

Carolina Review: Hunt vs. Helms

Hunt's 1984 Prospectus... Assuming the Senate race between Jim Hunt and Jesse Helms does take place in 1984, North Carolina voters will witness a spectacular match. On the surface, Sen. Helms looks unbeatable. And yet anyone who considers North Carolina's most consummate politician, Gov. Hunt, as an underdog is not necessarily turned in to the possibilities. A prospectus for Jim Hunt's 1984 Senate victory is already available: Since 1977, before the gubernatorial succession amendment was passed, Hunt and some very able political friends have been carefully considering the beginning and the end of Jesse Helms' Senate career. The beginning is, of course, available for scrutiny - the end, for conjecture. One can assume that Hunt backers feel Helms has been most fortunate in his two Senate victories. A relative unknown in 1972, Helms' opponent ran on the same ticket with George McGovern and Sergeant Shriver - taboo political personalities in conservative North Carolina, especially with still popular Richard Nixon on the Republican ticket. In the 1972 state primary, Helms defeated his nearest Republican opponent better than 2 to 1. Meanwhile, the Democrats were busy ripping apart their incumbent, Everett Jordan. After a bitter second primary, a battle-scarred Nick Galifianakis, apparently sporting a heavy inventory of closet skeletons, appeared to do battle with Jesse. Even under those circumstances, the vote was relatively close - 708,248 to

677,293 in favor of Helms. In 1978, the Democrats fought out yet another bloody scenario. Then, after the by now habitual second primary, ever controversial John Ingram emerged. Ingram, the party's in-house "bad boy", ran only on the fringe of the party structure and spent literally pennies to Helms' big bucks. Still, Ingram came closer than Galifianakis - losing 619,151 to 516,663. This, after Helms had enlisted six years of excellent constituency service and the power of incumbency. Running for office since college, Hunt has never lost an election, in part because he religiously does his homework. Soon after his election victory in the 1972 lieutenant governor's race, Hunt was busy lining up commitments from Skipper Bowles and Pat Taylor supporters for the governor's race in 1976. In 1976, Hunt faced primary opposition that sometimes resembled "gang tackling." In fact, accusations have been made that late entry George Wood ran for governor only in an effort to substantially reduce Hunt's liberal and eastern vote to pave the way for Charlotte millionaire Ed O'Herron. Hunt won (without a runoff) and then somehow garnered the enthusiastic support of all of his primary opposition. After flexing his muscles in 1977 and winning public passage of the gubernatorial succession amendment, 1980 was a foregone conclusion. In addition to his history of winning, the Hunt organization has become a textbook example of how the out-of-power Democrats in Washington want to rebuild.

Older than the Congressional Club, the Hunt campaign organization is mapped out to the smallest precinct. Finely tuned, the organization can pinpoint every area and every issue and service those areas and issues individually at a moment's notice. And, unlike the Congressional Club, which for all practical purposes has dispersed the state Republican party structure, the Hunt organization is closely aligned with and draws heavily from the state's Democratic party. Where will the Hunt money come from? Hunt backers realize that probably no one can at this point raise more money than Helms. But Helms has drawn substantially from out-of-state and a lot of that money has been extravagantly spent. In 1978, Helms' excessive fund-raising, especially out-of-state, became a campaign issue. Hunt has never tried to raise as much money as he could - only as much as he needed, and he has never failed. Hunt can and has raised millions of dollars. Voting constituencies will figure heavily in the Hunt plan in 1984. Helms and Hunt share a lot of supporters. But most of that shared constituency is Democratic. It is that constituency that Jim Hunt will aggressively pursue. His other supporters, the substantial black vote and the moderate to liberal Democrats, can't really afford to desert him. Besides, prior to Hunt's open pursuit of the conservative Democrats, private assertions will be made to the blacks and the liberals - a whispered "trust me."

Finally, registered Republicans in North Carolina are vastly outnumbered by Democrats - numbers not likely to be swayed abundantly even with the current Reagan popularity. Of course, a similar "paper case" can be made for Helms in 1984. The Congressional Club has for years staked Jim Hunt out on a number of issues, including the just-passed gas tax hike. The Club has also catalogued a number of Hunt problems - favoritism in the Transportation Department, too close acquaintance with organized labor and Wilbur Hobby, CETA contracts and Howard Lee. For his part, Hunt last week suggested that if Helms is so powerful in Washington, then he should be able to protect the endangered tobacco price support system. And if Helms can't well... The race will be a good one, that is if Helms doesn't decide to run for governor instead - a race where the Democrats seem destined to bloody themselves up again. **Senior Center Sponsoring Trip To Las Vegas** The Perquimans County Senior Center is sponsoring a trip to Las Vegas, Nev. The tentative date is set for November 15-19. The cost of the trip is approximately \$500 per person. This package includes four nights at the Las Vegas Hilton and the round trip air fare departing from Raleigh Durham Airport. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Patti White at 428-5695.

Old License Plates To Be Replaced

RALEIGH — Beginning Aug. 1, all license plates in the series numbering AAA-101 through JAY-999 will be replaced by the N. C. Department of Transportation's Division of Motor Vehicles. These license plates will be replaced when the owner's vehicle registration expires. "We are replacing these 1975 license plates because these are the oldest plates and many of them are faded and illegible," said Motor Vehicles Commissioner Elbert L. Peters, Jr. "It will take 12 months to replace all these license plates in this series." Of the 406,000 renewal cards mailed to vehicle owners for August license plate renewals, nearly 135,000 were mailed to motorists who will get their license tags replaced (License plate renewal

cards for vehicles that will get new tags will not have the license plate numbers stamped on them.) The old license plates do not have to be turned in to receive the new plates, which will be issued at no additional charge. Vehicle owners who are getting a new plate will receive one similar to the one they now have. The "First in Flight" license plate, which was recently approved by the General Assembly, will not be available to those who are replacing their 1975 license plates until the current supply of plates runs out. The new plates are expected to be available within the next year. Motor vehicle owners who are not issued new license plates during the August renewal will only receive new "year" validation stickers. The month sticker

is permanent. Validation stickers and license tags may be purchased in person from one of 115 license plate agencies across the state or by mail from the motor vehicles division in Raleigh as soon as motorists receive their license plate renewal cards. Drivers who renew in August will pay a 12-month registration fee and will not need to register their vehicles again until August 1982. "Early this year we changed to a new vehicle registration system which 'staggered' license plate renewals through the year," Peters said. "This new system is allowing us to provide more efficient service to the state's motoring public." The annual license plate renewal fee for a car is still \$16, Peters noted. "Motor vehicle owners

should check their license plate renewal cards for the fees they will pay, the license plate expiration and renewal dates," Peters said. "Motorists whose license plates expire in August have until Sept. 15 to renew, but are encouraged to renew by August 31." **Young Dems To Organize** A Young Democrats organization is being started in Chowan County. An organizational meeting has been scheduled for 8 P.M. on September 15 at the Coach House Inn. Guest speaker will be Lee Walton, former Young Democrats chairman for the Congressional District. For further information contact Miles Davis, Jr. at 482-8340 or Ted Storie at 482-3657.

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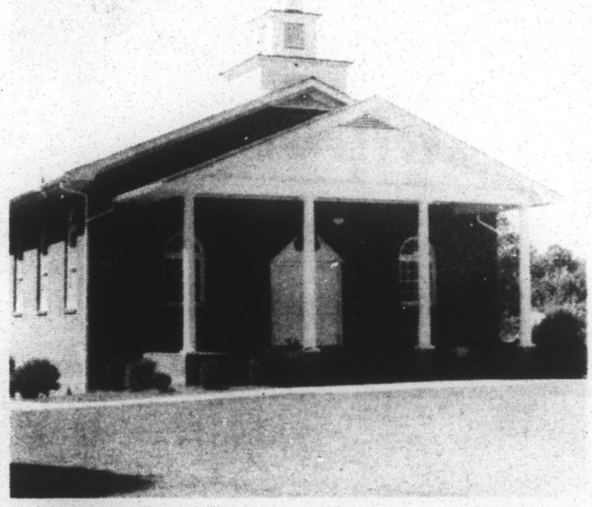


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