## **Black Durham residents** support district attorney

Continued from page 3A

Still, some local residents firmly believe that something did happen that night and are con-tinuing to support Nifong's handling of the

"I do not feel it's going to mess up his case because there are still the charges of forcible rape as well as kidnapping," said Victoria Peterson, a representative of the Citizens For Mike Nifong group. "The amount of time for sexual assault and kidnapping are still there." Phyllis Thornton, another representative of the group, feels that the woman was violated that night, but she is up against stigma and prejudice.
"It was a bad break for her, she was black with a terrible past and terrible present," Thornton said. "We know that these boys are highly intelligent. I think this thing was thought out.

"They aren't going to stick DNA up in her. They are going to stick objects. She's a black girl. They wanted to demoralize her, and, in my opinion, demoralize themselves. There's a justice system higher than we have here that's going to deal with those boys for the rest of their lives."

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Jackie Wagstaff, a former school board member and community activist, said Nifong is receiving too much criticism.

"He's doing his job," she said. "The complaint was made, and he didn't convict - the grand in the gran

jury did."

But Coleman disagrees. "I don't think it's possible for him to receive too much criticism," he said. "I think he is personally responsible for this case taking on as much national publicity as it did, revealing too much too early before he had the evidence to prove it, and turning this into a racially divided crime."

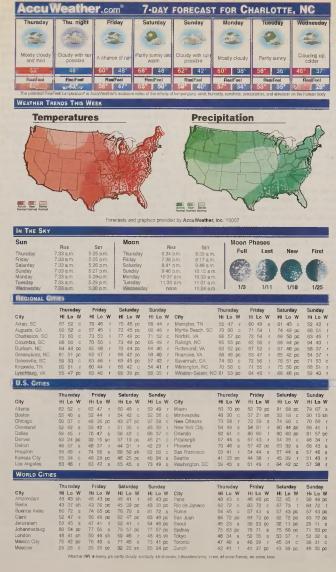
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