

# Sports Official-Karen Byers Calls Them As She Sees Them

By Loretta Manago  
Post Managing Editor

A personal foul. Traveling. A technical call. Sports official Karen Byers calls them as she sees them. And whether the spectators in the stands or the coaches on the sidelines like it or not, those calls usually remain unchallenged.

A sports official since 1976, Ms. Byers became interested in this avenue of athletics while she was a basketball player. "I've played basketball throughout my junior high, high school, and college and I was always disappointed with the way the sports officials took the girls games for granted."

For her, officiating was just a natural extension of her interest in sports. "I wanted to officiate women's basketball the way it should be done," remarked Ms. Byers.

That, she has been doing. For the past eight years, she has been officiating men and women's recreational sports, girls' basketball on the junior high level, on the senior high school level and for the past four years, she has been officiating on the college level. She is affiliated with the National Association of Women Intercollegiate Sports, the National Association of Girls and Women Sports, The NCAA, the Carolina Conference, the MEAC, in addition to working for an independent booking agency.

In all of those levels, Ms. Byers has been officiating only women's sports. Next year, however, she hopes to change all of that. "I want to officiate men's sports," began Karen. Adding, "When we are trained at clinics we are trained to work men's games. There's a lot more intensity involved. The whistle blows about every five seconds and I just like the challenge it presents."

Attending clinics is only a part of the many steps there are in becoming a sports official. "Aside from the clinics, to become an official you have to work so many scrimmages; you have to register with a local booking agency, and you have to be able to earn a rating. Ms. Byers has both a national and local

rating. Ms. Byers has no qualms in saying that officiating is a "tough job." As a matter of fact, she sees her assessment of what she does as one of the main reasons why more women aren't involved.

"I think a lot of women see the pressure that is involved and they simply don't want to deal with it. But me, I like the challenge officiating presents. I know that anytime I blow the whistle I have to be able to explain my call. In this you really have to know what you're doing."

To make her job that more difficult, Ms. Byers interjected the problem she has with male officials and their non-acceptance of women officials. "There are some men who treat women officials as equals, but the large majority of them don't want to have anything to do with us (women officials). Sometimes they even leave you out there on the court alone to carry your own weight. To me, it is three times as difficult to be a sports official when you're a woman than it is when you're a man."

Where Ms. Byers does get a lot of support from is from other women who are also officials.

Whatever negative aspects Ms. Byers has found in her role as a sports official, she has learned to accept as part of the territory. She does not set her sights on those things that could be considered hindrances; rather, she sets positive goals. One of which is her desire to officiate in professional basketball.

Ms. Byers is a member of the Southern Board of Officials, and was an invited guest of the CIAA Hall of Fame for Officials last year and will be attending the affair this year as well.



Karen Byers  
.....Looking towards the NBA

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return to Charlotte after the last session of the Conference; departure will be approximately 6:30 p.m.

Reservations on the SouthPark bus can be obtained by mailing your check made payable to Ernest & Whinney, Charter Bus, 1100 Independence Center, Charlotte, N.C. 28246. Eastland Mall-UNCC bus reservation checks should be payable to Baker's Unlimited and mailed to Charter Bus, P. O. Box 1182, Matthews, N.C. 28106. Reservations must be mailed by January 22.

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# White House Conference On Small Businesses Scheduled

The White House Conference on Small Business will take place in Raleigh on Tuesday, January 28, at the Radisson Plaza and Civic Center Complex. The Conference will move to Columbia, S.C., on January 31, where it will be held at the Carolina Inn.

The White House Conference is comprised of day-long state conferences which began in Richmond, VA, in August and will continue through May, where the final conference will be held in New York.

Small business participants identify small business problems, develop recommendations for government action, and elect delegates to the national conference, which will be held in Washington, D.C., August 17-21, 1986.

A total of 1,823 delegates will attend the national conference. Each delegate must be a resident of the state in which the conference is being held, must be an owner, partner or corporate officer of a small business that employs fewer than 500 people, and must be willing to pay expenses to the national conference.

For more information, contact the White House Conference on Small Business, 1800 K Street, NW, Suite 1101, Washington, D.C. 20006; 202-653-9550.

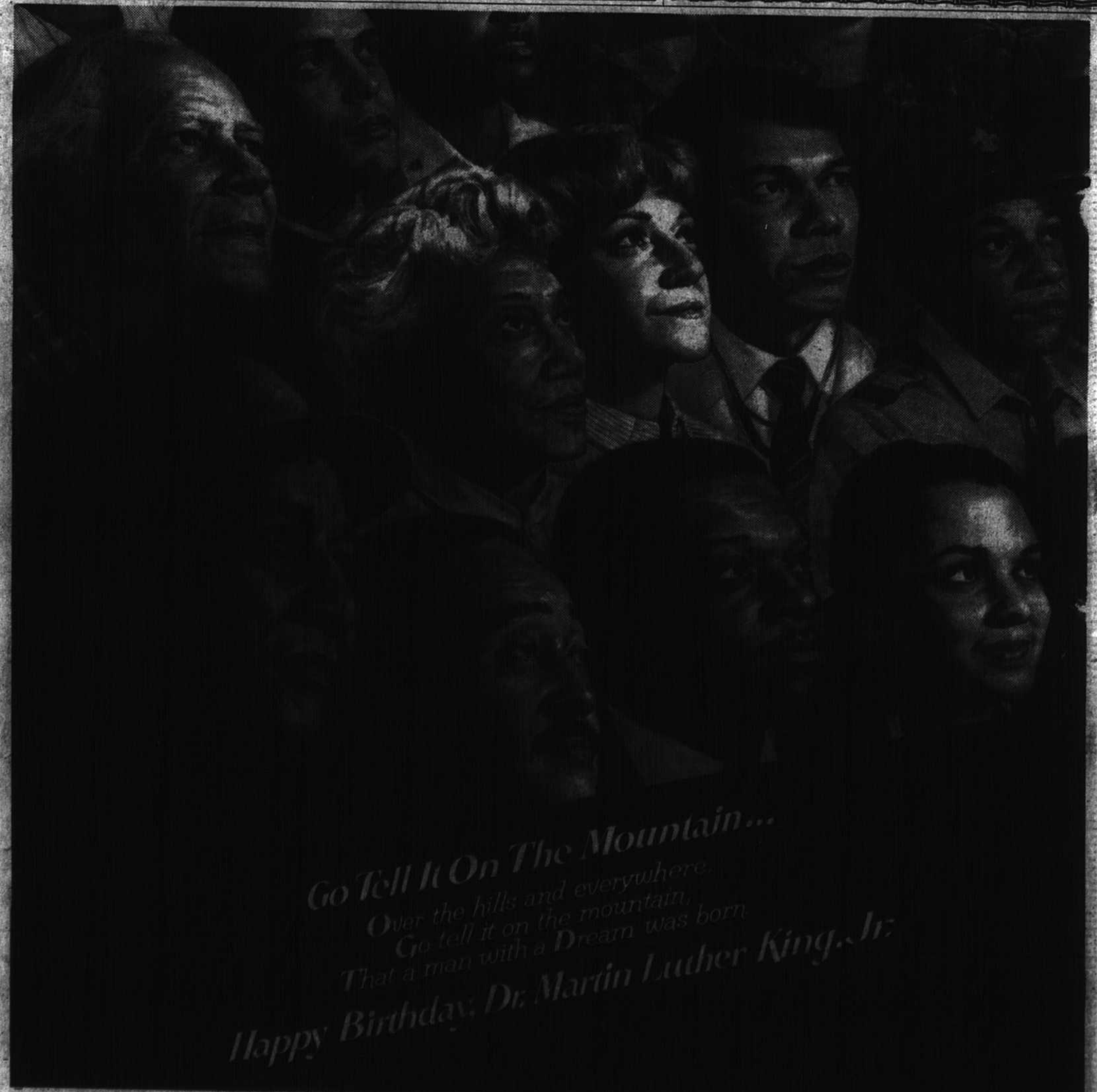
# Self-Esteem Workshop

WomanReach-North will offer a workshop on "Self-Esteem & Assertiveness" on January 25, Saturday, from 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Home Federal Savings & Loan, Exit 28 off I-77N, Cornelius.

The workshop will be facilitated by Missy Kuykendall. This will be the first of a series of monthly workshops to be sponsored by WomanReach-North, located in the Aida Jenkins Community Center, Davidson, N.C. For more information, call Pat Johnson at the Center, 892-3349.

The WomanReach Center is a United Way Agency. The facilities are handicapped accessible and services are freely given and freely received.

For more information and to register, call 334-3614 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Saturday, or Pat Johnson, 892-3349 at the Aida Jenkins Community Center.



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