

Muhammad leads Charlotte NOI

Continued from page 1A

afternoons reading, rather than playing with other children in Grier Heights, where he grew up.

"I told a lady I ain't never seen anybody read as much as this boy," Withers said. "The lady would give him \$10 on his birthday so he could buy a book."

Even in elementary school, Muhammad listened closely to speakers who came to the school or on visits to Queens College. "He would remember what they said, too," Withers said.

Muhammad enrolled at CPCC, then UNC Charlotte, earning a bachelor's degree in sociology, with minors in black studies and criminal justice in 1991.

Muhammad was attracted to the Nation of Islam after reading "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" as well as learning about of Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam. He joined the Nation in 1990 and in 1994 was named minister for the Charlotte area, a title bestowed on him by Farrakhan. Muhammad said he didn't plan to become a minister.

"If you daydream and if you are inspired by the teachings of Minister Farrakhan and other ministers, you envision having the same kind of ability for yourself," Muhammad said. "I could not imagine actually having the duties of minister. I feel honored. To me, this is the best job you could ever hope to have. I am honored to walk in the steps of someone as great as Minister Farrakhan and to help bring Islam to Charlotte."

A typical day begins at 5 a.m., he said. It may end at 1 or 2 a.m. the next morning, depending on his schedule or workload.

"There is not any part of my daily life that is not in some way impacted by the Nation of Islam," Muhammad said. "It is very high profile. People see you. People you come in contact with in the workplace, in the community, recognize me and they have to talk about their problems and

concerns."

Co-worker Claude Williams, an AME Zion minister, said Muhammad is "the most righteous brother I know." He said Muhammad has a "very low level tolerance for hypocrisy."

"He has been a friend who has stood with me when others wouldn't," Williams said. "We have worked on a number of community projects together. Even though he is a Muslim and I am a Christian, I consider him a brother in the struggle."

Muhammad said though his ministry involves long hours and little rest, he accepts the role gladly.

"It is a very intensive job, but it is a labor of love," he said. "I have a vision of what we can

accomplish locally. It is seven days a week, 365 days a year. There's no vacation time."

Muhammad and his wife, formerly Lisa Williams, have no children. She followed him into the Nation about a year after he joined and they were married in 1993. Her mother, Diane Williams, has become a surrogate daughter to Muhammad's grandmother, who is now 87, visiting regularly and helping care for her.

Lisa Muhammad does freelance artwork and desktop publishing.

Robert Muhammad's interest in computers has led him to design an Internet web page which should be on line shortly.

Major accomplishments of the

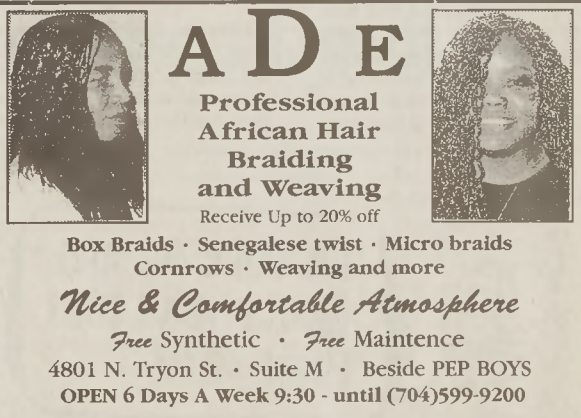
local mosque under his leadership include the Nation's participation in organizing the Black Monday demonstration led by another UNCC alumnus, Benjamin Chavis Muhammad. Robert Muhammad is also proud of the Nation's participation in an HIV/AIDS week, during which the mosque at 3300 Tuckasee Road hosted a workshop.

"That was definitely a way to break down barriers," he said.

As with most ministers, saving the lost brings him the greatest joy. "There is nothing more fulfilling that seeing the light go on in someone's mind," Muhammad said. "We sometimes forget the nation was founded by those who were believed to be castoffs with no consequence to the greater society."

Muhammad is determined to make sure everyone has access to the teachings of the Nation and its community.

"I am aware enough to know that those that do have certain perceptions, there are mechanisms to employ to alleviate those fears or perceptions," he said. "Some are not interested in changing. I try to be more tolerant and open-minded."

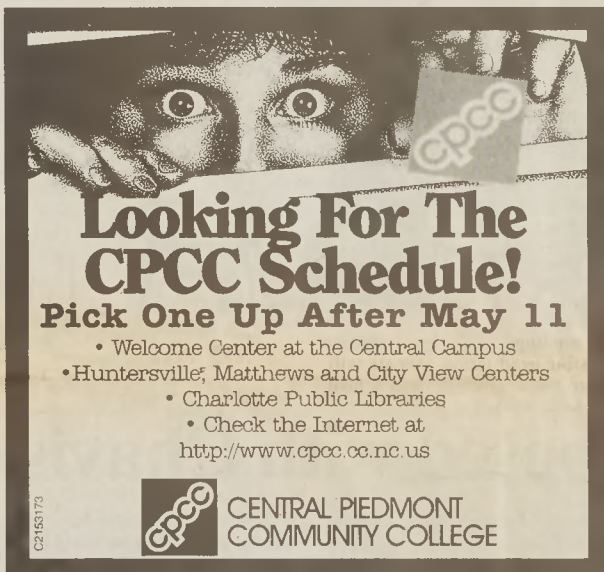


A D E
Professional
African Hair
Braiding
and Weaving
Receive Up to 20% off

Box Braids • Senegalese twist • Micro braids
Cornrows • Weaving and more

Nice & Comfortable Atmosphere
Free Synthetic • Free Maintenance

4801 N. Tryon St. • Suite M • Beside PEP BOYS
OPEN 6 Days A Week 9:30 - until (704)599-9200



**Looking For The
CPCC Schedule!**
Pick One Up After May 11

- Welcome Center at the Central Campus
- Huntersville, Matthews and City View Centers
- Charlotte Public Libraries
- Check the Internet at
<http://www.cpcc.cc.nc.us>

**CENTRAL PIEDMONT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Graduation ends a long journey

Continued from page 1A

Piedmont Community College, Murray transferred to Smith only to drop out in 1993 to search for her son Dexter, who has been missing since 1990. She decided to go back to school in January.

"The more I thought about it, there was no way I could let that go to waste," Murray said. "When you need only 13 credit hours, you don't want that to go down the drain. It was hard, but I knocked it out."

Murray, who works for Charlotte Area Fund, said she enjoys being a college student. Although she's older than most of her classmates, every day is a learning experience.

"You would think that would be a problem, but it wasn't. All the students were just so nice," she said. "I just fit right in. I had a great time. You feel good when you can be older than the other students and teachers and they work with you. I really enjoyed it."

Murray expects to have a large contingent of supporters show up at Ovens Auditorium for commencement. Four of her five children - sons Andre, Amorosa and Willie and daughter Cynthia - will be in town, as will a sister and cousins. But Murray's big day wouldn't be possible, she said, without some faith and hard work.

"You keep going and giving the praises to God," she said. "It's been a tremendous blessing. There ain't no stopping when you give the credit to God."

STABILITY IS JUST ONE OF OUR BENEFITS



Phillip Rorie

Mr. Phillip Rorie
First Citizens Bank Plaza
1776 S. Tryon St.
(704)372-9481

**Jefferson
Pilot**
INSURANCE / FINANCIAL SERVICES

WAREHOUSE Blowout SALE

EVERYTHING DRASTICALLY REDUCED!
No Interest • No Payments Until 1998*

- ELEGANT PLUSH CARPET \$5.99 SQ. YD!
- CERAMIC TILE (Over 3000 Sq. Ft.) 89¢ SQ. FT!
- URETHANE VINYL FLOORING \$8.99 SQ. YD!
- HARDWOOD FLOORING \$3.59 SQ. FT!
- WALLPAPER \$1.99 ROLL!
- ORIENTAL RUGS (500 in Stock) 55% OFF

CARPET
EXCLUSIVES

MON. & THURS. 9-8
TUES. WED. & FRI. 9-6
SATURDAY 10-6

Abbey Carpet 4517 E. Independence Blvd.
(At the corner of Sharon Amity)
*OAC. \$300 minimum finance

535-7111

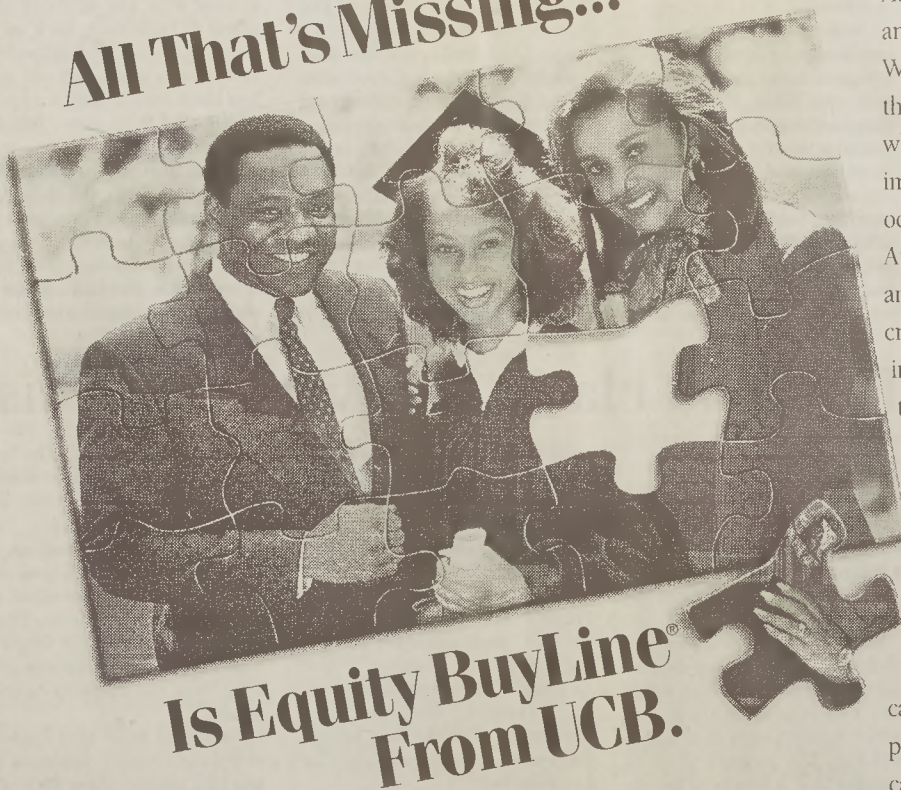


US Mortgage Group

Not your ordinary Mortgage Company

358-8000
1015 East Morehead Street
(Next to the children's theater)

All That's Missing...



**Is Equity BuyLine®
From UCB.**

All the pieces fall into place with an Equity BuyLine from UCB. With Equity BuyLine, the money's there whenever you need it, for whatever you need - home improvement, tuition, a special occasion, or any major expense. And you pay interest only on the amount you use. And because this credit line is secured by the equity in your home, the interest may be tax-deductible*.

By establishing a UCB Equity BuyLine now, you can take advantage of our special introductory offer - an APR equal to Prime** and no closing costs when you borrow \$5,000 or more at closing!

To find out how Equity BuyLine can help you complete your financial picture, stop by any UCB office or call 331-6300.

The Personal Touch. Easy As UCB.

**UNITED
CAROLINA
BANK**

*Please consult a tax advisor regarding the deductibility of interest. **Offer subject to credit approval and available to those who apply by May 30, 1997. Annual Percentage Rate (APR) may vary. Introductory APR equal to Prime Rate, as quoted in The Wall Street Journal, is available through November 30, 1997. APR on February 20, 1997 was 8.25%. Effective December 1, 1997 APR will equal Prime plus 1% (if this formula were in effect on February 20, 1997, the APR would equal 9.25%). Maximum APR is 18%. Minimum APR is 8%. UCB will waive closing costs when borrower takes an immediate advance of \$5,000 or more at closing. Otherwise, borrower is responsible for closing costs which typically range from \$200 to \$500. Property insurance required.

© 1997 United Carolina Bank
Member FDIC
Please visit us at our Internet web site at <http://www.ucb-bank.com>