

# Museum touts Muslim culture in Bible Belt Mississippi

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sippi Arts Pavilion, Rashid said.

The Muslim museum opened near the Arts Pavilion with an exhibition titled "Islamic Moorish Spain: Its Legacy to Europe and the West." Rashid said the response to the show encouraged her and museum board chairman Emad Al-Turk to keep the museum open past its scheduled closing date at the end of September 2001.

"As we traveled and promoted the exhibit nationally, we found that we were the only Islamic museum in the country," Rashid said.

Rabiah Ahmed, communications coordinator for the Washington, D.C.-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, said most Muslim

exhibitions are relegated to portions of existing museums. She said she knows of no other museum in the United States dedicated entirely to Muslim culture.

"In this day and age when

there are so many misconceptions about Islam, establishing a museum about Islam's history in America and Muslims in general is another way for Americans to learn about their neighbors and the

history of our country," Ahmed said.

Only one act of violence has occurred at the museum: A brick was thrown into the front window, days after 9/11. Organizers said the muse-

um's education objective began to pay dividends as public schools started bringing children to learn more about the culture.

"It was fortunate because it helped create a different

image and a dialogue," Rashid said.

Abdul Kasem, 15, who attends the Muslim Academy in Gretna, La., recently visited the museum with his ninth grade class.

## Shaun Alexander

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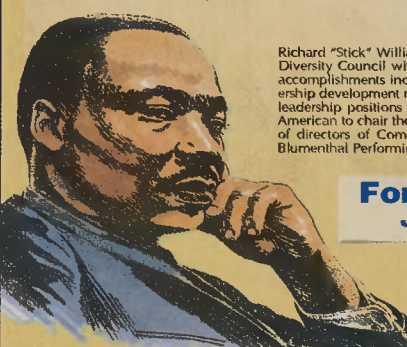
anyone who picks up any kind of ball.

Alexander states on his website that, "beyond my love for football, God has given me the vision and responsibility to be a role model and mentor to thousands of young men who need to see you can be a successful athlete and still love God and serve others."

Serving others, not something that you think of when you think of most professional athletes.

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 John Crawford is the founder of the Charlotte Housing Authority Scholarship Fund (CHASF). Mr. Crawford is on a quest to raise \$5 million to help send deserving young people to college who live in Charlotte's conventional public housing communities.

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**KEYNOTE SPEAKER - Richard "Stick" Williams**  
**Duke Energy Vice President - Enterprise Field Services**

Richard "Stick" Williams is vice president of enterprise field services of Duke Energy. He was the leader in creating the Diversity Council within Duke Energy that included Senior Executive leadership. Some of the Diversity Council's key accomplishments include initiatives for attracting, developing and retaining talented minorities, development of a leadership development model, and guidelines for employee resource groups. His strong work ethic helped him to excel in leadership positions within Duke Energy and the community. He is the immediate past chairman and first African American to chair the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill board of trustees. Williams is a member of the boards of directors of Communities in Schools of North Carolina, Hope Haven Inc., YMCA of Greater Charlotte, N. C. Blumenthal Performing Arts Center and the N. C. Center for Nonprofits.

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