

## Rise in handgun sales troubles area officials

By KIMBERLEY MAXWELL  
Staff Writer

Handgun permits and sales have been increasing in the Triangle during the past several years, and the increase has some local officials and residents worried.

The number of handgun permits in Wake County has increased every year since 1983.

About 3,767 handgun permits were issued in Wake County in 1988 — only 3,493 were handed out in 1987.

One reason for the increase is that people are more aware of crime, said Charles Dunn, deputy director for the State Bureau of Investigation. "They feel more security in having a handgun."

He also said movies and television glamorized handguns.

Don Hill, owner of Don Hill's Lock and Gun Shop in Durham, attributed the rise in the number of handguns to lack of protection from police. "Nobody wants to carry guns," he said. "The police department doesn't protect us, so (the guns) do."

Hill said he noticed a change in the type of people who buy handguns from his shop. "Women are buying more to protect themselves."

People are also buying handguns to protect themselves from drug-related crimes.

"Drugs have gotten so bad, (drug users) are doing anything they can to get (drugs)," said P.L. Womble of the Wake County Sheriff's Department.

"On an average day, 50 Americans are killed with handguns. In Far Eastern and Western European countries — advanced industrial countries — the level of gun violence is minimal," said Howard Aldrich, UNC professor of sociology and a member of Handgun Control Inc.

Aldrich attributed this difference to two factors: Obtaining a handgun is easier in the United States, and guns are more toler-

ated in this society.

But a handgun permit is not easy to obtain, Womble said. To be eligible for a permit in Wake County, applicants must have lived in the county for at least six months.

When an applicant goes to apply for a permit, he or she must bring a character witness. The character witness must have known the applicant for six months and be willing to sign an affidavit ensuring the good character of the applicant, Womble said.

The most crucial questions on the permit application are about previous felony convictions, past or present substance abuse problems and previous commitment to a mental hospital. Positive answers to these questions disqualify an applicant, Womble said.

The procedure in Orange County is similar. Three character witnesses are necessary, but they do not have to accompany the applicant when he or she goes to fill out the handgun permit application, said G. Nichols, deputy sheriff for Orange County.

The application asks the same questions as in Wake County, Nichols said. Any refusals to issue a handgun permit can be appealed to a district court judge.

The increase in handgun permits frightens a number of people in the public and private sector.

The solution to the problem is to restrict the sale of guns, said Jane Kelso, network coordinator of Handgun Control Inc. The organization's two basic goals are to restrict the sale of assault weapons and to make the application process of getting a handgun harder.

"You have to start somewhere," Kelso said. "Restricting availability will help; making it less easy for these people won't hurt."

But Hill said: "Guns are not easily accessible. The bulk of guns used are for good use."

## Howard University president under fire

By CRYSTAL BERNSTEIN  
Staff Writer

After years of controversy surrounding Howard University President James Cheek, students, faculty and alumni are now calling for his resignation.

"There is evidence of gross mismanagement in the university," said Ewart Brown, a Howard alumnus and Los Angeles physician. Brown has helped to organize a committee to force Cheek's resignation.

Howard University is a predominantly black private school in Washington, D.C. The university has a student body of approximately 12,000 and consists of 18 schools and colleges.

Cheek had a base salary of \$179,375 last year; his income totals nearly \$250,000 when bonuses are included. Chancellors at UNC and N.C. State University earn \$117,550 and \$110,500, respectively.

Many faculty and students feel Cheek has not earned his large salary in recent years and criticize the amount of interaction he has with them.

"A large number of people believe that he doesn't have a hands-on attitude," said Richard Seltzer, associate professor of political science at Howard. "I've been here 10 years. I've never even seen the man."

Cheek is even less accessible to

students, said Derrick Payne, editorial editor of the Hilltop, Howard's student newspaper.

"He generally makes about three public appearances on campus a year, surrounded by his bodyguards," he said.

Faculty members have left over the years because they have little input in university policy, Seltzer said. They are also being recruited by universities who will pay them more, he said.

Full professors at Howard received \$48,000 last year, while full professors at UNC made \$55,800.

Security officers' salaries are too low as well, Payne said. Howard is in a dangerous area of the city, and the university population would be endangered if guards left for higher-paying jobs, he said.

Many are complaining about the deterioration of campus facilities, especially dormitories and office buildings.

"The dorm conditions are terrible," said Garfield Swaby, student body president.

On one dormitory floor, only one of four shower heads in the bathroom functions, Brown said.

Faculty offices are cramped and in disrepair, Seltzer said. Two or three faculty members often share a single office.

Financial aid is often delayed, which presents difficulties for almost

70 percent of the student body who depend on aid, Brown said. Annual tuition, room and board costs \$8,000.

"I turned in my financial aid application last year, and it hasn't been processed yet," Payne said.

Dissatisfaction with the university administration was further inflamed when Lee Atwater, chairman of the Republican National Committee, was appointed to the university's 32-member board of trustees. Students disapproved of his appointment because they sensed racial overtones in his management of President George Bush's presidential campaign.

Approximately 3,000 students protested the appointment on March 6 by taking over the administration building. Atwater resigned his trustee post, and Washington Mayor Marion Barry and the Rev. Jesse Jackson were brought in to negotiate an agreement between Cheek and the students.

Cheek was not always so unpopular with students and alumni, Brown said. During his first five years in office, Cheek was one of the most progressive college presidents in the country.

Since 1969, the year he became president of the university, the annual budget has increased from \$30 million to \$420 million.

But Cheek has made errors in the selection of his administrative under-

lings, Brown said.

Howard alumni are circulating a petition and have taken out a full-page advertisement in the Hilltop calling for Cheek's resignation, Swaby said.

Brown has received more than 100 telephone calls within the last 30 days supporting Cheek's resignation, he said. He and other members of his group anticipate that Cheek will resign within the school year.

Alan Hermes, director of the Howard University relations department, does not agree.

"There have been rumors that James E. Cheek is going to resign almost since the very first years," he said. "I don't think there's a university in the country that doesn't have some alumni that want the president to resign."

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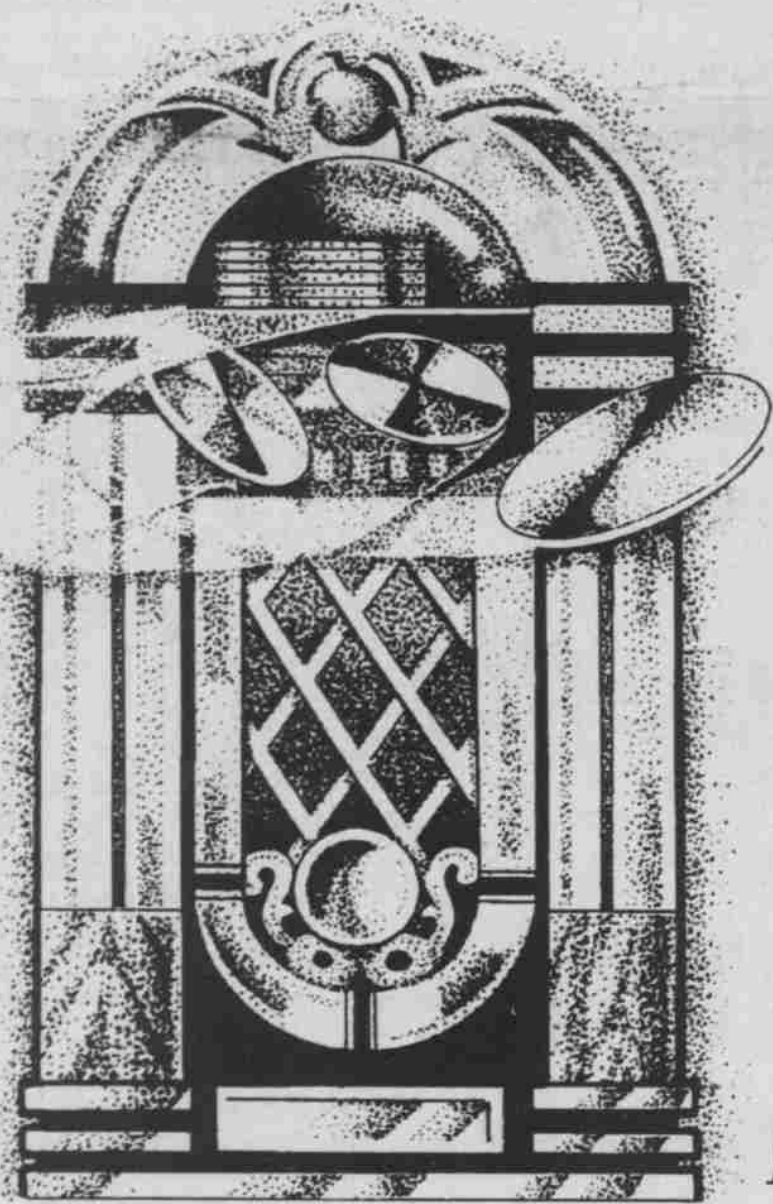
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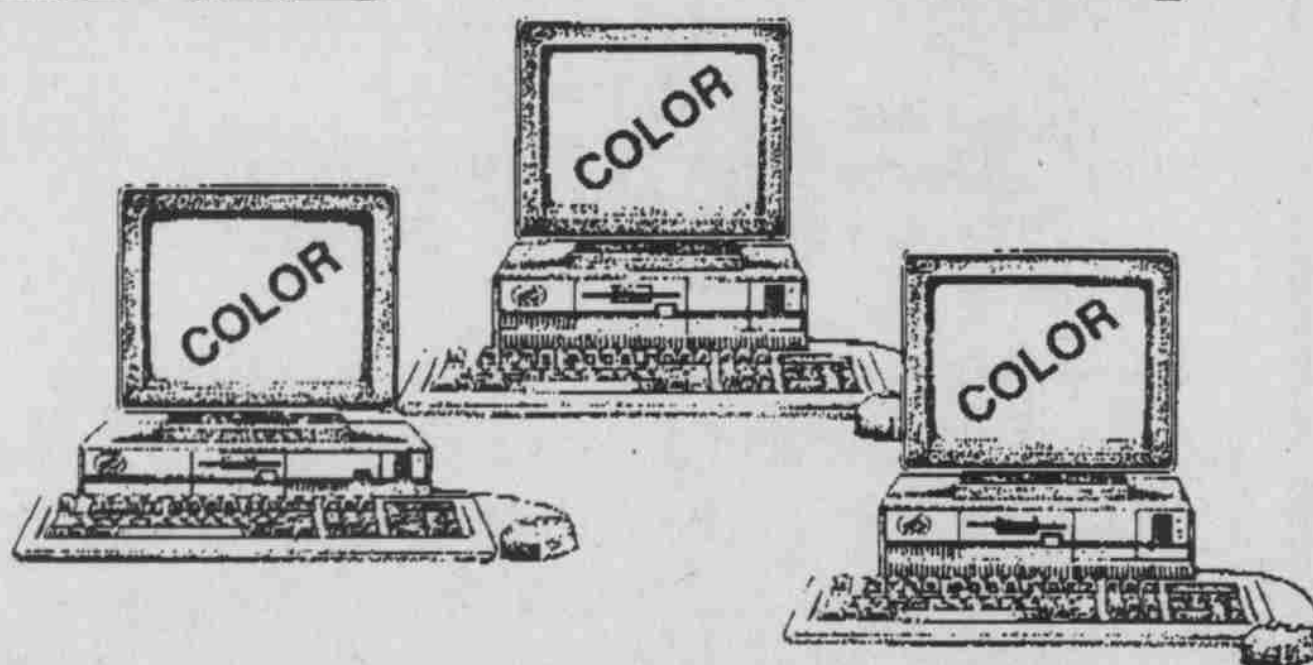
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