

THE CHRONICLE

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Black History event details local sit-in movement

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Dozens of people received an impromptu history lesson earlier this week when they came together to explore the black history of Winston-Salem during a cultural fair, film screening and panel discussion held at the Innovation Quarter on Tuesday, Feb. 18.

The event, hosted by the Winston-Salem Black Chamber of Commerce, Preservation Forsyth, Triad Cultural Arts, International Civil Rights Center & Museum, Winston-Salem African American Archive, and Old Salem Museums & Gardens, began with the local history and cultural fair where the public had the opportunity to learn about the rich black history of Winston-

fair; attendees watched the film "I Am Not My Brother's Keeper: Leadership and Civil Rights in Winston-Salem, North Carolina." The film, which was written and directed by Mary M. Dalton and Susan Faust, tells how Carl W. Matthews, a student at Winston-Salem Teachers College at that time (now Winston-Salem State University), led a protest by taking seats at a lunch counter at S.H. Kress Department Store in 1960, starting a three-month-long action that ended in the successful desegregation of lunch counters in the city. The film, which was released in 2001, uses interviews with many of the students involved in the protest, professors and others to provide a sense of what the movement was to the students and how it



James Webster, son-in-law of Carl Matthews, the man who started the local sit-in protest, sits down with local historian Barbara Morris to discuss the movement and the impact it had on the community.



Dozens of people received an impromptu history lesson earlier this week when they attended the Black History Celebration held in Innovation Quarter.

Salem and organizations in the area that preserve and celebrate our local history and culture.

Following the cultural

shaped their lives. After the screening of the film, local historian and longtime Winston-Salem residents Barbara Morris

and James Webster, son-in-law of Carl Matthews, sat down to discuss the impact of the movement and answer questions from the crowd. Before delv-

ing into the conversation, Webster let it be known that although the Greensboro Four are recognized as the first to start the sit-in movement, the first sit-in victory came right here in Winston-Salem.

"Let me tell you this because they don't tell you this, Carl Matthews had the first victory sit-in. He was the first to eat," Morrison said. "He sat down and he ate on May 25. What you must also understand is that Greensboro people didn't eat until July 25; that's almost two months later. We don't hear that, but that's what makes Winston-Salem so special; we were not the first, but we were the first to be successful."

To begin the conversation, moderator Abrea

Armstrong Morris also played a major part in the Civil Rights Movement because every night before we marched, we went to a church and had prayer and mapped out our plan. We were not just running around the city, we were a controlled group."

In honor of the historic sit-in, on Sunday, Feb. 23, a community commemoration vigil will be held in downtown Winston-Salem to mark the 60th anniversary of the event. The vigil, which is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m., will begin in front of the Millennium Center, 101 West 5th Street, and end at the corner of Fourth and Liberty Streets where a historical marker designates the site as the location of the "First sit-in victory in North Carolina."

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City officials approve funding for DRIVE Program

BY TEVIN STINSON
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Earlier this week the Winston-Salem City Council approved a resolution allocating \$275,000 in funding to support the expansion of the driver's license restoration program, better known as the DRIVE (Driver Restoration Initiative and Vocational Expansion) Program.

The District Attorney's Office initially began a driver's license restoration program in 2015 with the

purpose of giving the city's financially challenged or low-to-moderate income citizens an opportunity to have their driver's licenses restored. Since then, the program has helped nearly 2,000 people restore their licenses, but there is still work to be done.

A 2018 study found that "clean slate clinic participants experience significant increase in average employment rates and average real earnings." It has also been reported that 1,900 job categories require a driver's license. According to City Councilmember James Taylor, who is publisher of The Chronicle, there are 18,000 people in Forsyth County who don't have their driver's license because they can't afford to pay minor traffic fines. The DRIVE Program will not address charges that involve violence, DWI, school bus traffic violations, hit and run violations, and/or sex

offenders.

"There are 18,000 people here who do not have their driver's licenses for lack of paying fees and fines. So this will get people back on the streets working outside of their communities," Taylor continued. "I posted this on social media and this received a groundswell of support so there's a lot of people out here who feel like they don't have their licenses and they need to get back to work."

Forsyth County Clerk of Court Renita Thompkins-Linville also spoke in support of expanding the program. Thompkins-Linville said expanding the program will break down economic barriers that can impede one's ability to be successful. She said, "I think this project is going to help many of our citizens with economic income."

"Most of the citizens who are in this position are



what we call the 'working poor'. These are people who have to make a decision between paying the rent or paying these expensive ticket fees that they have accumulated, or paying for daycare or buying food. We're helping people to get back on their

feet, so I wholeheartedly support this project."

When it came time to vote on the resolution, it was approved unanimously.

According to city officials, the \$275,000 allocated to the DRIVE program will be used to hire

dedicated staff for the program, operating expenses, marketing and outreach over an 18-month period. Assistance from the city would support a legal assistant, assistant district attorney, and an administrative clerk.

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