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### **Keep running for rights, state chapter leader urges**

*Kathie Bullard Harris*

By Kathie Bullard HarrisStaff writerMelvin “Skip” Alston on Friday called on the next generation to continue the fight for civil rights.

He spoke during the Fayetteville chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's 17th annual Life Membership Banquet.

“Some people think the race is over and we have won, but they're wrong,” said Alston.

Alston, president of the state branch, was the keynote speaker for about 300 dinner guests at the John D. Fuller Recreational and Athletic Complex on Old Bunce Road.

The recreation center was a new site for the banquet. The center, built by the Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church Inc., opened in April.

Alston called on members of the chapter and parents to pass on the legacies of the black experience in America to their children. Alston said too many were not continuing the struggle.

“Rosa Parks wasn't the only black person on the bus, but she was the only black person on the bus who wouldn't go to the back,” he said. “As parents around young people every day, we must encourage them to stay in the race.”

#### Self-respect

Alston also made a passionate plea to teach young black women in America to respect themselves and to teach young black men to aim higher.

“Just good enough is not good enough,” he said.

Alston said this generation has more education, money and privilege than any generation before it, and it should use those attributes in the pursuit of civil justice.

Alston concluded by saying, “Many miles have been run in this race, and now is the time to take the baton.”

Raymond Shipman, president of the Fayetteville chapter, said his chapter wants to focus on education to accomplish the goals Alston spoke about.

“We need to work with our board of education,” he said. “Too many of our kids are out of school.”

Many in the crowd supported Alston's remarks.

“Mr. Alston bridged the gap between our ancestors and the generation of today,” said Charmaine Murrell,

mother of four and president of the Fayetteville Technical Community College Student Government Association. “We not only get our history from books, but we have to pass it on to our children.”

Staff photo by Marc Hall

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