

LOCAL

Despite controversy, state abortion fund not reduced

By Anna Griffin
Associate Editor

In the midst of the continuing uproar over the issue of abortion, the N.C. General Assembly seems close to approving a \$424,000 budget for the state's abortion fund, the same amount as was allocated the past two years.

Pro-choice advocates across the state say they view the stabilization of the fund as a victory, especially considering the severe cut passed several years ago.

The issue of abortion has been a hot topic of discussion recently in the wake of the Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling in the case of Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania vs. Casey. In the decision announced Monday the court gave states the power to put restrictions on abortions but refused to overturn Roe vs. Wade, the landmark 1973 decision that legalized abortion.

"The Supreme Court has reaffirmed what we have known for a long time, that state legislatures have the power to restrict abortion on demand," said N.C. Rep. Art Pope. R-Wake, the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor.

The abortion fund, which is operated by the state Department of Human Resources, provides money for poor women who are in physical danger or who are the victims of rape or incest to have abortions.

The fund, one of seven such state programs in the United States, was approved in the 1970s as a way to ensure that women from lower socio-economic levels could receive safe abortions.

"As long as abortion is legal in North Carolina and in the United States, poor women should have the same access as rich women," said Rep. Nick Jeralds, D-Cumberland, chairman of the House committee on human resources and a member of the appropriations subcommittee on human resources.

mittee on human resources. "The fund is just our state's way of ensuring that right."

But in recent years, conservative lawmakers have complained that the fund encourages women from all social classes to have abortions, regardless of how the child was conceived or the ability of the mother to safely complete the pregnancy.

"The fund tells women that we in this state support killing a child," Pope said. "I really think we need to rethink our priorities."

The recent Supreme Court ruling could provide the basis for changes in the state policy toward abortion on demand, Pope said. "We should look at this as a stepping stone toward ending all unnecessary abortions," he said. "The unborn children and the women of this state deserve no less."

Women apply for funding through local departments of social service. Once applications are approved by county or town administrators, the state office must give final authorization. The women then receive the abortions at local hospitals or clinics and send the bills to the state, said Dr. Ruth Relos, the department of human resources' director of community services.

"There is a very rigorous screening and application process," she said. "This is not just some random abortion operation. There must be a shown need."

The fund covers the cost of abortions for low-income women before the 112th day, or 16th week, of pregnancy.

As of April 5, 1991, the state abortion fund had paid for 1,938 operations, according to Department of Human Resources statistics.

Between 1985 and 1988, the fund remained level at \$924,500, an all-time high. But in 1989, lawmakers approved a drastic cut, chopping the fund down to \$424,000. Since then, state officials have

had to scramble to meet the needs of all women deemed eligible to receive funding and have had to fight each year to avoid further cuts.

"We've cut it close the past two years," said John Tanner, director of family services for the Department of Human Resources. "But of course we want to spend all the money. That's what it's there for."

This year's easy passage of the \$424,000 fund may be a sign of growing political power by General Assembly Democrats, Jeralds said, adding that the abortion issue should take up much of the debate during next year's session.

"(Abortion) will certainly be a key issue in 1993," he said. "With the Supreme Court decision giving states more discretionary powers, we could see all kinds of proposed limitations."

The average cost of an abortion within 12 weeks of conception is \$150. Abortions performed between 12 and 16 weeks cost the state an average of \$250 each, said Dr. Bessie Johnson, Wake County family planning coordinator.

At most county clinics and social services offices, where women apply for funding, applicants are advised of the alternatives and receive counseling both before and after abortions are performed.

"There is counseling regarding all options," said Johnson, who coordinates the Wake County program. "But usually they have done their soul-searching before they come here."

Contrary to the arguments from conservative lawmakers and right-to-life advocates, Johnson said the fund was not being used as often as it could be because of low publicity in poor neighborhoods and city ghettos.

"It's not well advertised at all," she said. "People who receive ... help from social service workers are aware of the fund. Our clinics do a lot to inform."

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UNC officials eye old house

By P.J. Waicus
Staff Writer

Next to the UNC Ackland Art Museum on South Columbia Street sits an old green house that looks out of place compared to the modern university buildings that surround it.

The owner was Sally Michie, 97, who died March 6, 1992.

"She had lived there for many decades," said John Sanders, director of the Institute of Government. Michie bought the house at 121 South Columbia St. in 1919 and lived there until her death.

Although UNC officials had hoped Michie would leave her house to the University after she died, she never planned on giving the property to the school.

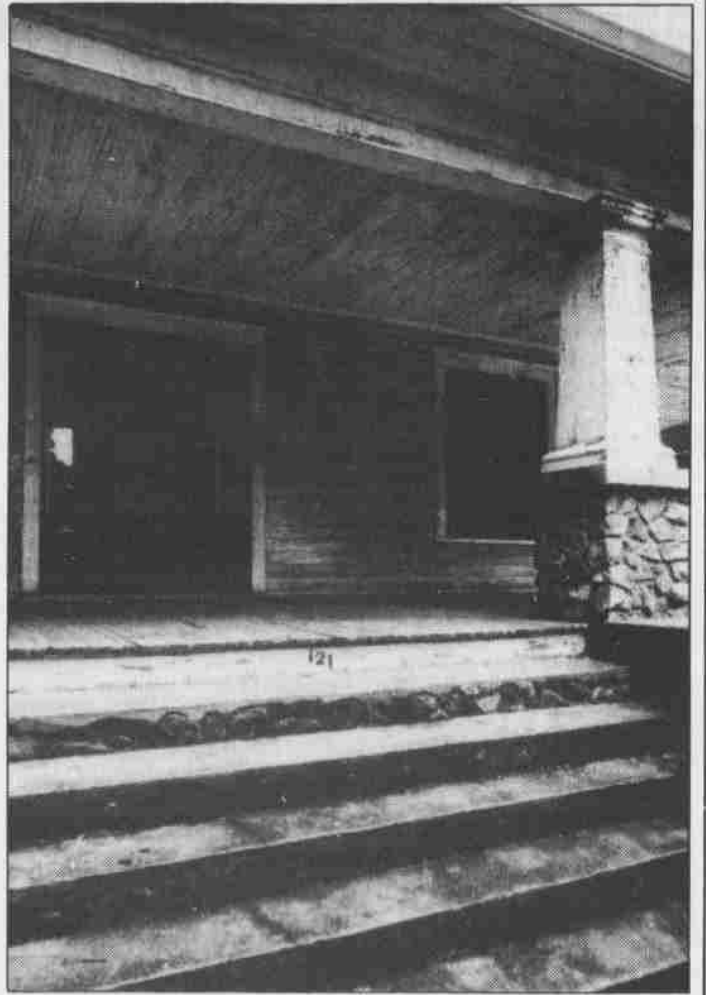
"It's a highly desirable piece of property," said Gene Swecker, associate vice chancellor for facilities management. "It's right next to the communications building, so it probably would have been added on to that."

Michie's court-appointed attorney, Guido De Maere, said Michie did not like the University and had never even discussed leaving UNC her property.

"That was never her intention," De Maere said. "Ms. Michie was not happy with the University, and she did not want them to have her property, which was her whole reason for living as long as she did."

De Maere said that although the will had not been probated yet, Michie's property would go to the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Society of the Magna Charta Dances.

Sanders said the house will be maintained in memory of Michie. "It is my understanding that her property was left to these two patriotic organiza-



DTH/Erin Randall

Sally Michie bought the house at 121 South Columbia St. in 1919 to serve as a memorial to her. But Swecker said the University still will try to acquire Michie's property. "I'm sure we will be talking with the people she left her property to soon enough," he said.

Prowler

attic.

The women first dismissed the idea that the noises were coming from their apartment, at first thinking it was coming from a neighboring residence. Later, they heard much louder noises, Irvin said, adding that it sounded like someone breaking into the window.

The women refused to sleep at Mill Creek that night and stayed at Craven's boyfriend's apartment.

In an unrelated incident last Saturday night, Timothy Patrick Steward, a 27-year-old stockbroker of 800 Pritchard Ave. Ext., Apt. 6-E, was arrested on first-degree burglary charges, police reports stated. According to the reports, Steward broke into a Mill Creek Apartment in building B and led officers on a short foot chase.

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Jennifer McKnight, who lives in the apartment, said she was sleeping when she awoke to find Steward standing over her bed. She asked for his identity, but he gave a fake name and asked for a woman named Barbara. McKnight then told Steward to leave.

Steward began masturbating and moved to the door. He left after she continued to yell at him, and her roommate called the police.

Apartment managers said the residents were to blame for the incidents.

"Everything that's happened there has resulted in the kids not locking their doors," said Larry Davis, a representa-

tive of Magnolia Properties, which operates many of the Mill Creek condominiums.

Recently, Mill Creek Apartments held a safety meeting at which only five people showed up, Davis said.

In addition to discussing the buddy system and the need for women to call ahead when leaving late at night, the group talked about creating a neighborhood watch.

Military

tion of anonymity. "There are plenty of gays and lesbians in every branch of the service. The question is whether or not we're allowed to be ourselves and to admit our sexuality."

"There is no question that sexual preference has nothing to do with how well you do your job."

The ensign, who recently received his masters degree at UNC, entered the Coast Guard knowing he was homosexual.

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Christopher Chinnos of Jacksonville, N.C., was diagnosed with asthma when he was 8. At age 12, he had his first attack severe enough to require an overnight hospital stay and drug therapy.

Two weeks later, he was dead.

Neither his mother nor his doctors knew that Christopher was incubating chicken pox. Treatment with corticosteroid — commonplace for asthma sufferers — made the chicken pox virus a killer because of the drug's immune-

suppressant properties.

The boy died four years ago today. His mother, Rebecca Cole, who has four other children, has been campaigning ever since to warn parents and doctors about the dangers of the drugs in combination with chicken pox.

Partly because of her efforts, the Food and Drug Administration started urging corticosteroid manufacturers last December to put labels on their drugs warning that children who are taking immunosuppressant drugs are more susceptible to infections than healthy

children.

Chicken pox and measles, for example, can have a more serious or even fatal impact on such children and special care should be taken to keep them away from exposure, the warning says.

The warning explains that if a child taking corticosteroids is exposed to chicken pox, other drug therapies will act as an antidote to the aggressiveness of the virus. The alternates recommended are varicella zoster immune globulin or pooled intravenous immunoglobulin.

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designated as sequester nonconformity," Hart said. "There are solid reasons for our policy."

"The DOD policy is that homosexuals are incompatible with military goals. All branches of the military must comply."

Hart said that while Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney had met with members of the gay and lesbian community to discuss the policy, he had no plans to change it.

"Secretary Cheney and General Colin Powell (chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff) have both stated unequivocally that they do not intend, nor have they even considered, changing the DOD policy toward homosexuals."

But Steffan said the policy weakens the military by keeping qualified people out of the service.

The policy is a disservice to the country, he said.

"The military is a great place to deny your sexuality," Steffan said. "But the bottom line is, whether I'm gay or not has nothing to do with what kind of a soldier I am."

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