

Moore, Tysons Are Convention Keynote Speakers

Janice Imgrund, Winston-Salem Branch

STATE TREASURER RICHARD MOORE was the featured keynote speaker for Convention 2006. In his introductory remarks, he noted his friendship with Rev. and Mrs. Tyson and their son, Tim. He said he grew up in the same town as the Tysons and acknowledged Rev. and Mrs. Tyson's presence in the audience. He discovered the book *Blood Done Sign My Name* on a break while in Washington, DC – when he went to a bookstore and happened upon a display of the book. Not knowing if the book was written by his classmate, he turned to the beginning of the book and read in the first paragraph about a group of boys riding their bicycles. He knew that he was one of the boys in that group. So he was sure that he would have to read a book by his friend.

On the topic of his address, he outlined three main points which have driven his tenure as North Carolina's Treasurer. They are: 1. Maintaining the retirement/pension fund of State Employees; 2. Locating and distributing unclaimed cash; and 3. Maintaining a sound fiscal policy for North Carolina.

- Maintaining the retirement/pension fund demanded that the Legislature acknowledge their reallocation of funds into the general budget was unacceptable and these funds must be restored to the pension fund as quickly as possible. Moore has continued to follow the workings of the legislature to restore these funds as promised.
- Locating and distributing unclaimed cash. The purpose of this program is to reunite North Carolina residents with money that rightly belongs to them. Most of the funds have not made it to their owners because of incorrect addresses or failure of the post system to follow up on misdirected mail. Some of the funds come from other states and his office pursues these funds daily. All cash that is not claimed goes into a fund for worthy students in the form of college scholarships.
- Maintaining a sound fiscal policy within the State. According to financial information (Wall Street) the State of North Carolina ranks second in stability in the nation. Only Florida is ahead of us.



Queen Thompson with NC State Treasurer Richard Moore. Thompson worked with Judy Atkinson, program vice-president, to secure Moore and the Tysons (shown below left), as well as the workshop leaders, for the 2006 AAUW NC convention.



Reverend and Mrs. Vernon Tyson

The Reverend Vernon Tyson drew parallels between himself and Martin Luther King. They were both born in the same year, began preaching at the same time, and were assigned to small congregations in the beginnings of their ministries.

The Rev. Tyson said that during the course of his ministry, he attended a fall conference at North Carolina A & T University in Greensboro. One of the speakers (a gifted black man) made a great impression upon him and Tyson invited him to preach at his church the following spring during their Racial Diversity Sunday. The speaker agreed. With the date fast approaching, Tyson thought he ought to alert the Church Board about the upcoming Sunday and the speaker. After heated discussion among the members and the inclination to have Tyson uninvite the speaker, an elderly retired school teacher had her say in the matter. She convinced the board the speaker should be allowed to come to the Racial Diversity Sunday. They voted to allow this and the meeting was successful.

Mrs. Tyson then talked about her son, Tim. He was the typical boy growing up in the South. He was an excellent student, but he didn't like math. He did read all of the time. He always enjoyed writing and would leave notes for the family in beautifully written prose or poetry. These must have been the beginnings of his career as a writer. Tim Tyson teaches and writes the history of African American freedom movements in the 20th century South. His most

recent book, *Blood Done Sign My Name*, appeared in May 2004. It tells the story of a racial murder and black uprising in his hometown of Oxford, NC, when Tyson was eleven and the father of one of his friends murdered a young black man and Black Power radicals fought back with fire.

Apprenticeship Program Under-utilized

Pat Abell, Statesville Branch

Sarah Jones, apprenticeship consultant with the NC Dept. of Labor presented as informative a



workshop as I have attended in a long time. In 1994, Bill Clinton signed into law a provision for high school students that says that they must be provided with opportunities to shadow, work at, and experience job opportunities so they leave high school prepared to go to work. The former vocational program is now mandated by law. It is under-utilized because students don't know to ask for it, School counselors don't have time to offer it. It allows students to train for jobs and helps prevent dropouts. The Dept. of Labor can assist employers to stay in business by training employees in more than one job.

The apprenticeship program identifies skills needed and allows 16-year-olds to go to school and to work for experience. They may go to the community college for special classes and get on-the-job training while getting credit for it at school. They end up with a two-year degree AND jobs with higher pay because they are trained beyond on-the-job training. These could be in janitorial skills, mechanics, or specialized jobs in factories that have set up special training degrees with the community college. The state will waive the hazardous rules for students, who must have sponsors, allowing them to be trained in jobs that are considered too hazardous for young people. Young people ages 20 and 22 years old are making \$22/hr because of this program. Sarah Jones was very knowledgeable. Others with knowledge about vocational studies in the workshop contributed to her presentation

asking and answering questions. I learned the definition of master craftsman, a person who has had on-the-job training with a mentor who transferred his knowledge to the student; work key system, skills assessment to profile jobs in a company, progressive wage scale, and occupational standards set across the state. Warehousing, another term I was unfamiliar with, means processes common to several companies are done at one location for the different companies requiring a system of filing and organization to keep the needs of the different companies and their accounts separate while filling their orders under the same roof.

What I took away was the need to monitor our local high schools to see if career counselors are offering the apprenticeship program to students who could benefit from it.

Long Road Ahead: Education Equity

Marty Folsom, Statesville Branch

"This conversation must go out of this room,"



was the opening statement of Ashley Osment, senior attorney from the UNC Center for Civil Rights, for the workshop on education equity. She discussed the huge disparity in dollars spent per child in wealthy and poor school systems

and the importance of striving for parity, to enable children to receive what the 1997 law mandates, a "sound basic education."

Leandro is a decision upholding the law. It means every school shall have adequate funding, teachers who are certified in their subjects, and certified principals with the skills needed to hire teachers and properly run the schools.

Osment used demographics from the current

lawsuit against Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to demonstrate factors that hinder the fulfillment of the law, of equity in education. She provided handouts of that case, as well for the case involving Hoke, Halifax, Robeson, Cumberland, and Vance Counties. Mecklenburg is a wealthy area. The other is not.

Factors include language, race, and income. Somehow, schools end up being classified as priority and non-priority, as revealed in Charlotte-Mecklenburg drop-out rates, as high as 78% in one school, and as low as 5% in another. Another is whether or not students are college-ready when they graduate high school.

The bottom line is Leandro needs better funding. North Carolina does not have enough teachers and principals. Osment noted that the problem is overwhelming and will take a long time to resolve, but we must try.

Women and Money

Amelia Mitchell, Statesville Branch

Kenneth Wilkins, NC State Deputy Treasurer, who oversees the Unclaimed Property Division, presented a lively and enlightening discussion. He expressed the importance of financial knowledge for women due to frequently lower pay and longer life than men, often less financial education than men, and as one AAUW member suggested, "We need to learn how to financially handle what we have."

Good tips for all persons are: to have few credit cards, definitely without double-digit balances; don't pay off credit card balances by transferring onto new credit cards; know what kind of debt you have and exactly who you owe; pay off highest interest rate or lowest balance cards first, just stick to one and get it paid off, then conquer another, whatever you can manage; put the least amount possible on credit cards, pay cash when

possible. Credit cards and financial problems are among the top problems facing us today. You can set up a payroll deduction to pay off your debt. Be careful of using home equity loans unless you can control your spending habits. Cut up the cards or else you will owe that and rack up more debt.



Wilkins provided sound financial advice regarding savings and protecting ourselves for the future and what we have. We should pay ourselves first by payroll deduction or savings, before bills and everyday life take a bite. Shorter term savings can sometimes offer higher return rates. Check with banks for offers. Most importantly, we must save. Social Security is a supplement, not a retirement fund. We should prepare for the future in our unstable economy: for the possibility of illness, unemployment, or caring for others.

Financial/identity protection advice:

- Place your bills in a public mailbox instead of your own mailbox with the flag up, to prevent check and account information theft;
- When possible, pay bills on-line;
- When writing checks, do not put entire account numbers on them;
- Use a cross-cut shredder, rather than strip cut shredder – thieves can steal information from strip-cut documents. (Unplug shredders if children are in the house.)

Wilkins defined good debt and bad debt. Good debt includes student loans, mortgages, and home equity loans, where consistent and timely payments build your credit and show responsibility. Bad debt involves credit cards, particularly multiple or high cards, car loans, and loans with the potential to owe a lot of money.