

# NAACP convention on course

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in and spend a couple of days prior to the convention."

The original intent of the visit was to meet with the blue ribbon committee and the local chapter, but she spent most of the time dealing with

## Foreign service officers nix deal

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fight that we had in 1986," said Walter Thomas, one of the officers. "Nothing has changed for black foreign service officers since that time."

Thomas, who has filed a grievance with the Washington, D.C. bar counsel against his own lawyers, said black officers are still assigned primarily to African or Caribbean nations, and given administrative and consular work assignments instead of the more prestigious political and economic matters.

The State Department did not return phone calls by presstime.

Two General Accounting Office reports, in 1989 and last year, have chastised the State Department for its poor minority hiring records in the foreign service. There are only 300 blacks in the 4,000-member force.

In their letters, McKinney and Rangel asked the State Department why the matter has yet to be resolved. They noted in the letters that despite the State Department's promises, recruitment, retention, promotion and quality of assignments are lacking in regards to blacks and other minorities. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has pledged to "promote diversity" in the department. But Thomas says every time his group tries to meet with Christopher, he is unavailable.

Thomas says he does not blame Christopher, but his staff, who, Thomas believes, thinks this is not an important enough issue for the Secretary.

the church burning here," Springs said. "It was a good trip. She was able to deal with the church burning first hand and with the convention."

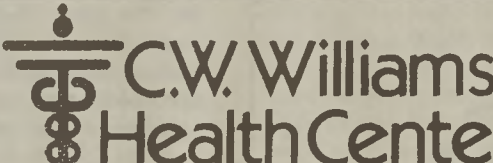
Springs noted that the church burnings, some 30 African American churches in about 18 months, will be the subject of a session of the national convention. That session will be led by NAACP southeast regional director Nelson Rivers and that assistant U.S. Attorney General Deval Patrick has been invited, Springs said. He was not sure if Patrick will be able to attend.

"Ironically, given the status of these church burnings and that the White House has gotten involved, this is probably going to be a major issue at the convention," Springs said.

Springs said convention planning is going well. "We are in the final stages. Fund raising is going well. The local branch has done a great job in organizing and getting volunteers. Charlotte has done a fantastic job."

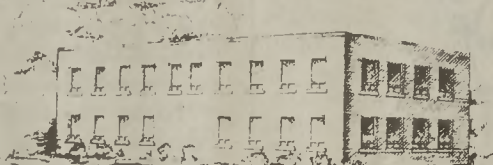
Springs said normally about 12,000 visitors attend a national convention, but as many as 15,000 or more may come to Charlotte, given the location, excitement around the leadership of Kweisi Mfume, the new president and CEO, and Evers-Williams and the conservative political environment spreading across the nation.

"All those things will add up to make this convention one of the largest ever in Charlotte," Springs said.



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