

## Acquittal Fails to Grab Attention of Students

Students in Washington and UNC say they lost interest in the impeachment trial and its historic end of acquittal.

By VICKY ECKENRODE AND ASTA YTRE  
Staff Writers

Fifteen minutes away from the media frenzy on Capitol Hill, Georgetown University students went about their regular schedules Friday afternoon, largely ignoring the political events going on across town.

Several televisions in Georgetown's campus bookstore aired the live Senate vote, which marked the end of the prolonged impeachment trial of President Clinton. But few students stopped to pay attention to the vote for very long.

"Everyone knows it's historic, but it's easy to get tired of it and forget the trial," said Ed Karam, a first-year medical student.

Karam, like many students around campus, sat with friends discussing classes, not the vote.

"Anything that's going on on campus will take importance over an impeachment trial," said sophomore linguist and French major Kirby Johns.

Other students cited early predictions that Republicans would not garner enough votes to avoid acquittal as their reason for ignoring the vote.

"I figured Clinton's getting off anyway so I'm not paying attention to today's vote," said Anthony Hill, a junior psychology major. "The trial's just not as important as it's been made out to be this whole time in the media."

Closer to home, UNC students and faculty said they followed the end of the impeachment trial over the Internet or on television. Most people seemed to be glad it was over, and nobody said they were surprised about the acquittal.

Emily Howell, a junior from Raleigh, watched the casting of the Senate vote in the Student Union. The former president of the College Democrats said she was pleased the trial had ended.

"Hopefully, we can get back to the

business of the country," Howell said. "As a nation, we would have set a scary precedent if we used private life to condemn our leaders," she said.

Erin Karcher, an English major from Cary, said the acquittal vote was not a surprise. She said the lack of public interest turned the trial into a source of amusement.

"After awhile, it seemed the general public lost interest (in the trial)," Karcher said. "It became a joke after awhile."

The public's feelings of apathy for the trial also registered on campus. Senior biology major Danny Dunston said media coverage of both sides of the trial had prevented him from forming an honest opinion of the outcome.

"I try not to pay attention," Dunston said. "I hate politics."

But Dunston said the trial was not a waste of the government's time. "It was a good way to show that not even people with high positions in government get away with everything," he said. "It shows the world that the United States does not cover up our problems."

UNC political science Professor Marco Steenbergen said there was not enough evidence to have warranted a trial, but that once it began, more time should have been spent on it.

Steenbergen said he did not pay a lot of attention to the trial. "The (media) coverage was not very helpful," he said, adding that it was high time to move on to other issues.

UNC Professor of Law Buck Melton said the outcome was what the public had expected.

"The process became extremely political and not judicial," he said. "This is very disturbing."

Melton said he followed the case carefully. He said the trial went by as fast as it could have, but that public interest had waned long before the acquittal vote.

"Even law students did not pay a great interest in the case," Melton said. "The general public was tired of the whole thing, if you believe the polls."

The State & National Editors can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

## Hackney: New Position No Problem

Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, says he welcomes the new challenges presented by his job of speaker pro tempore.

By KIMBERLY GRABNER  
Staff Writer

The position of Speaker Pro Tempore increases the amount of responsibility for a representative, but local Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, says he can handle the pressure.

The N.C. House of Representatives elected Hackney as Speaker Pro Tempore on opening day, with a vote of 65-54 against Republican nominee Rep. George Holmes, R-Alexander.

His new responsibilities include assisting the Speaker of the House, Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, presiding over the House when the speaker is absent, and fulfilling whatever other duties Black assigns to him, Hackney said.

Hackney said the new responsibility would not disrupt his usual balance between his position as a lawyer and as a legislator. "I do my regular job on

Mondays and Fridays," Hackney said.

He has already begun managing work in the House, said Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, who suggested Hackney's name as a candidate for the Democratic caucus nomination. "He asked me to nominate him," she said. "It was a courtesy on his part to ask me to do it."

Insko said Hackney was a model leader - knowledgeable and articulate. "(Hackney) has been around here for 18 years," she said. "It was time for him to have a major leadership position."

"I think that is where he will make the largest contribution - being part of the speaker's leadership team."

Hackney said he had expected to win over Holmes when the vote was taken last month. "In as much as the Democrats are the majority in the



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House, it was the anticipated result," he said.

Rep. Billy Creech, R-Johnston, who voted for Holmes, said other members of the House did not really show any feelings toward the outcome.

"I don't know if people feel one way or another about it ...," Creech said. "(Hackney) is a good guy. I think he will work out fine."

But Holmes expected to win the nomination until Rep. Dan Blue, D-Wake, lost the race by one vote for Speaker of the House.

Blue's nomination came as part of a political coalition between the Democratic Black Caucus and the

Republicans. Under the agreement, the Speaker Pro Tempore would be Republican, Holmes said.

"The Republican delegation was assured that there would be enough votes for Dan Blue to be elected," he said. "When that came up one vote

short, I did not expect to win."

Holmes said he received all the GOP votes and one Democratic vote while Hackney received the remaining Democratic votes.

Holmes said, "The majority party is happy with the results."

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VERLA INSKO  
N.C. House of Representatives

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