

It's Over

Anniversary

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NAACP Will Fight Barnes' Exclusion

By Jalyne Strong
Post Managing Editor

Dr. Audrey Fisher-Brown, NAACP Education Specialist for the southeast region, called the case of Derek Barnes a "bad dream" the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board would like to see go away.

"But it is not going to go away until something is resolved," Fisher-Brown asserted.

She had been called to Charlotte from Atlanta to specifically look into the Derek Barnes story and the Charlotte charters of the National Junior Honor Society, in general. Derek, now a ninth grader at McClintock Junior High School had been excluded from the school's charter of the NJHS at the end of the last school year. After looking into their son's situation, Derek's parents, Richard and Mamie Barnes, protested the school's decision. Further investigation into the matter led the Barneses to conclude that their son had been discriminated against in the NJHS selection process and, moreover, that McClintock had violated several of the NJHS policies and procedures.

Although the Barneses had taken their concerns to the school's principal, an area superintendent, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board these segments of the school system all denied that Derek had been treated unfairly and they all upheld McClintock's selection committee's decision to exclude the black youth from the honor society.

The Barneses finally went to Kelly Alexander Jr., Executive Secretary of the Charlotte Branch NAACP and State NAACP President. Alexander secured Dr. Fisher-Brown's assistance.

She arrived at the Hilton, University Place, on Monday and spent the balance of the day interviewing concerned parents, teachers and educational professionals.

"I've come to the conclusion there's evidence of discrimina-



Dr. Audrey Fisher-Brown
...NAACP Education Specialist

tion," said Fisher-Brown, citing Derek's case. "I will continue to talk with persons involved—expert witnesses; continue to monitor practices that have occurred; and investigate the decision making processes, guidelines and procedures."

Fisher-Brown also commented that discriminatory practices in NJHS charters appear to be systematic in Charlotte schools. She explained, "Since the public learned the NAACP was looking into this situation, we have been beseeched with calls from parents and concerned persons in reference to the frequency of such practices, especially in junior high and high schools."

"Even though strides have been made to eliminate discriminatory practices in Southeastern schools," continued Fisher-Brown, "this is 1987 and no significant differences have been made."

This fact, alluded Fisher-Brown, had much to do with the

formation of her position with the NAACP. She informed that an Educational Specialist post with the Southeast Region (No.5) of the NAACP came out of a need that was assessed. "The Southeast has so many discrimination in education complaints," she pointed out. Fisher-Brown works with Attorney Paula Bonds on most of her cases.

She will be working with Bonds on the Barnes case. About Derek's particular case, Dr. Fisher-Brown expressed, "I heard a lot of reactions about this issue, especially disappointment. People are appalled that such a thing could happen in 1987—and to a child."

"The national and local NAACP is disappointed that the Board of Education and the school system stood ground on something that was obviously wrong," said Fisher Brown, who claims that "sticking together" was a professional tactic on the part of the school system and school board. "But not a sound one," she

remarked.

"We also feel this act is devastating to Derek and to other black children as well. We feel this could affect the attitudes of children who have high expectations. They may develop a defeatist attitude and ask themselves, 'Why try?'"

For this reason, Dr. Fisher-Brown is glad the Barneses have waged such a battle in support of their son. "I admire the Barneses," she related. "There should be more informed parents who take the time, interest and find the resources to let the world know what is happening."

"I hope they will continue to speak out and not be discouraged by criticism. The NAACP will support them in every way possible."

Fisher-Brown revealed that several persons employed with the school system have spoken out against the treatment of Derek and similar discriminatory practices occurring in the school system. She said these individuals expressed appreciation that the NAACP had taken on the issue. "They now feel they have a support system, one that was really needed. They feel punitive actions would be taken if they spoke

out and they've encouraged continuous involvement from the NAACP."

"NAACP involvement in the school system is necessary and should have been done earlier," commented Fisher-Brown.

After she interviewed Derek and his parents Monday evening, Fisher-Brown said the next step would be to confer with NAACP attorneys. She stated emphatically, "We know there is a problem."

"And, we want everyone to know, the fight has just begun. It will continue until we have successfully moved young black Americans forward."



J.C. Smith Hosts Relic Banquet

Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina's largest school district is still enjoying its honeymoon with the system's new school superintendent, Dr. Peter Relic. Everyone, from school board members, teachers and the community at large, is excited about the refreshing approach the seasoned educator brings to his new job as headmaster of the country's 29th largest school system. Relic's overall acceptance by the community may explain the groundswell of excitement on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University to the news that Dr. Relic will be the featured speaker at the Friends of Johnson C. Smith Annual Banquet. The banquet will be held September 11, 1987 at 6:30 p.m. in Grimes Lounge, at the University Memorial Union. All friends and supporters of the University are invited to attend the annual event.

Relic, who began his new position July 1, 1987, comes to Char-

lotte-Mecklenburg from the West Hartford, Connecticut School System where he served as Superintendent. The West Hartford School System regarded as one of the best systems in the country, currently serves nearly 8,000 students.

The 50 year old grandson of Yugoslavian born immigrants, apparently set his sights on being an educator early in life. Soon after graduating with honors (Phi Beta Kappa) from Bowdoin College he began his career, teaching three subjects and coaching three sports. Later, he taught school in Turkey, West Germany, Peru and Puerto Rico. In 1963, he was appointed as a school principal in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. The rest, as the saying goes, is history. Relic's notable track record includes: earning a doctorate in education from Harvard, working as superintendent of a school system in Japan, and serving as Deputy Secre-



Dr. Peter Relic
Secretary for Education in the U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare.

In addition, Dr. Relic led school desegregation efforts in Chicago and Cleveland. His views on a wide variety of subjects can be found in an array of professional publications and journals.



Students at West Charlotte Senior High School got a head start in this Spanish class Monday, the first day of school in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Few Hitches, New Hopes For First Day

By Herb White
Post Staff Writer

Summer vacation officially ended Monday for thousands of Charlotte-Mecklenburg students as the first week of school began.

Hallways at the 102-school system rumbled Monday with the sounds of students searching to get to class on time. Most of them made it in pretty good shape, according to Myra Joines, Public Information Coordinator for the school system.

"There is no such thing as a perfect opening day" with 19 of 650 buses delayed because of mechan-

ical trouble and several students missing rides, she commented. "What you hope for is an opening day with minor problems you can handle."

Joines reported that 70,276 students were in school Monday, but more are expected. The projected student total for Charlotte-Mecklenburg this year is 73,901, 548 above the 1986 total. The increase is the fourth in a row for the nation's 29th largest school system.

At West Charlotte High, principal Louis Layne literally had more on his hands than expected.

Instead of the 1655 projected students, there were 1750, many of them newcomers to the school system.

"We had a sizable number of students who came in with no schedule whatsoever," Layne stated. "It would be a lot better if parents and students would contact the school."

Layne, who is beginning his third year at West Charlotte, characterized the first day as run-of-the-mill, with some minor problems tossed in for good meas-

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Grocery Transit For The Elderly

Effective August 26, 1987, Charlotte Transit began a once-a-week transit route to the Kroger Sav-On Stores in Dilworth and on Wendover Road. Named Route 99-Kroger, the route will serve elderly residents of Charlotte-Town Terrace, Addison Apartments, Red Carpet Inn, Parktown Terrace, Strawn Apartments, Edwin Towers, Booth Gardens and Hall House. The route will operate on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

For almost three years, Kroger chartered a City bus to transport elderly intown shoppers left without a neighborhood store when a grocery store at Charlotte-Town

Mall (now Outlet Square) closed in 1984. However, on June 15 of this year, a change in Federal regulations prohibited City buses from providing charter service. Service is being resumed, but as an official Charlotte Transit route. Elderly and handicapped persons may ride the bus for 25 cents with a Charlotte Transit I.D. card; the general public may catch the bus at the above housing developments and ride for 70 cents. All service deficits will be underwritten by Kroger Sav-On.

For specific Route 99-Kroger information or a printed schedule, call the rider information line at 336-3366.

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