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## Tribune Series On Rosewood Wins Award

**DURHAM, N.C.** — A series of articles on the impact of the Rosewood Massacre won an award from the Institute for Southern Studies here. The three-part series, written by freelance contributor Charles Flowers for the *Seminole Tribune*, won 2nd place in the investigative category for weekly newspapers.

The Institute for Southern Studies tracks social justice issues in the Southern United States.

Flowers' series dealt with issues arising from the \$2 million settlement by black survivors and descendants with the State of Florida in 1994 that were still unresolved five years later.

In "Return to Rosewood," Flowers found that while a few individuals benefitted from the terms of the Rosewood Bill signed into law by former Gov. Lawton Chiles, no fitting memorial to the 1923 massacre had been built in Rosewood or anywhere else. Meanwhile, in Riviera Beach, one of only four remaining survivors carried on a personal crusade to save a black cemetery where at least a dozen Rosewood survivors were buried.

"The wheels of justice grind slowly, especially in the South," noted Flowers, who was born in Arkansas. "Just this month, the FBI indicted two more white men for murder in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. — and that happened in 1963. The lesson of Rosewood is that you have to be tenacious, not

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## Award

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only about justice, but also about the truth."

Flowers' series also pointed out that at least two of the nine survivors still alive when the bill was passed — the late Wilson Hall of Hilliard, and Robie Mortin of Riviera Beach — were appalled by misrepresentations in the 1997 Warner Brothers movie *Rosewood*. Other survivors have refused to see the film at all.

Flowers, who began reporting about Rosewood in 1992 in a collaboration with Peter B. Gallagher, was also honored in 1998 by the Native American Journalists Association for "Best News Story" for his account of kickbacks allegedly paid by Rosewood survivors.

"The winning entries were outstanding efforts that combined impressive empirical research with poignant anecdotes," said Keith Ernst, coordinator of the Institute's awards. Winning entries will be excerpted in the Fall 2000 edition of the quarterly journal *Southern Exposure*.

Other winners from Florida were Gina Edwards of the *Naples Daily News* for a series on a stadium deal that led to a federal ethics investigation of 33 members of a stock brokerage firm, and new state and local ethics laws. Jo Becker, Sydney Freedberg and Adam C. Smith of the *St. Petersburg Times* were honored for their 1999 expose of Florida's criminal justice system, which launched an investigation of racism in the Department of Corrections. Both newspapers won first-place awards in their categories.