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IN SPORTS



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The Voice of the Black Community

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## Giving voice to black history

Oral project opens doors to city's past

By Erica Singleton  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

What began in the 1990s as an oral history project for students has turned into an opportunity for the whole community.

"In the late 1990s it became obvious that the African-American experience and history was not being accurately documented [in Charlotte]," said Barbara Turman-Ferguson, an African Diaspora cultural advocate. "I have children and grand[children], and I thought it was important for them to be empowered by the experience of African-Americans in the community."

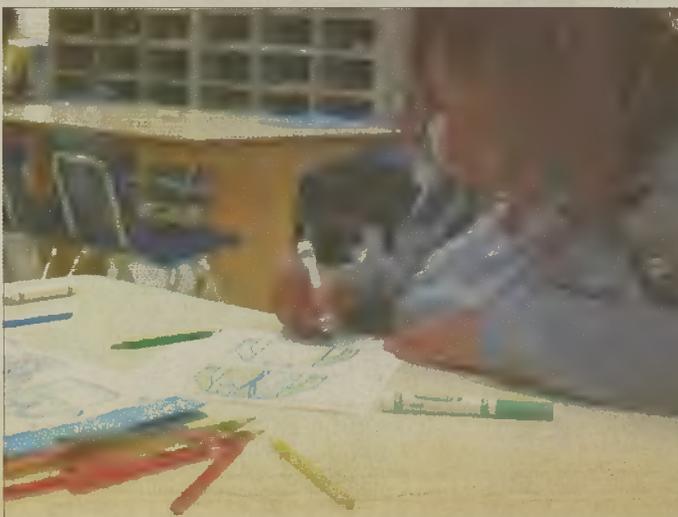
After seeing what needed to be done, Turman-Ferguson felt young people should be trained to conduct interviews in the community. She began with five students from Garinger High School who, with recorders, did interviews in the community. "If they did the interviews, they could live the experience through the interviews and be empowered," Turman-Ferguson said. "We didn't want to focus on high profile luminaries of the community. You can tell the stories through janitors at schools, or man at grocery store."

Over the years the project got bigger, and started to include other people, including Melinda DeMaris, who interviewed her husband, who then went on to UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University to make other connections, as well as Robert Smith and Karen Flint, professors in the Department of History and African Studies at UNC Charlotte.

UNCC hosted a one-day symposium in September titled "From Brooklyn to Biddleville. Memories of Charlotte's First Urban Renewal Project." The event, sponsored by UNCC's departments of history and African studies, the Afro-American

Please see ORAL/6A

## Designs on tomorrow



PHOTOS/ERICA SINGLETON

SaKenya Vaughns, a eighth-grader at Martin Luther King Middle School, draws a top as part of the Fashion in the Schools program launched by fashion designer Cary Mitchell. Students will develop and vote on a new school uniform - a first in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

### Middle school uniform project opens student opportunities

By Erica Singleton  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Fashion designer Cary Mitchell's new design program creates excitement at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School.

Mitchell has been called "designer to the stars," but with his newest project the title designer to students is more appropriate.

Mitchell created Fashion in the Schools, a program launched this month at the school located in the Hidden Valley community in north Charlotte.

"The program was kind of a spin-off from the experience from designing the Charlotte Bobcats' new uniform," Mitchell said.

Known for his work with designing clothes for the sports community, Mitchell, along with an eighth-grade design committee and a sixth- and seventh-grade design viewing committee will develop a school uniform at that students can take ownership of.

"The school is really excited," Mitchell said. "[Due] to the



Charlotte fashion designer Cary Mitchell (top, left) pulls the design team together during a brainstorming session. The Martin Luther King Middle School students are designing new school uniforms.

music industry, the words design and fashion have real crossover...they've made it cool. Everybody wants to be a designer because of (hip hop stars) Jay-Z and Puffy or whatever, so it's made it a buzzword."

Mitchell meets with the design committee at least twice a week. They talk about fabrics, looked at other schools' uniforms, and created handouts with clothing templates for students to sketch

their own designs.

"The way you reach the urban kid, to me, is really through music, sports and entertainment," Mitchell said. "Fashion kind of crosses over into the music genre now. It's a way to catch them...to create a buy-in for the uniform."

Despite studies that have shown the positive impact of school uniforms, King Middle

Please see DESIGN/7A

## Obama giving thought to 2008 presidential campaign

By Brandon Perry  
THE INDIANAPOLIS RECORDER

INDIANAPOLIS - After saying for months that he intended to service his full six years in the Senate, Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois reversed field Sunday, admitting for the first time that he is at least considering a run for the White House in 2008.

Speaking on "Meet the Press,"

Obama said: "I am still at the point where I have not made a decision to - to pursue higher office," he said. "But it is true that I have thought about it over the last several months."

Appearing on the cover of Time magazine last week, Obama has been urged to seek the Democratic nomination, though he has been in the Senate less

than two years. Currently, he is on a national publicity tour to promote his new book, "The Audacity of Hope."

Earlier, Obama made a rare stop in Indianapolis.

The popular and charismatic politician visited the Circle City to support and attend a fund raiser for Joe Donnelly, Brad Ellsworth and Baron Hill - Democrats running

as challengers in three of the nation's closest congressional races (2nd District, 8th District and 9th District, respectively).

Obama convened a brief news conference to discuss why voters should support the candidates, but much of the discussion was devoted to his thoughts about various issues.

Please see OBAMA/2A



CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

Liberia President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf visited Performance Learning Center in Charlotte last week.

## Reaching out to Liberia

Charlotte benefit brings in \$250,000 for education

By Herbert L. White

herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

A Charlotte fund raiser will help Liberian girls continue their education.

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf praised Charlotte's support for the Liberia Educational Trust Fund during her visit here last week. A private fund raiser tallied nearly \$250,000, which Johnson-Sirleaf said will be used to support girls education in the African nation.

"This additional money will enable us to expand that and to also enable us to start our literacy program for market women," Johnson-Sirleaf told The Analyst, a newspaper in Monrovia, Liberia's capital.

The trust fund collects money to build schools, hire teachers and provide scholarships for literacy programs. Fourteen years of civil war destroyed much of Liberia's education system. Peace was restored in 2003, but education facilities are in short supply.

In addition to the reception, Johnson-

Please see CHARLOTTE/2A

### thebox

NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS

## Farrakhan offers thanks for support

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO - Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan has made his first public comments since he issued a letter to his followers last month, saying he was seriously ill.

Farrakhan, 73, called in to a program on Chicago's WVON-AM this weekend, saying he wanted to thank those who have offered him their best wishes, the Chicago Defender reported.

"Let me thank God because he has

Please see FARRAKHAN/3A



New technology can help homeowners save money and water /6D

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