

# Make Hope Scholarships accessible to everyone

By Lauch Faircloth  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

On most occasions, I don't agree with President Clinton on policy. But on the subject of higher education, there is common ground. The President, in this year's State of the Union address, formally made his "Hope Scholarship" proposal to provide a two-year \$1,500 tax credit or \$10,000 deduction for college tuition. In the same vein, I have introduced legislation to provide up to a \$1,500 tax credit for students of all age attending community colleges.

The President and I agree that we should make the opportunity of education beyond high school

available to all Americans. My bill will encourage workers, whether they're 25 or 65, to pursue an education beyond high school without incurring the costly expenses of attending a four-year college. By improving the skills of our workers, we will create better jobs in the manufacturing and technology sectors throughout the United States. There is nothing more important than work force training if we are to stay competitive in the global marketplace.

While I do agree with the basic intention of the President's proposal, there are significant differences between the two plans. I disagree with his grading requirements need-

ed to be met to receive the tax credit. The President's more expensive plan applies to two- and four-year schools while the Faircloth plan focuses on community colleges. I also disagree with the Clinton administration's method of paying for the tax credit.

First, the President's "Hope Scholarship" makes some short-sighted and burdensome requirements. The \$1,500 tax credit would only apply to full-time students. Any part-time students will only have the availability of \$750 a year. My proposal allows for up to \$1,500 a year for full-time or part-time students as long as the student is making sufficient academic

progress towards a degree or certificate, or the course of study must contribute to the student's employability skills.

The Clinton administration's plan requires that students maintain a "B" average in order to qualify. But grade point average requirements have pitfalls. For one, most community college students have such responsibilities as jobs and families. These individuals may not be able to maintain a "B" average in their studies. President Clinton's proposal would discourage borderline students who have not yet achieved the required 3.0 average. Besides that, some job skill courses at community colleges defy tradi-

tional grading. How can you apply a "B" average to welding?

Community college presidents tell me that the Clinton administration's grade requirements would be administratively burdensome for them to track. Also, the Internal Revenue Service would then have to certify the proper grades before awarding the tax credit (and who wants to deal with the IRS over how they performed in school?). The Faircloth plan makes the tax credit available to everyone who is maintaining the required minimum GPA where that student is enrolled.

LAUCH FAIRCLOTH represents North Carolina in the U.S. Senate.

## Letters to The Post

### Censorship raises its ugly head

The battle over direct funding of the Arts & Science Council is about censorship and constitutional rights. An organized minority has taken over the county commission in order to impose its values upon the rest of us. This cabal is smart enough to cloak its assault on our fundamental constitutional values of "free speech" and "equal protection under the law" within the rhetoric of "community moral standards".

In order to impose its version of community moral standards, this xenophobic minority is prepared to reverse the hard won community consensus on arts funding. The ultimate arrogance of this course of action should not be overlooked by voters. We stand on the brink of censoring any private group receiving county money for the crime of disagreeing with the juntas view of community moral standards. We should fear this attack on freedom of speech.

Our system works because the majority respects the rights of even the most unpopular minority. When the majority fails to honor this social contract the system become oppressive and ultimately totalitarian. In their quest to impose their will, the commission majority is on the brink of committing the ultimate political sin, sacrificing the principles of our constitution to political expediency.

Kelly Alexander Jr.  
Charlotte

### Decision intrudes on free speech

Attempts to censor gay material in theatrical productions partially funded with county money are an intrusion of religion into government. The U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights guarantees separation of church and state.

Christian right wingers are trying to establish "pro-family" credentials of their religious beliefs on the backs of gays and lesbians. yet the founder of their religion was single and/or possibly even gay: having a beloved disciple (see John 11:36, 13:23, 19:26, 21:7, and 21:20). Furthermore, Jesus Christ's scriptural teachings are actually quite anti-family (see Matthew 8:21-22, 10:34-38, 19:29, Luke 8:20-21, 9:59-60, 14:26, and Mark 3:31-35).

Examination of scripture shows that the Old Testament condemned homosexuality, not in itself, but because it was associated with pagan idolatry and "cult prostitutes".

Biblical opposition to prostitution, incest, or adultery does not forbid male-female sex acts as such. What the Bible opposes throughout is the abuse of heterosexuality.

Likewise Biblical condemnation of explorative, lewd, and wanton sex between men should not be interpreted as condemnation of male-male sex in general.

For more details of Biblical exegesis on homosexuality see Daniel Helminiak's "What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality" San Francisco, CA: Alamo Square Press 1994 and Tom Horner's "Jonathon Loved David" Philadelphia: The Westminster Press 1978.

James Senyszyn  
Charlotte

### What's on your mind?

Send your comments to The Charlotte Post, P.O. Box 30144, Charlotte, N.C. 28230 or fax (704) 342-2160. You can also use E-mail - charpost@clt.mindspring.com All correspondence must include a daytime telephone number for verification.

# Where will urge to clone ultimately stop?

By Mike Feinsilber  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - "The human imagination runs riot," declared the Church of Scotland when word came of what one of its countrymen had wrought. "We have got to ask the question, 'What if?'"

And indeed, in the weeks since scientist Ian Wilmut cloned the sheep that shocked the world, the question has been asked everywhere: What if someone clones a person?

Wilmut's cloning achievement makes philosophers of everyone.

A clone: a person with a DNA gene donor rather than parents. A person made to order. Replicated rather than conceived. Carried by a woman who is more delivery vehicle than mother. Not a son or a daughter, but an identical twin to someone older. A parent who is the twin of its child.

The mind boggles.

How the hand-wringing that followed the sheep named Dolly, a consensus has emerged: Human cloning will one day be achievable, and what can be done will be done.

Although not necessarily soon. Mankind will not stand for much failed experimentation involving spoiled embryos or fetuses. Wilmut had 227 misses before he brought Dolly into being.

Cloning is one of those drumbeat-of-history events that challenges mankind's understanding of the nature of nature. Such events seem to occur every generation -

Sputnik in the 1950s (with its promise that man could leave the confines of Earth) or in vitro fertilization in the 1970s (test tube babies, made without sexual contact).

As with IVF births, Americans at first blush seemed appalled at the notion of cloning a human. In polls, the common theme was that people should not "play God."

Even Wilmut agreed: "Similar experiments with humans would be totally unacceptable."

Dr. Ward Cassells, chief of cardiology at the University of Texas Medical School, thinks this squeamishness is needless and short-lived.

"Three or four years from now some couple is going to have the courage and persistence to be the first to do this," Cassells said in an interview. "They'll have a beautiful little baby and the critics will be quiet."

He cites a practical purpose: using the genes of a child suffering from incurable leukemia to clone a child who would then provide lifesaving bone marrow to his older twin.

"Would it be immoral to save the life of a 2-year-old baby?" he asks.

Others, of course, see far more heinous, far less selfless purposes.

They envision cloning to create a master race or a slave class. Cloning to duplicate celebrities. Cloning to provide organs for an ill person to "harvest." Cloning as an egomaniac's way to ensure his own immortality.

Or cloning to create an unbeatable basketball team?

Michael Jordan emerged as a front-running favorite in cloning speculation. But would a Jordan clone play as

well? His brawn could be cloned. But his brain with its billions of accumulated memories can't be duplicated.

And his brain has a lot to do with his basketball prowess. Jordan clones could turn out to be more adept at playing the piano. Or one might play chess, another Shakespeare, another the market, another gin rummy.

Policy researcher Jessica Matthews explains that humans are the result of genes and environment - nature and nurture - and of the "constant interplay between them."

"A cloned sheep proves that it will probably soon be possible to make a genetically identical copy of a person, but that is not remotely the same thing as making another you or another me," she wrote in a post-Dolly essay.

Once human cloning starts, the ancient nature vs. nurture debate will get an injection of evidence.

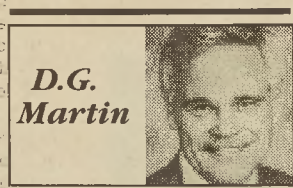
But just as it is already clear that the personhoods of lookalike twins differ, a person's clone, born in a different womb and into a different world perhaps decades after his gene donor, would differ even more in psychology and personality.

Unlike the Frankenstein monster in Mary Shelley's famous novel, a cloned person enters life as a baby, not fully grown. So, if the cloning of Michael Jordan were to start today, he'd be well into middle age before seeing his clone take his first dribble.

The biology of it all aside, the ethical issues that cloning raises are unsettling and unending.

MIKE FEINSILBER is an Associated Press columnist.

# Losing the last of the World War II veterans



D.G. Martin

A front page headline in a recent edition of a North Carolina newspaper: "County's Last World War I Veteran Dies"

It shouldn't have moved me as much as it did. After all, that war ended in 1918. Its youngest participants could not have been born much after 1900. Those still alive have past, or are fast approaching, their hundredth birthdays.

How do I explain why this is so important to me?

Maybe this way: When I was a young boy there were still a few Civil War veterans alive. They were just about as rare as a World War I veteran is today.

You are thinking, aren't you, that this is just another way of saying that the World War I is

about the same distance back in time now as the Civil War was in the early 1940s? You are right, I guess. But for me there sure is something more.

Back in the early 1940s when the Civil War veterans were fading away, most veterans of World War I were in their prime - just moving into middle age. Some were still young enough to go to war a second time in World War II. But mostly, for me, they were the men who ran things when I was growing up. The store owners, barbers, church leaders, and government officials came from the World War I generation.

They and their generation formed the "people-scape" in which my young life was set.

They were nothing special—just everything and everywhere.

Now, I keep thinking, they are mostly gone - and if they are alive, they are as old as the Civil War veterans were back then.

Do you think that I have been caught up in a circle of the pas-

sage of time - confused and without a real point for this column? If you have any sense of history, maybe the point is that we are at the moment of the very last chance with veterans of World War I.

If you know, or can find, one of them, take a young person or a child to see him and talk to him. Give that child a memory to connect that veteran all the way to the end of the next century. You will have done something worthwhile.

All this gets me thinking about the Second World War, its veterans, and the hard cold fact that in 25 or 30 years we will be reading this headline: "County's Last World War II Veteran Dies." It is hard to think of the World War II veterans as a dying breed. They surround us now. They are still everywhere - still so much our "people-scape."

One of them ran for president last year.

Another, former President

George Bush, showed us his vitality and courage the other week by jumping out of an airplane, free-falling for thousands of feet, and then parachuting to earth - smiling all the way.

We are in the middle of a great national debate about a proper national memorial for the World War II veterans. Maybe you have heard about it. The questions deal with the appropriateness of its design and whether its proposed location compromises the precious openness of the mall between the great monuments in our capital city.

However, the true monument to the veterans of World War II will be nothing that we construct.

It will be what they did. Over there in winning the victory, of course. But it will be more what they did here when they came back.

Their real memorial is what they made of this country, boosting it from the financial

depression and poverty into which most of them were born.

They came back from the war with more maturity, energy, confidence, practicality, open-mindedness, discipline, love of country, and competitiveness than any generation our country has ever seen.

Then the country gave them advanced educational opportunities never available to so many Americans before.

With that mixture of healthy traits and education, they caused an explosion of economic growth that underpins our country's continuing prosperity and success. The veterans of World War II are a generation to cherish, to thank, and to learn from. Now.

Before they, like the veterans of the Civil War and World War I, just fade away.

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# Success isn't in the size of the church - it's the people



Marian Wright Edelman

With all of the national recognition she gets as a writer, scholar, minister, and public speaker, Dr. Renita Weems has never forgotten that it all began for her at a tiny Pentecostal church in Georgia, where, at 11 years old, she was the Sunday school secretary.

"The church was very, very small, but everything there was painted with grand strokes," says Renita, a professor of Old Testament studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Tennessee. "We had a larger-than-life deacon board, and a larger-than-life choir, and a larger-than-life pastor, who

knew how to spank and hug at the same time without offending you too much. To me, church was like the land of Oz." The church is where she overcame her shyness, learned the importance of being prepared, and saw her work appreciated by the loving adults who surrounded her. Today, as one of only a few black women professors in her field, Renita Weems has dedicated her life to preparing others for ministry in the classroom and behind the pulpit.

In addition to being a respected scholar, she is a wonderful writer and gifted speaker. She was one of six great preachers to participate in the 1996 Summer Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry, at the former Alex Haley farm in Clinton, Tenn., during the third week of July. Her written works include a wonderful scholarly study of

marriage, sex, and violence in the prophetic books of the Bible, titled "Battered Love."

"I had always wanted to be a teacher," Dr. Weems says. "What little girl raised in the '50s had not imagined herself as a school teacher? So I made a conscious decision to continue school rather than seek a pastorate. I'm dedicated to the ministry of teaching."

By the time she left Princeton in 1987, she had earned a master's of divinity degree and made major strides toward completing her Ph.D. She completed her doctorate in Old Testament studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School while teaching there in 1989.

"There was something about the storytelling and drama in the Old Testament that appealed to me, even though there were no other black women and only a few black

men studying it," she says. "I'm sad to say that, almost a decade after I earned my doctorate, a black woman professor of Bible is still quite a novelty. Currently, there are only three black women in the United States who have Ph.D.s in Old Testament, and only one in New Testament."

But thanks to extraordinary women like Renita Weems, there are now a number of black women earning graduate divinity degrees, several of whom are Ph.D. candidates. "Women as university professors and in the ministry is part of the larger cultural movement," she says. "Women are asserting themselves more."

"But even in this day and age, I still encounter students in graduate school who have never met a woman minister, so we can't take for granted that every church has been impacted by

that cultural movement." Why is it important to have women leaders in the church? "Because there are women in the pews and throughout the church, a good number of those seeking pastoral advice and guidance are women, and because women are part of the human race. Women have always played an important role in the church."

"That work may not have always been in an official capacity, but it always has been important, the kind of work that has kept the church going. Traditionally, women have taken straw and made brick."

Bennettsville, S.C., native MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN is president of the Children's Defense Fund, which coordinates the Black Community Crusade for Children. For more information about the BCCF, call 202-628-8787.