

EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEE MORE 'LETTERS TO THE EDITOR' ON PAGE 20

Slapped in the Face Again by Chancellor Snub

Dear Sir,

I am a native of Robeson County; my ancestors settled this area long before the devastating advent of the white man so I am a Native American—that's 'bout as native as one can get.

I oftentimes wondered why people label us "Red Men." I have now figured it out: Every time we "Indians" start making a little lead-way the whites "Slap our face (figurative speaking)."

When we were recognized as Lumbee Indians by the General Assembly in 1956, local whites changed the name of Lumbee River to Lumber River; that, my friend, was a slap in the face. Could it be that we are called "Red Men" because our faces are always red and inflamed from the constant slaps administered by our fair (skin) non-Indian neighbors?

In 1885, after being denied an education for 50 years, the General Assembly appropriated \$500 to begin a school for Indians of Robeson County; it was from this \$500 appropriation Pembroke State University sprang forth many Indians have experienced growing pains in order for P.S.U. to arrive at its present state of glory. As a matter of fact, the legislation in 1885 included a stipulation that the local Indians would have to furnish the building in which the school would be housed.

Now, I read in the Fayetteville Times that a white man will become Chancellor of PSU when English Jones retires June 30. After overcoming the impossible 50-years-imposed ignorance (the years 1835-1885 when Indians were denied the right to an education), the Indian people managed to flout 2 qualified Indians for the post of chancellor of what used to be our school. To add salt to the wound, of the 4 nominees for the post, the 2 Indians came in 3rd and 4th.

This, my friend, is a slap in the face. Although I believe in the Bible, I don't think we should turn our other cheek; if we do the whites will eventually advance to using brass knuckles on us. It's now time for us to take a stand.

This time, let's not sit around smoking peace pipes and rubbing our red and inflamed faces. Let's join together and demand an Indian. I say, the new chancellor-to-be is old enough to retire right now; he's 55, let's let him know that we will not accept this latest blow to our pride and heritage. Let's petition all levels of government, write letters to our representatives, make phone calls to the appropriate persons, and demand an Indian. Write President Carter and ask him if what he preaches about human rights applies to Indians of Robeson and adjacent counties.

You may think I'm making a mountain out of a mole hill, but I think not. The last time I was on the PSU campus I saw nothing to reflect the university's rich Indian past; as a matter of fact, the only thing I saw with a dab of red in it was the bleachers in the old gym, and they, if the truth were known, were closer to a rusty orange.

It's pretty evident: the UNC administration wants every semblance of Indianness erased from the Pembroke State University campus; if Hurricane Hazel could have blown the whole campus to Lumberton with its devastating wrath in the 1950s, I'm sure Dr. Friday would not have minded. The prevalent PSU mentality would blend right in with our non-Indian neighbors in Lumberton.

The sad feature is that when Pembroke State joined the University of N.C. System in 1969, many smiled—even the Indians grinned a bit. I bet you 5-to-1 odds that only the whites are laughing now (no doubt behind our backs).

So, as you read this letter, if you experience a tingling sensation in your cheeks there is no need to consult Dr. Brooks. Your only problem is that you've been slapped again!

Garry Barton
405 Pine Street
Pembroke, N.C. 28372

A PLAUDIT FOR PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRY

Dear Mr. Barton,

Thank you very much for your editorial concerning John Robinson that appeared in the Carolina Indian Voice of 1 March 1979. We share your opinion of John and feel that he is an exceptionally capable and dedicated young minister. We are so pleased that the work that he is doing in Pembroke has been accepted by the people there.

Murphy McGirt of Maxton, one of our Presbyterian leaders, met with the remnant of the Pembroke Presbyterian Church to plant the seed for the ministry that John Robinson is doing. The tiny congregation that was left endorsed the project enthusiastically and offered the facilities of the church building. We are grateful that the project has grown.

Thanking you again, I am

Sincerely yours,
Harris Stephens
Executive Secretary
P.O. Box 53352
Fayetteville, NC 28305

The Presbyterians have needed to do something in Pembroke. I am pleased to say that some five years ago Mr.

A Nice Note About Barbara McMillan Story

Dear Bruce,

I am writing to express my appreciation to you for the excellent newspaper article you did on Barbara McMillan's program. The article was well done and certainly did present an excellent overview of Barbara's program. The thing that impressed me most about the article was the fact that you were not writing from hearsay but had a feel for the program. It was obvious that you had spent time with Barbara finding out about her program because of the kind of feeling you were able to put into the article.

You have always been willing to publicize special events at the Center, to do articles on certain programs of the Center, etc. This has enabled us to keep the public informed as to what we are doing and has also been instrumental in strengthening our ministry and in gaining support for our work at the Center.

Please be assured that I appreciate your continued interest in our work at the Center and am especially grateful for your willingness to help us publicize what we are doing at the Center.

Sincerely,
Betty Purkey,
Exec. Director
Robeson County Church & Community Center

You will never know just how much I appreciate the many kind and helpful things you are always doing for the Center.

Incensed at Chancellor Selection

To the Editor:

I will agree with you that things are not much better than they were in the 1800s. Smoke may not be coming from guns now as it was then, but it is still here, in the County of Robeson. The choice of chancellor for Pembroke State was made behind a large smoke screen, and we should send up the largest smoke signals ever.

and smoke it with many more decisions like this one, we will choke to death from the smoke. The choice has been made and this is not the time to stop, when a few people think the fire is cool, it should be flaming more in the hearts and minds of more of us. We were told for a long time that Indians were not qualified. Oh yes, we are now.

Thank you,
Ceel G. Hunt
Rt. 1
Shannon, N.C. 28386

We have smoked the Peace Pipe long enough, and if we sit

Booster Club Extends Thanks

Dear Sir,

The Pembroke High School Booster Club would like to express their appreciation to Mr. Donald Bonner, guest speaker for the PSHS Athletic Awards Banquet held last week in the school cafeteria. We would also like to thank Ms. Pattie Brayboy, Ms. Barbara Harris, and Ms. Barbara Jones and the girls from the Home Economics department who did an outstanding job decorating and serving for the

Banquet. Mrs. Rose Carter of Carter's Florist prepared the beautiful floral arrangements for the occasion. Mrs. Mable Zeigler provided the programs for the awards banquet, and did an outstanding job. Noah Woods and Oceanous Lowry helped with the table arrangements. The PSHS cafeteria staff did an outstanding job as usual, along with the help of Waltz Locklear and wife.

Jim Poorboy, President
Pembroke High Booster Club

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AS I SEE IT by Bruce Barton



SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CHANCELLOR DEBACLE

They were all on one accord on May 19, 1921. It was commencement at the Indian Normal School in Pembroke. An old copy of the Robesonian, dated May 21, 1921 reads like this:

"Speaking of people being all in one place with one accord, that is what happened at Pembroke Friday (May 19, 1921), the last day of the commencement of the Indian Normal, the exercises being held for the first time in the splendid new \$75,000 brick building. So great was the crowd for the morning exercises that not only was all space in the auditorium, which seats 800 people packed, but heads were thrust in at every window, and many could not gain a vantage point..."

After a full day of recitals and songs and speeches and commencement sermons and declaration contests by the students, including an impromptu sermonette by Rev. W.C. Moore (the first principal of the Indian Normal when it was established in 1887). O.R. Sampson, chairman of the board of trustees gave a wonderful talk to close the exercises. He urged parents to keep their children in school and on through the normal. "It is a big job", he said, "to educate a race", and he stressed the point that time spent in preparation for life's work is never lost, that it is better to spend 40 years in preparation than to be unprepared and make a failure. "Hard is the important thing", he said, "teach children to obey, to be truthful and honest. Opportunity is greater today than ever before. Every obstacle seems to have been moved out of the way. Since 1887, when the Normal was established, till the music of the hammers heralded the erection of the splendid new building we now enjoy, the Indian race has been making progress. The future will unfold things greater than you ever dreamed. You can't invest in a better thing than education. Empty your pocket-books into the education of your children and it will be the best investment you ever made. The power is in the brain. The educated man and woman are worth infinitely more than the uneducated..."

That was in 1921 and everything that wonderful man said has come to fruition. The future did unfold mighty dreams. The Indian Normal School (now Pembroke State University) survived perilous times and in 1969 was designated a state university, removing the institution for ever more from local control.

But the people still think of the school as "their school." They know that the school was begun in 1887 to "educate a race" and the education continues. Sometimes the going gets rough. The editorial in the Fayetteville Times Wednesday hurt very much. Entitled "Give Givens Chance", the editorial was simplistic and condescending. (The even the syntax protested) piece implied that we were screaming against Givens because he was not a Lumbee Indian. That is pure Llama dung. That is not the case at all.

Givens is beside the point. Like the Indian community, he is a pawn, a chess piece being moved as Bill Friday works out his high level strategy. No, Dr. Paul Givens does not have anything to do with our discontent.

Some, like Dick Brown in the Fayetteville Observer, in his column "Cape Fear Country", they spent \$20,000 flitting about acting important and winning the list down.

I join Rep. Horace Locklear in calling for the resignation of Bill Friday, head of the university system. The man is autocratic and backward thinking. Instead of playing thinly disguised racial games Friday ought to face up to the law of the land or quit and go to South Africa or some other land more suited to his philosophy. A government would be derelict if it did not hold its administrators accountable. It has been just a few years since Indians were allowed to attend supposed liberal UNC-Chapel Hill. That is one of the reasons PSU was begun: "to educate a race." A resignation from Bill Friday would be a sound educational step for all of us; then we could get on with educating our race, whatever color it happens to be.

The complaint is not that Givens is something other than a Lumbee Indian. The complaint is that two eminently qualified Indians (in a final field of four out of 84 candidates) were by passed. Either would have made a competent chancellor. But Bill Friday, the Autocratic One, once again has gone outside the state to fill a vacant chancellor's chair. He likes to name his own people, and seems to thrive on antagonizing the local people surrounding the universities.

He implied that he was offended by letters to him in favor of the two Indian candidates. To me Bill Friday is a fool, if that is true. God, in his infinite wisdom, receives petitions from his people. Is Bill Friday better than God? He admitted to this writer that he "received more letters for the chancellorship in this instance than in any since I have been here." All the letters, according to Friday, were in favor of the two Indian candidates.

Friday also decried the Indian division. And I decry his ignorance of the Indian mentality. Indians have preferences just like white folk. Really!! What in the name of God is wrong with Indians preferring one candidate over the other? We should be commended for being able to put forth not one mind you but two worthy candidates for the job.

Too, the local PSU Board of Trustees (with a majority of Indians) performed, at times, ineptly, throughout the selection process. At their last meeting with Friday they agreed (magnanimously even) to support whoever Friday recommended, although he did not deem it necessary to tell them who his selection was. That was sort of like buying a pig in a poke. As a matter of fact, it is stupidity of the highest order to give your support for something when you do not know what you are supporting.

Mr. Sampson, in his oration, said, in the 1921 commencement address, "Every obstacle seems to have been moved out of the way..."

Alas, every obstacle but one: RACISM! That obstacle is still with us. The university is predominantly white now, and Mr. Sampson would be shocked to know that two eminently qualified Indian candidates have been bypassed for an outsider who is 55 years old and has seemingly moved ever time the seven year itch struck.

Too, it has now come to light that the two Indian candidates were never seriously considered. They were cosmetic, to fool us into thinking they were being considered. And, at the end, they were played off against each other like banjos.

A reliable source has told me that Oxendine's references at Temple were never contacted, and that his interview was prefatory, to say the least.

And, Friday was angry because the local board had the audacity to add Chavis to the list of three recommended by the selection committee. Too, it is evident that the selection committee was determined to "get even" with the departing Dr. English E. Jones by forsaking his seeming choice, Dr. James B. Chavis. Anyway,

MUSING... by OI' Reasonable

Bill Friday has Robeson roots...

Boys, listen to this: Bill Friday's wife is from ol' Robeson. According to smart elekcy Bruce Barton, Mrs. Friday's father was a farmer in the Back Swamp area for years and her mother taught in the Lumberton schools for some thirty years. Barton says that Bill Friday told him this.

If so, boys, that explains Bill Friday's peculiar rulings against our Indian people. I can't hardly believe the man. He thinks like a member of the old home guard when Henry Berry Lowry was a running around.

I don't know what we can do, but I do know that we ought to boil our loud as hard as we can. Ifen it don't change nuthin, it will make you feel better in gitting it out of yore system.

An Editorial Expression Concerning the New Chancellor

We have thought about it long and hard. Dr. Paul R. Givens and his family most likely will be coming to Pembroke in the very near future. We frankly hope they change their mind and go back from whence they came. But we don't think that is going to happen.

Therefore, we welcome them to Pembroke; not with open arms, but we welcome them. And we hope Dr. Givens becomes a blessing in disguise. God knows there are many things wrong with campus-community relations. Maybe, if he lives in Pembroke, other white professors and administrators will join him. But I doubt it.

But we must give him and his family the benefit of the doubt. Our fight is not with him; it is with Bill Friday and his minions in Chapel Hill. They are the culprits; Dr. Givens simply applied for a job and got it.

But we will watch him like a hawk watches a chicken. We will critically assess him. To say less would be a lie, and to say more would be a strain on our troubled heart. We do not intend to join the lines already tending up to him. If we develop a relationship it will be one based on mutual respect, and it will be mutually earned.

dians. No, Dick Brown. It wasn't the all-Indian image your people sought to wipe out, using a so-called Lumbee for a whipping boy. They sought to wipe out Indian education, boldly confiscating our own educational institute to do it. Before William Friday wipes out any image at PSU he ought first to wipe out the all-white image at Chapel Hill and elsewhere in the University of North Carolina system.



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THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE
PUBLISHED EACH THURSDAY
by The Lumbee Publishing Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 1075, Pembroke, N.C. 28372
Publication No. 978380
Second Class Postage Paid at Pembroke