

# The Warren Record

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## Bye-Bye Birdie



This cat appears to be wondering where all the birds have gone, but actually she is pausing for a drink at a bird bath which is supposed to be

strictly off limits to animals of her kind during most part of the year.

(Staff Photo by Phyllis H. King)

## Police Cruiser Is Damaged During High-Speed Road Chase Thursday

A high-speed chase along US 1 has resulted in damage to the vehicles being driven by the suspect and a Norlina police officer.

Early last Thursday morning, Willie Thames, of Norlina, was arrested, placed under \$5,000 bond and ordered confined to the Warren County Jail on charges of first- and second-degree burglary and two counts of injury to personal property.

Since the initial confinement, Thames has been charged with four traffic violations: speeding 80 mph in a 35 mph zone, careless and reckless driving, failure to stop for blue light/siren and trying to elude an officer.

According to Sgt. Harold Seaman, the Thursday morning ar-

rest followed two reports of break-ins before 2:30 at the Pines Apartments in Norlina. Both the Warren County Sheriff's and Norlina Police departments responded to the calls.

Thames was sighted by Sgt. Seaman and Norlina Police Lt. James Champion traveling south on US 1, as they approached the apartments. The two officers gave chase and followed the suspect—at speeds between 85 and 100 miles per hour—for five or six miles along US 1, SR 1231 and the One Road.

After losing control of the Nissan he was driving, Thames wrecked the vehicle on the One Road. The police cruiser being driven by Lt. Champion was also

wrecked and declared a total loss.

Both Champion and Thames were transported to Maria Parham Hospital, where they were treated and released.

Lt. Champion has returned to work and has been assigned one of the town's Chevrolets. Thames has been scheduled to appear in court on Jan. 25 for his traffic violations. Information concerning the court date for the other charges were not available at press time.

## Leaf Referendum Will Be Held Here

"Flue-cured tobacco growers in Warren County will vote Jan. 9-12 in a mail referendum to decide whether marketing quotas on an acreage-poundage basis will continue," Lynn S. Carr, ASCS executive director, said this week. According to Carr, the referendum occurs every three years and must be approved by tobacco producers by a two-thirds margin before the present tobacco acreage-poundage system can continue.

"Warren County will have 248 eligible voters who will receive ballots in the mail around Jan. 9," Carr said. Persons who are considered as eligible voters for referendum purposes are those who are currently engaged in the production of tobacco by cash renting or sharecropping. "Persons who receive a fixed cash rent amount will not be considered active in tobacco production and they will not be eligible to vote," he added.

All ballots mailed to area tobacco producers must be re-

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## Warren Superintendent Accepts Post In Halifax

### Special Meeting Held On Friday

Warren County School Supt. Michael Forrest Williams has tendered his resignation to accept a four-year contract as superintendent for the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District and, according to board president Patsy Towe, will receive a \$12,000-per-year supplement after assuming the position on Feb. 1.

Williams, a 16½-year veteran in the Warren County School system, accepted the new position last Friday afternoon. The departing superintendent had been notified the previous evening by the chairman of the Roanoke Rapids board that the group would assemble on Friday at 5:30 p.m. and that an offer would be made. Williams, who will assume the post to be vacated on Jan. 31 by retiring Roanoke Rapids superintendent Dr. Robert Clary, was selected from among an applicant pool of 22 candidates. "I am sure he will promote the excellence in education concept this community has come to expect," Clary said.

After receiving the call last Thursday, Williams telephoned all members of the Warren County Board of Education to schedule for last Friday a called meeting at 8 p.m. It was at that meeting that Williams submitted his resignation, which was accepted unanimously by the Warren County board.

Williams is an alumnus of the University of North Carolina. His teaching career began in Roanoke Rapids in January of 1967, where he served for three and one-half years before accepting a position as principal at Enfield High School in 1970. After two years in the Enfield post, Williams came to Warren County as principal of Mariam Boyd Elementary School.

A believer in education, Williams since 1968 has pursued graduate studies, culminating first in a master's degree from East Carolina University, and he will soon receive the Ed.D. degree from the University of North Carolina. With the exception of one course that was taught only during morning hours, Williams has completed the 34 semester hours of coursework at Warren in evening sessions.

Following the retirement in the spring 1978 of longtime Warren County Superintendent J. R. Peeler, Williams began his tenure in that position on July 1.

During that 10½-year period of time, building and organizational projects have been completed. "When I assumed the position of superintendent, work had just begun on Warren County High School," Williams said. "The new

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Warren School Supt. Mike Williams prepares to record the vote as Board of Education Chairman Yarbrough Williams, left, calls for a show of hands of those members wishing to give approval to the superintendent's request that his letter of resignation be approved during Friday night's special board meeting.

(Staff Photo by Howard Jones)

### New N.C. Report Shows

## Infant Mortality Rate Is Highest In State

Folks in Warren County and in other small pockets of rural North Carolina have reason for concern, a report released recently by the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc. suggests.

According to the report, considerable social and economic differences exist between rural and urban areas in the state and—in many cases—the discrepancies are growing.

Called the "North Carolina Rural Profile," the report is drawn from a 100-county database prepared for the Rural Center by the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at North Carolina State University.

The report compares predominantly rural and urban counties, showing that urban areas generally have lower levels of unemployment, are experiencing faster growth in employment and have higher levels of per-capita income.

According to the report, rural areas lag behind urban areas in educational attainment, access to health care and quality of housing.

In Warren County specifically:

- The infant mortality rate for the years 1982-1986 was 20.44, ranking it at the bottom of all 100 counties;

- The percentage of housing without plumbing in 1980 was 19.8, ranking it above only Gates County with its 20.2 percent of comparable housing;

- The "persons-per-physician" ratio in 1982 was 8,218:1, surpassed only by the 11,224:1 rank-

ing reported for Caswell County; and

- The percentage of persons below the poverty level in 1980 was 30.1, ranking it the worst in the state.

In rural North Carolina as a whole:

- The proportion of population in poverty is 60 percent higher;
- The proportion of population with less than a ninth-grade education is 48 percent higher;
- The proportion of elderly is 23 percent higher;
- Unemployment is 44 percent higher;

- Per capita income is 22 percent lower, with the gap in per-capita income between rural and urban areas growing from \$1,745 in 1980 to \$2,692 in 1984;

- The proportion of housing that is overcrowded is 49 percent higher;
- Local educational expenditures per pupil are 35 percent lower; and
- Job growth is 36 percent slower.

"This report reinforces our belief that many rural North Carolinians are currently missing out on the growth and prosperity enjoyed by the state as a whole, and that they will continue to lag behind unless trends are reversed," Billy Ray Hall, president of the Rural Center, said recently. "As long as one in five persons lives in poverty in parts of rural North Carolina, we must continue to strengthen and diversify our rural economy."

The data used in the study were obtained from public sources, in-

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## Magistrates Take Office For New Two-Year Terms

By THURLETTA M. BROWN  
News Editor

Warren County's three magistrates—Ulysses S. Ross, Carson S. Pridgen and Curtis E. Mustian, Jr.—on New Year's Day were each sworn in for another two-year term by Richard E. Hunter, Jr., clerk of superior court.

Ross, who has held the position for eight years, is based primarily in the Warrenton magistrate's office. Pridgen, a 19-year veteran in the position, mans the Norlina office, while Mustian, a three-year veteran, works in both offices.

According to Ross, about 100 cases are handled each week by the county's magistrates.

But, Pridgen has noticed a reduction in the caseload routinely handled during his 19 years of service. Prior to the reciprocal agreements that exist now for many states, "every tourist in violation on U.S. interstate or on US 1 was brought into this office," Pridgen said.

Pridgen recalled his first day in the position: "I went to Warrenton to be sworn in and after everything had become official, I was talking with the clerk of court. The telephone soon rang, and I was summoned to my post by Trooper Wallace Brown, who said 'what's the use of being sworn in, if you are not going to do your job.'" Pridgen returned to Norlina immediately to process his first traffic violation.

Since those beginnings, Pridgen has kept records of all cases he has handled. "I have a box filled with notebooks and, although it might take a lot of looking, one could search through those files to find the details of

each case I have handled in 19 years."

As in other counties across the state, Warren County's magistrates are employed by the administrative offices of the North Carolina Courts and are officers of the county's district court. Their offices are the first through which potential cases pass before reaching district and superior court.

Ross, Pridgen and Mustian each work five days per week and are on call for two nights each week. A new work schedule is expected to be implemented on Feb. 1, but details of the changes were not available at press time.

Magistrates perform a variety of functions, which include:

- Setting the conditions of a suspect's release—using either secured bonds, unsecured bonds or custody release—based on guidelines that consider county residency, gainful employment and other factors;
- Writing criminal summons and arrest warrants;
- Writing search warrants;
- Signing year's allowances for widows;
- Writing criminal, as well as civil, papers;
- Presiding over small claims suits involving claims of less than \$1,500;
- Imposing jail sentences of up to 30 days for contempt of court and fines of up to \$50; and
- Performing marriages, since the elimination of the position of justice of the peace.

"It is really interesting work," Ross said, "and we are all very pleased to be able to serve in this capacity."



Warren County Clerk of Superior Court Richard E. Hunter, Jr. (far left) swears in the county's three magistrates for two-year terms. They are, left to right, Carson S. Pridgen, a 19-year veteran; Ulysses

S. Ross, an eight-year veteran, and Curtis E. Mustian, Jr., a three-year veteran.

(Staff Photo by Howard Jones)