

THE NEWS RECORD

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79th Year No. 47

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE COUNTY SEAT AT MARSHALL, N.C.

THURSDAY, November 20, 1980

15¢ Per Copy

Ramsey Likely Shooing For House Speaker

State Representative Liston B. Ramsey of Marshall is almost guaranteed to become the next speaker of the House when the 1981 N.C. General Assembly convenes in Raleigh on Jan. 14. The 61-year-old legislator was re-elected to his 10th term in the Nov. 4 election, and he says he has commitments from 95 out of the 96 Democratic representatives in the House toward his selection as speaker.

In a recent interview with the Asheville Citizen, Ramsey said he expects to be nominated as House speaker when the Democratic caucus begins in the House on Dec. 2 in Raleigh. House members will also nominate individuals for sergeant at arms, the principal clerk and reading clerk at the caucus.

Ramsey said she expects the present holders of those positions to be renominated. They are sergeant at arms, Larry Eagles of Edgecombe County, principal clerk, Grace Collins of Wake County and reading clerk, Sam Burrows of Randolph County.

If Ramsey is indeed selected as House speaker, he will become the first from the mountains of Western North Carolina to hold that position in 80 years.

As House speaker, Ramsey will have the same authority as the lieutenant governor who serves as the president of the Senate and the

president pro tempore of the Senate combined. The position would allow Ramsey to make all the committee and committee chairmen appointments in the House.

As a result, it is expected that some Western North Carolina legislators could become chairmen of important House committees; Reps. Gordon Greenwood of Black Mountain and Ernest Messer of Canton for example.

The 1981 General Assembly will have a 4 to 1 margin of Democrats over Republicans in both the House and Senate, according to Ramsey. The Democrats will hold a 96-24 margin in the House of Representatives, and Democrats outnumber Republicans 40-10 in the 50-member Senate as a result of the Nov. 4 election.

Ramsey served as chairman of the House Redistricting Committee in 1971 following the 1970 Census, and he said reapportioning the congressional and state legislative seats will be an important issue in 1981. According to Ramsey, it looks as if North Carolina will retain its 11 seats in Congress, but there may be some changes in the state's legislative districts once the population figures of the various counties have been certified by the federal government for the state.

As for changes in Western North Carolina Senate and House districts, Ramsey said early projections may require some changes in the mountain counties, especially in the 10-county

27th Senate District and the two-county 43rd House District, comprised of Buncombe and Transylvania counties.

It is possible that the 10-county 27th Senate District may have to be split in two, with one senator for each of the two new districts. Buncombe and Transylvania may possibly lose one of the 43rd House District seats because, "Buncombe hasn't grown as fast as these other counties, percentage-wise," Ramsey said.

Another pressing issue facing the 1981 General Assembly is that of taxes, particularly the decreasing revenues from the state gasoline tax which is the only source of money for state highway construction. North Carolinians are using less gasoline, and therefore, paying less taxes on gasoline.

Ramsey said he hopes the Department of Transportation can economize and continue to function properly within the bounds of the decreasing revenues.

The seasoned legislator speculated that there would probably be several bills introduced in the General Assembly to raise the state's gasoline tax to offset the dwindling gas tax revenue, but he said any such bills would not be introduced by him.

North Carolina is reputed to have one of the highest gasoline taxes in the nation.



Photo by Susan Edwards

Rep. Liston Ramsey

Judge Braswell Hangs Up Robe



Photo by N. Hancock

Judge J. Ray Braswell

Chief District Court Judge J. Ray Braswell sat on the bench at the Madison County courthouse for the last time Monday. After 12 years as head of the 24th North Carolina Judicial District, Braswell will be trading his robe and gavel for a text book.

Unlike many retiring judges who return to the practice of law as attorneys, Braswell said Monday he plans to enroll at Appalachian State University to study

Southern Appalachian history.

"I'm interested in our heritage," said the Avery County native, "and if I can ever learn to write a simple, coherent sentence after dealing with legal language so long, I would like to do some research and write something about the history of our area."

Braswell said he had mixed feelings about retiring from the judgeship, "but it's time for me. I will miss working the bench. Legal matters are of profound importance to people. Civil matters — divorce, child custody, juvenile cases — are important to people, and I'll miss being a part of that," he said.

But, Braswell spoke of attending college again with a gleam in his eye. "When I started college, I had planned to enter the field of journalism, but I went into law instead. Someday, I would like to write about what goes on in court to help the people understand the court system. I feel people are often confused about court procedure," he said.

The retiring judge was honored at a luncheon in Marshall by friends and fellow court workers where he was presented with a proclamation citing his outstanding service in the 24th Judicial District. The district includes Watauga, Mitchell, Avery and Madison counties. Judge Braswell has served under four North Carolina Supreme Court judges since his duties began in 1968.

Hot Springs Trio Receive Injuries In One-Car Accident

Three Hot Springs residents were injured Thursday at approximately 12:20 p.m. when the automobile in which they were riding overturned on a curve on Ivy Hill Road south of Marshall.

Tony King, 24, Billy Stout and Brenda Ricker all received moderate injuries when the 1974 Dodge Colt, driven by King, ran off the right shoulder of the road on a left-hand curve and swerved back onto the pavement overturning and came to rest on its side.

Highway Patrolman W.C. Swanson said King, the driver of the vehicle, was charged with driving too fast for road conditions and driving a motor vehicle without an operators license.

Both the Marshall and Mars Hill ambulance services were called to the scene to transport the accident victims to Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville. Marshall emergency medical technicians tended to the injured trio at the scene.

A spokesman for Memorial Mission Hospital said both King and Stout were treated



Photo by N. Hancock

Dodge Colt Wound Up On Its Side In Accident

and released from the emergency room Thursday. Ms. Ricker remained in the hospital Thursday night where she was listed in satisfactory condition.

The accident occurred at the intersection of Ivy Hill Road

and the drive leading to the Madison Gun Club. The vehicle was traveling east at approximately 45 miles per hour, according to Patrolman Swanson.

The Marshall Fire Department was initially dispatched to the scene because persons

living near the scene called stating a fuel oil delivery truck was involved in an accident. A Gregory Oil Company truck was near the scene of the accident at the time the car turned over, but according to Swanson, it was not evident that the truck was involved.

State, Local School Authorities Reply To Holloways' Request

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK
The office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the superintendent of Madison County schools, R.L. Edwards, replied late last week to the request of a Madison County couple to educate their nine-year-old daughter at home through a home study course developed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Marshall that they were in violation of North Carolina General Statutes by not enrolling their daughter in a school in Madison County.

The Holloways were contacted by Sidney Harris, principal of Walnut Elementary School, who passed along Mr. Edwards' notice. Harris said as principal of the school at which the Holloway child would ordinarily attend, he was required to send the Holloways form letters to officially notify them that they were violating the North Carolina compulsory attendance law, and that the local

board of education was authorized and directed by law to see that their child attend a school.

Contacted at his office, Harrison said the only recourse at present is for the Holloways to try to get their home and the correspondence course registered as a non-public school and to get state approval of the educational program being used by the daughter.

Accomplishing either of these actions looks doubtful for the Holloways in light of the existing compulsory attendance law and a 1979 opinion

handed down by the N.C. Attorney General's office regarding parents teaching their children at home, according to school authorities in Raleigh.

According to the Attorney General's ruling, "... it is and remains the opinion of this office that a parent does not meet the requirements of the Compulsory Attendance Law by providing his child with instruction in the home."

Contacted at his office in Raleigh, William Peek confirmed that the local board of education is obligated by law to get any child between the ages of seven and fifteen in

school. Regarding the Holloway case, Peek said the local board could accept or reject credit of a correspondence course only in conjunction with regular school attendance. Peek also mentioned that the Holloways could endeavor to register the Home Study Institute course used by the Holloways as a non-public school under the Office of Non-Public Education in North Carolina.

Calvin Criner, coordinator for the Office of Non-Public Education, said when contacted by phone that almost anyone can establish a non-

public school by sending notice of intent to open a school to his office. However, the school must meet safety and sanitation requirements set up by the state, and the students must be administered standardized achievement test at least once each year. However, Criner pointed out the Attorney General's ruling excluded parents teaching their children at home.

"It's just not possible for parents to teach their own children at home under the law, now," Criner said. But, he added that Attorney

General opinions are subject to change through a court of law.

Mr. and Mrs. Holloway said Friday they maintain that it is their right to exercise their religious freedom and convictions to use the Home Study Institute education program to give their daughter a "Biblically centered" Christian education.

As of press time Tuesday, Mr. and Mrs. Holloway had scheduled a meeting with school superintendent Edwards and Mr. H.E. Davis, a representative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the

North Carolina district of the church conference. The Holloways said they plan to pursue the matter of obtaining state and local approval of the Home Study Institute course further.

The Holloways' daughter is enrolled in the third-grade level of the Home Study Institute course. The correspondence educational program was established in 1969 by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church for pre-school, elementary, secondary, college and adult education students.