

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Turning back the clock in 2016

It is in-conceivable in this year of 2016 that we have a presumptive candidate of a major political party running on a platform of racism, sexism, bigotry and hatred.

It is less conceivable that a majority of the party agrees with and supports his position. This is still America. It's not quite the same as it was pre-civil rights days but it still possesses many of the characteristics of days of old.

From the days of Lincoln up to the days of Lyndon B. Johnson, each and every national election was a political contest between the candidates who favored blacks and the ones who vowed to maintain the status quo. Fear mongers used the bestiality of the black man and fear of reprisals against the slave master as a reason to deny the slave full protection under the law. He had to be contained and controlled. The country clearly belonged to the White Anglo Saxon Protestant Males.

The 15th Amendment gave blacks the right to vote. United States Supreme Court decisions in the late 19th century interpreted the amendment narrowly. From 1890 to 1910, most black voters in the South were effectively disenfranchised by new state constitutions and state laws incorporating such obstacles as poll taxes and discriminatory literacy tests, from which white voters were exempted by grandfather clauses. A system of whites-only primaries and violent intimidation by white groups also suppressed black participation.

Propositions to ease these restrictions during national elections met with fierce opposition.

White women in the United States won the right to vote in the late 19th century.

Segregationists feeling assured

Barry Goldwater, the Republican candidate for U.S. president in 1964, can be seen as the godfather (or maybe the midwife) of the current Tea Party. He believed the Civil Rights Act was unconstitutional. But states, he said, should implement the law in their own time. Many white southerners, especially segregationists, felt reassured

by Goldwater's words. African-Americans heard the message that was intended to be heard, which was that Goldwater and the Goldwater wing of the Republican Party were opposed not only to the Civil Rights Act, but to the Civil Rights Movement, in large part, as well. What happened to black members of the "Party of Lincoln"? When Goldwater, in his nomination acceptance speech, famously told the ecstatic convention "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice," he was speaking of "a very specific notion of liberty." "Small government, a government that doesn't give out handouts to black people; a government that doesn't have laws that interfere with states' rights; a government that is not conducting a war on poverty."

From the middle 1970s to the election of Barack Obama in 2008, civil rights, social and political inclusion was the tone of the day.

Enter Donald Trump in 2008 with his "birther" rhetoric. Out of the blue, even though proven wrong time after time, he insisted that Barack Obama was not an American citizen.

Donald Trump was well aware that if you were born to parents, at least one of whom was a U.S. citizen at the time of your birth; you automatically gained U.S. citizenship through the process of acquisition. It does not matter whether you were born on American soil or foreign. If you have children, those children will also acquire U.S. citizenship through you at their birth.

The US Constitution states:
"No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States, at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty-five years, and been fourteen years a resident within the United States."

Awareness be damned, Trump persisted even after the nation had spoken, and Barack Obama had

See Clock on A7



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We celebrate a fearless champion: Muhammad Ali

To the Editor:

Our hearts are filled with sadness as we learn of the passing of Muhammad Ali. He is an exemplar of personal strength and athletic grace. His lifelong career made it possible for people of different races to sit together and enjoy the meaning of a sportsmanship that demonstrated relentless competitiveness, sometimes with an accompaniment of poetic assertiveness and provocative humor.

His emphatic rejection of the casual racial discrimination, which others seemed to take for granted as an inevitable characteristic of American society, took him high into the ranks of the nation's chief advocates of equal status for all persons. Likewise, his brave integrity outside the sports arena on behalf of religious freedom and opposition to senseless war should admit him into the

orbit of civil rights heroes.

The Civil Rights community mourns his loss with the rest of the world, and we will remember him warmly and honor his legacy as a fearless champion who led the way in breaking down walls that have divided us, without giving up on who he really wanted to be. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family.

John L. Swaine, CEO
International Civil Rights
Center & Museum
Greensboro

Muhammad Ali: champion of human and civil rights

To the Editor:

Muhammad Ali was not only a champion in the boxing ring, but he was a champion of human

and civil rights. During a difficult time in American history he stood on principle to end racism and bigotry. In doing so, Ali showed the world how a true champion can stand with courage, self-respect, and dignity.

Muhammad Ali made a considerable impact on the world and his spirit and his work will live on for generations to come.

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, we send our deepest condolences to his family, and we mourn the loss of a true American hero.



Butterfield

Congressional Black Caucus
Chairman G. K. Butterfield
(NC-01)
Washington, D.C.

REFLECTIONS

My memories of Muhammad Ali

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

As a child, I was introduced to boxing by my father, Timothy J. Ramsey Sr. During my early years of watching the sport, I thought Mike Tyson was the best boxer that ever lived. That was until my father showed me clips of Muhammad Ali fighting Joe Frazier and epic battle with George Foreman. I then began to appreciate the man he was inside of the ring.

You couldn't help but admire a man that told his opponents what he was going to do to them before he



Ramsey

entered the ring, then had the skill and talent to back it up. His classic rhymes and oneliners were before his time, and his verbal battles with the legendary Howard Cosell will live on forever.

I remember when I was living in St. Petersburg, Florida, and I was able to meet Muhammad Ali at a banquet. At that time, he was the first celebrity I had ever met. I was very intimidated, but he could not have been a nicer person. This was in the early '90s, so his Parkinson's had not taken over his body as much. He was able to converse with me for a short time. It was the highlight of my year. He signed an autograph for me that I still have and treasure to this day.

As I matured, I was able to understand the impact Ali had outside of the ring and admired him more and more. He will surely be missed.

"Hating people because of their color is wrong. And it doesn't matter which color does the hating. It's just plain wrong."

-Muhammad Ali

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If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our website, www.wschronicle.com.

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