

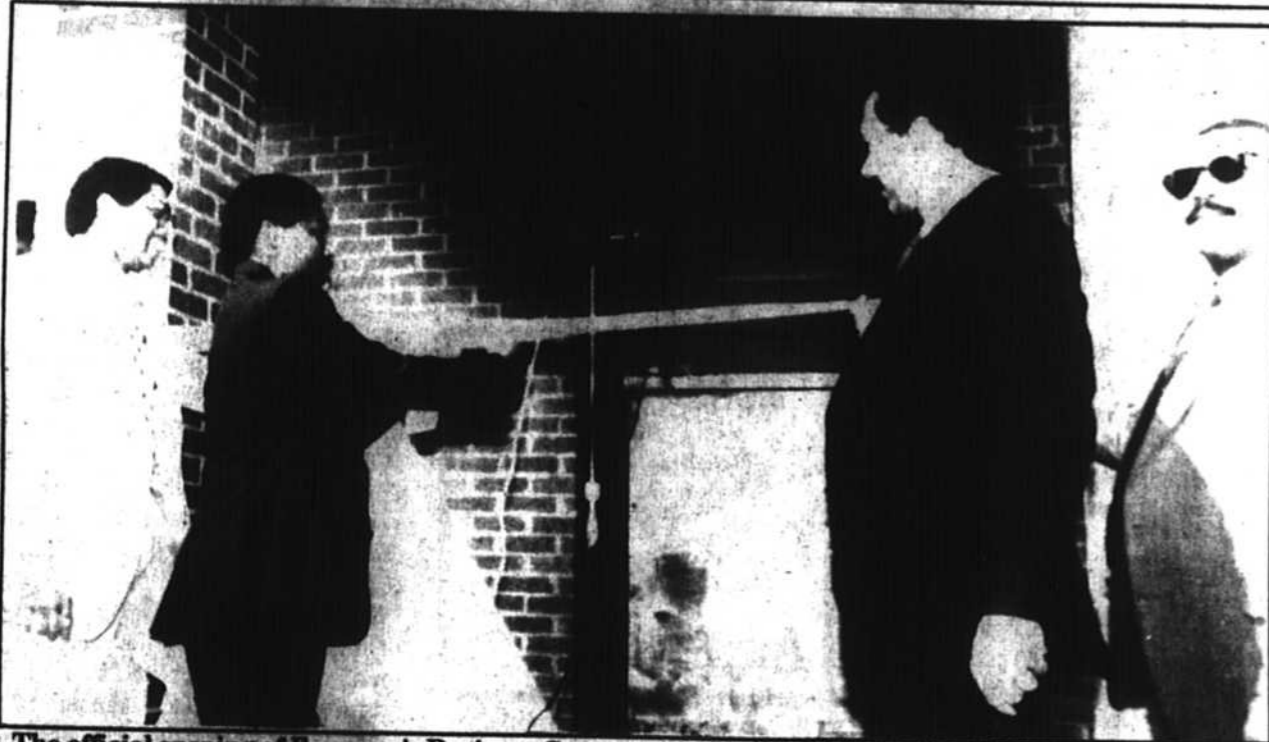
THE CHARLOTTE POST

"The Voice Of The Black Community"

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The official opening of Freeman's Business Center brought Charlotte's black professionals and business owners out in record attendance. Randy Freeman (center, holding ribbon), the building's

owner, was assisted in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony by City Councilman Ron Loeper (far left) and Attorney Mel Watt (second from right).

Black Entrepreneurs' Tribute

Freeman Business Center Officially Opens

Freeman's Business Center, Uptown Charlotte's newest and most modern Black-owned and operated office complex, officially opened its doors Monday, July 20.

Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt along with representatives from the Lieutenant Governor's Office and Mecklenburg County led the ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the two-story office building at the corner of East Fifth and North Alexander streets.

Randy Freeman, a business consultant and developer of the office complex, said he saw a need for a small office facility of this type in Uptown Charlotte and began to plan for its development almost three years ago.

"I envisioned a kind of 'one-stop shopping center' for small businesses, especially black-owned

businesses. Our tenant mix of black professionals is designed so that their services complement each other and we (Freeman's Business Center) aid them by providing secretarial, receptionist and telephone answering support," says Freeman.

The tenant mix in the Freeman Business Center includes an accounting firm (Marilyn Wright & Associates, CPA), a law firm (Donnie Hoover), a real estate sales and management company (Professional Real Estate Management), a public relations/marketing agency (Ken Koontz & Associates), and Freeman's Business Consultants.

In addition to the professional services companies, the tenants also include Premiere Productions, an entertainment promotions com-

pany. A special separate office where utility bills can be paid (electric, gas, water and telephone), checks cashed and a Western Union office is housed at Freeman's Business Center and owned and operated by Freeman Enterprises.

The Freeman Business Center has been described as a "living tribute" to black entrepreneurship and an example of black economic development. Freeman says he hopes his project serves as a catalyst to spur other black entrepreneurial projects in Uptown Charlotte.

For more details about the Freeman Business Center, call 334-5076, or write: Freeman Business Center, 715 East Fifth Street, Charlotte, NC 28202.

Battle And Stevenson Claim Derek Was Treated Unfairly

School Board Overrules Black Members' Concern For Black Student

By Jalyne Strong
Post Managing Editor

Visibly upset by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board five to two decision in favor of upholding the rejection of their son from the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS), Richard and Mamie Barnes left the board meeting Tuesday night saying they will now consider other avenues of action.

The Barneses went before the school board stating that their son, Derek, a black, 14-year-old rising ninth grader at McClintock Junior High School, had been discriminated against by teachers involved in the honor society selection committee at McClintock. The result being, last May, Derek was excluded from the program.

In a two and one half hour, factual and detailed appeal to the board, the Barneses cited incidences of NJHS policy violations, unprofessional conduct on the part of the teachers involved in the McClintock NJHS selection committee and the "subtle racism" perpetuated by the school's principal, a guidance counselor, and a teacher.

Upon hearing the Barneses' evidence, board member Sarah Stevenson vehemently exclaimed, "I am appalled over what has been presented. The child (Derek) did not have a chance from the beginning."

Board member Rev. George Battle agreed with Stevenson and he stated to the other members, "It has in no way been demonstrated why Derek was not included in the NJHS. I can't sit here in good conscience and say I don't think Derek was discriminated against. From what I've heard here today, I wouldn't want my son to be judged on these biases."

"The things I've heard tonight bother me," Battle emphasized. "I see discrimination."

Yet, Stevenson and Battle, the only blacks on the board were the only persons who voted against upholding McClintock's decision to exclude Derek from the NJHS.

The other five board members, all of whom are white, and the new school superintendent, Dr. Peter Relic, expressed through their comments, little or no regard for the prejudicial mistreatment of Derek. Rather they continually denied racial discrimination in the face of both Stevenson's and Battle's assessments and the Barneses fully documented evidence.

The white board members did concur that the teachers involved in the McClintock's selection committee had exhibited "unprofessionalism." They appeared to be very upset with the fact that some teachers had warned the Barneses of what was happening with their son.

Carrie Winter, chairman of school board, stated, "The breach of confidence of the selection process was inappropriate."



Richard and Mamie Barnes confer with Kelly Alexander Jr. of the Charlotte Branch NAACP, following the School Boards 5-2 decision to uphold their son's exclusion from the National Junior Honor Society. The Barneses say they will now consider other avenues of action.

While a student at McClintock last year, Derek maintained a 3.1 grade point average, played three sports, served on the school's Executive Council and maintained a good record of conduct. The Barneses reiterated that they had never been called to school on any negative reports about their son and for this reason they could not understand why he was excluded from the NJHS.

McClintock accepted 127 students out of 130 eligible students to the school's charter of the NJHS. The three students excluded included Derek, and two white male students. The two white students, it was learned, had both received in-school suspensions during the year which warrants automatic exclusion.

Of the 127 students inducted 118 were white, five were black and four were other minorities. With Derek's exclusion, no black males made it into the McClintock NJHS.

Though the board maintained that the reason for the meeting was to assess the "fairness" of McClintock's decision, the five white board members did not discuss Derek's exemplary scholastic record nor did they delve into the fact that no adequate reasons have been presented to substantiate Derek's exclusion from the NJHS.

The Barneses also brought up their concern as to why Area Superintendent Robert Hanes refused to have the School System's EEO office conduct a thorough investigation into Derek's case. Hanes, who was present for the

meeting, maintained he had not seen sufficient reason for an investigation, even though Thelma Johnson of the EEO office had reported to Hanes that from an informal investigation she felt the case warranted further investigation.

Overall, the board's consensus for upholding Derek's exclusion was their feeling that if the board intervened, the NJHS may decide to close the charter at McClintock.

Legal counsel for the school board, in response to Stevenson's question as to whether it was legal for the board to overturn McClintock's decision, replied, "I think it is legal. But the NJHS might withdraw the charter (if the board were to do so)."

To this, Mrs. Barnes countered, "Anything we have functioning in the school system that harms children needs to be lost."

Kelly Alexander Jr. of the Charlotte Branch NAACP and Robert Davis, principal of Spauld Elementary School, were both present for the board meeting at the request of the Barneses. Alexander said he attended to hear what the board had to say and to advise the Barneses.

After giving the board's majority ruling on the Derek Barnes case, Winter stated, "We want to clarify that we do not expect the school system to have biases. We want to insure youngsters that they will be treated fairly."

But at the same time, Winter along with the other white board members, decided to uphold the unfair treatment of Derek Barnes.

SCLC's Banquet To Kickoff Voter Registration Drive

By Loretta Richardson
Post Staff Writer

The banquet that the Charlotte/Mecklenburg chapter of SCLC is planning for Friday, July 31 at McDonald's Cafeteria is being looked at as a kickoff for one of the organization's most ambitious projects.

At the banquet's conclusion, SCLC will fully engage in its "Project Self-Esteem/Voter Registration Drive."

In announcing "Project Self-Esteem" SCLC president, Rev. Rudolph Seth related that the program was conceived from the observation of many factors. "In attending various civic and community meetings, by looking at things happening in the school system, through examining crime prevention strategies, male-female relationships, and from casually talking to persons who are separated or divorced, underemployed or unemployed, I came to the conclusion that some folks have low self-esteem. We, here at SCLC have decided to do something about it."

The first thing SCLC has done is to identify people in the community—black leaders, ministers, politicians and grassroots workers that are successful.

"We want to make contact with the Harvey Gantt, the Omar Leathersmans, the Mildred Baxter-Davies and the Sarah Stevensons. These individuals have high self-esteem. In my estimation, these people have been successful, but not without paying a price. SCLC looks to harness those people in an informal setting with youth and to get them to tell their stories. We need to have our youth hear what it takes to be successful. They (youth) need to

know how to set goals, how to say "no" to negative peer pressure."

"I believe that God wants us all to succeed, achieve, and feel good about ourselves. We must help build self-esteem by providing needed encouragement, good role models and effectively support many to handle the travesties of life," stressed Rev. Seth.

Once the contact has been made, Rev. Seth informed that a series of sleep-ins, forums, rap sessions and outings will be implemented. "We plan to use the facilities of the churches and the community centers. At the sleep-ins the way the project will be structured by sex. The chosen female leaders will address the girls and the selected male leaders will talk to the male youth. Our immediate goal is to encourage the youth involved in "Project Self-Esteem" to feel good about going back to school. We (SCLC) feel that if we start them off well, they will want to continue to excel."

Initially, the kids who will par-



Walter Fauntroy
—Banquet speaker

ticipate in "Project Self-Esteem" will come from those in attendance at SCLC's banquet. While the scheduled banquet is open to everyone, we hope to see a large number of youth in attendance. We want parents who want their children to be more motivated to be there. This is the group that the youth participants for "Project

See Project on page 5A

Myers Speaks To CABWE Meeting

The Carolina Association of Black Women Entrepreneurs (CABWE) announced its guest speaker for the organization's Monday, July 27, meeting will be Mr. Lewis H. Myers, Assistant Secretary in the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

Myers, who has been with the Department of Commerce since 1982, is responsible for operations of the Small Business Division which formulates policies on state programs that support small business development.

For the meeting, beginning 6

p.m. at McDonald's Cafeteria, the topic of Myers' talk will be "Small Business Development in North Carolina."

The CABWE organization consists of women entrepreneurs and women who aspire to run their own businesses. The group meets every fourth Monday, at McDonald's Cafeteria, at 6 p.m.

The public is urged to come at and hear Myers speak for this month's CABWE meeting.

Interested persons are asked to call Regina Jones at 365-1522 or Gloria Campbell at 547-8568 for more information.

Senior Citizens Request Affordable Health Care

"Support fair and affordable health care for all Americans" was the message brought to Rep. J. Alex McMillan today by NC Fair Share and the Mecklenburg Citizens. Several Charlotte citizens delivered petitions with over 2,700 signatures to McMillan's Washington office. Members of the Mecklenburg Council had collected several hundred signatures while NC Fair Share went door-to-door in Charlotte neighborhoods to collect the rest.

"Everyone is concerned about the high costs of medical care and the best way to cut down on these costs is to keep people healthy," commented Mildred Taylor, a Fair Share Board member and participant in the Mecklenburg Council who traveled to Washington with the petitions. "But too many people have no insurance and fail to get the health care they need because of the cost, until it's an expensive emergency," she continued. "Health care costs will continue to be a problem as long as so many people have no health insurance."

According to NC Fair Share, over one million North Carolinians and about 55,000 in Mecklenburg alone are totally uninsured. About one in four county residents are underinsured or uninsured.

"It is a long road to solve this problem but Congress has a chance right away to help in the area of prescription drug costs. These costs have risen at a rate four times that of inflation, and the average senior citizen has over 10 prescriptions a year. No wonder medicines are the largest medical expense most senior citizens pay out of their own pockets. There has been no Medicare coverage for this basic cost, but Congress has a chance to change that this week."

Congress will vote this week on HR 2470, a package of improvements in the area of catastrophic health care coverage. The package includes a program to pay 80% of the costs of out-patient medicine after a Medicare recipient has

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