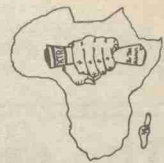


THE NUBIAN MESSAGE

The Afrikan-American Voice of North Carolina State University



Special Edition

Established in 1992

April 1, 1995

Special Edition In Honor of Dr. Augustus Mclver Witherspoon

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The Legacy of Dr. Augustus Mclver Witherspoon

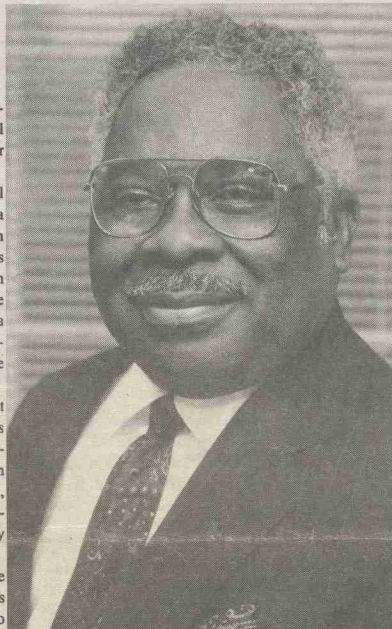
by LaTonya Dunn
News Writer

On Saturday, April 1, the formerly named Student Center Annex will be renamed the Augustus Mclver Witherspoon Student Center.

The dedication ceremony will begin at 3 p.m. and will include a performance by the Youth Community Choir from St. Luke's Afrikan Methodist Episcopal Church where Witherspoon preached. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Brenda Allen, coordinator of Afrikan-American Student Services at the College of Textiles.

Dr. Witherspoon dedicated most of his life to educating future leaders of America. After obtaining a bachelor's degree from Claflin College in Orangeburg, South Carolina, Witherspoon taught high school science in Lumberton and Rocky Mount, from 1953 to 1966.

He came to NCSU as a graduate student and received a master's degree in 1968. While helping to establish an Afrikan-American Cultural Center, he received his doctorate in 1971. Witherspoon then went from a graduate teaching assistant to a professor, Assistant Dean to



Staff Photo

Dr. Augustus Mclver Witherspoon

Associate Dean and Associate Provost of the Graduate School.

Witherspoon received several awards for outstanding teaching and research. In 1992, he received a citation of appreciation from the Board of Trustees for leadership, research, and education. He was also named to the Order of The Long Leaf Pine by Governor James B. Hunt for his service to the state of North Carolina.

Chancellor Larry K. Monteith stated, "G u s Witherspoon was a trailblazer. In renaming this center, we commem-

orate a man who was a leader among faculty, a role model to students, and above all else, an educator who refused to settle for less than the best from his students."

Chancellor Monteith and his wife will unveil a portrait of Dr. Witherspoon that will hang in the Witherspoon Student Center after the dedication ceremony.

Dr. Witherspoon is the first Afrikan-American to have a building named after him on the campus of North Carolina State University. He was the second Afrikan-American to earn a doctoral degree from the university. Dr. Augustus M. Witherspoon touched the lives of many students and will continue to serve as a living legend on the campus of North Carolina State University.

*A Preacher and Teacher to Us All. The Words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A Profound Warrior For Us All

by Rochelle Carlton
Staff Writer

Dr. Augustus M. Witherspoon began his affiliation with NCSU as a graduate student. As he progressed from student, to professor, to Associate Dean, and finally Associate Provost and Coordinator of Afrikan-American Affairs, he left behind a legacy that will continue to impact the Afrikan-American students at N.C. State University for years to come.

Provost William Grant, who has accepted the challenge of following in the footsteps of Dr. Witherspoon, spoke at great length on the profound changes Dr. Witherspoon has brought about on the campus of NCSU.

Dr. Witherspoon began, and con-

tinued throughout his career, the long and complex process of transforming what was once a segregated institution into a place that could meet the needs of its Afrikan-American population.

One of Dr. Witherspoon's first major undertakings was the creation of a task force, the Afrikan-American Advisory Council, during the early 1970's to determine why Afrikan-American enrollment at NCSU was so low. In examining this issue, the Council asked Afrikan-American faculty, staff, employees, and former students to describe their experiences at the university.

They also interviewed area high-school students and asked them about their impressions of the school. As anyone who has ever tried to bring about change may

know, often the first step in finding solutions to a problem is proving to "the powers that be" that the problem does indeed exist.

To convey the severity of the situation, a videotape was presented to the administration so that they could hear firsthand the students' and staff members' description of a campus environment that was hostile to Afrikan-American high school students had of this university.

The Afrikan-American Advisory Council then drew up a list of recommendations outlining how to resolve the problem, some of which led to the establishment of Afrikan-American Coordinators in each college, and the enlargement of the almost nonexistent Afrikan-American faculty.

Dr. Witherspoon was committed to ensuring that NCSU offered an

environment in which Afrikan-American students could excel. In order to provide Afrikan-American students with the opportunity to network, interact with one another, and become acquainted with Afrikan-American faculty and staff, he supplemented the regular orientation process to include an Afrikan-American Symposium.

When it became apparent that there was an alarmingly large discrepancy between the number of Afrikan-American students entering as freshman, and those actually earning a degree, even for those students whose performance was above average in high-school, Dr. Witherspoon introduced the idea of adding a new course to the curriculum that would help rectify this discrepancy.

see Grant, page 3

The Afrikan-American Cultural Center: A Center of Awareness and Education

by **Dr. Iyailu Moses**
Guest Writer

Brief History

The conceptualization for an Afrikan-American Cultural Center at North Carolina State University began nearly twenty-five years ago as the first Afrikan-American students present on campus sought to have a place to gather for support and comradery.

The original location provided was in the old design school. Subsequent to that time the physical location has changed several times with the most recent space occupied being the present West Dunn Building.

The present facility was opened on January 19, 1991 with the opening of the new Student Center Annex. During the first twenty years, the Cultural Center was placed loosely under the preview of the Division of Student Affairs, with the Student Center personnel in charge of reservations for building use.

In 1990, with the coming of the new facility, the Center was made an administrative unit of the Provost Office, reporting through the office of the Coordinator for Afrikan-American Affairs, with a plan for cultural programming and a staff to implement those plans. As a new feature, the new facility contains an art gallery and a library.

Purpose and Programming

The purpose of the Afrikan-American Cultural Center is to encourage and promote an awareness and an appreciation for the diversity and richness of the Afrikan-American experience.

To that end, the AACC Council of Directors has approved a programmatic thrust to sponsor activities that bring more African-American scholars and artists to campus; to develop leadership and personal development programs; to develop the Afrikan-American Heritage Society as it promotes the intellectual development of students with regard to the Afrikan-American experience; to provide an Afrikan library and art gallery; and to sponsor selected social activities.

In keeping with the stated goal outlined above, several programs are already in operation or are currently being developed. Some of these programs are listed below for your information.

A detailed account of the nature and purpose of the AACC, its structure and program information

may be found in the AACC Operational Handbook and in the AACC Programming Information Guide. (Copies are available for your review at the AACC.)

AACC Programs

Designated Lecture Series -

A series of lectures designed to cover various topics such as the fine arts, politics, psychology, religion, interracial relations, etc. (Includes the Lawrence M. Clark Lecture (history focus).

Afrikan-American Heritage Society -

A student organization to develop students' knowledge base of Afrikan and Afrikan-American culture and history through research and study. Annually conduct Heritage Day and the Heritage Symposium.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Festival -

An annual event to commemorate the life of Dr. King and to investigate ways in which his legacy can be made a reality today. This event is held at the McKimmon Center and attracts visitors from across the state and around the southeast region.

Afrikan Diaspora Series - A series of activities (lectures, panels, workshops, etc. to engage in dialogue with members of the Afrikan Community. This program is developed in cooperation with the Afrika Area Studies Group.

Faculty Colloquium - A program that engages faculty and staff in sharing their research interests with other members of the faculty and staff, and graduate students (presentation of papers, round-table discussions of ideas, sharing of educational and travel experiences and comradely fellowship).

Topical Issues Forum - a series of discussions on topical issues of concern to the Afrikan and Afrikan-American community.

Leadership Activity:

Action Volunteers - Involves leadership and service opportunities for student volunteers at the AACC.

Resident Organization - Involves leadership development for those student organizations residing in the AACC.

Art Gallery - The gallery features a number of exhibitions each year, representing the work of Afrikan and Afrikan-American artists. Exhibits are revolving and may feature a lecture or other presentations by the artist(s).

Library - The growing collect focuses on issues related to the Afrikan and Afrikan-American experience.

S.P.A.C.E. (Saturday Program for Academic and Cultural Education) - An out-



Staff Photo

The Witherspoon Student Center

reach program for sixth, seventh and eighth grade students in Wake County offering enrichment in the communication arts, math and computer literacy, science, and historical and cultural awareness. This program is developed in cooperation with the Afrikan-American Parents Educational Advocacy Association.

MDS 101D, 102D, The Freshman Advancement Seminar -

The AACC provides a location for several lectures connected with this class and provides additional supplementary lectures through its regular programming. The AACC also serves as a central location for some administrative functions of the class.

LIBRARY UPDATE

At the present time, the library collections contains over 1200 books. The D. H. Hill Library has committed \$30,000 to the AACC Library and additional books are being added to the collection daily. We regularly receive 19 periodicals and two newspapers.

There is also an audio-visual collection with video tapes and slides. Providing items for a library collection is an on-going process, and the collection process will continue as we develop. Additional resources will be used to obtain books such as book drives and purchases from designated contributions.

Students, faculty and staff may offer suggestions for items to be ordered. All books currently on hold in the AACC library may be accessed through the library automated systems, although the system does not provide circulation information. The D.H. Hill Library has also purchased a check-out system

for the AACC Library.

Staffing continues to pose the greatest problem with regard to the library at present. We operate during this academic year with a part time graduate assistant and work study students. The extent to which the library opens will be determined by the number of work student students available and their hours of availability.

The library is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday's and Sunday's from 12 noon to 4 p.m.

OVERALL STATUS

We continue to receive positive comments on the quality of programs presented, as well as those conducted by student organizations where those activities meet our stated goals and purpose.

The NCSU African-American Cultural Center is a member of the National Association of Black Culture Centers. Our interaction with other centers of this type across the country lead us to believe that our center is somewhat unique in its programming focus, in its structural content, and that we are among the leading centers of this nationally.

It is our hope that the entire African-American community at NCSU will take advantage of this facility both through attending and supporting its activities, and though assisting with programmatic development.

We continue to be weak in the area of student involvement by some student organizations who are housed at the AACC. This may become critical as we are viewed by others whose interests are not concomitant with those of the AACC.

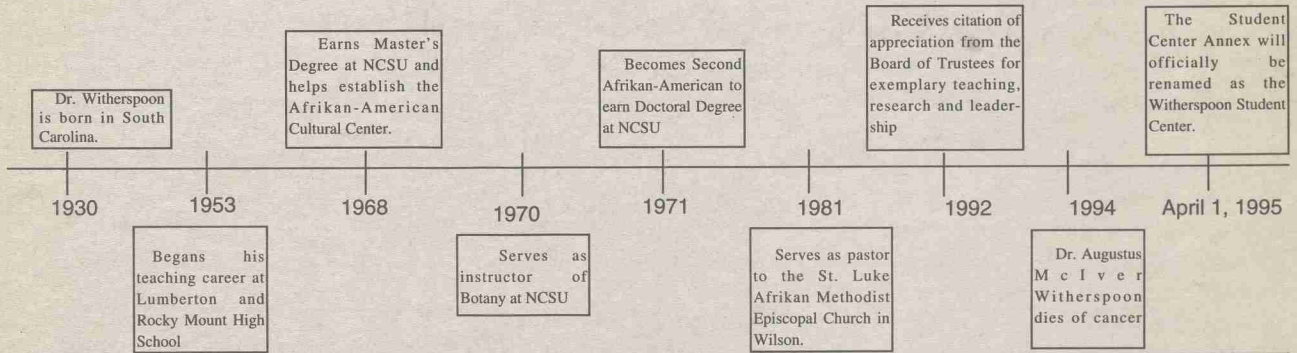
Additionally, problems continue to arise through the mal-efforts of those who do not understand, appreciate or respect the right of the AACC to function in its own right. For example, there is a continued perception on the part of many people (black as well as white) that the

AACC is a part of Student Affairs, that the AACC is a multicultural center, that there is a multicultural room in the AACC, that the governance should come from some place other than the director's office and the AACC Council of Directors.

Finally, lack of personnel to accomplish the many tasks connected with the operating the AACC continue to be of great concern and must be addressed by upper level administration with regard to creating additional necessary positions.

We have already undertaken an enormous responsibility in programming which overburdens the existing staff. Additional personnel must become a primary concern if we are to continue in our development.

Recapturing the Life of a Warrior



Monteith Remembers Dr. Witherspoon

by **Shawna Daniels**
News Editor

Chancellor Monteith's first memory of Dr. "Gus" Witherspoon was not on the campus of North Carolina State University, but at a high school. Their first encounter was at Ligon Junior High School during football practice in 1970.

Dr. Witherspoon impressed Chancellor Monteith with the need for patience with his son, who was practicing that day. Witherspoon made a comment to Chancellor Monteith at the time that made a lasting impression for years to come, "I believe in tough love to make youths responsible for their actions."

Monteith also recalled a time during his under graduate years at NC State when the first Afrikan-Americans did become students, almost sixteen years before Witherspoon became the second Afrikan-American to receive a graduate degree from the school.



Chancellor Larry K. Monteith

He cited no tension in the change in attitude of the student body, saying that he did not remember much discussion or hostility, and that this openness of the campus must have brought Dr. Witherspoon to N.C. State.

With a great amount of respect, Monteith recalls a man who was a

"model for all people", and a "father-figure" to so many students.

Also, Monteith felt the renaming of the Student Center Annex was timely and very appropriate. Dr. Witherspoon's dedication to the students of this university first brought about the Cultural Center, as he thought all should learn about the culture of Afrikan-Americans. "He wanted the center to be a learning place," stated Monteith.

So, on Saturday, April 1, Chancellor Monteith and his wife will unveil a carving of Dr. Witherspoon at the dedication of the Augustus M. Witherspoon Student Center. Monteith feels there should be more to the dedication, he feels it should be a learning experience, because that is what Dr. Witherspoon would have wanted. "Gus would have wanted people to get something out of this celebration of his life."

Dreams Becoming Realities

by **Dori Williams**
Guest Writer

The goal of SAAC is to seek Afrikan-American representation in official NCSU functions, including entrance into legislature, judicial, and executive branches of student government. Did we do our job?? Student Body President, Student Body Treasurer, Chief Justice, and UAB President all are Afrikan-American.

The Society of Afrikan-American Culture was the first Afrikan-American organization which evolved in 1968, under the supervision of the late Dr. Augustus Melver Witherspoon.

The purpose of this organization was and continues to be dedicated to working within the University framework to advance the cause of Afrikan-American identity. This vision is achieved by disseminating via programs and forums, cultural and historical information about Afrikan-American heritage to the student community.

All Afrikan-American students are automatically members of SAAC. Through SAAC, active members are able to voice and have their opinions heard, plan activities that reflect those views and effective change. Members also aid the Afrikan-American student community to deal with the political issues facing them today.

"Dr. Witherspoon was definitely a great leader here at NCSU. Every Afrikan-American being here is a result of the actions that Dr. Witherspoon fought hard for; therefore, we should all remember him not only as our great ancestor, but as our continuing guiding force.

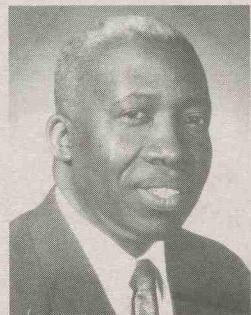
Dori Williams, 1994-1995 president of SAAC.

Grant con't from page 1

This course, which has expanded into what is known today as the Freshman Advancement Seminar MDS 101, emphasizes among other things, positive self-image, knowledge of history and culture, time management, and study skills.

The contributions Dr. Witherspoon has made to this university are so numerous one cannot even attempt to speak in depth on all of them. According to Provost Grant, "For almost any program that exists on this campus that has had a positive effect on Afrikan-Americans... Dr. Witherspoon was either the originator, an advisor, or played some other instrumental role in its development."

This statement is by no means an exaggeration. It was Dr.



DR. WILLIAM B. GRANT, Associate Provost

Witherspoon who first envisioned the creation of the Afrikan-American Cultural Center (which will soon officially bear his name)

to "promote an awareness and appreciation for the richness of the Afrikan-American experience." He was also very instrumental in bringing Afrikan-American fraternities and sororities to this campus. The existence of Black Students Board (BSB), The Society of Afrikan-American Culture (SAAC), and Minority Presence Grants on the campus of this university are all results of the efforts of Dr. Witherspoon.

The impact Dr. Augustus Witherspoon has had on Afrikan-Americans at NCSU is virtually astounding, and his example has served as proof that a single individual can make a difference.

Dr. A.M. Witherspoon had a deep passion for students. He pioneered the effort to establish the Saturday Program for Academic and Cultural Education (SPACE), which is currently part of the Afrikan-American Cultural Center. His dream was to help as many youth as possible with their academic work while instilling in them the pride and value of culture, leadership, and self esteem.

Dr. A.M. Witherspoon realized part of his dream for youth through SPACE. The programs has touched the lives of well over 250 youth in Wake County since its inception in Spring 1993. Dr. A.M. Witherspoon's impact continues to touch the lives of SPACE youth and parents all over Wake County today.

Angela Hicks, SPACE Coordinator

Like many students, I was impressed by Dr. Witherspoon as early at Afrikan-American Symposium years ago. Since then, he's been a mentor, role model, and someone that challenged me constantly (and I do mean constantly). He touched almost everything that I was involved with- National Pan Hellenic Council, SAAC, and Afrikan-American Heritage Society. I can not say that we always came to an agreement on every issue, but I can say that I always learned something. I looked up to him because he made sure things happened no matter who initiated the idea. This let me know that there really is nothing wrong with a strong will and high expectations. This, along with the love he had for his people and students, kept him fighting as long as he did. Who he was often reminds me of who I want to be.

Stephanie Cogdell

When I think of Dr. Witherspoon, I think role model, father, activist, unselfishness, and great love. I wish I could tell him 'thank you' just one more time. Although, thank you seems like such a small word in comparison to the number of deeds this man did for his Afrikan-American community. I loved Dr. Witherspoon because he meant so much to me and all the students at NC State.

Had it not been for Dr. Witherspoon, we would not have had the old "CC" (now the West Dunn building), which paved the way for the current Afrikan-American Cultural Center located in the *Witherspoon Student Center*.

Dr. Witherspoon gave us so much of his time, and effort, he even tried to play match maker for me once. He was the type of man that if he had 10 dollars, so did you! He helped me to realize "the power of my black hand". It was very painful to lose him, but we must always realize that he hasn't really left. I am constantly reminded of Dr. Witherspoon whenever I discuss the needs of the African-American community at NC State and beyond. I remember his ideals and his manner of teaching and nurturing.

After the passing of Tony Williamson in March, 1994. I was talking with Dr. Witherspoon about how the students were feeling and how I was handling the situation. He told me to be strong and he told me that he loved me. Well, Dr. Witherspoon, I am strong! I will be strong! I have to, we have to be able to pull up all those coming behind us right!!!

So, Dr. Witherspoon, instead of 'thank-you', how about I hope you know you were appreciated, loved and well respected. God Bless you!

Dawn F. Gordon

He was a bridge builder and he paved a way ,but made sure that we (Afrikan-Americans) had a way to make things easier so we would not have to go through the things that he went through. He struggled, perservered, and made sure we would have a path to follow.

Chris Smith

As a person who respects my elders and walks in the path my ancestors walked before me, I take this time out to salute Dr. Augustus McIver Witherspoon for every accomplishment that he ever made.

A person once said, "Telling Our Children: Renew the Instructions of Their Mothers and Fathers." That is exactly what Dr. Witherspoon did. and he certainly deserves not only a building named after him, but many more accolades. The Afrikan-American Cultural Center is a small measure of what would not have been here if Dr. Witherspoon would never have made his presence known at N.C. State. As we embark on what he accomplished today, let us also remember that we can not give up the fight now that he is gone, because we shall not be moved.

Carolyn Holloway

THE NUBIAN MESSAGE

The Afrikan-American Voice of North Carolina State University

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