

For Upcoming Book

# Students Interviewing Charlotteans Who Formerly Lived In First Ward

By Teresa Simmons  
Post Managing Editor

When Nancy Jones and Debbie Fullbright first wrote their term paper for the UNCC course "Planning For Charlotte's Future" they never envisioned their 15 page paper would turn into a book.

But the process has begun and with the help of 71 students at First Ward Elementary, many of the teachers and the school's principal, a book about the history, present and a look into the future of Charlotte's First Ward area is now underway.

"Students from First Ward Elementary School will be interviewing folks from all over Charlotte who have lived in the First Ward area at one time or

another," Mrs. Fullbright released. Groups usually meet in two-hour sessions with a time for reminiscing and answering questions posed by the children and coordinators. "We ask the students to have two or three questions in mind and the interviews are always taped," noted Mrs. Jones.

Excerpts from each interview will be used in the book, to be published by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System in conjunction with First Ward School's 35th anniversary celebration in April.

That didn't give Fullbright or Jones a great deal of time for organization. But they seem to have tackled the problems of limited time well.

The process of interviewing 15 to 30 parties is going along smoothly. During one meeting held February 10 in the library of First Ward those who had been involved with First Ward in one way or another proudly reflected their memories. Many young faces gleamed as stories were told of school teachers years ago or how the First Ward neighborhood once appeared.

In the 1920's the streets of First Ward were lined with elegant mansions. In 1967 Earle Village Homes, a 409 unit public housing project was erected. The black residential core of First Ward had been bulldozed. Today 90 percent of the individuals living in First Ward are black. During earlier times the political Ward was racially mixed in a harmonious tradition.

Unsafe conditions such as poor lighting and the widening of 7th street have haunted the residents according to Jones and Fullbright. Both interviewed several present-day First Ward residents to find out their attitudes. Their paper titled "First Ward: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" vividly describes the feelings of the residents: "The public housing residents spend the vast amount of their time in just attempting to survive therefore, leaving little time or thought for outside activities."

This, Jones and Fullbright contends, is one reason why a strong neighborhood organizational network has not formed among the residents.

The paper went on to say "Residents are pessimistic concerning what a neighborhood organization could do for them. They greatly fear the authorities will resent their involvement in such an organization and will therefore, further neglect their needs or actually move them out."

The structural face-lift of downtown hasn't done much for the nearly 1,500 residents of Earle Village, Jones and Fullbright expressed. "We would like to see the people's needs taken care of instead of the downtown area just looking good," they continued.

Thus the book has a multi-fold purpose. Not only are the elementary students able to participate in history documentation, but perhaps the book will promote a strong neighborhood organization.

"We want the residents of First Ward to be proud of their area," Mrs. Jones reflected. "There is so much potential there and First Ward is extremely rich in history."

## AACC Presents Rosa Parks Awards

Rosa L. Parks, Mother of the Modern Freedom Movement, was honored in Charlotte recently during a "Black History Month Celebration" at McDonald's Cafeteria.

During the banquet, at which Mrs. Parks was guest speaker, it was announced that the Afro-American Cultural Center (AACC) had established "The Rosa Parks Award," which will be presented annually during Black History Month.

The large plaque bears an engraving, as well as a picture of the woman who Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called "the greatest force that led the modern stride toward freedom."

It will be placed on permanent display at the new home of the AACC.

The inscription reads: "The Afro-American Cultural Center honors the following persons who have exemplified unselfish courage, dignity and determination in working for equality, understanding, and brotherhood among all persons."

The 1985 honorees are Rev. Coleman W. Kerry Jr., James K. Polk, and James L. Ross II.

Rev. Kerry, former pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, was the first Black person to serve in an appointed position on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board. He encouraged and inspired many young people not only in the community, but in the ministry as well. In presenting his award, posthumously, it was said, "God gave us a man as this time demands, a great heart, ready hands. We commemorate his memory."

James K. Polk pioneered many of the early Civil Rights efforts in Charlotte. He has long been concerned about Blacks obtaining employment in every segment of the work force, and has always had a zeal for encouraging the training and employment of his people, as well as working for their total involvement in the political life of the city and state. In the late 50's Mr. Polk worked to get Blacks hired as bus drivers and firemen. In honoring him, it was said, "Jim realized that there were many challenges and he never ceased to meet them with dignity and commitment. His greatness has made him great."

James L. Ross grew up in Charlotte's Griertown community. In his youth he was the epitome of Lorraine Hansbury's "Young, Gifted and Black." Working at the Charlotte Bureau on Employment, Training and Placement, Ross challenged the corporate community by seeking jobs for his

people. His determined persistence never faltered, even when on one occasion a prospective employer to whom he was making a proposal refused to even permit him to sit in a chair. Ross was so determined that he stood in the middle of the man's office to make his presentation for equality in employment.

With the same determination, Ross helped to organize marches and candlelight vigils, and sat down in restaurants where he knew he was not welcomed. He became the youngest man named to the Mayor's Committee, later to become the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee.

In honoring Ross, it was said, "This warm, generous and caring man is not one who is permanently attached to his fighting gear, but certainly one who rises to the occasion with understanding, compassion, determination, courage, and a keen sense of insight and intelligence."

Each year during Black History Month at least one person's name will be added to the "Rosa Parks Award" plaque, and will be honored at a special event.

According to Dr. E.E. Waddell, chairman of the AACC Board of Directors, "This is our way of expressing sincere appreciation to both Mrs. Parks and persons who have made significant, though often unlauded, contributions to our city and state. We are proud to honor these persons."

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The Little Miss Valentine Pageant of 1985 showed an array of big talent from a lot of little ladies recently at Greenville Community Center. Sponsored annually by the Parks and Recreation Department, young ladies from ages 5 to 7 are featured. Sheryl Gould was crowned queen of the pageant. She is the daughter of Douglas and Linda Gould and represented Methodist

Home Center. Participants include Patricia Alsbrook, Amanda Delmonaco, Keshai Wallace, Jodi Lynn Bass, Stacey Homesley, Charita Davis, Shya Truesdell, Sheryl Gould, Carmen Andrea Waschkolp, Latonya Young, Tiffany McMinna, Nikki Redmond, Lakysa Erwin, Tamika Harrison and Amanda Yates. (Photo by Divine Reflection).

### American Legion Holding Statewide Spring Conference

February 22, 23, and 24, will bring hundreds of members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and the Forty & Eight to the Marriott Hotel, Executive Park, Charlotte, North Carolina for the annual statewide Spring Conference.

The Conference activities will begin Friday, February 22 with some 24 Department Commission and Committee meetings scheduled throughout the day. It will resume Saturday morning with meetings to be followed by the final session of the Department Executive Committee at 1 p.m. The Conference will be under the direction of State Commander Harvey W. Hall of King, N.C. and all meetings and activities will be held at the Marriott Hotel, Executive Park, Charlotte.

Clarence Bacon, The National Commander of The American Legion and Helen Gardner, The American Legion Auxiliary National President will be the guests of honor at the Spring Conference. The National Commander and National

President pay an annual visit to North Carolina.

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# For The 25th Year In A Row... Weather Or Not... The South's Annual Salute To Spring

The calendar may still say winter... but each year, one month ahead of schedule we bring you face to face with Springtime... and all it has to offer:

**Glorious Gardens** filled with daffodils, tulips, and beautiful time-savers for your own gardens, decks and yards. There's even a Hawaiian garden hosted by WBT Radio.

**Designer Rooms** fresh as a Spring day. Eighteen rooms by the area's top designers, with the latest fabrics, furnishings and decorating innovations. There's a circular sunroom with antique beveled glass and a stained glass mural. And, many of the rooms were inspired by celebrities like Dean Smith, Ty Boyd and Bill Walker.

**Orchids by the hundreds** in exotic settings created by the Piedmont Carolinas Orchid Society.

**A Gardener's Marketplace** where shy violets share the limelight with lots of lofter plants, seeds and shrubs at special show prices.

**Patios, Sun Porches, Gazebos and Greenhouses** furnished with style and pizzazz to help you with your own favorite relaxing spot.

**Flower Arrangements, Room Niches, Horticulture** and more in the Charlotte Council of Garden Club's show within the show.

**Ancient Bonsai trees** and newer Bonsai plants. And, a chance to learn how to train your own Bonsai.

**Crafts for your home**, from Pennsylvania Dutch pottery, basketry, weavings, wonderful wooden works and the things that heirlooms are made from.

**Travel and Recreation** are always priorities... So plan to get help with the kids camp, your own private adventure or a luxury vacation.

**Lawn and Garden Equipment, Spas, Swimming Pools, European and traditional kitchens, Energy saving appliances** and ideas. Handsome accessories for all through the house.

Enter the **WSOC/Cedardale Log Home Kit Giveaway**. Tour the custom-designed 2,000 sq. ft. model sponsored by **Piedmont Natural Gas** and decorated by Designer **Sandy Bourke**. Visit the **WSOC "Celebrity Deck"** and meet your favorite **WSOC-TV** and **WSOC AM/FM** personalities!

Show Hours: 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays.  
Admission: Adults \$4 at the door, \$3.50 in advance. Students (age 6-18) \$2 at the door or in advance. Children under 6, excluding groups, free with adult.  
**BENEFIT NIGHT TICKETS** (Feb. 22) for **DISCOVERY PLACE** are \$25 each (tax deductible donation) and includes refreshments.

**SOUTHERN SPRING SHOW**  
February 23 thru March 3, 1985  
Charlotte Merchandise Mart  
Until this year called the Southern Living Show.

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**SOUTHERN SPRING SHOW**  
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\_\_\_\_\_ Adult tickets @ \$3.50 ea.  
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