



The catalyst that is spurring the success of Atkins CDC

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

In 2001 Carol Davis was chosen to lead an up-and-coming community development cooperation that was geared toward pumping new life into the neighborhoods that border Winston-Salem State University, the S.G. Atkins Community Development Corporation. While a lot has changed over the years, the mission of S.G. Atkins CDC has remained the same and Davis has been the catalyst behind it.

Davis said before taking the reins of the CDC, she and her husband ran an organization called COBI (Coalition of Black Investors), where they traveled the country hosting financial literacy conferences. She said the goal of the organization was to teach minority communities how to invest.

"My husband is a financial planner so through his work we got excited about helping people save and invest," Davis said. "We held a conference in D.C. and we had a lot of the big investors come and talk and it was really exciting, so we started doing more. We went to Atlanta, Houston ... we did one in Chicago, Milwaukee. I really enjoyed doing it and we were able to get the support of mutual fund companies and some publically traded companies who wanted to get the word out."

After hearing about the success of COBI, Bill Turner, who was serving as the CEO of S.G.



Submitted photo

Carol Davis

Atkins at that time, reached out to Davis and asked if she would be interested in the position. A few weeks later Turner introduced Davis to former WSSU Chancellor Dr. Harold Martin and the rest is history. "I was interim at first until they finished the search and I was chosen to stay," David continued.

"We immediately started working on a strategic plan and laying the groundwork for what we have today. And the first money we got was to build houses on Excelsior Street near Union Station. We built four new homes on that street and rehabbed three on that street, and all for homeownership."

In 2005, Davis led the way for homes to be built on 10th Street. Just before the housing crisis in 2008, they were able

to invest in Ridgewood Place, where they have built nearly 30 homes. When all 130 lots are completed, Ridgewood Place is expected to generate a yearly property tax of \$500,000.

Davis was also the catalyst for The Enterprise Center, which offers start-up and emerging companies office space and exceptional level of support from the business professionals and organizations, as well as faculty from WSSU.

Today the Enterprise Center is home to S.G. Atkins' Center for Home Ownership, the Shared Use Kitchen, community gardening space, and more than 40 minority-owned businesses. The Enterprise Center also has space that can be rented to host events and programs.

Davis said at times it has been hard, but helping people reach their homeownership and entrepreneurial goals has been worth the risk and time investment.

"I've come to realize this type of work takes time because everything has to align just right before something happens," she said. "It's hard sometimes to take the risks. You just have to be aggressive, step out and take some chances."

She said just the possibility of being able to help someone reach their goals keeps her coming back every day. "That is motivating enough ... trying to close the gap on those disparities is what motivates me."

"As I've said before, when

you ride downtown you can see where investment has come. You ride through old neighborhoods like Ardmore, an old neighborhood, but the houses are in good shape and it's all about that money flowing through and I just love the challenge of trying to do that work in our communities as well."

When discussing the future of S.G. Atkins, Davis said they are currently laying the groundwork for several new projects including the construction of

Center at a cheaper rate than the private offices.

"We're trying to listen, be responsive, and try to attract investment," Davis said. "Five years from now we'd love to see some storefronts and possibly revamp the East Winston Shopping Center with local businesses and investors. I'd like to see more local ownership of the properties in East Winston rather than have outside investors owning so much of the neighborhood, because then they're not



new homes in the East Winston community near Forsyth Seafood, expansion of the mixed use Shared Use Kitchen, new business education courses, and a new co-working space that will allow business owners to rent space inside the Enterprise

responsive and they don't have the same commitment."

For more information on the S.G. Atkins Community Development Cooperation visit <http://www.sgacdc.org/about.html>.

NFL hires first Black woman referee

BY STACY M. BROWN
NNPA NEWSWIRE SENIOR NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

Maia Chaka knows well that Women's History Month is all about commemorating, observing, and celebrating the vital role of the fairer sex in American folklore.

She just didn't know she would become a part of that history.

After years of officiating games in the Pac-12, Conference USA, and the NFL's Officiating Development Program, Chaka will head to the NFL in the fall. When she takes the field in September, the Norfolk State University graduate and health and physical education teacher will do so as the first Black woman to work as a referee in the NFL.

thought I was being punked because I didn't believe it at the time. But it was true," she remarked.

Troy Vincent, an African American and the NFL's second-in-command behind Commissioner Roger Goodell, celebrated Chaka's appointment.

"Maia's years of hard work, dedication, and perseverance - including as par to the NFL Officiating Development Program - have earned her a position as an NFL official," Vincent declared. "As we celebrate Women's History Month, Maia is a trailblazer as the first Black female official and inspires us toward normalizing women on the football field," Vincent concluded.

Chaka told NNPA Newswire that she expects coaches and players to treat her the same as any other official.

"I think the coaches just want a good official who is going to get the play right," Chaka stated. "And I think

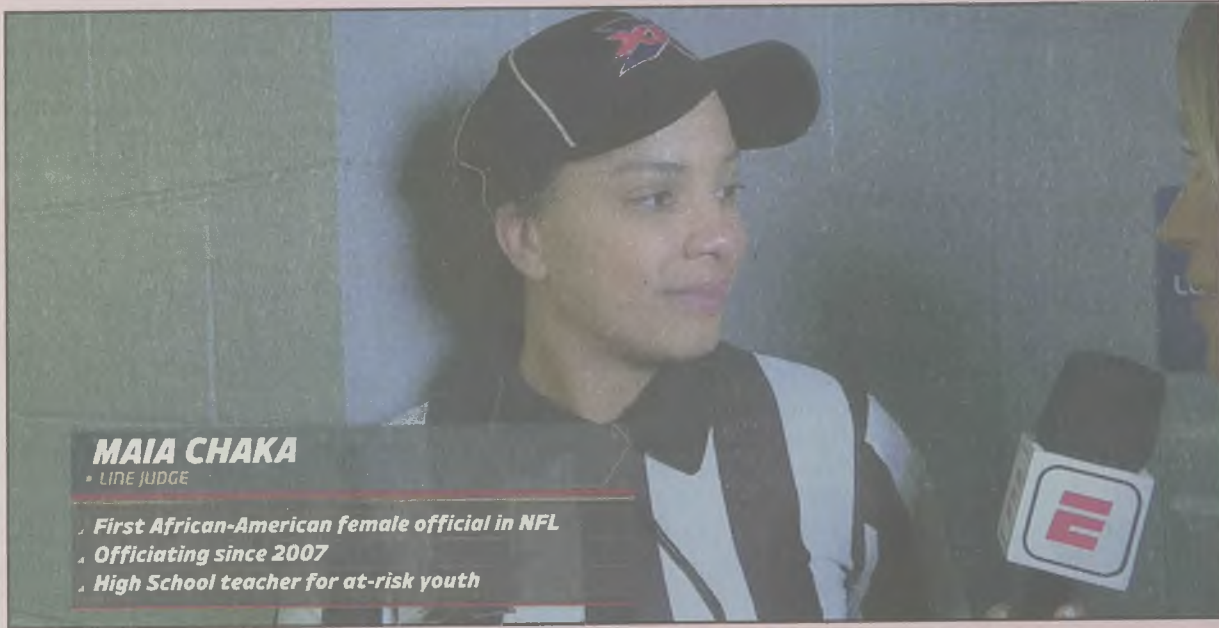
to women of color that they can work and succeed in a male-dominated field, Chaka said.

"As long as you put in the work and you are fundamentally sound in anything that you do, you know you will reach your goal," Chaka offered.

"I think it's important that they see the representation in these fields."

Asked if she would switch from playing NBA2K with her nephew and challenge him to Madden Football, Chaka demurred.

"No, he couldn't handle me on Madden," she retorted.



She'll also be just the second woman to wear the zebra stripes. Sarah Thomas, who worked last month's Super Bowl, is the other.

"This is a funny thing. I was actually at home and I was playing NBA2K with my nephew online because that's what I like to do at night," Chaka told NNPA Newswire just hours after an appearance on NBC's "Today" show.

"Then, I received a phone call at around 9:15 p.m. [March 4], and I just dropped everything I was doing. The next thing I know, I'm getting told 'Welcome to the National Football League,'" Chaka exclaimed.

Did she think it was for real?

"I just jumped up and threw everything off my lap. I

they just want consistency. I hope they do not hold us to a different standard [than men] because we are all officials at the end of the day. It does not matter what gender we are. We are all wearing the same uniform."

The importance of her historic promotion isn't lost on Chaka.

"It's an honor to join the National Football League," commented Chaka, who works with at-risk girls in Virginia. "I just want young girls of color - young women - to know that if you have a drive for something, don't let anything hold you back just because you think something may give you some limitations. Work hard and follow your dreams."

Her promotion to the big league also demonstrates

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