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Pushing for new Second Ward

Alumni group wants county to support land plan

By Herbert L. White

Alumni of Second Ward High School want Mecklenburg County commissioners to clear the way for a new school in the neighborhood.

A letter delivered to commissioners Chairman Parks Helms last month by the Second Ward National Alumni Foundation lobbies commissioners to "do everything in its power to support and fund rebuilding" of a new Second Ward High School.



Helms

The original, opened in 1923 as the first high school for African Americans in Mecklenburg, was razed in 1969 as part of Charlotte's urban renewal drive that obliterated the historically-black neighborhood.



Jones

A complicated land swap proposed by Charlotte Center City Partners that includes the county, city of Charlotte, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Mass Mutual would result in Brooklyn Village, a mixed-income, mixed-use community built with private funds. A baseball stadium for the AAA Charlotte Knights would also be included in the plan.

County Manager Harry Jones has proposed the county partner with the Knights to build the stadium, which would sit on county land. Mecklenburg - not the city - would be responsible for \$7.8 million in infrastructure.

City Council is expected to vote on the proposal by year's end.

Second Ward alumni are pressing for a magnet school in the area - a project that

Please see **SECOND/6A**

Swept up by electoral change

In front - for now: N.C. Rep. **Jim Black**. The N.C. House speaker (center) prevailed over Republican Hal Jordan by a razor-thin seven votes Tuesday night.



Timmons-Goodson

First for N.C.'s top court: Judge **Patricia Timmons-Goodson**. Fayetteville jurist is first black woman elected to the state Supreme Court. She is the only African American on the panel.



Access to power:

U.S. Rep. Mel Watt

Charlotte Democrat becomes a deal-maker as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. He's also in line to lead his choice of subcommittees which oversee financial services industry.



Watt



Clyburn

Heavy hifter:

U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn

S.C. lawmaker is in line to become majority whip - the No. 3-post in that chamber of Congress.

Historic election alters government at every level

By Herbert L. White

African Americans will have unprecedented power in Congress, while a scandal-tainted ally in Raleigh may have just enough support to keep his seat.

Democrats rode a wave of discontent over Iraq and how Congress conducts the nation's affairs to a majority in the House of Representatives. U.S. Rep. Mel Watt of Charlotte,

chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, will be in a position of strength to deal with fellow Democrats on issues of importance to African Americans.

"The American people have spoken and African Americans, in particular, have overwhelmingly voted for new leadership in Congress and around the country," Watt said. "We will now have a Congress that works for

all Americans."

The CBC, which grows to 45 members in January with the election of Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.), Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) and Hank Johnson (D-Ga.), has been out of the political loop since President Bush took office in 2001. With Bush forced to deal with a Democrat-controlled House, the landscape has changed.

Please see **CONGRESSIONAL/7A**

King memorial first to honor black American on Mall

By Derril L. Holly

WASHINGTON - On a hot August afternoon in 1963, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech to a mostly black audience from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

On Nov. 13, a half-mile from Lincoln's iconic statue, a diverse group of celebrities, corporate

leaders and ordinary Americans will help turn the first shovels of dirt for a memorial honoring the civil rights leader who was slain 38 years ago. It will be the first monument to an African American on the National Mall, the long stretch of grounds between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument.

"He's an American hero, and

beyond that he's a hero for all sorts of people," said poet and novelist Maya Angelou, who is scheduled to join talk show host Oprah Winfrey and others who have been working for more than a decade to help build the monument.

Angelou, 80, said the groundbreaking is even more special because it comes almost a year

after the death of King's widow. "She never was a person to say 'Why didn't it happen sooner?' That would not be Coretta Scott King," Angelou said of her friend, who died in January at 78.

Following the deaths of Coretta Scott King and civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, who died in October 2005, efforts to raise the neces-

Please see **MLK/3A**

Caucus pursues clemency for inmate

N.C. prisoner is mentally ill, advocates insist

By Estes Thompson

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREENSBORO - A condemned man who represented himself at trial should be spared from execution because he's mentally ill, black leaders and his defense team said Wednesday.

Guy T. LeGrande, 47, was sentenced to death in April 1996 for the shooting death of Ellen Munford in Stanly County. His appellate lawyer said no physical evidence such as fingerprints, blood or hair link LeGrande to the slaying.

"Only the grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan would dare to call it justice," said Carnell Robinson, chairman of the North Carolina Black Leadership Caucus, adding that carrying out the sentence would make the state's citizens "unwilling parties to a legalized lynching."

District Attorney Michael Parker, who wasn't chief prosecutor at the time, said LeGrande committed a calculating murder after the victim's estranged husband offered him \$6,500 from a \$50,000 insurance policy. LeGrande didn't seem insane, he said.

"He's intelligent," Parker said. "He's clearly competent. He's articulate."

The North Carolina Supreme Court's review of the conviction said LeGrande was properly examined by a psychiatrist who found he had no "serious mental disorder ... (and was) competent to waive representation by an attorney."

Please see **ACTIVISTS/2A**

the box

NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS

Nobel Prize laureate to visit Charlotte

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka will be in Charlotte for a reading of his autobiography Nov. 12.

Soyinka, the first African to earn a Nobel Prize in literature, will read and sign copies of "You Must Set Forth at Dawn" from 3-4 p.m. at Borders books, 3900 Colony Road. His visit is sponsored by The Echo Foundation, an education and human rights organization.

Soyinka has participated in three previous Echo programs, including a 2002 visit as keynote speaker for the Voices Against Indifference Initiative. Soyinka is an Alphonse Fletcher Fellow at Harvard University's W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African and African American Research.



Soyinka



J. Hale Turner grew up a fan of children's books. As an adult, she's writing them/1D

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