

WESTVIEW CEMETERY



PHOTO/ROSE STURDIVANT YOUNG

Fund raisers like this December gathering in Washington, D.C., sponsored by Friends of Old Westview Cemetery help support preservation efforts at the historic burial ground.

D.C. group works to preserve historic Wadesboro cemetery

By Robin Y. Queen
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The restoration of Old Westview Cemetery in Wadesboro is a top priority for a Washington-based nonprofit group.

Rose Sturdivant Young, president and founder of Friends of Old Westview Cemetery began the preservation project in 2001, when her family returned Wadesboro to bury her mother, Ethel Sturdivant, in the family plot. Young noticed that the grounds were overgrown with weeds and brush and headstones in disrepair.

She returned to Washington and began efforts to rehabilitate Old Westview. Several radio stations broadcast public service announcements to locate people who might have relatives buried in the cemetery.

FOWC's mailing list now includes members

who live along the East Coast and as far away as California.

Last year, the non-profit marked several accomplishments, including:

- Documentation of historical information. A genealogist found that among those buried there are veterans of both world wars and slaves.

- An internet site detailing the cemetery's history.

- And North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office presented Old Westview at the National Register Advisory Committee's fall meeting in Raleigh. The cemetery now may be eligible for listing on the register.

FOWC is recruiting financial support for a sign and a fence. For information, call (877) 331-6989 or legal counsel Gary Swindell in Charlotte at (704) 376-1388.

Rally to support at-risk school

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North Carolina fails to provide low-income school districts necessary resources to educate students.

At 10 a.m. Saturday, West Charlotte alumni will gather on the sidewalk beside the school to offer their support. For Bumgarner, who attended WCHS at the start of desegregation in public schools, the rally is necessary to protect the school's legacy and future.

"This is the rich history of West Charlotte," he said. "I was one of the first white students I love West Charlotte. We came together as a school. I had my head kicked in once or twice, but I got involved."

Earlier this week, CMS announced a decline in the dropout rate for 2004-2005 that improved over the previous year.

CMS reports the dropout rate for grades 7-12 at 2.25, down from 3.20. The rate for grades 9-12 is 3.14, down considerably from 4.48 in 2003-2004.

At the state level, the dropout rate in grades 7-12 was 3.23 percent while the rate for grades 9-12 was 4.74 percent. The numbers represent decreases over the 2003-2004 data (3.29 for grades 7-12 and 4.86 for grades 9-12).

CMS officials credit the decrease on early intervention programs that keep students in school. The Finding Opportunities Creating Unparalleled Success, or FOCUS program was developed in CMS where children need individual attention and extra support.

The district also credits the case manager model used in high schools. In those

schools, case managers are directly involved with students who are at-risk of dropping out of school. Case managers provide support to teachers working with these students and serve on the school's intervention team. In addition, the case managers work directly with families of at-risk students through home visits and providing support and interventions.

Another strategy in place is the truancy prevention program that provides additional Charlotte-Mecklenburg resource officers to focus on truancy at West Charlotte, West Mecklenburg and Garinger. Officers make home visits to investigate non-attendance and are routinely patrolling areas within close proximity to the schools for students who are not on campus.

Director Gordon Parks first made mark as photographer

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his gritty visual essays on the grinding effects of poverty in the United States and abroad and on the spirit of the civil rights movement.

"Those special problems spawned by poverty and crime touched me more, and I dug into them with more enthusiasm," he said. "Working at them again revealed the superiority of the camera to explore the dilemmas they posed."

In 1961, his photographs in Life of a poor, ailing Brazilian boy named Flavio da Silva brought donations that saved the boy and purchased a home for him and his family.

"The Learning Tree" was Parks' first feature film, in 1969. It was based on his 1963 autobiographical novel of the same name, in which the young hero grapples with fear and racism as well as first love and schoolboy triumphs. Parks wrote the score as well.

In 1989, "The Learning

Tree" was among the first 25 American movies to be placed on the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress. The registry is intended to highlight films of particular cultural, historical or aesthetic importance.

The detective drama "Shaft," which came out in 1971 and starred Richard Roundtree, was a major hit and spawned a series of black-oriented films. In 1972, Parks directed a sequel, "Shaft's Big Score."

He also published books of poetry and wrote musical compositions including "Martin," a ballet about the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Parks was born Nov. 30, 1912, in Fort Scott, Kan., the youngest of 15 children. In his 1990 autobiography, "Voices in the Mirror," he remembered it as a world of racism and poverty, but also a world where his parents gave their children love, discipline and religious faith.

He went through a series of jobs as a teenager and

young man, including piano player and railroad dining car waiter. His breakthrough came when he was about 25, after he bought a used camera in a pawnshop for \$7.50. He became a freelance fashion photographer, went on to Vogue magazine and then to Life in 1948.

"Reflecting now, I realize that, even within the limits of my childhood vision, I was on a search for pride, meanwhile taking measurable glimpses of how certain blacks, who were fed up with racism, rebelled against it," he wrote.

When he accepted an award from Wichita State University in May 1991, he said it was "another step forward in my making peace with Kansas and Kansas making peace with me."

"I dream terrible dreams, terribly violent dreams," he said. "The doctors say it's because I suppressed so much anger and hatred from my youth. I bottled it up and used it constructively."

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