

# Text Of Mayor Byrum's Statement On Racial Unrest

(Editor's Note: The following is the complete text of a statement distributed to Edenton Town Council and the news media Tuesday night by Mayor George Alma Byrum.)

It was my desire to make this full report much sooner, but felt that due to the large number of arrests and approaching trials, it would be to the best interest of those involved as well as the entire community to withhold this report until after local trials has been completed.

Edenton and Chowan County have had a tragic experience with racial unrest and damaging fires since the middle of May. No one can truly state the staggering cost of these unfortunate experiences. The cost to the Town and County has been substantial, as well as to the State of North Carolina for the Highway Patrol, SBI, and other state agencies. The loss of business by merchants and the tragic losses caused by set fires would be another large figure. Add to this the unknown hours of extra duty served by all law enforcement personnel in Edenton, Chowan County, the N. C. Highway Patrol and SBI, our fire department, and all the volunteers who helped patrol our town and county. Many others have spent many valuable hours away from their businesses or homes at meetings trying to find solutions to local problems.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all of the law enforcement agencies, firemen, and public citizens mentioned above for their exceptional efforts during this period of unrest. We can all be proud of the dedication to duty of these people. We can also thank God that throughout this period, we have not experienced any tragic bodily injury or death.

These disturbances began after the Chowan-Edenton School Board did not renew the contract of Mr. Richard Satterfield as Band Director. Almost the entire Black Community felt that Mr. Satterfield was being discriminated against and had been performing well at his job. The School Board was asked by a committee representing the Black Community to publicly give their reasons for failure to re-hire Mr. Satterfield. This committee requested the rehiring of Mr. Satterfield in some capacity due to his 17-18 years with the local schools. The School Board stated they could not publicly give their reasons for not re-hiring Mr. Satterfield's contract.

It was soon after this meeting that some individuals or group requested aid from SCLC and Dupree Clark, Don Woods, Howard Brooks, from SCLC arrived in Edenton.

Notice was given to the Town that parades and picketing would be started in order to show sympathy for Mr. Satterfield and to put pressure on the local community to ask for the re-hiring of Mr. Satterfield. The Town Council met on May 15, 1973 to discuss its ordinances in regards to parades. The Towns picketing ordinance had been reviewed thoroughly and revised after the court action that took place in 1962 during the time of picketing and sit-ins.

Beginning on May 14, 1973, "Black Monday" was proclaimed and Black employees and students were urged to stay away from work and school. School attendance was drastically affected for many days, and many activities including graduation were cancelled.

On Wednesday, May 16, 1973, about noon a large number of Black students with SCLC leaders sat in at the

Superintendent's office in the County office building and in the principal's office of John A. Holmes High school. Our Town and County law enforcement officers were called to the buildings to restore law and order.

Continuous efforts were made for several hours by law enforcement officers and school officials to request the students and their leaders to leave the buildings, but to no avail. I arrived at the Edenton Police Department around noon and was informed of the entire situation. Later in the afternoon, when the building was still occupied, I called the Governor's office requesting the aid of the highway patrol, if it should be necessary to arrest those occupying the buildings. The Good Neighbor Council and some other Black leaders were called in during the afternoon to meet and hopefully find means to clear the buildings. Black leaders as well as school officials requested that the buildings be cleared, without success. The order was given with my approval to arrest those occupying the buildings about 6:30 P.M.

Immediately after the arrest, members of the Good Neighbor Council, some Town Council members and school board members, and other community leaders met in the Council Chambers until early in the morning.

The problems discussed primarily centered on the dismissal of Mr. Satterfield and what were the charges against him, what could be done to get reduction of bonds, set at \$500 for those arrested and jailed. Committees were appointed to seek information from the School Board, reduction of bonds, and charges of police brutality.

The meeting was adjourned until Thursday afternoon at 2:00 P.M., May 17, 1973, when members of the Good Neighbor Council, School Board officials, local Black leaders, State officials from the Good Neighbor Council and State Department of Public Instruction and Mr. Satterfield were present.

A great deal of discussion took place in regards to Mr. Satterfield not being rehired and why. The School officials and Mr. Satterfield were both asked to give the charges publicly for Mr. Satterfield's dismissal. No information was given by either except what had already appeared in our local press.

Efforts had been made to have bond reduced on those arrested but without results. It was the feeling of those present that our community problems could be solved and that bond reduction would be one of the best means to show good faith in solving the problems facing our community. A local Black minister stated he was unable to secure bond for his daughter without considerable expense, since he was not a property owner in N. C. With the thought of helping community relations I offered and signed the bond for release of his daughter.

Later in the afternoon of May 17, 1973, a large group of Blacks were arrested for blocking traffic on Albemarle Street and arrests were to continue for many weeks for charges of blocking traffic, disorderly conduct, failure to disperse, larceny and damage to the Confederate flag, unlawful assemblage, assault on officers, unlawful use of loud speakers and damage to real property.

Beginning on May 16, 1973, at my request for aid from the Governor's office, our Town received tremendous aid from the N. C. Highway Patrol, SBI, FBI, and many other state

agencies. It is impossible to report the many times they responded to our call and the fine job they did in helping restore and protect law and order in our community.

It is a very satisfying feeling to know that in time of need, you receive help from trained, dedicated, and competent law enforcement agencies.

Meetings continued on Friday, May 18, 1973, with a smaller group of Blacks and Whites and a request was made of Judge W. F. Walker to meet with this group on Saturday morning, May 19, 1973, in regards to reduction of bond. The request for reduction of bonds was made with the approval of the officer in charge of the Highway Patrol, Chief of Police Parrish, Sheriff Toppin, and the committee from the Good Neighbor Council. All of these and others were present at the meeting with Judge Walker. Judge Walker's decision was that bond would be reduced to \$250 with the provisions that the defendants were remanded to the custody of their parents and they would make every effort to stop their children from further participation in unlawful assemblies. Meetings continued with small groups discussing our problems and seeking solutions to these problems.

Representatives of the Community Relations Service of the U. S. Department of Justice arrived in Edenton on Saturday, May 19, 1973. They became involved in meetings with Blacks and Whites and requested a meeting for Thursday afternoon, May 25th, with Dr. Ralph Abernathy in attendance. They requested a small number of Whites and Blacks to attend. At this meeting, the only problem brought up and discussed was the request for rehiring and reasons for dismissal of Richard Satterfield. A request was made by Dr. Abernathy that the School Board rehire Mr. Satterfield or to have appointed a bi-racial committee to investigate his dismissal and charges against him. The School Board was requested to meet with this group and were called for a meeting after recessing for dinner. The School Board reaffirmed their decision on Mr. Satterfield. This meeting adjourned late that night.

On this same date May 25, 1973, Blacks began picketing downtown Edenton with signs. This was to continue for weeks in an effort by these Blacks to exert pressure on the downtown merchants in hope that they would in turn put pressure on the School Board to change their decision on Mr. Satterfield.

A large number of incidents were reported of intimidation, profane language, and threats against those shopping downtown. The general public was very much opposed to the picketing and parading in downtown Edenton and most people did not want to be confronted with this type of disorder. Picketing took place almost exclusively on the east side of Broad Street within a two block area, which adversely affected the merchants in this area. Many unfounded rumors were spread regarding the location of the picketing. It was asked why no pickets were on the west side of Broad Street. The rumor was spread that I, the Mayor, had contributed \$1000 to the Black Movement, so they would not picket in front of my business. This is completely false and unfounded, as I have not contributed any money or anything to the Black Movement in Edenton or elsewhere.

On the night of May 28, 1973, I invited a group of about 40 Black leaders to a meeting at the Municipal Building. I gave a report on the entire situation up to that time and requested that they exert their leadership and influence to help bring our community back to normal. The Town Council met on May 29, 1973, to discuss the local problems and review our ordinances on parades, group demonstrations, and flags. Dr. Ralph Abernathy returned to Edenton on June 1, 1973, and a meeting was held with most of the same group as present at the first meeting. He stated that the School Board

should rehire Mr. Satterfield and presented a list of grievances and demands drawn up by a local committee. He stated that parades and picketing would continue in Edenton until their problems were solved by the local committee. He stated that his organization, SCLC would call its leaders out of Edenton when the local committee started negotiations on these grievances and demands.

I told Dr. Abernathy and the group present that we did not appreciate what his organization had done in our town. Edenton was not a racist city and relations between the races in Edenton had been good and improving until recently. I informed him we were proud of our community and have and would be willing to discuss any differences at anytime. However, the School Board was elected to operate the schools and had the right and obligation to hire and fire personnel.

I said that our town would not be intimidated and we expected all people, Black and White, to obey and respect the law and the rights of others.

After this meeting on June 1, 1973, I waited for a call from the local committee on Black Grievance, who were now responsible to help resolve our local problems. I did not receive any calls. On June 5, 1973, I called the Chairman of the committee and asked for results or questions or meetings from his committee I requested a meeting for 11:00 A.M. on June 9, 1973. Attending this meeting were some members of the committee on Black Grievances, Good Neighbor Council members, Black ministers, and a few county and town leaders. A long discussion was held in regards to a list of grievances and demands and the general racial conditions of our Town before the disorder and at present. The Black Committee stated they could not accept the Good Neighbor Council as the negotiating unit for any of their problems. The Blacks demands would be handled by the Grievance Committee. A strong difference developed between some individuals present in regards to the Black arrests and the cost to the families of those involved. Information was related to the group in answer to the demands by the Chairman of the County Commissioners, and the Town Administrator. The meeting closed with a request that the local committee on Black grievances meet and discuss the reports given and use their influence to quieten our community. It was stated that local problems can be solved only with cooperation between the races in a peaceful community. This has been the case in the past and will work in the present and future.

No calls or requests for meetings came from the local Black Committee. I continued to communicate with other Black leaders while Edenton continued to have parades and picketing. Where was the Black leadership that Dr. Abernathy had promised?

Also at this time, another crisis had developed. Local and state investigative officials reported 14 fires set resulting in nearly half a million dollars in property damage. The Town Council met on June 14, 1973, to discuss this problem and along with Chowan County Commissioners, offered a regard for those responsible for setting the fires. Merchants, industry, and others began patrolling to safeguard their property. A meeting was called by the Chamber of Commerce at the Municipal Building and those present pledged \$3,500 for information leading to arrest of

those responsible for setting the fires. I again called the Governor's office and requested the Governor to offer a reward, which he offered in the amount of \$2,500.

On June 29, 1973, at my request, a small group of Blacks and Whites met to discuss the racial problems and the Black demands. Reports were made and individuals were asked to seek additional information from the proper authorities for a later meeting. On July 19, 1973, at my request, a larger group of the Black Committee met with some White in the Municipal Building to discuss the information assembled from governmental agencies regarding their demands and ways and means of procuring other information and the transmission of this information to the Black Community. Two or three meetings were called and held by Black leaders for other Blacks to hear the reports on the list of grievances and demands.

Since July 19, 1973, I have not been called by any member of the Black Committee for information, meetings, or other problems or complaints. I have called no further meetings with this committee. I have continued to communicate with Black leadership concerning our community problems.

I called a meeting of all Black and White ministers serving our community and asked them to help solve our problems and to ask God's help through prayer. A "Week of Prayer" was called for the entire county, and the ministers continued to meet each week for prayer meetings in the Municipal Building.

On July 25, 31, and August 6, the Town Council met to discuss our racial problems and review and change out town ordinances regarding parades, picketing, and group demonstrations. These actions resulted in a general uprating, defining of rules and regulations.

Throughout this period of unrest, many have asked why the Town allows parades, picketing, and demonstrations. The answer is simple. We cannot take this right away from anyone. This right is given by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and has been tested thoroughly in the courts.

Many have expressed the opinion that something could have been done to stop the parading and picketing. Many threats were made of violence on both sides. We can thank God that even though our community experienced disruptions and fires we had no major injuries or loss of life. No one offered a solution to our problem, and when you are the one in the responsible position and under fire, all you can do is use your best judgment to keep peace and prevent violence.

No one had a legal solution to our problems or, if they did, they failed to tell the proper authorities. We had all state agencies and some federal and they had no solutions. No local or outside suggestion or recommendation was made that did not receive thorough checking. Some legal suggestions were checked at great effort and expense to the community. I do not claim to have been perfect and there is always room for suggestions, criticisms and improvement. I did the best I knew how under the circumstances, hopefully to the advantage of all Blacks and Whites in our community. May we all learn and profit by our problems of the past and build a better Edenton for the future.

MAYOR GEORGE A. BYRUM



CAROUSEL REBUILT—On display in the new Charlotte Civic Center is the 100-year-old German carousel from Carowinds. It is a major attraction of "Oktoberfest" week, running October 6-13 in the Queen City.

## 100-year-old German Carousel Very Popular

CHARLOTTE — A 100-year-old German carousel from Carowinds, the new family entertainment complex just south of Charlotte, has been dismantled and rebuilt in the Queen City's new civic center as a major attraction of "Oktoberfest" week.

The carousel is an antique which once entertained riders at a village inn near Frankfurt, Germany, in the 1880s. Children attending the Oktoberfest may ride the carousel in the civic center, just as they do in the 73-acre Carowinds theme park.

annual celebration in Munich, Germany. The festival will feature gardens, foods and other exhibits following the German life-style.

The carousel will be torn down and set back in the park at the end of the celebration. Carowinds, featuring some 100 rides, lives shows, shops and exhibits, is open weekends only through November 25.

The Oktoberfest, running October 6-13, is the first public event to be held in the \$11-million civic center.

## Recreation Scoreboard By Roy Winslow

Continued from Page 5  
MIDGET LEAGUE

Flag Football	
Redskins	4-2
Cowboys	3-2-1
Packers	3-2-1
Dolphins	1-5

point after TD. Bobby Ashley scored three times for the Dolphins. Bud Garner added a point after and the team scored a two-point safety.

scored as the Redskins turned back the Cowboys, 21-12. They each got an extra point.

The Redskins defeated the Dolphins and the Cowboys to move into first place in league play. In a high scoring game, the Redskins defeated the Dolphins, 33-21, and two days later defeated the Cowboys, 21-12.

On defense for the Redskins, standouts included Raleigh Basnight, Cliff Clark and Darrell Gray. Arthur Brothers, Woody White and Mike Spears turned in a good defensive game for the Dolphins.

The defensive standouts were: Blake Boyce, David Jordan and Tommy White for the Cowboys, and William Privott, Cliff Clark and Raleigh Basnight for the Redskins.

William Privott scored four TDs for the Redskins and an extra point in the win over the Dolphins and Jim Chesson scored on a 60 yard run and got an extra point with Greg Shackelford getting the other

Edward Jackson scored twice for the Cowboys as did Steve Holley for the Packers in their 12-12 game.

Bobby Ashley scored 21 points in the game where the Dolphins defeated the Packers, 33-20. Woody White and Bud Garner also scored in the win. Bobby Hutchison scored twice for the Packers, Steve Holley got a TD and an extra point and Trent Nixon scored an extra point.

The United Methodist Women of Edenton United Methodist Church will have a chicken salad plate lunch sale October 18 at the church. Those who wish to call in their orders may contact Mrs. Delores Earnhardt at 482-2289.

Allen Downum, David Jordan and Blake Boyce for the Cowboys; Keith Nixon, Thomas White and Holley were defensive standouts in the game.

On defense, Ed Small, Keith Nixon and Trent Nixon were exception with Ashley, Mike Spear and James Johnson turning in good defensive play for the Dolphins.

Hunter's Helper  
A basic guide to Wild Game Cookery is being offered free by The National Rifle Association, 1600 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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**NOTICE TO ALL EDENTON VOTERS**

This is to announce that I will be a candidate for office of Councilman of the Third Ward in Edenton in the November 6 election. If elected, I will devote my time and energy to improvements in Edenton and the total welfare of the community. I am intensely interested in the forward progress of Edenton and promise, if elected, to do all in my power to help Edenton to be a leader.

YOUR VOTE AND SUPPORT WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED

**William A. Reeves**