate; analyze it, study and come up with a solution."

"We fulfilled our mission and we're still doing it today. Your challenge is to fulfill your purpose and find out why you are here."

### Continuing the fight

The free ambulance service and the other programs offered by the local BPP continued until 1976. Although the Party didn't have the funds or support to continue, many of the members continued the mission of the Party by entering the realm of pub-

See Panther on A2



Last week the surviving members of the Winston-Salem Chapter of the Black Panther Party celebrated their 50th Anniversary.

## WSPD getting new gunfire detection system

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Police Department has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to enhance the department's Violent Firearm Investigations Team's ability to investigate shootings in the area.

The grant, which is worth \$699,608, will be used to purchase a gunfire detection system that uses acoustic sensors to

detect and triangulate the source of gunfire within a designated area. The system then authenticates the sound to make sure it is indeed gunfire before automatically reporting the incident to local law enforcement.

When discussing the gunfire detection system earlier this month, Chief Catrina Thompson said, after seeing a rise in shootings earlier this year, they started looking at ways to increase their capacity to deal with the issue and decided to apply for the grant. Thompson said the system will be used to disperse officers to areas that

have the highest level of gun violence.

"We will use this system, relying on our data, to determine where we have the highest level of gun violence as reported to us and that's how we will use this tool to deploy and help us attack the gun violence in the city," Thompson said.

During a recent Public Safety Committee meeting, Thompson mentioned the sensors that will be deployed throughout the city have the capability to pick up sounds of gunfire from about three miles away. She said the system, commonly known as "Shot

Spotter," has the technology to distinguish gunshots from similar sounds such as firecrackers.

She said the detection system will help the Violent Firearm Investigation Team which was established earlier this year to help with the rise in gun related crimes. Thompson said, "This just becomes a part of our overall system and initiative on attacking gun violence." Since 2017, violent crimes have increased nearly 10%. This year more than 1,000 gunshots have been reported and there have been 21 homicides.

Mayor Pro Tempore

Vivian Burke thanked Chief Thompson for finding out about the grant and looking for solutions to problems in the city.

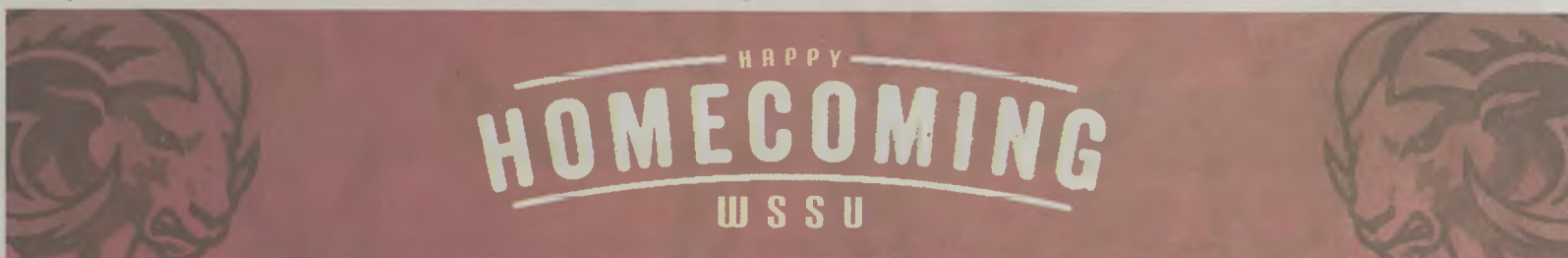
Burke said, "Every grant we get helps us improve ourselves. I know and I pray that this will be a good project. We have so many people shooting and we can't get control of where they are, and this will probably help us."

Councilmember James Taylor, who is publisher of The Chronicle, said he believes the gunfire detection system is one way the city can take a step toward reducing gun violence. Taylor, who is chair of the

Public Safety Committee, said, "I think this is one way that we can lead the country by figuring out where gun violence did occur and going out and stopping those perpetrators and working to keep the people in our community safe, so this is a great tool in our tool belt."

During the City Council meeting on Monday, Oct. 21, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2019 Local Law Enforcement Crime Gun Intelligence Center Integration Initiative Grant. The grant is for three years and is expected to be in place by 2020.

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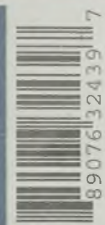


Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 6:00-8:30pm

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