

# Dedicated to the Memory of Sandy Dexter Brooks, first Indian Superior Court Judge: May 15, 1943- March 5, 2002

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## The CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

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## Remembering Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Sandy Dexter Brooks

by Connie Brayboy



of civil rights cases during Pierce's days as executive director of Lumbee River Legal Services, a legal aid program Brooks helped to organize. The two successfully fought to have the Robeson County commissioner districts redrawn several times.

Though racial turmoil has rocked Robeson County in recent years, Brooks is optimistic. He feels things are improving because blacks and Indians have become more active in local politics, seeking and winning public office.

Because of his activist work, critics warned that Brooks would pursue a liberal agenda. However, when it comes to court proceedings, Brooks is described as "right down the middle."

"I don't see myself as what some people might term an activist judge," he says. "In my scheme of things I see the law as being made by the state legislature and by the appellate court. Trial judges are more enforcers of the law as opposed to makers of the law."

"I try not to inject myself into the trial. As an attorney, you're an advocate and you have to represent your client zealously. But as a judge, you have to be neutral and impartial, and you can't show any favoritism to either side."

Prior to entering law school, Brooks' career included work as an assistant engineer with Westinghouse Electric Corp. He also taught math at two eastern North Carolina community colleges and at NCSU as a graduate teaching assistant.

While Brooks sees his appointment as a Superior Court judge as important, he maintains a sense of perspective about the relative power of judges.

"I think it was a positive step in the sense that it allowed Indians to feel more a part of the system," Brooks says. "I hate to think of a judgeship as being part of the balance of power because judges have to disassociate themselves from most of the political process."

Judge Brooks was one of the greatest legal minds in the nation. He leaves to cherish his memories, his brother, Larry T. Brooks of Pembroke and two sisters, Maggie Lois Mercer of Pembroke and Vivian Atha, several nieces and nephews and thousands of members of the Lumbee Tribe. He was preceded in death by three brothers, Steve Brooks, Earl Brooks and John Mark Brooks.

This issue of the Carolina Indian Voice is dedicated to the memory of Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Sandy Dexter Brooks. Brooks was the first Indian Superior Court Judge in the State of North Carolina, assuming that position January 1, 1989. Brooks was never married. He was born May 15, 1943. He was the second youngest of a family of five boys and two girls. His father, John H. Brooks, was a public school teacher, farmer and Baptist deacon. His mother, Mrs. Lela Hammonds Brooks, was a part-time public school teacher and homemaker.

Judge Brooks lost a four year battle with cancer on Tuesday, March 5, 2002 at age 58.

He was an advocate for Indian causes and dedicated to improving the political plight of people of color. He was instrumental in many progressive moves in Robeson County, including breaking double voting, merging the school system, saving Old Main on the UNCP campus, the election of the first Black to the House of Representatives, and many other activities. He will be remembered for his brilliant mind, fairness to others and his ability to plan political strategies which resulted in Blacks and Indians being elected to positions of authority in Robeson County. He was not ashamed and made no apologies for being Indian. In his role as Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, he had no problem assuming his rightful position as the one in charge and operated the Robeson County Court House as a great leader. He will be remembered for his courageous personal act of hanging a picture of Henry Berry Lowrie, local Indian hero in the Robeson County Court House, as well as many other accomplishments too numerous to list here. He was a historian and enjoyed making history as the first Indian judge, and took personal pride in swearing in the first Indian Sheriff, Glenn Maynor, elected in the county. One of his personal triumphs was when he admitted his nephew (brother John Mark Brooks' son) Brian Keith Brooks, to the North Carolina Bar. Judge Brooks was also a thinker and a scholar. These qualities will be missed especially in the Lumbee community. We shall not soon meet his calibre again.

Brooks' educational background included Pembroke Graded School, 1949-57. While there he won the Reading Award as well as the Mathematics Award. He was a 1961 graduate of Pembroke High School where he served as Senior Class Officer and received the Mathematics Achievement Award. He graduated from North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC in 1965. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering with High Honors. He received a Masters of Mathematics from NCSU in 1971 with High Honors.

In 1976 he earned a Juris Doctorate from the University of North Carolina School of Law, Chapel Hill. During his tenure there he was honored with the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fellowship, American Indian Law Fellowship and the American Jurisprudence Awards.

He served in the United States Army from 1966 until 1968 and was a Veteran of the Vietnam War where he served with the First Air Cavalry Division. During his military service he was awarded the National

Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal 2/device 1960, one Overseas Bar and was a Sharpshooter (Rifle M-14).

With a varied background, Judge Brooks was affiliated with Locklear, Brooks, Jacobs and Sutton (formerly Locklear and Brooks and Locklear, Brooks and Jacobs) Law Firm in Pembroke, NC from 1976 until 1988. The firm is now Locklear, Jacobs, Hunt and Brooks.

The following article from the North Carolina State Alumni Magazine, by Natalie E. Hampton, tells the Judge's story. It is entitled "Brooks '65 appointed to Superior Court: Engineer turned judge presides in racially turbulent Robeson County (1989)"

As a graduate student at NCSU, Dexter Brooks (B.S. '65, M.S. '71) was more concerned with mathematical problems than legal problems.

But a growing interest in voting rights issues in his native Robeson County, NC turned Brooks' interest from math and electrical engineering to the study of law.

For almost a year, Brooks, a Lumbee Indian, has served as a resident Superior Court judge in Robeson County. The judgeship was created by the NC General Assembly following the death of Indian activist Julian Pierce, the man many Lumbees believed would have become the state's first Indian judge.

Pierce was killed in a domestic dispute just five weeks before the Democratic primary in which he challenged Robeson County District Attorney Joe Freeman Britt for Superior Court Judge.

When NC Governor James G. Martin pledged to appoint an Indian to the new judgeship, Brooks' ear probably began to burn. He was a clear choice for the position.

Brooks had been a partner in the Pembroke law firm Locklear, Brooks, Jacobs and Sutton. He and Arnold Locklear had formed the partnership following Brooks' graduation from law school in 1976.

Brooks had known Julian Pierce and worked with him on a number



### A Message from the reigning Miss Lumbee Jammi Lowry

Living the dream of being Miss Lumbee has made me wiser and more appreciative of my heritage. I take great pride representing my people and I am always eager to educate others about our struggles as well as our victories. We have so much to be thankful for. I deeply appreciate all the prayers and support you have offered me throughout my reign. Listed below is a brief summary of events I have shared in.

I participated in the Healing Lodge Native American Ministries where I performed and visited with various individuals. The "Healing Lodge" addresses many issues that affect our community such as: substance abuse, homelessness, sexually transmitted diseases, domestic violence, child abuse, and suicide prevention. I encourage each of you to become involved with this project that will make our community a better place.

I provided special entertainment for the following programs or events: Syphilis Awareness Seminar held at Prospect United Methodist Church, Pembroke Chamber of Commerce Banquet held at UNC-Pembroke, Vocations/Scholarship Rally held at Prospect United Methodist Church, Douglas Byrd High School Pageant in Fayetteville, UNC-Pembroke Alumni Banquet, and the Unity Conference General Assembly program.

I attended Spring Hill Middle School's Multicultural program in Laurinburg where I performed and gave a presentation on unity and brotherhood. It was a joy of mine to visit Shining Stars Daycare in Pembroke where I explained my regalia and demonstrated native dance. What a great honor for me to be the first Miss Lumbee to attend the initial Diversity Awards Banquet held at Richmond Community College where I sang a traditional song and gave a brief presentation of the Lumbee culture. A humbling experience came for me when I visited various rest homes where I played the piano and sang gospel hymns.

In closing, I would like to encourage our youth to spend time with our elders. The knowledge they possess is so great and by learning from them will help us to preserve our culture.

If my services are ever needed, you can contact me either through LRDA, Ms Angel Clark at 521-8602, or my home 521-3706. You can also read additional articles throughout my reign on my web page [www.lumbee.org](http://www.lumbee.org). I am your reigning Miss Lumbee 2001-2002, Jammi Lowry. Aho!

### Hunt Wins Miss North Carolina Teen All American

Miss Morgan Brittany Hunt, daughter of Johnny and Demetrius Hunt of Rowland N.C. was crowned Miss North Carolina Teen All American 2002 at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Winston-Salem on Sunday March 3rd.

Forty-five beautiful young ladies competed with entrants from all over the state for the coveted crown.

As Miss North Carolina Teen All American 2002, Morgan will receive an expense paid trip to Miami, Florida this August where she will compete with young women from all over the country for the prestigious title of Miss Teen All American. The 24th Annual Miss Teen All American pageant will be presented at the Miami airport Hilton and Towers on August 1st to August 4th 2002.

Morgan is the granddaughter of fuller and the late Delora Locklear of Lumberton and Ms. Laney and the late Jack Hunt from Rowland N.C. Morgan is 19 yrs. old and a



freshman at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke where she plans to major in Mass Communications. Morgan would like to thank everyone for their support and prayer's.

### First Bank Promotions



Lucille Locklear



Peggy Hunt

First Bank is pleased to announce that Lucille B. Locklear has been promoted to assistant vice President and is the Branch Manager of the Pembroke Branch.

She is currently a resident of Robeson County and is a graduate from Magnolia High School in Lumberton, NC. She has also attended Robeson Community College and has obtained her Series 6 and Series 63 license which allows her to conduct mutual fund and variable annuity transactions. She has been employed with First Bank since March 2001 when First Bank acquired the Pembroke Branch from First Union, but has over 29 years of banking experience. She serves as President of the West Robeson United Methodist Women, Director of the Children's Church Ministry, is a certified Lay Speaker, and serves on the Advisory board of the CIS Academy.

Lucille is married to the Reverend Marshall M. Locklear and they have five children.

She is the daughter of Wardell and Gertha Burnette of Shannon. They make their home in Maxton, NC in the Red Banks community and are members of the West Robeson United Methodist Church.

First Bank is also pleased to announce that Peggy S. Hunt has been promoted to Branch Officer. Peggy is the Assistant Manager of the Pembroke Branch.

She is currently a resident of Robeson County where she graduated from Pembroke Senior High School. She has also attended Robeson community College and has obtained her Series 6 and Series 63 license which allows her to conduct mutual fund and annuity transactions. She has been employed with First Bank since March 2001, but has over 23 years of banking experience.

Peggy is married to Brian R. Hunt and they have five children. They make their home in Pembroke, NC and attend the West Robeson United Methodist Church.

First Bank is the major subsidiary of First Bancorp, a bankholding company based in Troy, North Carolina. It is a state-chartered bank that serves a sixteen-county area centered in Troy. First Bank has assets of over \$1 billion and offers a full range of banking services to individuals and businesses throughout its market area.