

City offers to settle Thompson lawsuit

Continued from page 1A

ber of this community," McCrory said. "We extend our compassion to the family of Ms. Thompson. Settling this suit brings closure to the case."

Police Chief Dennis Nowicki said the settlement would avoid the community polarization that could possibly occur if the case came to trial.

"The process of the trial itself would not be healthy for this community," Nowicki told reporters Monday night after the council vote. "It would not be healthy for the Thompson family or for the officer."

The council voted unanimously in favor of the settlement offer after being encouraged to do so by city attorney Mac McCarley and outside legal advisers.

"We believe the settlement will be accepted by (the Thompson family)," McCarley said.

The council's decision was applauded by former state NAACP President Kelly Alexander Jr.

"Money can never replace a mother, but it's a step in the right direction," he said. "I think it will go a long way to close a rift in the community."

The Rev. James Barnett, founder of the Stop the Killing crusade, said he had hoped the case would go to trial.

"I'm glad the family's getting something, but there are a lot of unanswered questions that need to be answered," he said.

Nowicki said the Thompson settlement is unrelated to Cooper's shooting by Officer Michael Marlow, who has been cleared of wrongdoing in that case and remains on the police force.

The Thompson and Cooper shootings, plus a 1989 shooting by a city police officer of Jake King, an unarmed black man in the Cherry community, led to a number of discussions and

sometimes heated exchanges among blacks and whites. Community leaders, including TransAmerica president Bill Simms, an African American, have called by a summit on race relations. The Foundation for the Carolinas is now planning such a summit.

Thompson, a 32-year-old mother of two, moved to Charlotte from Lancaster, S.C. two months before the shooting.

Officer Mark Farmer, who still works on the Charlotte force, was cleared of any wrongdoing in the Thompson shooting, which occurred after Thompson's car slammed into a utility pole in front of Nations Ford Elementary School.

Farmer said he tried to stop Thompson after seeing her drive erratically near Tyvola Road. After the accident, Farmer said Thompson tried to drive away while he was leaning into the car to take her key out of the ignition.

When Thompson refused to stop, according to Farmer's account, he shot her four times.

Thompson, who was legally drunk according to an autopsy report, had been seriously injured in the accident, including a compound fracture of the

right leg.

Thompson family attorneys contended she would have been unable to drive the car, because of the injuries and because the vehicle was heavily damaged. Its windows were shattered by the force of impact. The axle was broken and all four tires were flattened.

Other evidence opposed Farmer's account of the shooting. The spent rounds from Farmer's gun were found outside of the vehicle and there were no powder burns, which the Thompson family attorney contend should have been present if she was shot at close range.

Witness testimony was also inconclusive in supporting Farmer's account.

The Thompson lawsuit was set for trial later this year. The

original trial date had been delayed by the city's appeal of earlier court rulings.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Celebrate Your Heritage...

with invitations by Carlson Craft®



The Heritage Collection

"Designs For People Who Share An African Heritage"

PAPERTOWN

4420 Monroe Rd. • 342-5815



Michael Morrison
Agent/ Owner

A-Plus Insurance Agency

Too Many Tickets/Points
Low Down Payments

- Life/ Health Plan • Auto, Boat, Motorcycle
- Commercial/ Business • Homeowner/ Rental
- Income Tax Service

903 Eastway Dr.

Charlotte, NC

(located at SugarCreek & Eastway)

704-536-5007

Fax: 704-536-5506



"We Insure All Vehicles & Drivers"

Affordable Mortgage, Inc.

- \$Get a mortgage with a lower interest rate
- \$Get cash for any worthwhile purpose
- \$Get money for needed home improvements
- \$Combine bills into one easy payment
- \$Credit problems understood



Homeowners call Affordable Mortgage, Inc.

(704) 827-3707

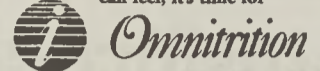
115 N. Main Street, Suite 204 Mt. Holly, NC 28120



Call Linda Bailey, Independent Distributor, at (704)559-5984

Get Trim Now!

Are you interested in losing weight, feeling better and looking great? For a nutritional boost you can feel, it's time for



ROB'S

Mon.-Fri. 8am-6pm
Sat. 7.30am-6pm
Appt. Available

Resident Barbers

Juan Tart
Ron Young
Sean Johnson
Curtis Martin

"NEW LOOKS"

Barber shop

Robert Locke
Owner/ Barber



(704)563-8184
1401-C Eastway Dr.

'Buckwheat' fights back

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH - A black Wal-Mart employee has sued the retail chain, claiming a former store manager referred to her as "Buckwheat" and other supervisors did not take her complaint seriously.

The lawsuit, filed this week in Wake Superior Court, is the second in three months filed by a black employee accusing Wal-Mart Stores Inc. of not taking steps to discourage racist conduct by employees.

Brenda Powell Morgan, who stocks shelves at a Raleigh Wal-Mart store, alleged in her lawsuit that former store manager Charles Stone, who is white, referred to her as "Buckwheat" while she was working Jan. 13. The lawsuit also alleges other employees at the store have been subjected to racial slurs.

In the earlier Wal-Mart lawsuit, filed in December, Felicia Gray-Watson, who worked in a Wal-Mart pharmacy in Knightdale, filed a lawsuit that claimed a supervisor told her, "Slaves can't quit, they have to be sold." Her case is still pending.

Morgan told The News & Observer of Raleigh in a telephone interview that she filed the lawsuit because her complaints were treated lightly by supervisors.

"They have never offered an apology or anything," Morgan said.

She said when Stone uttered the slur, "he was just laughing as if to say, 'You can't do anything about this,'" said Morgan.

Another employee was present, and when Morgan turned to make sure Stone was speaking to her, she alleges, he looked at her and repeated in a loud voice, "Hey, you, buckwheat!"

Stone could not be immediately reached for comment.

Betsy Reithemeyer, spokeswoman at Wal-Mart's corporate headquarters in Arkansas, said Stone was fired after the incident. She said the company does not condone racism.

Free ATM transactions at any bank, anywhere

Free PC Banking through Quicken, Microsoft Money, and AOL BankNOW™

Free Pocket Check Card

Free unlimited use of Centura Highway's Automated Phone Banking Service

Free first order of checks

No Minimum Balance

No Annual Fee Credit Card

Unlimited check writing



Money Manager Express Checking. You can count the extras on one hand.

Your eyes are not playing tricks on you. This isn't your typical glove. And this isn't your typical checking account. You see, most banks offer a "basic" package with a no-minimum-balance account. With Centura's no-minimum-balance Money Manager Express Checking Account, you get 8 features and benefits at no additional cost. Plus, you get access to offices open seven days a week inside Hannaford Food Stores, and over 270 ATMs, including Wal-Mart and Sam's locations. If your bank doesn't offer all this, switch to Centura. It's so easy, you can even do it over the phone. Call 1-800-CENTURA or stop in for a visit. We'll set you up with a Money Manager Express Checking Account. And give you a high five, err, high eight!

Centura
The Money Managers®
1-800-CENTURA