

## The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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# March Madness and the race card

By Marvin Wamble  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

It is time for the race card. Let me explain.

Beginning in mid-March, the sports fan and casual follower of college basketball will be inundated with the field of 65 teams that will be vying for the heralded National Collegiate Athletic Association national basketball championship. Now we all know that a Historically Black College and University doesn't have a chance to win the championship. In fact, if a Black college makes it past the first round, office brackets from coast to coast will be ruined.

Of the 65 teams that will make tournament, the average sports fan will only be familiar with 20 teams at best. That leaves more than 40 teams that most of us have never seen play any sport. In fact, there are a few colleges in the tourney that folks have never heard of.

So how do we decide what team to give our allegiance to during those crucial 40 minutes. I can only relate to a learned behavior that was ingrained in my character years ago. As a youngster, I would go into the living room where my father was watching one of the tournament games.

"Dad, who's playing?"

"I don't really know who these teams are."

Which team are you rooting for?"

"The team in blue."

"If you don't know who the teams are, how come you are rooting for the blue team?"

"Because the blue team has the most Black players."

That was my father's consistent barometer for his alliance. Unlike some of the dads today, my father did not attend one of the top 20 NCAA basketball powerhouses in the country. In fact, Pops didn't attend a college in one of the top basketball conferences in the country. Truth be told, dad did not even attend college, so he does not have a special team in the Big 10, Pac 10 or ACC to root for. His only tie is to the number of Blacks on the team.

He also has a number of tiebreakers. If both teams had the same number of Black players, he naturally aligned with the team that had a Black coach. Of course, back in the day there were very few. Then, he would go with the team that had any Black players on the bench. He even went to far as to throw his support to the team with the most African-American fans in the stands. His judgment on this issue is purely one of color.

Please understand that this "team alliance technique" is not unique to college basketball. This pertains to all sports from professional football to soccer. Race is the determining factor when determining which team to cheer for.

Is this racist?

No. I believe it is social conditioning (I can hear some of you disagreeing). People like my dad hold no ill will toward teams with few African-American players or coaches. It is just a social preference. We're talking about a man who lived through the total integration of college and professional sports. He lived through times when all the teams were almost totally White. It is really a matter of racial pride that so many African Americans have been able to excel at the college and professional ranks as players, coaches and administrators. He is proud of all Black coaches because he can remember when the only Black college coaches in the country — those at black colleges — could never be on television.

So as the Madness of March takes full effect, the race card in many minority households is played just like a college bracket sheet. And it's just fine to be proud of where we have come from and where we are going.

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## OUR VOICES

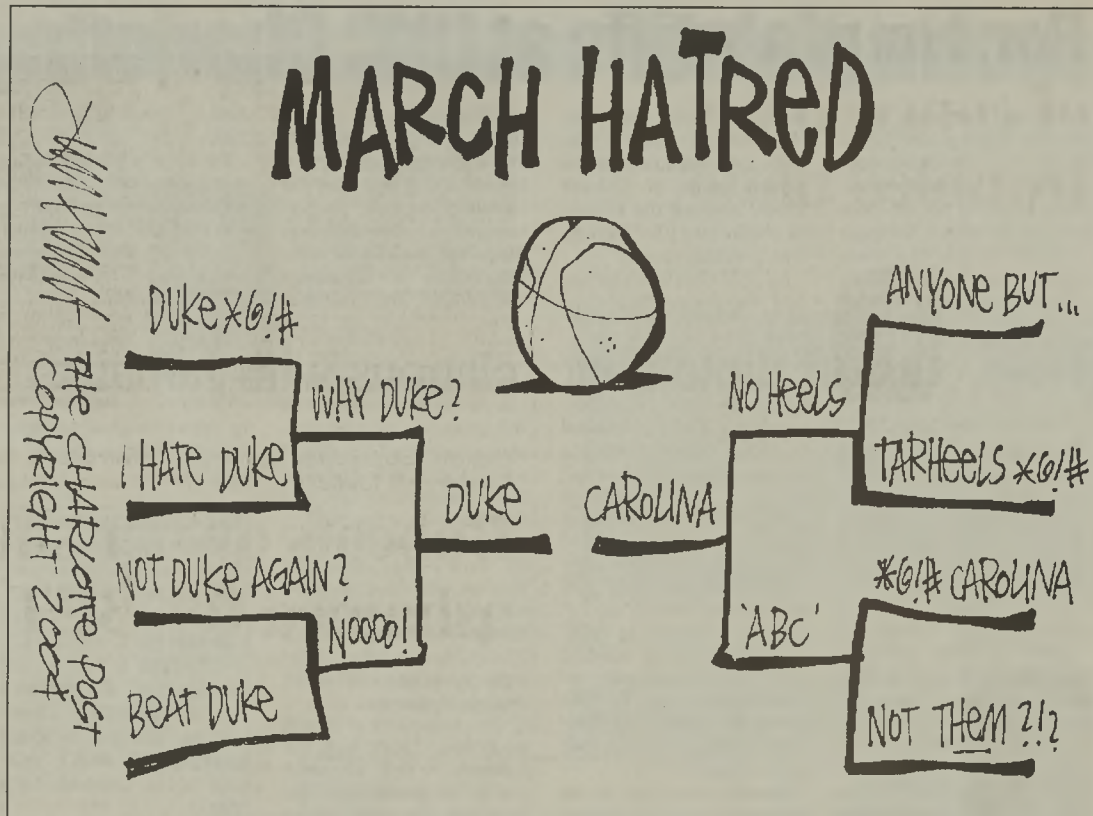
### There's room for an old-school typewriter in computer-driven world

Earlier today, I went to Wal-Mart to purchase a ribbon for my Smith Corona typewriter (Model #KA13), and was told they're no longer selling ribbons for typewriters.

Although I may have access to the internet to send e-mails, I think it's unfair to put an end to the use of a typewriter because everyone cannot afford to buy a computer. If I'm not able to send someone an e-mail, but have the address of someone I wish to write give me the opportunity to purchase a ribbon for my typewriter that I may contact the person I wish to write through the U.S. Postal Service.

If the sale of typewriters and ribbons are slow they should still be available for people who need them. It would not be professional for me or anyone to send an elected official a handwritten letter. In my opinion there are other things more important in life than money!

Howard J. McClure Jr.  
Charlotte



## The 'Big Lie' about Kerry's record

GEORGE E. CURRY



With public opinion polls showing that if the presidential election were held today, Sen. John Kerry would defeat President George Bush, Republicans have launched a Big Lie campaign to distort the presumptive Democratic nominee's record on military spending. Obviously, they believe that if you tell the same lie over and over, people will eventually believe it.

That would be bad enough. But to make matters worse, some of the country's best journalists are allowing these lies to go unchallenged.

Research by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a New York-based media monitoring organization, reports that Kerry is being depicted as one who is repeatedly voting against military funding when that's not the case.

For example, the report notes that Ralph Reed, the former head of the Christian Coalition and now a Bush-Cheney campaign strategist, appeared on CNN (2/3/04) and described Kerry's record in the Senate as "voting to dismantle 27 weapons systems, including the MX missile, the Pershing missile,

the B-1, the B-2 stealth bomber, the F-16 fighter jet, cutting another 18 programs, slashing intelligence spending by \$2.5 billion, and voting to freeze defense spending for seven years."

Blitzer reacted by turning to Ann Lewis of the Democratic National Committee and saying, "I think it's fair to say, Ann, that there's been some opposition research done."

NBC anchor Tom Brokaw swallowed the line when he said on MSNBC (3/2/04), "...the vice president just today was talking about [Kerry's] votes against the CIA budget, for example, intelligence budgets and also weapons systems. Isn't he going to be very vulnerable come the fall when national security is such a big issue in this country?"

The usually reliable Judy Woodruff was transformed into a parrot in an interview with Rep. Norm Dicks of Washington (Feb. 25, 2004). She said, "The Republicans list something like 13 different weapon systems that they say the record shows Senator Kerry voting against. The Patriot missile, the B-1 bomber, the Trident missile and on and on and on."

In his response, Dicks did what Woodruff, Brokaw and Blitzer had failed to do: He admitted that Kerry was being attacked for a single vote on the Pentagon's 1991 appropriations bill. No mem-

ber of the media trio pointed out that 16 senators voted against that bill, including five Republicans, or that 10 of the 13 purported votes against military spending were part of the 1991 defense appropriations bill.

Woodruff was so caught off guard by Dicks' response that she said, "Are you saying that all these weapon systems were part of one defense appropriations bill in 1991?"

That's exactly what he was saying.

Vice President Cheney told Fox News' Brit Hume: "What we're concerned about, what I am concerned about, is [Kerry's] record in the United States Senate, where he clearly has over the years adopted a series of positions that indicated a desire to cut the defense budget, to cut the intelligence budget, to eliminate many major weapons programs."

Hume failed to note that Cheney was criticizing Kerry for a position he had taken around that same period.

In fact, Fred Kaplan of Slate, the online site, noted that Cheney served as the elder George Bush's secretary of defense. He quotes Cheney as telling Congress during that period: "You've squabbled and sometimes bickered and horse-traded and ended up forcing me to spend money on weapons that don't fill a vital need in these times of tight budgets and new requirements."

He was particularly critical of members of Congress who engage in pork barrel politics by pressuring the Defense Department to move forward on the development of the M-1 tank and the F-14 and F-16 fighters and other weapons that "we have enough of."

Although military spending represents only 20 percent of the federal budget, it eats up approximately half of all federal discretionary spending.

With so much being spent on the military, growing federal deficits fueled by tax cuts that primarily benefits the wealthy, Bush is particularly vulnerable on domestic issues. A recent USA Today/CNN poll shows Kerry leading Bush 52 percent to 44 percent, largely because the public believes Kerry will do a better job of handling such issues as the economy, health care, education and Social Security. Bush's overall rating in the USA Today poll was 49 percent, matching his lowest rating in late January.

Republicans plan to spend \$133 million over the next few months to "redefine" Senator Kerry. If this is typical of the way they plan to do that, they are not trying to "redefine" Kerry, they are trying to mis-define him.

GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service and [BlackPressUSA.com](http://BlackPressUSA.com).

## CIAA basketball, culture and politics

VAL ATKINSON

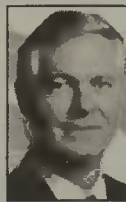
By now we all know that Virginia Union University defeated North Carolina Central University to win the 2004 CIAA championship.

And those of us who were in attendance witnessed impromptu fashion shows, met old friends, ate good food and between it all we took in a few basketball games. But this year's CIAA had another attraction that it didn't have in 2000-2003. White fans, businessmen and white politicians were out in large numbers...which is a good thing.

Gov. Mike Easley has been out a couple of times, so has former governor Jim Hunt, but I don't recall a year that we had as many diversified

political candidates in attendance. We always expect a large showing from our African American elected officials; after all, many African American elected officials attended a CIAA school during his undergraduate or graduate studies.

But I must say again that I was taken aback at the number of whites political candidates in attendance. These are just the people I saw and spoke with (the RBC Center is a big place, and I could have easily missed a few): Representative Wayne Goodwin, candidate for Commissioner of Labor was there, but we expect Wayne to be there. Wayne is everywhere these days. Wayne somehow finds the time to keep showing up to all these events — the state NAACP



Easley

convention, Aggie-Eagle Football Classic and now the CIAA...Kudos for Wayne.

J.B. Buxton, a Democratic candidate for superintendent of public instruction was in attendance. So was Rep. Brad Miller of the newest congressional district, District 13. Erskine Bowles, the declared candidate for the Democratic nomination to succeed U.S. Sen. John Edwards was in attendance, as was our Lieutenant Governor, Beverly Purdue, who came out early and stayed late. Could she be positioning herself for a run for the governor's mansion in 2008? Stay tuned.

The surprise of the tournament was the attendance of State Sen. Pat Ballentine. Ballentine is a conservative Republican running for his party's nomination for governor of North Carolina. Most African Americans are not usually able to vote in Republican primary elections simply because there

are only about 42,000 black registered Republicans in North Carolina.

Almost 1 million (approximately 975,000) African Americans have registered to vote in North Carolina, but only about 4 percent are registered Republicans.

So why would Pat Ballentine bother to show up at the CIAA? Well, maybe he's thinking about running in the general election, but he's got a couple of small problems (Bill Cobey and Richard Vinroot) to deal with before he runs against Mike Easley in the General Election.

Tom Gilmore, candidate for commissioner of Agriculture, purchased tickets but was unable to attend.

VAL ATKINSON is a syndicated columnist.



Purdue