

Recognition Dinner For Ben Ruffin Attracts Prominent Guests

By Lozzie Watkin
Special To The Post

"If you really love me...then in the next 39 days you will work hard at sending the right person to Washington, D.C. ...insuring all my work was not in vain," stated Ben Ruffin last Saturday at a recognition dinner given in his honor by the North Carolina Association of Minority Public Officials.

"Our Future Is In Our Hands" was the theme of the Annual Conference and Workshop for the Association.

The two day affair was studied with such prominence as Vice Chairman, Rev. Bob Walton, Mecklenburg County Commissioners and President of North Carolina Association of Minority Public Officials. Commission Walton presided over the first session and Master of Ceremony along with Ms. June McLaurin Jeffers, President of the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association who was the Mistress of Ceremony. The Honorable Harvey Gantt was the keynote speaker at the first session. The day ended with a reception at the Governor's Mansion.



Honoree Ben Ruffin
.....Poses with Harvey Gantt



COUNTY COMMISSIONER BOB WALTON APPLAUDS
....As other podium guests approve

The breakfast session also had the touch of Charlotte with Commissioner Walton appearing on the program and remarks by the Honorable Harvey Gantt. Mayor Gant remarked on the physical and internal changes of Charlotte.

Charlotte is changing its face with the "completion of the City Hall... completion of new coliseum in November." The Mayor further stated that "...there are no Clicks in Charlotte..." so progress and advancement is based on merit and worth not the "Good Old Boy System."

It was clear that Ben Ruffin was loved and respected by everyone attending the luncheon. The Governor, The Honorable, James B. Hunt proclaimed that September 29, 1984 to be Ben Ruffin Day. Mr. Ruffin was also inducted into the Order of the Long Leaf Pine with all the rights and privileges thereof.

The Honorable Henry F. Frye, Associate Justice, N.C. Supreme Court was the key speaker at the 2nd Session.

Commissioner Walton described Ben Ruffin as a "personal friend... Sincere and dedicated public servant..." When asked what advice Rev. Walton had for young Blacks today, "Get involved early." This advice was also expressed by Raleigh's Mayor Edwards. Rev. Walton went on to say "...register to vote and vote...make the Officer voted in responsible for their action and accountable to the voters..."

Many awards and rewards were bestowed on Mr. Ruffin. Included was an award, "to the wife of Mr. Ruffin" by the President of Johnson C. Smith, Dr. Robert Albright.

Mr. Ruffin invited all back to the Civic Center in Raleigh for a personal announcement in 1988 for an introduction to the next person that has a Dream for the Greater North Carolina.

Mr. Ruffin attended Hillside High School in Durham, North Carolina Central University was his next stop. Here he began his climb to greatness.

He learned that success is not a gift but payment for a job well done. He worked as a tailor and paid his own way through college. From the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill he received a masters of Social Work and Social Planning. In 1963 he established a tutorial




Rufus Edmisten
.....Enjoys festivities

program for boys and girls, while working as a counselor at the John Avery Boy's Club. He later served as the Deputy Director of UDI Community Development Corporation. "As coordinator for Adult Education with Operation Break-

through, Community Action Agency, he had the responsibility for coordinating the outreach of the program with the Durham City Schools and Technical Institutions." He served as the Director of the North Carolina Human Relations Council. Since appointed Special Assistant to the Governor, State of North Carolina in 1978, Ben Ruffin now speaks for all the minority population in the State of North Carolina. "This administration has made outstanding accomplishments in minority participation during the past seven years in many areas.

Mr. Ruffin stated "If State government moves on without any substantive involvement of minorities, then Ruffin's mission has failed. However I submit to you that I have made the difference," he concluded.

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