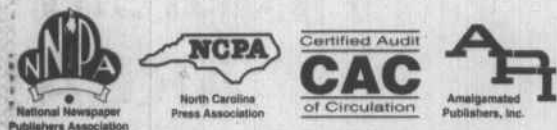


OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Endorsements

Polite for sheriff

John Polite is the most qualified person to be this county's next sheriff, period.

He has been there and done it. His opponent simply does not have the kind of qualifications that can stand up to Polite's.

It should be that simple for voters, but of course it is not. Some are trying to say that Polite is too closely tied to the scandal-plagued regime of outgoing Sheriff Ron Barker and that the new department needs a clean slate. That is nonsense. Anybody who knows Polite (and many people know him because he has spent his entire life in this county) will tell you that Polite's only loyalty is to the truth and to what is right. Polite simply worked for Barker, just as he did for several other sheriffs in his 27 years at the department. Polite is his own man. There is much that could be said of the history that Polite will make if he is elected Tuesday. In a county that has had only white male sheriffs, no black man has ever gotten this close or has ever been as qualified to lead the department.

It is VITAL that blacks support Polite in record numbers because many people in this county do not want that type of milestone recorded in the history books. No one is advocating that Polite should be elected simply because he is black. He is the most qualified, and after serving this community for all his life and the people of this county for the last three decades in the Sheriff's Office, he has earned our support.

District Court judges

It is also VITAL that we support Denise Hartsfield in her bid to replace Roland Hayes on the District Court bench. Hartsfield's election is the only way that the court will keep some color. We are used to not being represented on powerful bodies (look at the U.S. Senate), but diversity on the District Court, where most of the people affected are minorities, is crucial.

Hartsfield is qualified to be a District Court judge and not only because of her strong legal background. She has shown her ability to be folksy, yet firm. She will give everyone respect and her full attention. A hometown girl with a big sense humor, those of us who know Hartsfield know that she will always do what she feels is right.

Lisa Menefee deserves our support in the other race for District Court judge. She has shown that she is fair and is open to new approaches to helping defendants and the community simultaneously. Her opponent, James Davis, is a bit scary, with all his talk about Republican loyalty. If he is allowed to exercise his conservative values on the bench, God help us.

County commissioners

Like many of you, we had a hard time calling the race for District A county commissioner. Three men are after the two seats in the district, and all of them would be great assets for the area. Republican John Davenport is just 35 and has that fire in his belly to help foster change in the city. Democratic incumbent Walter Marshall has been a fighter for much of his life, from his days heading the NAACP to his seven years as a commissioner. And Democrat Beaufort Bailey is a local legend as a result of his community and public service.

Although some of the positions he has taken in the past have left many of us scratching our heads, Marshall deserves to be re-elected. Calling Atkins High School inferior, regardless of what context it was put in, was not the

smartest thing to do, but Marshall has done far more good than harm for this community. He is not a pushover and will not let the people of his district be slighted.

It's a tough call but Davenport deserves the other seat. Bailey should be commended for his years of service. His time on the School Board has already made him a well established leader. It is time for us to start growing our next generation of leaders. Davenport has the potential to be one of them. He has grown tremendously since his ill-fated campaign against Alderman Vivian Burke last year. He is now talking about real issues, like school equity and economic development. Perhaps because he is not a Democrat, Davenport has worked harder than any candidate in this race to get his message out. In the process he has become popular and very likable. If Davenport is elected, there is a strong possibility that the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners will have only one Democrat and six Republicans, which usually is not good news for blacks. We believe that Davenport will be a new kind of Republican, one who will put the best interests of the community before party loyalty.

Board of Education

The School Board seems to be conjoined at the hip these days. Most of the members think alike and talk the same kind of talk. That needs to change. Robust debate can only make our system stronger. Eric Elliott can bring that fresh energy to the board. He will not be afraid to ask tough questions on the board, questions about school equity and achievement. Elliott is the only Democrat running in the at-large race, where he faces three incumbents. We can choose up to three candidates in this race, but Elliott is the only one who has actively advocated for the black community's support, and we should give it to him. He is the only candidate who deserves our vote in this race.

N.C. Court of Appeals, Supreme Court

We don't have to spend a lot of time trying to sell Loretta Biggs to Chronicle readers. She is simply one of the fairest and most honest legal professionals in this city. She is this county's only voice on the N.C. Court of Appeals. Let's do all we can to keep her there.

Also, let's work to keep Judge Wanda Bryant on the court. Biggs and Bryant are two of only four blacks on the N.C. Court of Appeals.

We also enthusiastically endorse Justice G.K. Butterfield, the state's lone remaining black Supreme Court justice. Butterfield, who was endorsed by the 13 former presidents of the N.C. State Bar this week, has shown that he has what it takes to serve on the state's highest court. Spread the word about these candidates. As African-Americans, they face uphill battles in their statewide races.

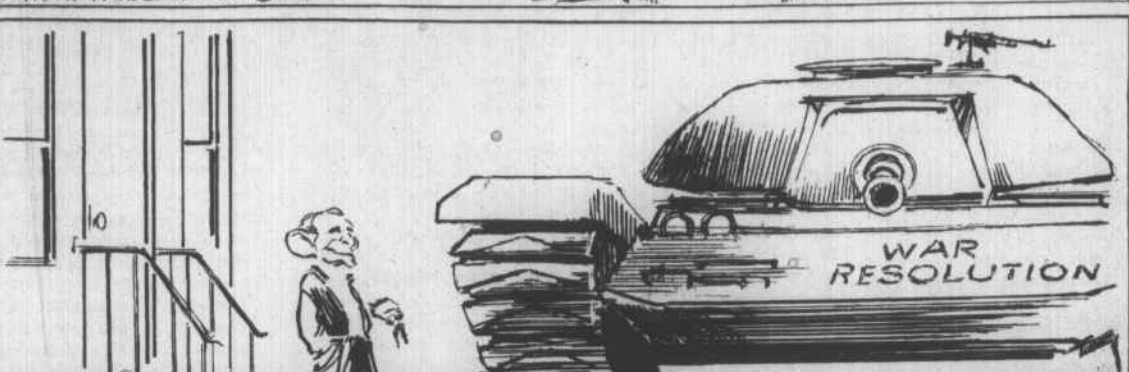
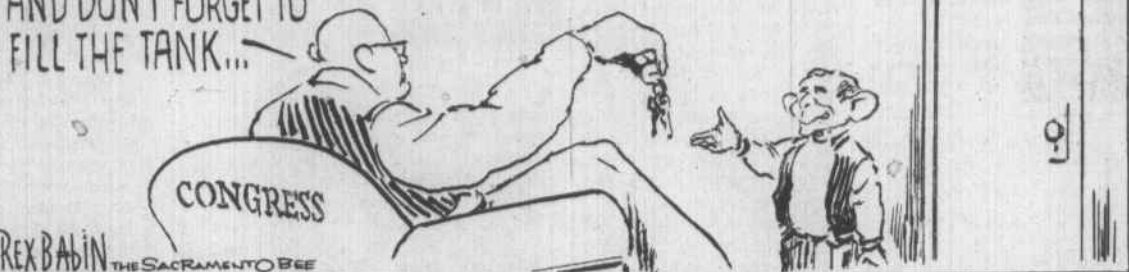
Congress

Erskine Bowles will undoubtedly be more prone as a U.S. senator to fight for issues that blacks care about. Elizabeth Dole may be sweet as pie, but has anyone actually been able to decipher where she stands on anything?

Mel Watt has done everything right in his 10 years serving the 12th Congressional District. Let's give 'em Mel again.

Last week The Chronicle enthusiastically endorsed Earline Parmon for the District 72 state House seat and Larry Womble for the District 71 state House seat.

OK, HERE ARE THE KEYS...
AND DON'T FORGET TO
FILL THE TANK...



Letters to the Editor

Marshall's record

To the Editor:

In the Oct. 24 issue of The Chronicle, Walter Marshall indicated that his and my relationship ended when he appeared in 1999 before the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board and argued against a proposal that would have converted Atkins Middle School back to a high school. Marshall's appearance and comments at that meeting did not begin the split; they were the straw that broke the camel's back.

When I succeeded Marshall on the School Board, I was shocked to find the following conditions:

- 1) From the third to the eighth grade 65 percent of black children were failing and only 35 percent were passing.
- 2) Eleven thousand children had been suspended from school, and 6,820 (62 percent) of the 11,000 were black children.
- 3) Out of the \$95 million school bond referendum of 1994, North Hills Elementary School was the only inner-city school built, and two old, inner-city schools were renovated.

Marshall was on the Building and Grounds Committee, where decisions are made and recommended to the full board. "The one constant in the black community" and then-School Board member, Marshall never addressed publicly the above critical issues. He had prior knowledge of where the schools would be built, the costs and the populations of students to be served in those schools. After the schools were built, he publicly criticized the Choice Plan (another deception).

Nevertheless, Marshall spoke out against the building of Petree Elementary School, which serves black children in East Winston. He attended a working session of the School Board. No other county commissioner has attended School Board working sessions; only reporters usually come to such sessions. He exercised

impropriety by attending a meeting dealing with a personnel matter. He attempted to undermine the building site for the new Atkins by pushing the Nicholson Road site when the voters' wishes were to keep the campaign promise to build the school on the Old Greensboro Road site. There was a compilation of issues that caused the split between Walter Marshall and Victor Johnson, not just the Atkins situation.

Victor Johnson Jr.

Vote for Parmon

To the Editor:

I encourage you to join me in supporting Earline Parmon to be our next state representative from the 72nd District of Forsyth County.

She has represented us as a Forsyth County commissioner for 12 years, and I feel that her experience will make her a strong representative for the citizens of North Carolina.

I have known her for more than 20 years and have worked with her in numerous capacities. I have found her to be diligent, cooperative, trustworthy, and she works well with people.

I highly recommend Parmon to the citizens of this community.

Annie Brown Kennedy

Criticize but state the facts

To the Editor:

The article "Diverse trio seek commissioners' seats in District A" in the Oct. 24 issue of The Chronicle states that Walter Marshall criticized several people, including School Board member Victor Johnson, for sending their children to mostly white Reynolds High School instead of Atkins, the city's premier black school in its day. According to the article, "Marshall said people like Johnson chose to send their children to

Reynolds because racism made the education at Atkins inferior."

The facts are: (1) Atkins closed as a senior high school in 1971, the year that Johnson's daughter entered first grade in Carbondale, Ill. (2) Upon her return to Winston-Salem in 1973, she was enrolled in the gifted and talented program. The feeder pattern for that program was Brunson, Wiley, Paisley and Reynolds.

For at least the second time, the facts are presented to you, Marshall. Elected officials should share correct information regardless of what their opinions may be.

Constance H. Johnson
A proud Atkins graduate

The race

To the Editor:

As a resident of Guilford County I can't help but notice the negative tone that the race for Forsyth County sheriff has taken. Is the race for sheriff really about the best qualified candidate or is it about ethnicity?

Let's not consider the fact that one candidate is African-American and the other is white. Just consider the qualifications and experience of each candidate. One has 27 years of experience in the Sheriff's Office, not only working for Ron Barker. The other candidate has 24 years of experience in the FBI. Both candidates promise change if elected as sheriff. If race isn't an issue, why not support your own party affiliation? Why make the statement that if the whites would have voted, you would have won (McGee). Sounds like racism. As the former high-ranking official under Sheriff Ron Barker, McGee now supports Schatzman. But Schatzman states he wants complete change - "clean house."

Let's not judge these candidates on the color of their skin, but on the character. Let's throw out this issue of race. Do what is right. Vote for the one who is most experienced, intelligent and POLITE.

Romans 8:31.

Ainsley E. Owens

We need leaders like Womble

To the Editor:

Although environmental issues were major news stories this summer, few of our N.C. General Assembly candidates have focused much discussion on our environment. From urban sprawl, to our record number of high-ozone days, to our statewide water shortage, the human effect on our environment is increasingly noticeable.

One candidate, Rep. Larry Womble, understands how important clean air, transportation alternatives and water resource protection are to our health, quality of life and economic viability. Womble, who is running in the 71st District, has been endorsed by the N.C. Chapter of Sierra Club. His votes reflect his understanding that our county and state can prosper only when we provide our citizens with healthy, safe places to work and live.

During the most recent legislative session, Womble was a vocal supporter of the Clean Smokestacks Bill, which requires electric power plants to reduce the emissions that contribute to ozone pollution and mercury poisoning. He was also helpful in passing legislation that prevents industries from constructing new buildings before receiving air quality permits.

In the past year more than 50 bills relating to the environment came before the General Assembly or its committees. We need leaders, like Larry Womble, who understand that our environmental decisions affect everyone in the state. I urge you to vote for him Nov. 5.

Elyse Jung
Political chairperson of the
Foothill Group of the N.C.
Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Nation's economy should be a wake-up call for voters



U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson

Guest Columnist

With our nation's economy stumbling and midterm elections approaching, voters must mobilize in support of candidates with a kitchen-table agenda that benefits African-American families.

Since January 2001, our nation's economy has deteriorated dramatically, aided in large part by a Republican domestic agenda that favors tax cuts for the wealthy at the expense of ordinary citizens.

Under failed GOP economic policies, our nation's stock market has lost \$4.5 trillion in value. That decline, combined with corporate accounting scandals, has erased billions from the pension funds and retirement accounts of American work-

ers. Our nation has shed 2 million jobs, with the jobless rate for African-Americans double the national average.

The bad news doesn't end there.

According to recent Census Bureau data, the numbers of U.S. citizens living in poverty rose significantly last year, the first increase in eight years.

For African-Americans it was the first increase in two decades.

And the income of middle-class households fell for the first time since the last recession ended in 1991.

Yet, GOP leaders in Congress have repeatedly refused to address the economic issues that matter most. Amid this recession, they have refused to raise the minimum wage or to improve job training options. They have also repeatedly dragged their feet on extending unemployment benefits to give a safety net for those still on the jobless rolls.

These economic issues

have had a ripple effect through our economy, and have adversely impacted our health care and retirement security.

Even though the number of Americans without health insurance increased by 1.4 million in 2001 and the price of prescription drugs is soaring, House Republicans blocked efforts by Democrats to put in place a comprehensive Medicare prescription benefit this summer. Instead, they passed a sham plan that covers only a fraction of America's senior citizens.

The legislation puts benefits in the hands of private insurance companies and took a dangerous step toward privatizing Medicare, which would put the plan off limits to many who need it.

Republicans have also attempted to sweep the outlook for Social Security under the rug. We all know that Social Security is the nation's most effective retirement security program, and its disability and survivor benefits

disproportionately benefit people of color.

Yet, President Bush's reckless fiscal policies have raided \$2 trillion from the Social Security trust fund, and Republicans continue with their plans to privatize the system and cut benefits. What's more, GOP leaders have refused to even have a debate with Democrats on the future of Social Security before the coming elections.

Our nation deserves better, and we must demand better from our leaders.

On Nov. 5, voters will have the opportunity to elect policy-makers who will fight to protect domestic security along with national security.

If Democrats take over the majority in the House, we will work to create jobs, increase access to quality health care and protect retirement security.

The choice is clear for African-Americans. We must go to the polls Nov. 5 and vote for candidates who are in step with our needs.