

Students question food selection at King dinner

By Jeanna Covington
Special to Sentinel-Voice

GREENSBORO, N.C. (NNPA) - Kool-Aid, fried chicken, and watermelon surprised some students on the University of North Carolina Greensboro campus when the items were served as part of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration dinner Thursday, Jan. 12.

Such a menu created for a dinner to honor such a celebrated, African-American leader was shocking for many who were aware of the minstrel shows of the 1830s depicting White men who would paint their faces black, paint on bright red lips and

provide parodies of African-American life. Watermelon and fried chicken were stereotypes often used as mockery.

Larry Watson, a 19-year-old sophomore, realized what was being served in the cafeteria after his roommate returned to the table with a plate of watermelon.

"My roommate went and got it (watermelon)," Watson said. "I was like, 'Are you serious?'"

"I knew they were going to serve fried chicken, but the watermelon didn't really shock me, but it opened my eyes. I told my roommate it was stereotypical."

According to Watson, an African-American student who was sitting at the table asked, "Are you trying to say it's racist?"

"I said, 'Why not?' That's when I knew that something needed to be done; that no one knew it was a problem and that it needed to be discussed," Watson said.

Watson didn't eat the watermelon. After the discussion at the table, he asked African-American students if they saw the watermelon and their opinion on the matter. Watson was surprised to find that many students didn't see anything wrong with the

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Protocol

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meetings, the Sky View Terrace, at 6565 South Spencer, Suite 200.

"We are also mobile, and we do groups [at their sites] and private instructions and corporate events. And, we go into the [school] classrooms to do it, too," she added.

Gray has a special outreach plan to lead a new generation of young, well-behaved, and highly confident youth through the doors of success.

She expresses deep concern for the difficulty that many young adults will face on job interviews and in competitive business scenarios if social skills are lacking. In the workplace, she said, many corporations "even take [junior level] job applicants to lunch during the interview process."

Gray has classes for those young adults and even younger children.

"Many times, children [are unruly] and act out [improperly]. They need to know how to act. Once they learn how... they react differently. We are going to teach them how to respect themselves," Gray said.

Self-esteem, self worth and self-confidence are the goals of children's instruction at the Protocol Etiquette School of Nevada-Las Vegas, Gray promises.

One program will work with youth and broaden their socialization skills. In the Child Etiquette Program, students ages 6 to 12 learn the ABCs of meeting and greeting one another, identifying dining utensils and usage, and being mindful of the



Sentinel-Voice photo by Les Pierres Streater

Florozee Gray covers the finer points of social graces.

"little things we say and do to one another."

Students ages 13 to 17 learn how to initiate and carry on a polite conversation, the simple rules of courtesy, dressing for success, and dining techniques.

The Art of Etiquette for Young Men teaches students ages 13 to 17 how to treat a lady with respect, table manners and behavior, and managing personal hygiene, good nutrition and daily exercise to build confidence and self-esteem.

Gray commented on why it is important to focus on our youth. She stated, "We want to work with the at-risk students in our community and give back something that will be of value to them. We will have summer etiquette

camp for students on a sliding [fee] scale. Students need to learn the basics of using a soup spoon, eating with a fish fork, distinguishing between a water glass and beverage glass, how to handle your napkin after concluding your meal, and how to approach and leave the table."

Gray said, "The response has been overwhelming."

Over the next three months, the program will offer a variety of courses, such as Tea and Etiquette, Outclassing the Competition — Business and Social Etiquette Skills, Visual Dining Skills, and one session called Five Course Formal Dining Tutorial.

For more information, contact (702) 456-3850 or website www.peson-lv.com.

Sharpton: 'Boondocks' must apologize for slur

NEW YORK (AP) - The Rev. Al Sharpton has asked for an apology from Cartoon Network for an episode of edgy animated series "The Boondocks" that shows the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. saying the n-word.

"Cartoon Network must apologize and also commit to pulling episodes that desecrate Black historic figures," Sharpton, a civil-rights activist and former Democratic presidential candidate, said in a statement Tuesday.

"We are totally offended by the continuous use of the n-word in (cartoonist Aaron McGruder's show."

The episode, "The Return of the King," aired Jan. 15, the day before the national holiday honoring the slain civil-rights leader.

It shows King emerging from a coma and using the n-word in an angry speech venting his frustration toward sexually explicit hip-hop videos, among other things.

In the episode, King is branded a traitor and terrorist sympathizer for his "turn-the-other cheek" philosophy of nonviolence in response to post-Sept. 11 retaliation. Exhausted, he moves to Canada, but his speech provokes a second civil-rights

revolution.

Cartoon Network released a statement Tuesday saying the episode is a tribute to King and "in no way was meant to offend or 'desecrate'" his name.

"We think Aaron McGruder came up with a thought-provoking way of not only showing Dr. King's bravery but also of reminding us of what he stood and fought for, and why even today, it is important for all of us to remember that and to continue to take action," the statement said.

McGruder, who has been called a "genius" and "the angriest Black man in America" as he skewered everything from the Bush White House to Black Entertainment Television, began writing "The Boondocks" comic strip, on which the TV series is based, in 1997.

The strip, known for its risky political and social satire, follows the adventures of two Black children living in a White, middle-class suburb.

Sharpton said he could appreciate McGruder and his achievements, but added: "This particular episode is over the line."

"The Boondocks" airs Sundays at 11 p.m. EST on Cartoon Network. It is the centerpiece of the Adult Swim late-night block of programming.

LA school to be renamed for late lawyer Cochran

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The Los Angeles middle school attended by high-profile attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr. will be renamed in his honor, officials said.

The Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday to rename the 1,900-student Mt. Vernon Middle School after the attorney best known for representing O.J. Simpson.

"This extraordinary, superb lawyer with movie-star celebrity status was an outstanding student at Mt. Vernon Middle School and Los Angeles High School," said Scott

Schmerelson, principal.

Cochran died last March in Los Angeles at age 67. He was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor in December 2003.

Besides Simpson, Cochran's celebrity client list included football great Jim Brown, who he defended on rape and assault charges, actor Todd Bridges, who faced attempted murder charges, rapper Tupac Shakur on a weapons charge, rapper Snoop Dogg on a murder charge and rapper Sean "P. Diddy" Combs on gun and bribery charges stemming from a nightclub shooting.

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