

# Community Page



## Shaw University Alumnus Attorney Willie Gary speaks at Alumni banquet

Story by Jae McKrae \* Photo by JJ Jones

Shaw Alumnus and successful attorney Willie Gary was the guest speaker in Fayetteville for Shaw University Alumni Association's 10th annual banquet. Still incredible by today's standards, Gary is widely known for donating \$10 million to Shaw University in Raleigh. The main campus in Raleigh was founded in 1865. Shaw University is North Carolina's oldest historically black university and one of the oldest in the country.

Gary, a prominent and high profile trial and personal-injury lawyer from Florida, spoke about the significance of giving back and being supportive of higher education. He also wants people to continue being supportive of black universities and colleges. Gary said that we need them now more than ever.

Usually the banquet is an annual fundraiser for the university's scholarships, however, according to Wilson Lacy, president of the association's Fayetteville and Cumberland County chapter, "This year monies were also used for the recovery efforts from the tornado that damaged the university April 16, forcing it to end the semester early. It left a bit of damage to our university, so we wanted to use some of the funds to assist in that endeavor," Lacy said.

Professionally, Willie Gary has won several multimillion dollar litigations against major corporations. Together with his wife Dr. Gloria Gary, they founded The Gary Foundation in 1994. The Foundation provides scholarships and direction to at-risk students who want to continue their education and attend college. Willie Gary and the Foundation proudly support Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by donating millions of dollars. Gary added, "They were there for you when you had no place else to go."

Lauren Hardy, a junior majoring in psychology, was recognized as this year's recipient for the association's scholarship. "I'm really honored to get the financial help. It was really nice just to give people like us an opportunity to go (to school)." Ms. Hardy returned to school as an adult; she was thankful that Shaw had accommodating night and weekend classes that matched her personal situation. "It was a better fit with my schedule," she said. "They mentioned a scholarship was offered and a lot of people didn't apply for it. That's when I decided to find out more because times are really hard." Gary said that students today have to be persistent and diligent.

Nearly 375 attended Shaw University's Annual Alumni Banquet held at the Crown Coliseum's Hospitality Room.



Ms. Laura Hardy, 2011 Scholarship Recipient, Dr. Wilson A. Lacy-President, Fayetteville/Cumberland County Alumni, Ms. Mary A. Young-Secretary & Scholarship Chairperson, Atty. Willie E. Gary, Esq., Chairman Shaw University Board of Trustees and Cumberland County Commissioner Billy R. King

### Shaw University Fayetteville/Cumberland County Alumni Chapter



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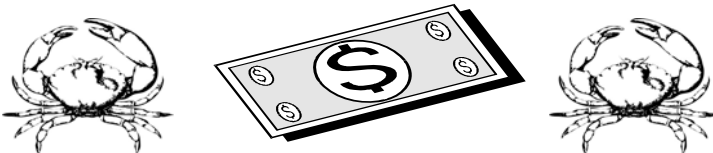
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