

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Celebrating
42
Years
of Community Journalism

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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.

Early voting provides chance to vote and get things done

Michelle Obama is "The Closer." She worked in that capacity on last Thursday when she came to Winston-Salem to rally for Hillary Clinton. Clinton was there, too.

The first lady gave a passionate call to arms in making the case for Hillary Clinton. She gave her family background and that of her husband, President Barack Obama, and Clinton, the daughter of an orphan and small businessman.

She touched the hearts of the Democratic base. And she spoke about early voting.

"I want you all to crowd those places. I want you to remember that folks protested for our right to vote. They endured beatings for our right to vote."

It appears she could see the early voting site at Forsyth Tech's Mazie Woodruff Center, on Lansing Drive, that day.

"Are you with me? We're going to stand in line! Go let your voice be heard!"

At the Mazie Woodruff Center, that's what they did, stood in line with an average waiting time of an hour and a half.

(Other sites have recorded times from an hour to two hours.)

It didn't seem to irritate people. In fact, it provided several opportunities for people in line.

Two people caught up on the happenings at church.

Two others talked about family matters, although it was not about their families.

Still others pulled their cell phones out and looked at movies, checked email and talked to others while waiting in line.

Some people talked about the voting process. One man thought a sign said "Photo ID required," when it really said "No photo ID required." A person in line pointed out that the "No" was blocked from his view.

Roland Martin of the TV One network morning show "News One Now" says bring your water and anything else you need to help you endure the lines.

The process appeared smooth last Thursday. There were just a lot of people in line, and a hefty ballot to go through. For early voting site information, go to <http://www.wschronicle.com/2016/10/early-voting-begins-across-state/>.

For those who plan to take advantage of early voting now through Saturday, Michelle Obama wants you to forge ahead.

"I urge you to please, please be encouraged ... because we still live in the greatest country on this earth," she said.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Justice denied in case of Calvin M. Smith

To the Editor:

Just when you think there can be no more egregious errors in ROY COOPER's closet, there are more. Cooper as attorney general has made it a mission to relegate, turn back the clock, and minimize Black justice in North Carolina.

He has "served" for 16 years in this state, yet has not forwarded the intent and outcome of justice for Black men or other minorities. In fact, he has established a mind set at the SBI of collusion, misrepresentation and outright falsehood that cost Black men their freedoms.

Take the case of KALVIN MICHAEL SMITH. His partisan loyalties have never been more apparent than the bumbling, fumbling, incompetence of this case. Justice is supposedly blind - obviously, ROY COOPER IS ALSO! I'm not an attorney; however, a law degree is not essential to see there are problems with this prosecution.

Since 2010 the attorney general has stubbornly opposed Smith's request for a new trial. Why? If justice is your "expertise" it would seem that a new trial would justify your belief that justice was served, not questioned. Mr. Cooper; what is there to fear/hide/ to be denied. Let's take a look at the case.

Kalvin Smith is "accused" of severely beating a store employee in 1995. The Silk Plant Forest Citizens Review Committee empanelled by the Winston-Salem City Council found that "the defendant should receive a new trial after sitting in prison for 15 years." No response or action from Cooper.

They also found no credible evidence that Calvin Smith was at the Silk Plant store on Dec. 9, 1995, the day of the beating. A former FBI assistant director after completing his

own review agreed with the Citizens Review Committee's recommendation. No response or action from Cooper.

The director (Chris Swecker), went further to say the investigation by the Winston-Salem police was "woefully flawed and incomplete" thus calling into question whether the original jury rendered their verdict based on all the relevant facts of the case." No response or action from Cooper.

One would think that justice is blind; however, the people of Winston-Salem, a historically Democrat bastion who has helped ROY COOPER win elections time after time, have his number! The reality of justice is that it's also tempered by politics.

ROY COOPER does not want to review, revisit or respond to the plight of Calvin Smith.

If this is the type of "justice" borne from 16 years of "service" to North Carolina, we are all in trouble, regardless of political leaning or beliefs.

Kalvin Smith deserves a new trial. North Carolina deserves a much better effort from our elected constitutional officers such as Roy Cooper. We all must be more diligent in the pursuit of justice. I remember the adage that applies here: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." - Martin Luther King Jr.

Clarence Henderson
High Point

Vote no on Forsyth County school bonds

To the Editor:

This bond [put forth by Winston-

Salem/Forsyth County Schools] will not educate one child in Forsyth County, but will continue to expand the segregation of our children according to their ZIP code and economic status.

It advocates building new schools in areas where the student population has been intentionally inflated to show need, and no schools where student population has been intentionally decreased to show no interest.

Our School Board, with the support of our County Commissioners, is continuing the over 20 year's mission of the previous School Board; to remove traditional schools out of predominant communities of color; to set up their concept of an educational system; in other words "Charter Schools" with strong focus on Cook, Ashley, Winston Prep and Carver.

The message has been for neighborhood schools. However, schools have been removed or closed in East and Northeast Winston-Salem, the most recent being Hanes-Lowrance schools. Evidently, neighborhood schools do not pertain to residents of these two wards, considered to be in the urban center.

This bond will not build one new school in these two wards where schools have been removed or closed or close the technological gap of the existing schools.

We as residents and taxpayers are being asked to support and pay for bonds that do not support and will not build schools in our communities which are also in Forsyth County.

It has been over 20 years of this and we can no longer continue to vote for such bonds and Hope that Fairness and Justice will be done. We must vote to stop it here and now.

Chenita Johnson
Winston-Salem

Fannie B. Rogers' last vote



Ron Rogers
Guest Columnist

Recently while watching television, I saw a group of millennials being interviewed about whom they would vote for in the upcoming election. Some said Hillary Clinton, others said Donald Trump, others said they would vote for an independent candidate.

What bugged me was one guy who said, "I'm not voting" with a laugh and a look on his face that showed me his arrogance. OK, smart guy, Clinton or Trump could determine what affects your life, job,

whatever you do. They can mess with your world.

The statement took me back 40 years ago on Election Day in 1976 and my late grandmother, Fannie B. Rogers. She was a well-informed individual. She read newspapers, books, the works.

She lived in an era when segregation ruled and poll taxes was the law in Virginia. My grandmother was a domestic worker. She was proud and God-fearing. In the fall of 1976, she was battling cancer.

During that time, I was working at my first newspaper job as a copy-runner for The Richmond News Leader. For me it was an exciting job, to see how putting out a newspaper really worked.

On Election Day 1976,

I voted and then went over to see my grandmother. At the time she was bedridden and could not walk. She told me she wanted to vote. Along with other family members, we took her to the polls, where she voted.

Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford battled through the night, with Carter squeaking out a narrow win.

My grandmother's condition continued to become worse. She passed away on Jan. 19, 1977, a day before Carter was sworn in as president.

If my dying grandmother could get out of her sick bed and cast a vote, why can't that young man vote?

What's really your excuse, millennials?



Ron Rogers draws editorial cartoons for The Chronicle

Ron Rogers illustration for The Chronicle