



Q Notes

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Tracy Morgan leaves indelible legacy

Drag star died from backstage heart attack

by Jack Kirven . Q-Notes staff

After 20 years of professional achievement, nearly 100 titles and thousands of exuberant performances, Clay Edwin Lambert, who performed in drag as Tracy Morgan, passed away backstage during the Oct. 14 show at Scorpio nightclub in Charlotte. He was 41.

In a show of appreciation for the community that embraced him, Lambert's relatives gave half of his cremated ashes to his friends and colleagues at Scorpio. He was a member of the club's house cast for nearly two decades. The urn rests in the club's display case in the lobby, alongside a ~~dozen of his parent crowns~~.

On the night of his death, Lambert performed two energetic routines. He told cast mates that he "didn't feel right" after the first



Clay Lambert (a.k.a. Tracy Morgan) passed away Oct. 14. 'He was the epitome of a female impersonator,' said long-time boss Rick Wilds.

number, but decided to stay in the show. Walking into the dressing room after his second routine, he complained that he was experiencing severe indigestion. He added that he was going to faint and immediately collapsed.

Lambert's color changed drastically in a matter of seconds, witnesses say. He was very hot to the touch. A medical professional in the audience was pulled backstage to begin CPR. After 911 was called, paramedics continued life-saving treatment en route to Carolinas Medical Center. Sadly, the efforts to save Lambert were unsuccessful.

According to Carol Pinkard, a Death Investigator in the Mecklenburg County Medical Examiner's office, Lambert died of

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N.C. gay man campaigns for U.S. Senate

Jim Neal says he's always been out, sexuality not an issue

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

CHAPEL HILL — "If not now, when?" That is the question Jim Neal asked himself when considering whether he would slip his name into North Carolina's 2008 U.S. Senate race against the state's first-term Sen. Elizabeth Dole.

Indeed, it is Dole's abysmal track record that is giving Neal the push to run and win. He said he was at an event in California when he first heard the news that she had voted against a child health insurance bill, commonly known as S-CHIP.

"I heard that Dole had voted against the [bill] for our state's 120,000 kids from working class families," Neal told *Q-Notes*. "I didn't get that. I found it repugnant. That is when I said, 'File! Let's go!'"

And that is what he did. As of late October, Neal is the only declared Democratic challenger to file his candidacy in the November 2008 general election.

That move makes him only the second openly gay U.S. Senate candidate in history after Ed Flanagan of Vermont, who mounted an unsuccessful bid in 2000.

Neal says he first started thinking about

throwing his hat into the ring when he found out U.S. House Rep. Brad Miller had decided not to run.

"When Brad did that, I thought, 'I can't believe Dole is going to go uncontested.' Her record in six years in Washington has been very, very slim when it comes to accomplishments for North Carolinians," Neal said. "Her allegiance has been to her party, its president and its failed policy. Every moment she spent working for the Republican Party, she didn't work for North Carolina."

Neal's race has become a lot more interesting in recent days. On Oct. 20, he participated in a "virtual town hall" on the progressive political blog BlueNC.com.

Among the comments posted for Neal to address was one directed to his sexual orientation.

"I've heard you're gay," wrote an anonymous commenter.

Just as directly, Neal responded, "I am indeed. No secret and no big deal to me — I wouldn't be running if I didn't think otherwise."

"Really think a gay man can be elected in North Carolina?" the commenter continued.

"I'm not running this race to lose," Neal replied. "I'm not running to make some social statement. I'm running to lead in the Senate for the voters in NC — something Sen. Dole has not done."



Chapel Hill resident Jim Neal is running to unseat Elizabeth Dole.

In his conversation with *Q-Notes*, Neal explained that he has always been an outsider who came from humble beginnings — his grandmother worked in a mill and his mother was the only one in her family to ever go to college. (She attended what is now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro).

Although he describes himself as progressive, he says he is fiscally conservative.

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Hillary Rodham Clinton

Q-Notes examines the candidates — Part one of a multi-part series

by David Stout . Q-Notes staff



Over the next several issues we'll be handicapping the Democratic presidential candidates in preparation for primary season. The first Democratic primary occurs in Iowa on Jan. 3. South Carolina holds the earliest in the South on Jan. 26. The North Carolina Democratic primary takes place May 6.



We have made an editorial decision to limit our coverage to the Democrats because, vis-à-vis LGBT issues, the leading Republican candidates range from woefully lacking to open hostility, or they're Rudy Giuliani, an Iraq war hawk. Either way, the GOP slate is a disappointment and not worthy of consideration in our opinion.

Hillary Rodham Clinton's run for the White House as the Democratic nominee is a foregone conclusion. At least, that's what the mainstream media would have you believe.

Their position is understandable. The two-

term New York senator is the frontrunner, is seated on the largest war chest ever amassed at this point in a presidential campaign, is surrounded by a crack team of advisors and is married to the most popular American president since Reagan in his heyday.

Impressive stuff. Enough to feel Clinton is in the driver's seat, without a doubt. But, despite the "inevitability" meme, no guarantee of victory.

It was also conventional wisdom that Howard Dean would run away with the bellwether Iowa primary in 2004, setting in motion a tumbling of dominoes that would carry him to the nomination. However, a surprising third-place finish led to the infamous "Dean Scream" speech. Within weeks Howard was the lamest of ducks.

No one is predicting that Clinton will experience a similar meltdown, of course. But let's not call the race before a single vote has even been cast.

A record of support

Hillary Clinton has a unique history with the gay community that runs the length of her time in national politics. She and Bill openly courted LGBT voters in their initial bid for the White House. As First Lady, her press secretary, Neel Lattimore, was an out gay man.

Additional high-profile staff and advisory positions in the Clinton administration were filled by other gays and lesbians, including Fred

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