

# The Charlotte Post

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## Greetings from the Motherland



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

U.S. Rep. Mel Watt of Charlotte shares a handshake and embrace with Nana Boakye Ansa Debrah, sub-chief to the king of the Ashanti people, during a reception for the Kumasi, Ghana delegation. The delegates were in Charlotte this week as part of the Sister City exchange program.

## Ghana delegation gets first-hand look at sister city

By Tammie Tolbert  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Business and civic leaders from Charlotte's sister city in Africa are here to observe how its American counterpart operates.

On Sunday, there was a welcome reception held for delegates from Kumasi, Ghana. Local, state and national political leaders, including U.S. Reps. Mel Watt (D-N.C.) and

Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) and gubernatorial candidate and former Charlotte Mayor Richard Vinroot were at the reception along with business and community leaders.

The business leaders met with the Kumasi delegates to discuss possibilities of conducting international business between the two cities.

The Ghana contingent has been exposed to everything from city planning to education to food processing and

preservation.

"The purpose of having the delegates in Charlotte is because we want to establish and build upon the economic and educational ties that we began with Kumasi in August of 1995," said Peggy Wesp, director of Charlotte's Sister City Committee. "There are 18 delegates and nine of the delegates are business people, while the remaining

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## Thompson civil suit set for August

City of Charlotte and officer are plaintiffs in connection with 1994 shooting fatality

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Windy Gail Thompson's last words were apparently "No, I'm not getting out."

She said those words three times before she was shot and killed by Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer Mark Farmer, according to Farmer's statements after the Dec. 29, 1994 shooting.

That account and statements by three witnesses to the shooting are contained in court documents for a civil lawsuit filed on behalf of Thompson's estate and her two children.

The trial is currently set for the Aug. 3 term of federal district court, with U.S. District Court Judge Robert Potter presiding.

The lawsuit was filed in state court, but attorneys for Farmer and the city of Charlotte, joint defendants in the action, had it moved to federal court.

The case was originally on the docket for trial in March, but was delayed because of overcrowding.

The defense team also declined an opportunity to try the case sooner before a U.S. magistrate.

Potter, appointed during the Reagan administration, is viewed as conservative and has earned a reputation as "Maximum Bob" for his tough sentencing of those convicted in his court.

According to depositions and other documents in the Thompson file, the plaintiffs' case alleges Farmer was not in danger when



Thompson

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## List of superintendent finalists list includes African American

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte will get its first look at four prospective schools superintendent candidates next week.

One of the four candidates, Kenneth Burnley of Colorado Springs, Colo., is African American. One is a woman, Cheryl Wilhoite of Madison, Wis.

The other candidates are Eric Smith of Newport News, Va. and Patrick Russo of Savannah, Ga.

Missing from the school board's short list is Dennis Williams, who became assistant superintendent to John Murphy last year and has served as acting superintendent for instruction since Murphy resigned in December. Williams, 33, had expressed interest in the top job, but had no previous experience in that capacity.

Smith and Russo have extensive experience in school systems in which African American students are in the

majority or are nearly 50 percent of the enrollment.

Russo's Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools 38,000 pupil enrollment is 64 percent minority. Smith's Newport News Public Schools' 32,000 student enrollment is 53 percent minority.

School board members said they selected candidates based on proven achievement in raising test scores and dealing with discipline problems.

Smith, for example, ran an eight-month police undercover operation in the Newport News system and no guns have been found in his schools for the past two years.

Russo, Georgia's 1995 superintendent of the year, has developed magnet schools and tech prep initiatives and employs the "effective schools" approach.

Wilhoite's Madison Metropolitan School District has some of the highest test scores in the nation and produced 47 National Merit finalists last year, more than 23 times the norm for a district

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PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) says African Americans have to fight for their rights as American politics gets conservative.

## Fight for what's right, Maxine Waters says

By Tammie Tolbert  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Congresswoman Maxine Waters encourages African Americans to stand up and fight for the rights that have been afforded by affirmative action and voting rights.

"It was the fights and the struggles of the 1940s, '50s and '60s that opened the doors for so many of us to walk through and it will be the fights of tomorrow that will keep these doors open," Waters said last week during

a speech at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund dinner in Charlotte.

Since its founding in 1940, the NAACP LDF has led many of the struggles by taking on and winning court cases that directly affect African Americans.

"This marks the 100th anniversary of Plessy versus Ferguson where the Supreme Court sanctioned separate but equal and gave the green light to Jim Crow laws," Waters

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## International students learn more about America at JCSU

By Josephine George  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Mgimo University and Obirin University aren't household names in these parts, but they're not foreign at Johnson C. Smith University.

They're schools in Russia and Japan and part of the International Studies program at Smith, which gives foreign students the chance to learn more about America and its people. In return, American students are sent abroad.

Students from Mgimo (Russia) and Obirin were picked by deans at their universities to spend a minimum of one semester at the historically black campus. Seven international students are in the foreign exchange program to see American culture first-hand and learn more about the U.S. than what they get from media back home.

"They recommended me a full scholarship and I passed certain criteria," says senior Fumiko Shimizu.

This is the students' last semester at JCSU. They are studying basic courses - math, rhetoric and liberal studies - plus economics and psychology at Smith. In exchange, Smith students and faculty go to colleges in places as diverse as Australia, Russia and Korea. Having international students at Smith exposes its



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Nikolai Tsatsyne, Fumiko Shimizu, Eugene Zhelobanov, Anastassia Korneeva and Alexei Denisov (left to right) are spending the semester at Johnson C. Smith University as part of an exchange program that gives students the opportunity to study and live in foreign countries.

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