

UPDATE

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Greensboro Truth Commission to Hold Final Hearing this Friday and Saturday

The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC) has released detailed information about the 22 people who will testify at the Commission's final hearing this Friday and Saturday, September 30 and October 1, 2005.

The impressive list of speakers includes people directly and indirectly affected by the shootings of November 3, 1979, and their aftermath, community leaders and others including journalists and scholars.

See the GTRC press release below for further details.

The hearing will take place from 2-9 p.m. Friday, September 30, and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, October 1, in the Elliott University Center Auditorium at UNC-Greensboro.

For further information on the Commission, please contact GTRC Communications Director, Joya Wesley, at (336) 275-5953 or joya@greensborotrc.org.

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) has served as an adviser to the organizers of the GTRC. For further information please contact Suzana Grego (contact information above).

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GREENSBORO
TRUTH & RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION



seekina truth.
workina for reconciliation

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MAYOR PRO TEM, AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT FINAL TRUTH COMMISSION HEARING

GREENSBORO, N.C. – Greensboro Mayor Pro Tem Yvonne Johnson and Timothy Tyson, author of books including the acclaimed “Blood Done Sign My Name,” are among 22 speakers scheduled for The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s third and final public hearing on Friday and Saturday.

The speakers also include Dr. Carlton Eversley, vice chair of the Darryl Hunt Project for Freedom and Justice in Winston-Salem, as well as people directly and indirectly affected by the shootings of Nov. 3, 1979, and their aftermath, additional community leaders and others including journalists and scholars. Each will offer answers to the hearing’s topical question, “What does the past have to do with the present and the future?” (see complete list below).

Johnson, a Greensboro native and one of three black members of the Greensboro City Council, has supported the truth and reconciliation effort from its beginning and through the Council’s 6-3 vote to oppose it.

Tyson has garnered extensive media coverage for “Blood Done Sign My Name,” which tells the story of a 1970 killing in Oxford, N.C., and the racial conflagrations that followed. It was the 2005 Summer Reading Program selection at UNC-Chapel Hill.

The hearing will take place from 2-9 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30, and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 1, in the Elliott University Center Auditorium at UNC-Greensboro. Parking is free with vouchers obtainable at the auditorium. The Commission invites and encourages all to attend.

“Many people have opposed this process because they say it is too focused on the past,” says Jill Williams, executive director. “I hope those people, particularly city officials, will attend this weekend so that they can hear diverse perspectives from their fellow community members, constituents and others about how the issues surrounding the tragedy are related to Greensboro’s present and future.”

Directions and other details are available at www.gtrc.blogspot.org, which notes that bags larger than ladies’ purses will not be allowed inside the hearing space, and that Tate Street will be closed Saturday for the annual Tate Street Festival.

The Commission, the first of its kind in the United States, is a democratically created, impartial and independent body seeking truth and working for reconciliation around Greensboro’s tragedy of Nov. 3, 1979.

Community divisions exploded in violence that day, ending with Klan and Nazi members killing five labor organizers and wounding ten others at a rally organized by the Communist Workers Party. All defendants in the shootings, which were captured by TV news cameras, were acquitted in state and federal trials. In a federal civil trial, Klansmen, Nazis and two Greensboro police officers were found jointly liable for one count of wrongful death.

The Commission’s historic work and two earlier hearings on the topics “What brought us to Nov. 3, 1979?” and “What happened on and after Nov. 3, 1979?” have been featured in hundreds of newspapers and magazines around the world. The universal third question highlights

the valuable lens Nov. 3 provides for viewing underlying issues such as race, economics, power and law enforcement, which recently have come to the fore with the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

The Commission's hearings – as well as its final report and a community forum set for Nov. 5 – will create an accurate record and give voice to the community's collective experience. The report, due by early 2006, also will include specific recommendations for the Greensboro community and its institutions for concrete healing, reconciliation and restorative justice.

HEARING SPEAKER INFORMATION

These people, who each were asked to give the Commission wording for their own bios, are scheduled to speak in the following order:

FRIDAY, SEPT. 30

Dr. Timothy Tyson, author of the much-acclaimed *Blood Done Sign My Name* and other award-winning books. He is a senior research scholar at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and visiting professor in the Duke Divinity School. A North Carolina native and Duke graduate, he is on leave from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Tammy Tutt, a Greensboro resident who was living in Morningside Homes, the public housing community where the shooting happened, on November 3, 1979. She was born and raised in public housing and now is active in the community.

Willena Cannon, a member of the CWP in 1979 who arrived on the scene after the shooting and was arrested there. Involved since 1963 in the Civil Rights Movement, she has participated in the African Liberation Movement, the Blind Workers Strike, the Cafeteria Workers Strike, the K-Mart boycott and the struggle for district representation on the City Council. She currently works as community housing organizer for the Greensboro Housing Coalition.

Joyce Johnson, director of the Jubilee Institute of Greensboro's Beloved Community Center and wife of the Rev. Nelson Johnson since 1969. A mother, grandmother and activist, she has worked for black liberation in the United States and Africa, quality public education, economic justice and women's rights. She retired in 2000 after 27 years of service to N.C. A&T State University, where she was director of the Transportation Institute. A native of Richmond, Va., she graduated from Duke University in 1968.

Dr. Barton Parks, a professor since 1980 for the Community and Justice Studies major at Guilford College. In the 1990s, Parks co-chaired a City Council-appointed committee that looked at ways to reduce crime and violence in Greensboro, and co-chaired another that studied the possibility of an independent community review board for police accountability. He also served on the search committee that ultimately hired Police Chief Robert White.

Marie Stamey, president of the Eastside Park Neighborhood Association since 1996. A mother, grandmother, seamstress and resident of Eastside Park for more than 30 years, she has worked collaboratively with her neighbors, the Police Department, the City of Greensboro and the East Market Street Development Corp. to transform the formerly crime-ridden neighborhood.

Ben Holder, a native Greensboro journalist, blogger and activist who has worked with the city for five years to eliminate blight. His targets have included illegal massage parlors, Randleman Road improvements and enforcement of ordinances against crack pipes and asbestos. As a reporter for the Carolina Peacemaker, he was a finalist for an investigative reporting award from the N.C. Press Association in 2001. His blog is online at www.thetroublemaker.blogspot.com.

Dr. Millicent Brown, an assistant professor in the history department at N.C. A&T State University. Her introduction into issues of segregation and educational equity began with her role as a child in *Millicent Brown vs. School Board District 20, City of Charleston, SC*, South Carolina's first desegregation case in 1963. Brown has been active since the 1960s in civil rights work, especially focusing on police brutality and educational equity.

Dr. Michael Roberto, an assistant professor of history at N.C. A&T State University who teaches courses in world history, global studies, the history of socialism and modern revolutions. He holds a B.A. degree from Adelphi University, an M.A. from the University of Rhode Island and a Ph.D. from Boston College.

Mayor Pro Tem Yvonne Johnson, a Greensboro native and graduate of Dudley High School and Bennett College for Women. In addition to an undergraduate degree in psychology, Johnson has a master's degree in guidance and counseling from N.C. A&T State University. She is director of One Step Further, Inc., mediation services and was the founder of Summit House. The recipient of numerous awards and honors, Johnson also is president of Bennett's Board of Trustees.

Jeff Thigpen, a member of the Guilford County Board of Commissioners from 1998 to 2004 and currently an elected official serving as the Guilford County Register of Deeds. In the 1990s, Thigpen was a coordinator of the Business/Pulpit Forum Work Group, which

was actively involved in bringing diverse groups together to get clarity and help resolve issues surrounding the Kmart Boycott. He has an undergraduate degree from Guilford College, and a master's UNC-Greensboro.

SATURDAY, OCT. 1

Dr. Carlton Eversley, pastor since 1984 of Winston-Salem's Dellabrook Presbyterian Church. Eversley currently is serving as vice chair of the Darryl Hunt Project for Freedom and Justice, and as a member of the Mayor's Commission on Racial Healing. He formerly was public information officer of the Darryl Hunt Defense Fund.

Gary Curtis (Cepnick), the news director at WFMY on Nov. 3, 1979. Prior to a career change in 1999, Curtis worked 30 years in broadcasting, including 15 years in management positions with Gannett, McGraw-Hill, Harte-Hanks and Chronicle. He is the recipient of numerous journalism and broadcasting awards.

Dr. Martha Nathan, widow of Dr. Michael Nathan, one of the five people killed on Nov. 3 and executive director of the Greensboro Justice Fund, which supports Southern grassroots work fighting racist, religious and homophobic violence. A physician in Northampton, Mass., she is a graduate of Brown University and Duke University Medical School.

Richard Koritz, representative of the Letter Carriers Union to the AFL-CIO and managing partner of a small multicultural publishing company. A retired postal employee, he is co-leader of the weekly anti-war vigil in downtown Greensboro, and a former member of the Greensboro Human Relations Commission, for which he chaired the Police Complaint Review Committee. He also has served on the board of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum.

Deborah Kelly, executive director of Centro de Acción Latino, which serves Latino newcomers and works to empower emerging Latino leaders. Born in Puerto Rico, she moved to Greensboro 12 years ago and lives with her three children and her husband. She serves on the board of the N.C. Latino Coalition and is chair of the Guilford Health Partnership.

Alison Duncan, the daughter of former CWP members Robert and Alaine Duncan, who believes her life has been colored by Nov. 3, although she hadn't yet been born. A resident of Philadelphia, Pa., she is a 2004 graduate of Guilford College, where she double majored in English and Health Sciences and minored in math, African American Studies and visual arts.

Cesar Weston, son of Larry and Floris Weston, named after Floris's first husband, Cesar Cauce, who was among the five killed on November 3. As a student, recent graduate and Bonner Scholar at Guilford College, he was active in local politics and service to the community. He has joined the Peace Corps and will depart soon for service either in the former Soviet Union or China.

Jim Wrenn, who was among the 10 people wounded on Nov. 3. He lives and works in North Carolina and is a member of the N.C. Public Service Workers Union Local 150.

Dr. Spoma Jovanovic, a Department of Communication faculty member at UNC-Greensboro. Originally from California, she received her B.A. from UCLA and her Master's and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Denver. Her scholarly interests include ethics, civic participation and community. She's active in community-building projects including work to support the Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project and Action Greensboro's Creative Character initiative.

Deena Hayes, a member of the Guilford County Board of Education whose work in the community centers on anti-racism efforts and has included service as board chair for the Partnership Project and active participation in the weekly Community Dialogue on Education. She is a graduate of Guilford College.

Rev. Mazie Butler Ferguson, president of the Greensboro-area's Pulpit Forum ministerial alliance, an attorney and a gender-breaking N.C. Missionary Baptist pastor. A native of Sumter, S.C., and a lifelong activist who has served on numerous boards and commissions, she is a preacher, teacher, theologian and writer. She has a B.A. from S.C. State University, a J.D. from the University of South Carolina. Ordained in 1991, she is the founding pastor of Liberation Baptist Church, a motivational speaker for justice, and a coach and counselor with her consulting company, The Refinery.

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