

Votes As Election Nears

Graham received 303,605 votes, but was 11,269 short of a clear majority. Smith had received 250,222 votes, and Reynolds, 58,752. Gov. Kerr Scott had appointed Graham to the Senate after the death of J. Melville Broughton in 1949.

Smith decided to call a runoff primary, and his forces stepped up their character assassination of Graham calling him a "Communist" and a "nigger-lover."

Asbhy wrote that the Smith's "Know the Truth Committee," had reprinted 100,000 copies of the front page of the Carolina Times, a black newspaper in Durham, showing a picture of Graham with the headline, "Negro Press Endorses Graham," and a claim that more than 100,000 had registered.

The material was mailed to whites with this information, "Notice, too, that the Negro newspaper carried editorials, reproduced on the back page of the enclosures, advocating intermarriage of the races and the admission of Negroes to the state's white institutions of higher learning. Do you want these things to come to pass?"

That and similar dirty tactics worked as Smith defeated Graham in a close election. Smith had 281,114 votes to Graham's 261,789. After serving three years, Smith died in 1953. President Harry Truman appointed Graham to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and later to the United Nations as an ambassador. Graham died in 1972 in Chapel Hill.

Claude Allen, Helms' black campaign secretary in 1984, said that Helms was just a volunteer in the Smith campaign. "He (Helms) has also said that he never wrote any of the campaign material," Allen told *The Daily Tar Heel*.

Two veteran black politicians in Raleigh disputed Allen's statements at that time, saying that Helms was an active participant in the Smith campaign. "Jesse was the architect behind the whole campaign," said John Winters Sr., a Raleigh developer and former state senator. "He might not have said that racist stuff, but he masterminded the whole thing."

Former Raleigh Mayor Clarence Lightner agreed with Winters. "I have been in politics for 30 years," Lightner said in July 1984. "We were fighting Jesse Helms even then."

Following the bitter campaign, Smith appointed Helms as an administrative assistant to his Washington staff. Forty years have passed since the Smith-Graham race, and Helms finds himself in close contest with a black architect from

Charlotte whose main appeal is to blacks, liberal whites, women, farmers and other groups.

Gantt's candidacy has spawned increased black registration in North Carolina as black voters have registered to vote at a higher rate than whites since April 1990 and Democrats joined the rolls faster than Republicans.

The Associated Press reported on October 24 that the number of N.C. voters eligible to cast ballots in the Nov. 6 election has grown by nearly 200,000 since April, based on figures released by the State of Board of Elections. There are 3,347,635 North Carolinians eligible to vote in the Gantt-Helms Senate election.

Democrats picked up 112,579 new voters while Republicans registered 60,543. Another 26,646 registered as unaffiliated. New voters include 135,484 whites and 60,886 blacks.

Susan Jetton, the spokeswoman for the Gantt campaign, said the new figures were encouraging and the election will come down to which campaign does the better job of getting its supporters to the polls.

"Obviously we want as many people as possible to be registered," Jetton told the Greensboro News and Record, "With that many of the eligible voters registered, now it's our job to get them excited about Harvey Gantt and turn them out on Election Day."

Carter Wrenn, a top political aide for Helms, said the increase in GOP registration since 1984 is good for Helms. "We got five percent more Republicans, which is very good news for us," he said.

The Helms campaign must get their supporters to polls to ensure the senator's re-election, Wrenn said. "It looks pretty close, like everything else in this election," he said. "Now it depends on whose people turn out and vote. I hope everybody that's on the Helms team gets the message that it's going to close, hard fought election."

President George Bush's recent veto of the civil rights bill in Congress has become a campaign issue in the Gantt-Helms race.

Gantt said he supported the legislation, which would have circumvented six U.S. Supreme Court decisions that have made it difficult for women and minorities to prove they have been victims of job discrimination, *The Charlotte Observer* reported on October 25.



Bush vetoed it on the grounds it would lead to hiring quotas, and Helms said he agreed with the president. The U.S. Senate came up one vote short of a two-thirds majority needed to override Bush's veto.

"That just goes to show you if Harvey Gantt was in the U.S. Senate today, it would have gone a different way," Gantt told more than 1,200 students and faculty at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte on October 24. "I support the civil rights bill," he said.

Helms has made an issue of Gantt's campaign contributions from homosexual-rights groups in recent campaign television commercials.

"That's where Mr. Gantt's money is coming from," Helms said at a rally in Gastonia. "From the artists, the homosexuals, the Molly Yard crowd, People for the American Way and on and on. Would you say I have all the right enemies?" he asked three dozen

supporters. Yard is president of the National Organization of Women.

Gantt responded to Helms' accusation that he is running a secret campaign among homosexuals, saying that, "He (Helms) insults the intelligence of the voters North Carolina," Gantt told *The Charlotte Observer*.

"This is just another example where Sen. Helms seeks to appeal to the worst instincts within all of us," Gantt said. "I won't be a party to any effort on the part of my opponent or anybody else to try and put down one group of people in our society. We need to find ways of coming together."

