

# NAACP taps Skip Alston

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as much as \$585,000.

Gina Pettis now heads the group's scholarship committee, a source of controversy as the Alexander family has withdrawn its support, including use of Kelly M. Alexander Sr.'s name.

The senior Alexander was chairman of the NAACP's national board at his death

1985.

Kelly Alexander Jr. had tried unsuccessfully to get the major donors for the scholarship fund, R.J. Reynolds Inc. in Winston-Salem and Sprint Communications, to donate funds to his recently-formed Kelly M. Alexander Sr. Leadership Institute.

In other NAACP news, the new election for the secretary's

post in the local NAACP chapter will be held on June 28. That portion of the local elections had been overturned after complaints were filed charging the elections were improperly administered. Several other complaints, including one questioning the exclusion of treasurer candidate Andrea Huff, a former Charlotte police captain.

# Redistricting is at an impasse

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and Shannon Park, but also the fast-growing University City area.

Sources close to the negotiations say District 7 representative Mike Jackson, who owns a coffee shop in the University City area, would like to move closer to his business. If Republicans can make enough changes in District 4 to insure a win for Jackson, they would likely keep the Republican-controlled District 7 and add District 4 to the Republican column.

Jackson denied he planned to move into District 4. "I haven't considered that," he said.

Jackson said he was willing to let a federal judge draw the districts rather than rely on the Democrats' definition of District 4 as competitive, though it has 50 percent minority population and only 25 percent Republican registration.

If District 4 can be changed to include more whites, that could almost assure the election of Republicans in four districts. The Republican plan would limit African Americans to just two

district seats, districts 2 and 3. District 1 would also be a Democratic-controlled district.

Four city council members are elected at-large. Republicans currently hold two of those seats.

Black city council members accused the Republicans of racism during wrangling over the competing proposals Monday night. A 6-5 party line vote last month was overturned by Republican mayor Pat McCrory's veto.

If no agreement is reached, the matter could end up in court and cancel or delay at least part of this fall's municipal elections.

The Democratic-backed proposals would add 30,000 new residents to adjacent districts and make little changes to district lines.

Filing for city elections are scheduled to open July 4, though July 7 is the first business day. The primary is set for Sept. 23 and the general election is Nov. 4.

It is possible to hold the the mayoral and at-large council elections on schedule, if the districts are not ready.

# Young Shabazz 'in need of help'

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speaker and another a singer.

Malcolm Shabazz was traumatized, Sutton said, by the 1995 charges against his mother, which led to his being removed from her custody for most of the last two years while she went through counseling and a probation period. The charges that she plotted to kill Farrakhan were officially dismissed last month.

Sutton, who helped represent Qubilah Shabazz in the Farrakhan case, said Malcolm Shabazz told him then that he blamed himself for his mother's arrest because he had begged her to marry the man with whom she had allegedly plotted the murder-for-hire.

"Malcolm said he wanted her to marry [the man] so he could have a mother and a father and a room of his own," Sutton said. "He felt he'd hurt his mother."

Betty Shabazz was made her grandson's legal guardian as part of a 1995 plea agreement in which Qubilah Shabazz accepted responsibility for her actions but maintained her innocence and agreed to undergo psychological and substance abuse counseling. While Malcolm Shabazz lived with his grandmother and aunts, Qubilah became a producer at a San Antonio radio station owned by Sutton's Inner City Broadcasting company.

"She did all right. She came to work, did her job and went home," said Charles Andrews, an executive of the San Antonio station. "She would talk about the fact that when her son was living with his grandmother, that she missed him."

About five months ago, Malcolm Shabazz went to live with his mother in San Antonio, where Andrews said he attended first a parochial school, where he was unhappy, and for his last two weeks there, a public middle school.

In February, according to the police reports quoted by the Associated Press, Qubilah Shabazz told police Malcolm had attacked her and that she wanted him committed to a mental hospital. The son in turn told police he was "angry because (Qubilah) had been drinking again" and wouldn't take him to school. The police report said officers took the boy to a psychiatric unit and that his mother was too drunk to drive him.

Malcolm called police in April and said he and his mother had an argument. Shabazz told the responding officer they were "not getting along" and that she was making arrangements with child protective services to move him out of the house. Sutton and other family friends said Qubilah Shabazz sent Malcolm to live with her mother in Yonkers, north of New York City, because she feared that Malcolm was

becoming involved with a gang.

Family acquaintances said they saw no sign of violent tendencies by Malcolm Shabazz. Ernest Davis, mayor of nearby Mount Vernon where Betty Shabazz lived for most of the last 30 years, said he had been told by family members that Malcolm had become angry about being

sent to New York and wanted to be with his friends. But Davis said he had seen Malcolm and Betty Shabazz together the day before the fire, and both seemed content and happy to be together. "I saw him as mannerly, mature beyond his years, very comfortable with older folks," Davis said.

# Simmons has supporters

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West Charlotte reestablish itself as one of the premier schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg System," he said.

Smith said a survey of teachers and students has shown a sharp decline in favorable responses when asked about the operations of the school since former principal Barbara Ledford retired in 1994. Since then, West Charlotte has had two principals. Simmons replaced William Crawford, who served 18 months.

"It is not a matter of political pressure that is causing one reaction or another," Smith said. "I have met with a lot of folks regarding West Charlotte."

Smith said his main focus this week is making sure the school year ends on a positive note.

Black parents were angry at reports that white teachers were leaving the school and criticizing Simmons' leadership.

"If 44 white teachers want to leave West Charlotte - bye," said parent Harriet Porter-Jinwright, wife of Salem Baptist Church pastor Anthony Jinwright.

Jinwright, who said it appeared that white teachers did not want to take orders from a black man, wants Smith to support Simmons. She alleged that white parents from the Myers Park and Eastover communities and school board member John Tate, who represents their district, was leading the effort to get rid of Simmons because Simmons was doing more to help black students.

"What empowers Tate and that community to direct the future of West Charlotte and over 2,000 students who will attend," Jinwright wrote in a letter presented to Smith Monday morning and read at a Tuesday night rally at the Education Center. "He (Tate) has consistently and proactively fought to create a private school within a school for his community.

"Our fear is that this practice of allowing small factions of the community to dictate the operations of a school is systematic."

Some 600 people met at Salem Baptist on Sunday night, the day after a story appeared about the West Charlotte conflicts.

More than a 100 showed up at the Education Center Monday to present Smith a letter expressing support for Simmons.

At Tuesday's meeting, several speakers supported Simmons, including West Charlotte senior Kanesha Williams.

Williams said most of her teachers are white and they would stop class to complain when something they disagreed with was said over the public address system. Simmons was being criticized because he "demanded respect and gets respect," she said.

"They (white teachers) are mad because they have to respect him...because he brought order and discipline to West Charlotte," Williams said. NAACP president Rev. Conrad Pridgen said the community must not let Smith oust Simmons.

"With Kenneth Simmons we are going to draw a line," Pridgen said. "The black community is not divided on this. We want the message to go back - we are ready to take a stand on this. We want the message to be clear. We don't want to know whether or not Kenneth Simmons is going to stay. It is our choice that he stay. We want Kenneth Simmons period. We don't want nobody else."

Simmons was not at Tuesday night's meeting and could not be reached for comment, but his wife spoke on his behalf, saying that Simmons was very disappointed to find such racism when he went to West Charlotte.

"He saw that black children not being taught," Simmons' wife, said. "He asked teachers to be willing to teach all children. Some teachers said we don't do that. We only teach children who at a certain level. He wanted them to know expectations was for them to teach all children. Some teachers don't want to teach all children."

She said that Simmons is sad the dispute has become a racial issue. "He didn't make it an issue, other people made it an issue," his wife said.

Geraldine Powe, president of the West Charlotte High School National Alumni Association, also voiced support for Simmons.

"He needs a chance," Powe said. "He has only been there a year."

She said some parents and teachers had presented a long list of complaints earlier in the year and that Simmons had responded to those complaints at a meeting.

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