

## Ron's Words

# Who really elects presidents?

By Ronnie Hopkins

The Electoral College has no students, no dormitories, classrooms or football teams. It offers no degrees.

It is, in fact, one of the least understood fixtures of the Constitution, created by our founding fathers because they didn't trust the American public to select a president by direct popular vote.

It is the Electoral College, not the American voter, who will directly elect our president for the next four years.

Originally, the Electoral College was adopted as a compromise to ensure that smaller states in the federal system would have some muscle in presidential elections.

Currently, there are 538 seats in the Electoral College, which was established at the 1787 Constitutional Convention and has been used to elect every president since George Washington.

Under the electoral system, each state is allotted an elector for each of its members in the House of Representatives, which is apportioned according to population. And to give those small states a chance, each state also receives an elector for each senator.

Candidates for elector are nominated by state party convention, primary election, or caucus. Often, they are party functionaries or former government officials. The only requirement is that they be U.S. citizens not currently holding general office.

Every state except Maine chooses its electors on a winner-take-all basis. For instance, the candidate who carries North Carolina will receive all of its electoral votes, though he may have won the state by only one popular vote.

However, in Maine, the winner in each of the state's two congressional districts gets one elector and the statewide winner receives the rest.

On Dec. 17, the electors will meet in their respective state capitals and cast two votes, one for president and one for vice president. Ballots will be collected and sent to Washington, where they will be counted and the official winners formally announced in a joint session of Congress on Jan. 7. If there is an electoral tie, then the House of Representatives elects the president.

It is thus possible for a presidential candidate to win the popular vote but lose the election if his opponent receives more electoral votes.

Jesse Jackson has canvassed a great portion of the U.S. encouraging blacks, low income whites, and other minorities to vote. If his efforts result in the Mondale/Ferraro ticket winning the popular vote, he could still find his candidates outvoted in the Electoral College, if the

See ELECTORAL, p. 4

## ISA initiates 40 members

By Obirize Ugo

Forty new students were initiated into the International Student Association on Saturday, Sept. 29.

The ceremony in the Alfonso Elder Student Union Lounge also marked the 1984-85 administration under the leadership of Samuel Anye, ISA president.

Anye told both old and new members to work together with the spirit of oneness to achieve their individual and

collective objectives.

Anye charged members to strive for the quest of excellence, which he said can only be achieved through hard work and commitment.

Alexzine Whitted, secretary to the Foreign Student Advisor and Counseling Center, reiterated Anye's statement for excellence, calling both old and new members to take an active part in the organization.

Anye encouraged American students to join the organization.

Later new members were entertained at an all night party.

## Bloc Vote

Continued from page 1

get together and vote on one issue because the faculty seems to believe that students are not always as competent as they are when it comes to decision making."

Sharon Allison agrees with Thomas, saying, "The students and faculty will not vote the same way because there is a difference in economic classes, viewpoints, and party affiliation."

However, she believes that the majority will vote the same way because of their black middle-class background.

While some looked at the problems of bloc voting, others found advantages.

Karen Jarnagin approves of it as a means "for getting blacks elected into offices."

Letita Mason agreed with Jarnagin, saying, "Bloc voting unites people under a particular issue and makes the politicians and elected officials aware of different groups."

But Sadie Jordan, a political science instructor at NCCU, disagrees. "Bloc voting can have a negative slur when there is a race or people or group of females that are voting along the same line," she said. "If a group is going to bloc vote an issue or a candidate, it (may) become a disadvantage because the candidate will not speak on important issues." Instead, she argued, candidates speak on party affiliations and what that group of people wants to hear.

Eric Cramer, a senior, agrees with Jordan. "Certain groups would have greater power than others," he said, which could lead to possible abuse of that power, destroying individuality and encouraging apathy. "It's too close to totalitarianism," concluded Cramer.

Rickie Bethea, a senior, stated that one disadvantage to bloc voting is that the Democratic Party takes the black vote for granted.

## Chambers

Continued from page 1

trustee of NCCU was in effect a matter of minutes.

By 1972, many celebrated law firms would almost certainly have delighted to list the credentials of Julius LeVonne Chambers on their letterhead, (B.A., M.A., J.D., LL.M., LL.D.). There were predictions of political and judicial appointments.

But for ten years, Chambers kept his pledge of commitment to civil rights. As a private practitioner in Charlotte, he had led the plaintiffs' case in the landmark school desegregation case, *Swann v. Board of Education*. He was senior partner in his own law firm, a firm celebrated for its commitment to civil rights.

Chambers was elected in 1975 to the

presidency of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and soon afterward resigned from the UNC Board of Governors, declaring his dissatisfaction with the system's commitment to desegregation. (Nevertheless, he was honored in 1983 with the Distinguished Alumni Award of the system's "flagship" institution, UNC at Chapel Hill.)

This year he left his law partnership to assume the role of chief executive of the Legal Defense Fund, Director-Counsel.

Chambers' speech at Founder's Day is part of the celebration commemorating Dr. James E. Shepard, who founded NCCU in July, 1910.

## UNC poll

Continued from page 1

Thad Beyle, a political science professor at the UNC-CH, said Helms used the King issue in the last debate as a code word for anti-black sentiments. "There's no question (that Helms is doing that)," he said. "It's a very racist approach. That's the tie he has with the voting population. There are a lot of people who feel that way."

Claude Allen, press secretary for the Helms for Senate Committee, said that it is Hunt who is making an issue of race and not Helms. "The issue is Hunt's integrity in running newspaper ads showing he favored the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in black newspapers only," he said in a recent telephone interview. "He is using that issue to play on the emotions of blacks to go the polls and vote against Sen. Helms."

Allen said Helms has not tried to hide his views on the King Holiday. Unlike Hunt, he said, Helms has run "ads in newspapers all across the state...."

"There's no question that Sen. Helms opposed the Martin Luther King bill to inflame racial sentiment,"

said Will Marshall, press secretary for the Jim Hunt Committee. "The Governor called him on that very well in the last debate.

"It's a little hypocritical and extreme to say Gov. Hunt is making an issue of race in this campaign when Helms has done that throughout his career."

"It's to his advantage to play up to blacks," Allen said. "If you look at the Carolina Poll and the recent News and Observer Poll, you'll see that Hunt needs a big minority turnout to win. That's why he's making this such a racial issue."

Marshall said that Helms treats the recent mass voter registration by blacks as if it was "a threat to society." He quoted an article from the *Wilson Daily Times* in which Helms said: "Jim Hunt needs an enormous black vote to put him across. But if enough of our people go to the polls it will be all right."

"I'm sure he was speaking to an all white audience so when he said 'our people,' he meant white people," he said.

Beyle said it was going to be very important for Hunt to run a unified campaign. "He is going to have to make sure his black vote comes out and that Democrats vote Democratic. This is one campaign in which the undecided are very few."

In the 1984 poll, only 8 percent of those surveyed were undecided. This figure has decreased every year since 1981 when it was 17 percent.

Beyle said the race was going to be very close because most of the people who have voted for Hunt and Helms in the past are the same voters. "They have had the luxury of voting for a Democratic governor and a Republican senator," he said.

Although the polls show Hunt and Helms about even, Beyle said if an election were held today, he would "pick Helms (as the winner) because of Reagan at the top of the (Republican) ticket."

Winfred Cross was the 1981-82 editor of *The Campus Echo* and continues to contribute to the paper. He is currently a graduate student in the School of Journalism at UNC-CH.