

"Building Cooperative Bridges
in A Tri-Racial Setting"

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-A Front Page Editorial- LUMBERTON CITY SCHOOLS GUILTY, AS CHARGED, 1965 VOTING RIGHTS VIOLATION

It's official. On January 26, the U.S. Justice Department rejected the pleas of the Lumberton City School System to rescind an earlier objection lodged against the annexations to the system which occurred in the late sixties and early seventies.

In other words, Lumberton City Schools was found guilty, as charged, of violating the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The U.S. Justice Department ruled that the illegal annexations of Barker Ten Mile, Lakewood Estates, Clyburn Pines and Country Club areas were unconstitutional because the school system did not present enough evidence to show that the annexations were not for the express purpose of discrimination. According to the ruling, "There is evidence of convoluted, meandering district lines with the results being blacks and Indians were excluded from annexed areas. Such exclusion is a clear violation of the 15th amendment of the constitution." The 15th amendment guarantees that the right to vote will not be denied due to race.

In a front page editorial dated January 1, 1981, the Carolina Indian Voice termed the resulting suit a case of "educational chickens coming home to roost in Ol' Robeson." Even earlier, in 1974, the Carolina Indian Voice ran an article that noted a "massive investigation of Robeson underway by the Department of Justice."

At that time (1974) we noted that the Lumberton City Schools had been notified that they were in violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The confirmation came after a three man team from the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice visited the county.

As everyone should know by now Robeson County is one of 40 counties in North Carolina subject to the Voting Rights Act. The only way one can gain the dubious distinction of being subject to the voting rights act is to discriminate against blacks, Indians or other so-called minorities, although the term is misleading in Robeson County: combined the Indians and blacks are actually the majority and the whites are the minorities.

Lumberton City Schools was not guilty of technical violations, as noted in the local press, but rather were guilty of serious violations of the corner stone of civil rights legislation—the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The interest in Robeson County by the Justice Department was spurred by Dexter Brooks, a Pembroke attorney now, but in 1974 a summer legal intern at the justice department while in law school at Chapel Hill. Now a very successful attorney, Brooks serves as attorney for the Robeson County School System.

The Lumberton City Schools are expected to meet in emergency session in the next few days but their options are limited as there is no appeal of a justice department ruling of a voting rights violation as occurred in this case.

And penalties are severe. Under the Voting Rights Act "...whoever shall deprive or attempt to deprive any person of any right secured by the act shall be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than five years or both."

Plus corrective action must be taken to assure that discrimination no longer exists in the situation.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The area in question is the richest tax base in Robeson County and is home for a number of Pembroke State University administrators and faculty, industry big wigs and Lumberton professionals. Actually, if the 1970 Desegregation plan, as implemented by the HEW (now the Department of Education), had been followed, the children in this area would have gone to Magnolia, Green Grove, and other schools in the county school system. They simply skirted the issue by ransacking the illegal annexations through the general assembly by then Senators Hector McLess and later,

Luther Britt.

It is estimated that the area produces (according to whomever you talk to) 20 to 40 percent of the revenue that goes into the operation of the Lumberton City Schools. Some 700 students would be affected in the predominately white area, according to school sources.

It is obviously a time for reconciliation, discussion, dialogue and new directions in education circles in Robeson County.

But, seemingly, Osborne (Obbie) Lee, Jr., the attorney for the Lumberton City Schools, is having none of that, if a report in the Robesonian is to be believed.

In Tuesday's edition of the Robesonian, there was a report of a talk Lee gave to a PTA meeting in Lumberton. At the meeting Lee called Lumbee River Legal Services, "a dissident element in this county..." Lee topped that inflammatory remark, according to the Robesonian, by saying, "(LRLS) (is) trying to foment trouble."

A Lumberton school official, who obviously asked not to be identified publicly, said, "the best word to describe Lee is 'bombastic.'" And, in his most bombastic fashion, as we see it, Lee went on to say that the Lumberton City School System was not discriminatory and that he saw "no reason for the lawsuit but to cause chaos and confusion." He laid all the blame at the feet of Lumbee River Legal Services.

We wholeheartedly concurred when Julian Pierce, the head of LRLS, termed Lee's remarks "nonsense."

Pierce went on to say, "Anytime we become a dissident element in Robeson County it's when we're trying to protect the civil rights of others, and then

Unity Conference

More than 500 Indians from throughout North Carolina are expected to attend the Seventh Annual Indian Unity Conference March 4-6 in Raleigh.

Highlighting the conference will be speeches by several national Indian leaders, an appearance by cast members of the outdoor drama "Strike at the Wind," and an art contest featuring works by North Carolina Indians.

The conference has two purposes, according to Jim Lowry of Tryon, chairman of the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs which is sponsoring the event. Purposes are to provide a forum for Native Americans to address the needs of Indian communities and to provide an opportunity to share Indian heritage and culture.

The conference will meet at the Royal Villa Hotel and Convention Center in Raleigh.

With almost 65,000 Indians, North Carolina has the largest Indian population of any state east of the Mississippi River. The recognized tribes in North Carolina are Cherokee, Coharie, Haliwasaponi, Lumbee and Waccamaw-Siouan.

Following the theme "Building a Better Future through Indian Unity," workshop topics will include women's issues, today's farming issues, education, future employment and training, federal programs and budget policy, national Indian issues and the political process, and N.C. archaeology legislation.

Banquet speaker will be Ada Deer, a member of the Menominee tribe. She is on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin and was formerly associated with the Native American Rights Fund in Washington. The banquet is scheduled for 7 p.m. March 5.

Other speakers will be Dr. Joseph Oxendine, professor at Temple University and president of Indian Rights Association, Philadelphia; David Lester, commissioner, Administration for Native Americans, Washington; and Dr. Frank Ryan, director, Indian Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, Washington.

Conference registration fee is \$30. Separate banquet tickets can be purchased for \$14. Feb. 16 is the deadline for registration. For information, contact Greg Richardson, N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs, P.O. Box 27228, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

someone needs to be that element."

As pointed out by Pierce, and many others, Lee seems to have forgotten that a three judge panel with the U.S. Supreme Court has held that the Lumberton School System is in violation of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. And, more than this, they must come into compliance or risk the consequences which, as noted earlier in this editorial, are severe.

Too, the attempt to avoid the law, has been expensive to Lumberton City Schools. Their legal fees, according to a reliable source, have already cost them "more than \$20,000 but less than \$40,000."

Lee shows a brazen disregard for the law, if the quotes attributed to him are accurate, when he says, "No one in their wildest imagination would have ever thought the school system was subject to that." "That" being the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Lee was also reported to have said, in regard to the 1965 Voting Rights Act, that he feels the act is of questionable constitutionality in that it refers only to 13 southern states and 40 counties. Our comeback to that would be that the federal court, and the same constitution, is open to challenge by any citizen who is so inclined...including Mr. Lee. He ought to sue for whatever he feels is wrong with the Justice Department, Eastern District Federal Court, and the U.S. Supreme Court and the Congress of the United States.

America lives and dies by the constitution. Any American citizen with a grievance has a right to lay it up against the constitution and find out where he (or she) stands. We are proud to be Americans, living in a land where the constitution has the last word on every constitutional question. Sometimes it takes a long time to be heard but one can be heard in America if he is able to persevere and articulate his grievance. We stand by the constitution. Without the constitution, and the federal judiciary (whose role it is to interpret it), and the justice department (whose role it is to enforce it), we would lose all the basic freedoms which accrue to American citizenship, no matter what one's race, creed or color. The dominant race, or political party, would, otherwise, prevail right or wrong. That might be all right in, say, Poland, but it is 'anathema to America.

I say to Mr. Lee, and all those who rely on politics and tradition to see them through constitutional assaults, God bless America, the land of the brave and free. And God bless the constitution and the federal courts, the guardians of our freedom.

And, furthermore, as noted earlier, this is simply a case of the educational chickens coming home to roost in Ol' Robeson. Now let's get on with a reasonable process that will guarantee our children (all of them—black, white and Indian) a decent education so that they can live and work and play in a free society. It is a time for reconciliation, realistic approaches, not wild eyed rhetoric that is better left in the 1860s where it belongs.

How many school systems are enough? All reasonable men in Robeson County agree that five is too many. Is one enough? Two? How many? Let's get on with it.

And, to set the record straight, we wish to take umbrage with Mr. Lee when he says in regard to Lumbee River Legal Services, "I don't think much of them legally, philosophically or other wise."

Let the record show that Lumbee River Legal Services won the suit; that speaks well of their legal ability. They won the suit in federal court (with even the U.S. Supreme Court ruling favorably in their behalf); that speaks well of their philosophy. And education in Robeson County will improve considerably because of the ruling; so much for the case.

We are thankful to the plaintiffs, Lumbee River Legal Services, Civil Liberties Union, and all those who persevered and subscribed to win this victory for all of us, including Mr. Lee...in spite of himself.

Pembroke Jaycees Honor Local Men for Contributions to Community



Shown left to right, first row: Sgt. Robert Locklear of the Pembroke Police Department; William [Dollar Bill] Oxendine, employed by Southeastern

General Hospital; and James Earl Locklear who is a farmer; back row, left to right: Harry Sieber, LOF supervisor; Kelvin Samson, Robeson County

Ambulance employee; Warren Love, Volunteer Fireman who is employed at PSU; and Danford Dial, teacher at Pembroke Junior High School. (Bill Hunt

Pembroke—The Pembroke Jaycee Club House was filled with excitement Thursday night, January 21, 1982 when several persons were honored for their contribution to society and their community.

The evening began with attorney Donald Bullard, Chaplain, giving the invocation. After which everyone enjoyed the steak dinner prepared by the Pembroke Jaycees. Jimmy Goins, President of the Pembroke Jaycees, welcomed everyone to the event. Anthony Chavis, Chairman of the DSA, recognized the guests and expressed appreciation for everyone's attending.

Noah Woods, past president and fine Jaycee himself, introduced the guest speaker of the evening, Dr. Gerald Maynor of PSU. Dr. Maynor, whose topic was based on our educational system, is also a member of the Robeson County Board of Education, District IV.

Dr. Maynor said things that touched the hearts of many and made the Jaycees proud to be a part of a worthwhile organization, as well as being an American.

Dr. Maynor also spoke about another important issue, the economy and emphasized that education will be a major factor in battling inflation. One of the most important remarks Dr. Maynor made was that the family must become more united to face the hard decisions in the future which are facing everyone.

The most prestigious moment came when the presentation of the seven awards to deserving individuals began. Carnell Locklear presented the Outstanding Young Rescuer Award to Kevin Sampson. This was the first time that this category had been included in the annual awards.

Dennis Moore, outstanding young fire fighter in 1981, presented Warren Love, a Pembroke Volunteer Fireman, as this year's outstanding young fire fighter.

Donald Bullard, local attorney and a dedicated Jaycee, presented Sgt. Robert Locklear of the Pembroke Police Dept. as the outstanding young law officer of 1982.

James Earl Locklear of the Prospect area was presented the Outstanding Young Farmer Award by Willie Harris. Locklear is an outstanding farmer and it was noted he was deserving of this presentation. Mr. Locklear operates approximately 400 acres of land during the year.

Walter Oxendine, Jaycee Senator and past president of the Pembroke Jaycees, presented Danford Dial, Jr. as the Outstanding Young Educator for 1982. Dial was very thankful of the award and said he really believed in the Jaycee Creed, especially the last sentence which states "That service to humanity is the best work of life."

Ed Wilkins, Boss of the Year for 1981, presented the Boss of the Year

Award for 1982 to Larry Seiber of Maxton who is an LOF supervisor. The Jaycees would like to thank LOF and all their employees for their support. This wonderful industry always gives the Jaycees support in many of their 140 projects that they run every year.

The most touching award of the evening was the prestigious Distinguished Service Award which was presented to William (Dollar Bill) Oxendine. President Jimmy Goins presented the award to Dollar Bill and everyone present really felt the warmth of love when this award was presented. Although Dollar Bill is mildly handicapped, he is always fighting to help in any way possible. Said President Goins, "I know of no one in our community who deserves

this award more than Dollar Bill." Everyone in the audience had to agree because Dollar Bill is always involved in making our community a better place to live.

The Pembroke Jaycees wish to thank everyone for their support, especially the Pembroke Jaycees who are always encouraging. They would also like to extend a hardy invitation to every young man between the ages of 18-35 to come and get involved and start seeing their lives begin to change for the better.

Carnell Locklear was recognized for his service as public relations officer for the Pembroke Jaycees and also for his contribution to the Banquet as co-chairman of the annual Distinguished Service Awards Banquet.

Joe Freeman Britt Files for Re-election



Joe Freeman Britt

Joe Freeman Britt filed today for re-election as district attorney for the 16th Judicial District in the May Democratic Primary.

The 16th Judicial District is comprised of Robeson and Scotland Counties.

"I intend to continue the fight in our courts for the rights of victims of crime and for the safety of the public," said Britt, "and I appreciate the opportunity of service that the citizens of our district have given me in the past."

"We brought this district from third from the bottom to one of the best in the state in assigned Superior Court utilization. At the present cost to the taxpayers of more than \$2000.00 per day for courtroom operation, this is highly significant," said Britt, who was first elected to office in 1974.

He is the immediate past president of the North Carolina District Attorney's

Association (NCDA) and presently serves on the Governor's Commission on

Length of Sentences in North Carolina. Chairman of the NCDA Legislative Committee, he has worked for five years representing the prosecutorial viewpoint in the North Carolina General Assembly. He also serves as a member of the NCDA-State Bar Liaison Committee and as Chairman, NCDA Future Directions Committee.

Britt has rendered public and professional service as Pembroke State University trustee, president of the 16th Judicial District Bar Association, chairman of the 16th Judicial District Committee on Judicial Selection of the North Carolina Bar Association, the

Lumberton City Board of Adjustments and Appeals, vice-chairman of the Robeson County Courthouse Committee, member of the Robeson Technical Institute Police Science Advisory Council, co-chairman of the N.C. Ad-Hoc Study Group on Juvenile Delinquency and Drugs and Chairman of the Lumberton City Heart Fund Drive.

Active in the Democratic Party, he has held various local party offices, including precinct chairman, president of the Robeson County Young Democrats, and member of the Robeson County Democrat Executive Committee.

An army veteran, Britt is a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. He received his B.A. degree from Wake Forest University, his M.S. degree from the University of Tennessee, and his J.D. degree from Stanford University.

Britt is married to the former Marilyn Linker of Lumberton, and they have two children, Joe Freeman, Jr., 12, and Natalie, 9.