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THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

ALSO SERVING CABARRUS, CHESTER, ROWAN AND YORK COUNTIES

NEWSMAKERS OF THE YEAR

Dawn Womack

Exhibit breaks ground

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Dawn Womack does things. Things that break molds and have far reaching impact across the community.

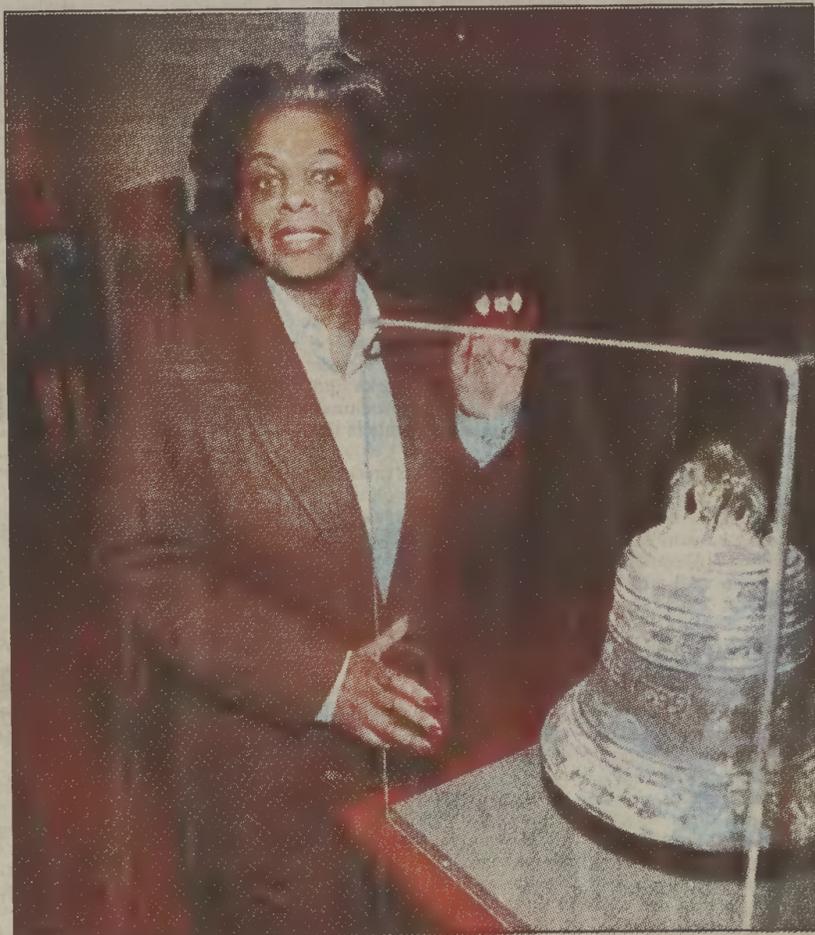
This year, Womack, Spirit Square's vice president of arts and education, brought the Henrietta Marie slave ship exhibit to Spirit Square in uptown Charlotte. The project was so bold it even attracted threats on Womack's life. During an interview for this story, a woman called to complain about Angela Davis' lecture Tuesday night.

Davis' appearance was part of an accompanying program of lectures and seminars that have brought to Charlotte the likes of Anita Hill, Gwendolyn Brooks, Derrick Bell, Peter Greco, Sista Souljah, Isaiah Madison and Liberian Sen. William Tubman Jr.

Womack even included locals: Bill Simms, B.E. Noel, Vicki Crawford, Ike Heard Jr., Ron Leeper and Ahmad Daniels.

While some may look askance at what is essentially an historical exhibit in an arts center, Womack the doer sees little problem with that.

"It is extremely atypical for an arts center such as ours to do, but also an arts center should be doing things to elevate the community," she said.



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Spirit Square vice president of arts and education Dawn Womack was the driving force that brought the Henrietta Marie exhibit to Charlotte.

"It was very appropriate. Art is not synonymous with frivolity. Art attempts to demonstrate some very serious aspects of society. If you look at the exhibit, you can see this as an opportunity to use art to try to teach."

Womack stepped forward to bring the Henrietta Marie to Charlotte after Discovery Place, a science museum, decided the exhibit is outside its mission and could be perceived as negative.

The Afro-American Cultural

Center was too small and the Museum of the New South covers a later historical period, after the Civil War.

Womack wasn't about to let the opportunity to bring an

See WOMACK on page 3A

Fourth pupil plan is choice of board

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools officials met their deadline and adopted a pupil reassignment plan which moves 3,200 students to populate two new high schools and achieve racial balance in the system.

The plan was altered from three earlier proposals to answer complaints from some southeast Charlotte and Long Creek area parents. But it left Matthews Elementary parents threatening to sue to have their children assigned to the new southeast high school rather than East Mecklenburg High.

School board member Arthur Griffin defended the board's 8-1 vote by saying, "Look at where we have come from."

The plan adopted Tuesday after a lengthy debate, would reassign 3,275 students or 13 percent of the system's 93,000 students. Racial balance would be improved from a range of 9-63 percent to 23-52 percent by 1998-99.

All ninth-graders would be assigned to high schools under the three proposals. Rising seniors could remain at their current schools if they desire.

Blacks had accepted the proposals, despite some adjustments to their attendance zones, because West Charlotte High School would remain at least 50 percent black.

Under the original proposals, the new Education Village high school near UNC Charlotte would open with a black population of 40 to 46 percent, depending on which proposal is approved. The new southeast high school would have a black population of 36 to 43 percent.

The opening of two new high schools meant some reassignments would be necessary and Supt. Eric Smith attempted to deal with pupil assignments system wide in his initial proposals.

See REASSIGNMENT page 6A

Activists unite to monitor local police activity

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Grassroots organizations have committed themselves to serving as role models for action in the wake of the shooting death of unarmed black motorist James Willie Cooper.

The decision handed down last Monday by Mecklenburg County District Attorney Peter Gilchrist not to prosecute Charlotte police Officer Michael Marlow ignited swift and sure reaction on several fronts, especially among African American clergy.

Citing legal precedent, Gilchrist explained the difficulty of proving that Marlow, a two-year veteran, did not act in self-defense. Gilchrist's verdict means no criminal charges will be filed.

Citizens for Justice, formed after the 1993 police shooting of Windy Gail Thompson, an unarmed black motorist, has strengthened its call for establishment of an independent citizens review board to review cases of police misconduct in the

wake of what they perceive as the senseless killing of an African American.

The group, along with members of the Nation of Islam and the Black Student Organization at Central Piedmont Community College announced last week the formation the much talked about "Video Vanguard," a roving group of citizens that would videotape routine police traffic stops.

"This is a response to the fact that after some two years of attempting to get a citizens review board, the idea has been shelved," said Minister Robert Muhammad of the Nation of Islam. "We hope to show the need for watchfulness. We are showing that if you're not going to do it from your end, we will do it from our end."

The program, which relies on teams trained volunteers and loaned video equipment, puts cameras and cellular phones in the hands of Vanguard members. Citizens who witness traffic stops could call a number

See GRASS ROOT on page 6A

Gloria Pace King

United Way chief leads record year



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Gloria Pace King, president of the United Way of the Central Carolinas, oversaw the organization's most successful campaign - \$22.5 million. The holiday season will be brighter.

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Gloria Pace King is never quite satisfied.

A trailblazer, King has led the United Way of the Carolinas in three of its most successful campaigns ever, including a record \$22.5 million in gifts this year.

But she's not satisfied. Not with the new record. Not with raising in excess of \$60 million during her three years on the job in Charlotte.

There is always a new goal - a new challenge.

King has set another goal: To create a United Way that is more diverse and accessible. Achievement comes naturally for the 51-year-old Cleveland native.

See KING on page 2A

Charlotte athlete broke color barrier in Shrine Bowl

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Thirty years ago, Titus Ivory didn't intend to become a pioneer.

Ivory, then a West Charlotte High School senior, and Tommy Love of Sylva-Webster High, played in the annual Shrine Bowl football game, the first African Americans to do so. Both played on the North Carolina team. During a time when blacks were breaking down racial barriers across the South, Ivory, a defensive lineman, had a hand in changing the social order.

"To some degree, I was spearheading a movement that was long overdue," he said. "Any

time you're first, you realize there are others who'll follow in your footsteps, so whether you know it or not, you're a role model."

Making the Shrine Bowl wasn't a goal for Ivory, who later played collegiately at Morgan State for legendary coach Earl Banks. His selection was a surprise.

"It was a tremendous honor for me," said Ivory, a Charlotte financial administrator. "It was a shock for me to be considered."

Ivory and Love, a running back who went on to Michigan State, more than held their own in North Carolina's 34-14 win over South Carolina. Ivory recorded five tackles for the Tar Heel defense, while Love, who

went on to Michigan State, was named most valuable player. The best part, though, was being able to participate.

"I was just delighted to be part of the system," Ivory said. "I was honored to be selected as one of the best athletes in the state."

Black athletes had been barred from the Shrine Bowl, but the omission of Myers Park and former Second Ward High running back Jimmy Kirkpatrick in 1965 sparked protests. Ivory was one of the first to benefit from those efforts.

"That started the process where I could be picked," he said.

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PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Titus Ivory, holding awards from the 1966 high school football season, helped break the color barrier at the Shrine Bowl.

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