

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.

There are bright spots in dismal election

Many African-Americans in Winston-Salem and across the nation, who mostly vote Democratic, are feeling angst after waking Nov. 9 to realize Donald Trump won the presidency.

Trump spewed all kinds of negative talk against minorities. It's hard for many to think of him as leading the greatest nation in the world.

But what has been lost in all the Trump news for North Carolina African-Americans is the fact that a black judge was voted on to the N.C. Supreme Court, replacing a judge who supported the largest voter suppression measure in N.C. history. A federal panel of judges just before the 2016 elections overturned most of the 2013 voting law.

African-American Judge Mike Morgan, a Wake Superior Court Democrat, beat out Associate Supreme Court Justice Bob Edmunds, a Republican, by about 10 points, according to preliminary figures. This means that the Supreme Court now has a Democratic majority and another African-American on the Court. Cheri L. Beasley is an African-American currently on the court.

CAMPAIGN 2016

Morgan won the statewide race decisively. The General Assembly had passed a law allowing retention elections for Supreme Court justices, when North Carolinians would vote whether to retain current justices or not. This was done in an effort to keep Edmunds in power.

The effort backfired when Sabra Faires, a Wake County attorney, sued and won her case against the retention election.

Faires had filed a lawsuit asking a N.C. state Superior Court three-judge panel to toss out the law, arguing that moving from contested elections to up-or-down retention votes was a change that required an amendment to the state constitution approved by voters, and that did not happen. The panel ruled for Faires, and it was appealed to the state Supreme Court.

Edmunds recused himself from the court, which left the court with a 3-3 vote on the matter, thus giving the victory to Faires, who wanted to run for a seat on the court. She lost to Morgan and Edmunds in the primary for the seat. The top two vote getters moved on to the General Election.

Now, Republicans in the General Assembly don't want a Democratic majority on the court, so they are trying to concoct a scheme to add two more justices to the court to water down the Democratic majority, media reports say. Are we surprised? This is the Republican-majority General Assembly that passed the 2013 repressive voting law and the retention law. Let's hope this doesn't come to pass.

Another bright spot for African-Americans in Forsyth County is the victory of Lynne Johnson for register of deeds. This African-American woman, with 27 years experience working in the register of deeds office, showed what can happen when people consider experience over race. Johnson also won her Democratic primary and went on to defeat the Republican last week.

The Register of Deeds records, manages, and pre-serves public real property records, vital information on births, deaths and marriages, and military service records, while also administering the Notary Oath.

Other African-Americans ran for office, from statewide to Forsyth County offices, but lost.

We can only hope that those thinking of running for office will pick the brains of these two bright stars about how to win and will work to win offices when they become open.

Speaking of that, when Republican Mark Johnson leaves the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Board to become North Carolina secretary of education, there will be a vacancy to fill. This would be a great opportunity for an African-American to work to fill the void.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

President thanks voters for Forsyth Tech bond passage

To the Editor:
I want to thank the voters of Forsyth County, County Commission



members, and supporters and friends of Forsyth Tech. The success of this bond referendum will allow us to provide new and much-needed ways to upgrade our facilities over the next six to eight years. In turn, this will give us the opportunity to train our students with the skills for local, better-paying, in-demand jobs, which will help our community grow economically.

Forsyth Tech is a good steward of the funds provided by the people, and we can assure our community that every dollar will be well spent," he said.

**Dr. Gary Green, President
Forsyth Technical Community
College
Winston-Salem**

Note: The Forsyth County Community College Bonds were on the Nov. 8 ballot. The \$65 million bond package passed by a 74 percent to 26 percent margin, receiving about 117,880 yes votes compared with 42,400 no votes.

We must work together to bridge the divide in our nation

To the Editor:

We stand at a critical moment in American democracy. Events over the past year make clear that our nation is deeply divided. We must work together to bridge this divide to create the conditions necessary to achieve unity, promote cross-racial understanding and eliminate racial tensions.

The origins of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyers' Committee) lie inside the White House. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy issued a call for lawyers across the country to mobilize to help combat discrimination and protect the rights

of minorities.

While some progress has been made, we know that this progress is fragile and can be easily unraveled.

As we prepare for President-Elect Donald Trump's tenure and a change in administration, the Lawyers' Committee will continue to advocate for policies that ensure that every man, woman and child living in this nation is treated with dignity, fairness, respect and equality.

In 2017, we will aggressively push the new administration, as we have consistently pushed every administration for decades, to take action to promote and ensure equality and justice under law for all.

As we move toward 2017, there is unfinished business on core civil rights issues that must remain at the forefront of our national agenda.

Key issues include:

*Restoration of the Voting Rights Act and strong enforcement of federal civil rights laws to address evidence of ongoing voting discrimination and voter suppression in many communities across the country, and made evident throughout the 2016 election cycle;

*Policing reform to help strengthen police-community relations and end the scourge of unconstitutional policing practices in cities across the U.S.; and

*Sentencing reform to address stark racial disparities in federal sentencing, an issue that enjoys strong bipartisan support.

Last evening, citizens across the country exercised their First Amendment rights in response to the Nov. 8 election. These demonstrations make evident the deep level of polarization and divisiveness that exists in our country and underscores the need for leadership that promotes unity. The fate of American democracy is at stake.

**Kristen Clarke, President and
Executive Director
Lawyers' Committee for Civil
Rights Under Law
Washington, D.C.**

Roy Cooper win as governor shows teachers made a difference

To the Editor:

This election showed that North Carolinians believe that investing in our public schools is a priority in this state.

Teachers stood strong for education and made a real difference during this election.

We look forward to working with Governor-



Cooper

elect Cooper to move North Carolina forward.

**Mark Jewell, President
North Carolina Association of
Educators
Raleigh**

HBCU colleges fund leader congratulates Donald Trump

To the Editor:

Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMC) congratulates President-elect Donald J. Trump on his historic election as the 45th President of the United States of America. As a non-partisan higher education nonprofit organization advocating for the nation's publicly-supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), we work to ensure that HBCUs remain part of the political conversation.

We are hopeful that the incoming Trump Administration will continue to engage with TMC and the HBCU community to find positive



President-Elect Trump

solutions and solve important issues such as student loan debt and tuition costs.

TMC stands ready to serve as a resource to the Administration and work as a partner to strengthen the nation's higher education sector and HBCUs.

We look forward to having a productive and substantive working relationship on behalf of our member schools with President-elect Trump, Vice President-elect [Mike] Pence as well as the entire Administration.

**Johnny C. Taylor Jr.
President & CEO
Thurgood Marshall College
Fund**

Note: The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMC), established in 1987, is named for the U.S. Supreme Court's first African-American justice. TMC represents all Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and its member-schools include the 47 publicly-supported HBCUs.