

## Progressive purpose for our goal

MELODY MICERE STEWART

In the spirit of Ma'at



"To make as our collective work, the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness." Nia - purpose - is the fifth principle of the Nguzo Saba. Nia speaks directly to the idea that African Americans have a purpose that is collective in nature and progressive in its goal. Nia pointedly combines the first four principles of Kwanzaa, (unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility and cooperative economics), suggesting that these values are needed to accomplish the ultimate goal of liberation for modern day Africans in America.

For money-chasing African Americans caught up in consumerism, materialism and status-seeking individualism, Nia is an uncomfortable concept. In fact, the Nguzo Saba as a foundation of racially-conscious values requiring committed action is an unsettling concept to many blacks who think they have made it. Yet, the illusion of acceptance is shattered every time a person of African descent achieves excellence, e.g., Fuzzy Zoeller's derogatory comments about Tiger Woods. Despite Rodney King's plea, we are not only far from being able to "all get along," we are also far from the concept of respect.

In many ways, a significant portion of our historical sojourn has been the quest for respect. Respect as human beings of African descent, divinely created, with talents, gifts, intellect, creativity, spirituality and resourcefulness. Black people are the only ethnic group in America to generate over \$400 billion in income and receive \$2 worth of respect. While there are individuals who command respect, the whole of our race does not. Perhaps part of the reason is because we do not respect ourselves - our history, culture and collective experiences.

Nia, purpose, instructs African Americans to collectively work toward our "traditional greatness." Our traditional greatness begins in Africa, at the beginning of time, as the first people to live on earth, placed on the richest continent on earth. It continues with the development of agriculture, animal domestication and formulations of mathematics, science and medicine. Our traditional greatness is accentuated by the building of the great pyramids, the great stone walls of Zimbabwe and the creation of spiritual values, embodied by Ma'at.

In 1997, why should African Americans have a racial expectation of assistance from other African Americans? Simply, it is the way of our Ancestors. It is the way of Imhotep, Hatshepsut and Hannibal. It is the way of Douglass, Turner, Tubman and Truth. It is the way of Woodson, DuBois, Wells and Bethune. It is the way of Martin and Malcolm. When we cultivate self-respect and self-love, we will practice Nia, just like our ancestors.



For Comments or questions, Please call us at

704-376 0496 or 1-888-376-POST

# Tussle wasn't one: Greene

Continued from page 1A

Watson in any manner," Cref said. "There was a touching. The intent of the touching was not to inflict harm or threaten Mr. Watson in any way."

The incident proved fertile for satire. WPEG radio aired a tongue-in-cheek account of the confrontation Wednesday, complete with bleeped-out epithets, screams and crashing furniture.

The McDonald's Cafeteria situation, which led to the incident, has lagged for months as Greene and others have worked to prevent the restaurant and the adjacent hotel from closing. Founder John McDonald died two years ago and his wife has operated the complex since.

A deal has apparently been reached involving mortgage holder NationsBank and the city to transfer property to

another owner. Watson had proposed a competing plan which was apparently not accepted. Tuesday's confrontation left many fearing the entire effort could be harmed and that McDonald's Cafeteria would be foreclosed on later this month.

Watson's account of the incident appeared on page 1A in Wednesday's Charlotte Observer. Greene gave his version during Wednesday's press conference, acknowledging there was a confrontation with Watson and words were exchanged, "but not to the degree reported in the paper," he said.

"He called me a liar, referring to the fact that there were lies being told (about the McDonald's deal)," Greene said. "He said he was going to make it his personal responsibility to clear up the lies. At that point I asked if he was

calling me a liar and he said he was."

Greene said he reached across a row of chairs and grabbed Watson, at which time he was grabbed by members of the audience. Watson then left the meeting.

"I regret that I was provoked to touch him and I apologize to the community that has elected me and entrusted me with so much," Greene said. "I don't understand why Mr. Watson is doing what he is doing."

"I have not talked to Watson since," Greene said. "I am trying to find a solution to this thing. I don't take kindly to people calling me a liar, especially when he knows better."

"I don't understand this at all. I don't mean to play the hurt victim, but I don't understand this at all. There has to be something else going on here."

## Seniors get valuable degrees

Continued from page 1A

than just a sense of accomplishment. I know that I worked hard for it. But I just don't know what to do. I have anxieties. I don't know where to begin anything - looking for a job or whatever."

Watkins, 31, commuted to Barber-Scotia's Concord campus each day from Gastonia, leaving behind a 2-year-old son who was born after her sophomore year.

"I finished in four years," she says. "I missed a semester after my son was born, but I was ahead so I didn't lose any time."

She also didn't lose any steam. Watkins will graduate Summa Cum Laude and with a 3.98 GPA that will probably make her class valedictorian. But that's not the most important thing, she says.

"I'm really thinking about my son," Watkins says. "As a single parent I had to make life better for him."

"I took the roundabout way," says Johnson C. Smith University senior Alpha Arnett, 35. "I had my fun. Then I real-

ized it was time to settle down."

Arnett began college in 1979 at Howard University. After almost 20 years, Arnett will finally get his degree. A business management major, he has a 3.72 average.

"That's almost twice what I had at Howard," he says with a laugh.

Arnett said he and Howard "parted company" because he wasn't really into school.

"We weren't real secure financially," he says. "And I certainly was not the best student out there. I really had no idea what it meant to have a degree. I was just into having fun."

Arnett, who along the way became an ordained Baptist minister, said he, like Watkins, wanted to return to school. It was just a matter of convenience and confidence.

"I had talked about it for years," Arnett said. "But I just had a lot of fears and didn't have the faith to do it."

Arnett says accepting the call to the ministry meant getting a bachelor degree.

## N.C. drops in child care

By Herbert L. White THE CHARLOTTE POST

Children aren't faring very well in North Carolina.

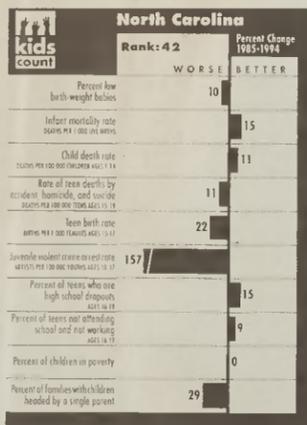
The Tar Heel State ranked 42nd among 50 states in child well-being, according to Kids Count Data Book, an analysis produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The findings, released Monday, are based on key indicators in health, safety, educational and economic security.

Although North Carolina slipped from 39th in 1996, the state was credited with making significant strides in math and reading achievement. The high school dropout rate has declined

from 13 percent in 1985 to 11 percent in 1994. Those strides, in addition to an emphasis on early childhood development should improve life prospects for young people, the study said.

"In recent years, North Carolina has demonstrated the political will to implement innovative programs and focus on front end solutions to the problems children and families face," said Julie Rehder, program manager for the N.C. Kids Count Project/N.C. Child Advocacy Institute. "For example, in parts of the state programs such as Smart Start, Communities in Schools,

See N.C. on page 6A



## They came before Columbus



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Author and lecturer Ivan Van Sertima was at Charlotte's Afro-American Cultural Center recently to talk about the state of race relations in America and defend his book "They Came Before Columbus," which has been criticized by some academics.

## Divorce

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## Notice Of Meeting

Notice is hereby given that a special meeting of the members of The Long & Son Mutual Burial Association, Inc., will be held at Long & Son Mortuary Service, 2312 Beatties Ford Rd, Charlotte, North Carolina on the 21st Day of May 1997, at the hour of 11:00 AM, for the purpose of submitting to the vote of members, the question of dissolution of said burial association and the purchase of life insurance contracts on the lives of members.

The foregoing notice is given in pursuance of recommendations by the Long & Son Mutual Burial Association Board of Directors.

Lem Long, Jr. Secretary-Treasurer



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