

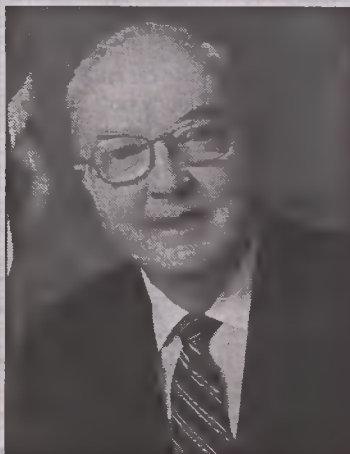
Lesbian senator votes against Jesse Helms resolution

Twenty-six legislators walk out of House, Senate chambers

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

Sen. Julia Boseman (D-New Hanover), North Carolina's only openly gay or lesbian state legislator, voted against a resolution honoring the life of the late Jesse Helms on Wednesday, June 10. She was the only legislator in the entire N.C. General Assembly to vote against the honorary resolution. Twenty-six of her colleagues in the House and Senate, meanwhile, sat out of the vote.

The resolution, which passed the Senate 41-1 and the House 98-0, states, "The General Assembly of North Carolina expresses its appreciation for the life and public service of Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., and honors his memory."



A resolution honoring the late U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms passed the N.C. General Assembly, but not without some vocal protest from the state's only openly gay legislator.

Helms was a conservative radio and TV commentator before serving on the Raleigh City Council and later serving as a U.S. senator. Boseman told *Q-Notes* that she couldn't bring herself to vote yes and felt she had to be heard.

"To me, Helms represented hate and intolerance — his opposition to civil rights and AIDS funding, his opinions of gays and lesbians. There was absolutely no way I was going to vote for the resolution, nor was I going to take a walk."

While no other legislator voted against the resolution, 26 House and Senate members did walk out of the respective chambers in silent protest. Most declined to comment when approached by the Greensboro *News and Record's* Mark Binker.

On why she didn't participate in the walkout, Boseman said, "I thought it was important to stand up for what I believe. Jesse Helms certainly would have done the same thing. In fact, he might have given me more respect for voting no than walking out on it."

She said many of her colleagues felt voting no would have showed disrespect to Helms' family.

"That was their decision, their personal decision," Boseman said of her 26 colleagues. "They felt what they did was appropriate."

One of the last lines of the Helms resolution reads, "North Carolinians mourn the death of this dedicated public servant who was known and respected for his love of his home State and his nation."

Helms has been criticized, past and present, for his conservative racist and homophobic views and legacy. He was a chief opponent of HIV/AIDS funding during the 1980s AIDS crisis. He said gay men were "weak, morally sick wretches" who contracted the disease

through their own "deliberate, disgusting, revolting conduct."

In 1988, Helms said, "There is not one single case of AIDS in this country that cannot be traced in origin to sodomy."

The legislature routinely hears and passes honorary resolutions for state leaders and community members. It is rare for legislators to vote against them or to boycott them altogether. In fact, Boseman said her no vote on June 10 was the first such vote she'd seen while in office. ▀

— Read the full text of the Jesse Helms resolution via the online version of this story at www.q-notes.com/2745/.

Eat Charlotte

Eatery owners unite to promote local dining scene

The general manager of a popular Uptown Charlotte casual dining restaurant has launched a new local dining alliance and hopes to "ignite the local dining scene" in the Queen City.

Briana Cohen, general manager of Sonoma Modern American Cuisine on N. Tryon St., says that EatCharlotte.net will serve to promote locally- and independently-owned restaurants and create strong relationships between businesses, owners, patrons and the community.

"Eat Charlotte is all of us working together to promote local restaurants and local philanthropic groups," Cohen says in a release.

Originating members of EatCharlotte.net

include Andrew Blair's, Aquavina, Barrington's, Blue, Bonterra, Cafe Monte, Carpe Diem, Custom Shop, Fenwick's, Global, Good Food on Montford, La Vecchia's, Las Ramblas, Latorre's, M5 Modern Mediterranean, Mimosa Grill, Nix, Noble's, Pie Town, Press, Ratcliffe on the Green, Rooster's, Sonoma, Upstream, Zebra, and Zink American Kitchen.

The project launched at EatCharlotte.net on Friday, June 19. Through the site, the alliance will offer exclusive specials at each of their restaurants. The first special included half-price bottles of wine through June 27.

Be sure to check out EatCharlotte.net for their next round of specials. ▀

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