

# PEOPLE

## & COMMUNITY NEWS

### Wilkie Clark's daughter writes book about father

#### Book signing Saturday

Charlotte A. Clark-Frieson will have her first book signing of *Chief Cook & Bottle-Washer: The Unconquerable Soul of Wilkie Clark* on Saturday during the Black History Month program at First Baptist Church, Riley Street, Roanoke. The program begins at 6 p.m.

"In *Chief Cook & Bottle-Washer: The Unconquerable Soul of Wilkie Clark*, I celebrate the life of my late father, Wilkie Clark, a strong, steadfast black man whose maturation I witness as I grow in my love and appreciation for all that he is, does and becomes. Written from the perspective of a daughter infatuated with her father's heroic qualities, the entire book is an exaltation of his extraordinary life and works, wrought while living in the same remote, rural community where I was born, raised and still reside in Randolph County, Ala.

"Throughout the book, I talk about my dad's interactions with various people and institutions in and around Randolph County and the way they have impacted my attitudes about life. It is a celebration of triumph and victory despite the good, the bad and some of the ugly of this community. It probably contains some very controversial and ugly truths about our community... This book takes a serious look at black economics and suggests a way to improve our status in the context of communities that offer us little or no support."

Clark-Frieson said, "The final chapters conclude with a collection of writings contributed by nine other individuals with whom my father maintained intimate relationships over a period of many years. This 'Anthology of Praise' for the late Wilkie Clark helps me to further validate him as a worthy recipient of the title 'historical figure.' This volume is brought to a gentle conclusion via a lengthy declaration of appreciation penned by a grate-



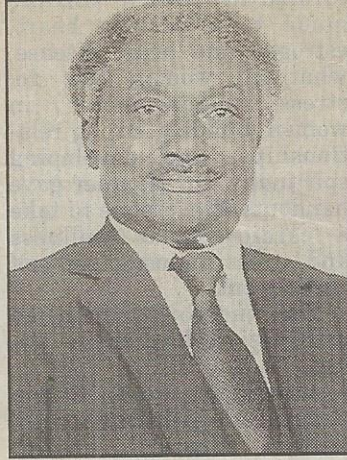
Charlotte Clark-Frieson

ful daughter in honor of a father who refused to allow racism to limit his vision - or hers."

The publication of the book is the fulfillment of only a small part of a much greater vision of hers, she said, which is to establish his historical significance in this local community by documentation through books, papers and the erection of an African-American archives center in Randolph County.

Clark-Frieson's mother, Hattie, was a master at writing and down through the years, her writings appeared in the local newspaper as letters to the editor. At that time, this was the only forum open to black people for vocalizing their issues and bringing them to life. She said, "Mamma was quite masterful in serving as the self-appointed mouthpiece for our community through her writings. Everybody appreciated what she did. And she did it joyfully. As my father, bragging on her writing abilities could say, 'the point of her pen was so darn sharp, until no white politician wanted to get caught up in it.'"

"I tried to write just like her," Clark-Frieson stated. "I started very early in life trying to take up this art. She was always my favorite writing critic, picking my work to pieces, sometimes chiding me for being redundant, circumlocutious and superfluous in my writings. She always told me, 'Charlotte, just be direct. Tell them exactly what you want them to know.



Wilkie Clark

Tell them what they did and how it affected you. Tell them how it made you feel. Stop trying to flower and flavor it. Just tell it just like it is."

Clark-Frieson is the widow of Clarence Frieson Jr. to whom she was married for 18 years. She has two children, Wilkie Sherard Frieson, 25, and Je'Lynn Mikele Frieson, 21, and a grandson, James McKenzie Frieson, 6.

A 1971 graduate of Handley High School, she graduated from Southern Union State Junior College in Wadley. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in education from Auburn University.

She pledged Delta Sigma Theta National Service Sorority, as one of the first nine Deltas to be initiated there, thus establishing the first black women's sorority on the campus of Auburn in 1974.

She also has a degree in funeral service from Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service in Atlanta.

She spent many years as a classroom teacher in the Troup

County area, having worked in the former Hogansville City School System and later the former LaGrange City School System (which was later consolidated with Troup County).

She is jointly employed by Twin Cedars Youth Services Inc. and Troup County Public Schools who share responsibility for providing educational services to a unique population of at-risk youth in a residential treatment facility.

She also continues to supervise the management of her parents' business, Clark Memorial Funeral Service. She is a national board certified embalmer and funeral director.

As a means of providing a spiritual ministry to her community, she can be heard each Sunday morning at 6:30 on WELR-102.3 in a gospel radio broadcast she produced in 1982 called "The Sounds of Faith Gospel Experience."

She has been local NAACP president since 1990 and a member of the county school board.

Her book is available locally from the author for \$16.95. She encourages those who wish to reserve copies of the book to telephone her at (334) 338-1149. She accepts Visa and Mastercard. It is also available to download from her Internet bookstore, which can be accessed at the following websites: [www.wilkieclarksdaughter.net](http://www.wilkieclarksdaughter.net), [www.lulu.com/caclarkfrieson](http://www.lulu.com/caclarkfrieson) or [www.clarkmemorial.biz](http://www.clarkmemorial.biz).

In the larger bookstores, such as Books a Million, Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com and Waldenbooks, the book may be obtained for less because of discounted pricing.