THE DAILY CLIPS

July 8, 2009

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Nearly 200 participate in march to ECU

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, July 07, 2009

Nearly two hundred East Carolina University students, faculty and supporters joined others from the Greenville community Tuesday evening in a march against violence.

They remembered ECU student Landon Blackley and Andrew Kirby, a downtown restaurant manager, who were shot and killed June 30 while standing outside The Other Place, a nightclub on Fifth Street.

James Earl Richardson, 32, has been charged with two counts of murder in the drive-by shooting and is under a $5 million bond at the Pitt County Detention Center.

The march proceeded along Fifth Street from the nightclub to the cupola in the center of the campus, led by students five abreast carrying a gold banner calling for the Pirate community to unite against violence. A peace sign reminiscent of the 1960s was painted on the banner.

At the cupula, they joined a contingent of 15 Blackley family members, including Laura Dean and Lennie Blackley, Landon's parents.

His father thanked those who came to the memorial vigil, describing his son as, "...the most courageous person I know. Our family will survive this with all your prayers and help. This really warms our hearts and we love East Carolina University."

ECU chancellor Steve Ballard spoke to the audience about togetherness in the hardest of times.

"Let's make a commitment to make something good out of this tragedy. That is our responsibility and the legacy we can leave to the two whose lives were lost," Ballard said.

The chancellor praised student body president Bradley Congleton for his leadership in gathering the students together to stem the violence in their campus community.

"Leadership is not so much the decisions that we make, but the actions we take to live our values and be sure those values are well known," Ballard said of the initiative.

Mayor Pat Dunn fought her emotions to speak to the audience.

"This has been a very hard week for the city of Greenville," Dunn said. "I think of how so many are hurt when someone strikes out in intentional violence; the grief and pain of the families and friends of the victims, whose lives are cut short at a young age. There have been too many whose lives have been cut short by intentional violent acts this year," Dunn said as she read all their names.

The memorial and march against violence will bring awareness of the growing problem of violence in the community and the nation, she said.

Erin Gough, Drew Kirby's girlfriend, cried openly as she offered words of comfort to the Blackley family.

"My heart and prayers are with you all the time. I know how much of a loss this must be for you because I know how much I've lost. I've heard nothing but wonderful things about (Landon) this week. I've been surrounded by
my friends and family, and that's the only way I've been able to push forward,” Gough said.

Faculty chairwoman Marianna Walker joined the marchers and said the issue of student safety will be talked up in the coming school year.

"Students are concerned about their safety, but they know that ECU (administrators) and police are working together to help things out. The students know that things are more dangerous than they used to be, unfortunately," Walker said.

Student marchers said they would like their classmates to be more aware of the dangers that exist when they venture off campus and be more vigilant.

Graduate student Daniel Fussell said the student government association will play a key role in providing the information students need to know.

“They’re the ones that can rally ECU students, bring them together and get them motivated,” Fussell said.

Graduate student David Daw said he never used to worry about walking downtown.

“Now I think twice about my surroundings, be aware of what’s going on and watch what I might say to somebody downtown,” Daw said.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9571.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
Chief: Police expect no charges beyond Richardson's

By Michael Abramowitz and Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, July 07, 2009

Police do not plan to file charges against anyone but the suspected shooter in the June 30 deaths of an ECU student and a restaurant manager in Greenville's downtown club district.

Chief William Anderson said Tuesday that investigators have no suspects in the case beyond James Richardson, the former professional basketball player arrested Saturday and charged with two counts of murder in the incident.

Richardson reportedly was with several men at The Other Place night club before shots were fired about 2 a.m. from a white BMW, killing East Carolina student Landon Blackley and Drew Kirby, manager of the Fifth Street Michaelangelo's Pizza.

When asked if Richardson was alone in the car, Anderson would only say there are no other suspects and no charges will be filed against others in the incident. He said additional charges against Richardson are possible.

Anderson declined to comment on other aspects of the investigation, including whether authorities had retrieved a weapon they believe was used.

Richardson, 32, a standout athlete at J.H. Rose High School who played basketball for teams in Europe and the NBA's developmental league, turned himself over to police at his mother's house five days after the shooting.

A $10,000 reward offered for information leading to the arrest will not be paid out because Richardson turned himself in, police said.

Events leading up to the arrest have been disputed by Richardson's mother, Rufus Huggins, president of Pitt County chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, met with Anderson, Mayor Pat Dunn and other officials about her concerns on Monday.

Dorothy Richardson said facts about the arrest were misrepresented by Anderson at a Saturday news conference, Huggins said.

Anderson gave credit to several law enforcement agencies and community members for the arrest of James Richardson. He said Richardson gave himself up at his mother's home. Ms. Richardson says she convinced her son to turn himself in and that she had other concerns about the police department's actions.

Huggins said he appointed a committee to look into issues raised by Ms. Richardson. He declined to outline the concerns until the city could respond to the SCLC committee.

"Part of the meeting I had with them was I was willing to give them an opportunity to respond to the statements made by James' mother," Huggins said.

The SCLC "is concerned about fairness and making sure these issues were addressed in a fair way," Dunn said. "It was a very respectful meeting."
Huggins said he was asked to be at the Richardson house on Saturday out of concern for the suspect’s safety. “Things have happened to people in similar situations and they just wanted to make sure that nothing happened to him,” he said.

Huggins said the arrest was “peaceful” and “smooth,” and he credited the arresting officer for his actions. Huggins noted that he would have played a similar role for anyone in the community.

“I do not condone what happened downtown, not even for a split second, and I think the worst should happen to whoever did this,” Huggins said.

City Councilwoman Rose Glover also was at the home, Glover said Tuesday. She was asked by Huggins to be there, she said.

A substantial number of friends, family members and people who grew up with Richardson were on the scene. Richardson’s mother appeared anxious and upset, Glover said. A single police officer arrived to take him in to custody.

Glover asked the crowd to “step back and let the police do their job,” she said. “That was really my only involvement. I just felt like he needed to be safe and the mom needed to be safe ... to know he was going to be taken care of.”

She complimented the police department’s handling of the arrest. “I feel like the arresting officer did a very professional job. He never raised his voice, stayed very calm.”

Huggins originally asked for Monday’s meeting with city officials to discuss feedback his office has received since the June 30 shooting. He said the office has received complaints about discrimination against black people frequenting downtown businesses and that officers patrolling the area are inexperienced.

Huggins said he walked away from the meeting with the feeling that the city is taking the appropriate steps.

Anderson said Tuesday officers downtown are well-trained and among the best in the state. “The majority are seasoned officers and very familiar with the downtown area as part of our IMPACT team,” he said.

He knows of no discriminatory behavior on his officers’ part, he said. “They know that would be totally unacceptable in this agency,” he said.

Kathryn Kennedy and Bobby Burns contributed to this report.

Contact Brock Letchworth at bletchworth@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9574.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9571.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
City officials, businesses to address area’s security

By Ginger Livingston  
The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, July 07, 2009

Greenville’s mayor said Tuesday she expects meetings among city and business leaders today will result in the announcement of immediate action to address downtown security concerns in the wake of recent shootings.

A private meeting at 4:30 p.m. today between downtown business owners and city officials will continue a discussion about improving the area’s safety following two acts of gun violence in five days. Today’s gathering, closed to media, is the second in as many days. Greenville Mayor Pat Dunn said she expects it to result in an announcement outlining immediate action for downtown security.

“I think they’re feeling pain and frustration,” Dunn said of the business people she talked to Tuesday during what she called a brainstorming session. “Right now we are taking a comprehensive look at what’s going on. Not looking for a quick (solution) but something longer term that includes broader issues.”

Tuesday’s meeting and today’s gathering come after an East Carolina University student and a downtown restaurant manager were shot to death June 30 while standing outside a Fifth Street nightclub. Then, early Sunday, a window was shot out of the Blount-Harvey building at the corner of Evans and Fourth streets when gunfire erupted between two groups of people involved in an argument.

“We need a bigger police presence in the uptown area and a lot of people think there should be a larger foot patrol,” said Don Edwards, a downtown businessman who has rehabilitated several downtown structures and has championed revitalization efforts in the area. Edwards was among business people who met with Dunn, Police Chief William Anderson and other city officials on Tuesday.

Anderson said Tuesday that two additional officers will be deployed to patrol the district on foot Sundays-Wednesdays, bringing the total to four in the area on those days.

In addition, downtown merchants today will be presented with a new traffic plan. The plan will limit parking in the bar district and divert traffic away from the district at closing time, the chief said.

Dunn has spoken with City Manager Wayne Bowers and he assured her that the funds would be made available to law enforcement as necessary.

Edwards said it’s important for people to recognize that Greenville’s downtown business district is “very safe” between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10-11 p.m.

“It is a different place late night,” Edwards said, “particularly when bars let out late night. There is a huge number of intoxicated people in the streets and I don’t think that is a safe situation.”

Delia Liuzza, owner of Acasia’s Tipsy Teapot, 409 Evans St. No. B, said she believes there is a difference between the area’s early evening business and the late night-early morning activities.

“In the four-and-a-half years (of operating) we have had no problems whatsoever,” Liuzza said. “There is the occasional person on the street that is annoying, but I’ve never seen or been affected by any kind of danger.

“It’s 2 o’clock in the morning that seems to be where it needs to be cleaned up.”
Tony Khoury, president of The East Group, an architectural, engineering design and survey firm, said business obligations kept him from attending Tuesday's meeting. None of the 40 people employed in his office at 324 Evans St. have expressed concerns about safety.

"We've been downtown over 15 years and we've never experienced a break-in," he said.

The East Group owns 12,000 feet of downtown office space in the same block as the Blount-Harvey building. Khoury said a $500,000 renovation of the space should be completed in the next 30 days, signaling his confidence in the area's future.

One business owner invested in the area isn't feeling the same confidence.

Tamalynd Torrecilla, owner of LA Lounge and Spa, located on the second floor of the Blount-Harvey building, was closing around 1:30 a.m. Sunday when the gun shots were fired outside the building. She did not reopen Tuesday and was considering a longer hiatus, she said.

"Everyone is telling me Tamalynd, please, this (restaurant) is so great, it is so different, but I want to make sure the city is doing something to get this problem fixed," she said.

Torrecilla said her clientele of young professionals means few people are interested in drinking to get drunk or staying open until the wee hours of the morning. She closes at midnight on Fridays and Saturdays but her staff cleans up and she worries about their safety.

Before the June 30 shooting deaths, Torrecilla said she was a major advocate of Greenville's downtown community and encouraged people to locate their businesses in the area.

"You know how hard it was to get people to come downtown because of the stigma associated with it," Torrecilla said. "But people started coming and telling their friends because we tried to be something different."

"We were overcoming that (stigma of violence) and we are set back five years," she said.

Tirath Singh, who's operated Dale's Indian Cuisine, 419 Evans St., in the downtown area for three years, said he worries people are again perceiving the area as scary.

Last week he didn't have a single customer come in after 8 p.m. when people normally come in until 9:30 p.m., Singh said. He didn't know if it was because of the Fourth of July holiday, an overall slowing because it is summer, or people's fears about the shooting.

Liuza said her business was slower last week too, but didn't know why.

"Instead of focusing on what has happened we need to focus on what needs to be done," she said.

Michael Abramowitz and Kathryn Kennedy contributed to this report. Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9570.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
Judge refuses to reinstate professor

The Associated Press

DENVER - A judge refused Tuesday to reinstate a University of Colorado professor who was fired on plagiarism charges after he likened some Sept. 11 terrorist attack victims to a Nazi leader.

If it stands, the ruling means Ward Churchill cannot return to the classroom even though a jury ruled in April that his firing was politically motivated.

Churchill wrote an essay after the 2001 terrorist attacks calling the World Trade Center victims "little Eichmanns," a reference to Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi leader who helped orchestrate the Holocaust.

University officials were pressured to fire Churchill after that essay gained wide attention in 2005, but they concluded they couldn't because of First Amendment protections.

However, they launched an investigation into the research behind his other writings, and in 2007 he was fired on the plagiarism charges and other research misconduct allegations. Churchill sued, and jurors ruled in his favor.

All rights reserved. This copyrighted material may not be published, broadcast or redistributed in any manner.