

# CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

"Building Communicative Bridges  
In A Tri-Racial Setting"

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## SHELIA LOCKLEAR BECK AWARDED \$375,000 IN "WRONGFUL DEATH" JUDGMENT AGAINST CP&L

### Local Attorney Dexter Brooks leads Legal Effort

Pembroke law firm of Locklear, Brooks & Jacobs to prosecute a 'wrongful death' action against CP&L.

The case was of particular interest to Dexter Brooks, a member of the firm, who handled the case. Brooks, interestingly enough, earned a degree with high honors, in electrical engineering from N.C. State. Brooks grasped the significance of the case immediately, noting with clarity the negligent actions and omissions of CP&L.

In another ironic twist Brooks is also a first cousin to Ronald Hammonds and has strong ties to the Saddletree Community. His mother is Ms. Lela Hammonds Brooks, a native of the Saddletree Community.

The two first cousins spend countless hours re-constructing the case, painstakingly putting together the case against CP&L. For instance, the existence of lightning on the fatal day had to be explained and negated as even the autopsy report suggested death by lightning rather than by electrical power (actually lightning is electricity). The research, over a period of months, included interviews with neighbors of the deceased, meteorologists, airport towers and computer analysis of weather data and satellite photos. The services of an electrical engineer with experience in power transmission and distribution had to be secured; apparently this was not an easy task given CP&L's influence on the engineering community.

In spite of the death CP&L never once contacted the family of Daryl Beck with expressions of sympathy or settlement. Although discussions were held between Brooks and attorneys for CP&L, no offer to settle the case was ever made by the power monopoly.

Brooks eventually contacted the Raleigh law firm of Thorp, Anderson & Slikfin for

assistance because of the tremendous expense of preparing a case against such a large corporation with seeming unlimited legal help and also because of the power company's hard line stance. Anne Slikfin was a classmate of Brooks at the UNC School of Law in Chapel Hill and Bill Thorp is a renowned civil trial practitioner.

After suit was filed, the trio engaged in extensive discovery, motions and depositions as they meticulously built their case, which included restructuring the entire work and inspection history of the particular fatal power line.

Still CP&L refused to settle the case; instead they retained the services of Howard Manning, a prominent Raleigh attorney to defend the case for them.

In another ironic twist Manning also represents the St. Pauls, Red Springs and Fairmont Boards of Education in the celebrated Robeson School Discrimination suit. Brooks, of course, is the attorney for the Robeson County Board of Education.

The trial finally began on Monday, February 2, 1981 in Wake County Superior Court before Judge A. Pilston Godwin and ran for two weeks.

CP&L attempted to show that Daryl Beck was negligent in causing his own death and discounted his worth to his family by citing his lack of formal education. CP&L also introduced statistics involving homicide and vehicular accidents among the Indians.

Arguments to the jury started on Thursday, February 12, with Brooks making the first presentation.

Brooks in a long, sometimes colorful, presentation used Indian history and philosophy and his electrical engineering background to argue the family's theory

as to how the death occurred and to CP&L's contention. Anne Slikfin argued the perspective of a mother, noting that Beck was survived by a child at the time of death seventeen year old widow and an eleven day old daughter.

After an argument by Manning, Bill Thorp argued that the gross negligence of the power company called for punitive damages in order to force the large corporation to become more conscious of the safety of the public.

After deliberating less than three hours, the jury returned a verdict for \$200,000 in compensatory damages and \$175,000 in punitive damages. It is believed that this is the largest jury award ever to a Robeson County resident and the largest award ever of punitive damages by a Wake County jury.

### Dexter Brooks calls trial Two Weeks of "Intense Mental Combat"

Dexter Brooks, the young Indian attorney who spearheaded the defense is well known locally for his work in the landmark federal case which broke double voting in Robeson County and the case which forced the reapportionment of the county commissioner districts, thereby resulting in the election of a third Indian commissioner.

Brooks is also considered the founding father of Lumber River Legal Services in Pembroke, a particularly effective advocate for poor people in the area.

Since becoming an attorney Brooks has earned a reputation for competence in the area of civil law in a series of cases, including the now celebrated case brought by a white, non-resident land owner against the town of Pembroke -- Alfred W. Cook.

Brooks, along with Arnold Locklear and Arlie Jacobs, his associates, have brought the law firm of Locklear, Brooks and Jacobs to a position of prominence in Robeson legal circles.

Brooks, when queried about the case, would only respond that he considered the trial two weeks of "intense mental combat," and referred us to the family for further details.

Because of the efforts of Brooks and his associates it appears that Shelia Locklear Beck and her daughter Rekelle will have a relative happy ending to a sad story that began with the death of their husband and father.

### Tickets still available

Tickets are still available for a chance to win a 200-lb. hog. Tickets are \$1.00 each and may be purchased from the students of Pembroke Senior High and Pembroke Junior High. The drawing will be held Monday, Feb. 23, 1981 at Pembroke Senior High School.

This drawing is only one of many projects undertaken by the concerned parents of Pembroke Senior High in an effort to raise funds to purchase an activity bus for the school.

A previous drawing was held Feb. 9, 1981. The hog was donated by Dial Farms. Paula Brooks was the winner of the hog.

The student who sells the most tickets for this drawing will be presented a \$25.00 Savings Bond.

For more information interested persons may contact Roy Maynor, Jr., principal of Pembroke Senior High or Buddy Bell at Pembroke Junior High.

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## PEOPLE AND PLACES AND THINGS

### FAMILY REUNION PLANNED

The family of the late Edmond and Mary Lowery Jacobs is planning a family reunion on April 5, 1981 at the Saddle-tree Jaycee Hut in Lumberton, NC.

This invitation is being extended to all the descendants of Edmond and Mary. The family is requesting that each one attending bring a covered dish. Lunch will begin at 1 p.m. followed by a program and fellowship.

For further information call Betty McGirt at 919-739-5593 or Doris Brooks at 919-521-2061 or Mary C. Brewer at 919-521-2189 or Geraldine Clark at 919-521-4303.

### FREE INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

Lumbee River Legal Services is participating in the Internal Revenue Services Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. The VITA program is designed to help lower income, elderly, handicapped and non-English speaking individuals in filing their income tax on Form 1040A and the basic Form 1040. This service is being provided at the offices of Lumbee River Legal Services at East Main and Second Street in Pembroke on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

### NORTH CAROLINA'S HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

The high school dropout rate in North Carolina's public schools declined slightly over the previous year, according to a recent report from the State Department of Public Instruction.

Some 70,862 students graduated from North Carolina's high schools in 1980. An estimated 7.8 percent (or approximately 28,090) dropped out during the 1979-80 school year.

There were approximately 72,464 graduates in the Class of 1979. Eight percent (about 29,431 students) were estimated to have dropped out during the 1978-79 school term.

The drop out rate was 7.9 percent in 1976-77; 7.5 percent in 1975-76; and 8.5 percent in 1974-75.

### GOSPEL SING PLANNED

A gospel sing will be held Thursday, Feb. 26, 1981 at 7:30 p.m. at Scotland Senior High Auditorium in Laurinburg. The sing will feature Teddy Huffman and the Gems, the Cathedral Quartet, and the Lowery Trio. The event is being sponsored by the Northview Pentecostal Holiness Church.

### STRIKE AT THE WIND BONANZA

A drawing will be held at the Carolina Indian Voice February 28, 1981 at 11 a.m. The drawing will be to determine who the lucky winner of \$500.00 cash, first place; \$150.00 in cash, second prize; and third place \$100.00 in cash.

The drawing is sponsored by Strike at the Wind and is an effort to raise money for the local outdoor drama.

Information on tickets may be gotten by calling 9191-521-2489.

### SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL CLINIC TO BE HELD

The Robeson County Officials Association will hold its first softball and baseball clinic on Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2 p.m. at the Robeson County Recreation and Park Commission Office on Elizabethtown Road in Lumberton.

This is the first of three clinics and in order to qualify to umpire softball and/or baseball for the summer of 1981, all umpires must attend these clinics. If you are interested in joining the association and umpiring this summer, make plans to attend this first of three important clinic meetings.

### Named to EEO Post in Hawaii

Barbara Frederick, the Deputy Equal Opportunity Officer in Hawaii (DEEOO), assumed the position at CINCPAC as Management Analyst/ DEEOO on 20 October 1980.

As the DEEOO, she is tasked to provide leadership in the administration of the CINCPAC EEO program.

Prior to coming to CINCPAC, Barbara worked as a management analyst at NAS Barbers Point. She has a total of 16 years Federal service which have included various positions at Midway Island, China Lake, California, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Corpus Christi, Texas.

Barbara is a native of Pembroke, NC and the daughter of Mrs. Sarah Jane Oxendine Locklear. She is married to a Naval service member and they have two very active teenagers.

### FIRST AMERICAN

### SHOWCASE, INC. TO MEET

### FEBRUARY

20, 1981

Pembroke-Organizers today announced plans to hold the first annual meeting of First American Showcase, Inc. on February 20, 1981.

The organizational meeting will be held at Big Mo's Goal Post Restaurant located on Highway 74 approximately 4 miles from Pembroke.

The first venture of the fledgling organization was to raise monies via a successful fund raising dinner to send Carnell Locklear to Hollywood, California.

The venture was successful! Locklear returned from Hollywood after a two week stay and is now acting as general manager of "Strike at the Wind," the popular outdoor drama about Henry Berry Lowrie and his fellow Robesonians before, during and after the Civil War.

Locklear made many valuable contacts in Hollywood and hopes to pursue his career in the entertainment industry.

The first annual meeting will be devoted to electing permanent officers, adopting by laws and charting a direction for the organization in the years ahead.

Bruce Barton, editor of The Carolina Indian Voice, is presently serving as temporary chairman of the organization.

All those who attended the fund raising dinner for Carnell Locklear and/or bought tickets are eligible to participate. The meeting is also open to anyone who is interested in artistic expression, especially in the Indian community.

### Baptist Student Center Groundbreaking Feb. 27

by Gene Warren

PEMBROKE--Ground-breaking ceremonies for a \$210,000 Baptist Student Center to be built this spring across from Pembroke State University will be held Friday, Feb. 27, at 3 p.m. with top dignitaries of the N.C. Baptist State Convention taking part.

Among them will be Cecil Ray of Raleigh, executive secretary-treasurer of the N.C. Baptist State Convention; James Y. Greene of Raleigh, director of

the Youth and Campus Ministries for the Baptist State Convention; W.R. Wagoner of Thomasville, president of the N.C. Baptist Children's Homes; J. Dewey Hobbs of Marion, president of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention; and Robert Hickman of Bladenboro, vice president of the N.C. Baptist Men.

Also on the program will be Dr. English E. Jones of Rowland, chancellor emeritus of Pembroke State University; Tony Brewington of Pembroke, superintendent

of missions for the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association; and Lawrence Hardy of Pembroke, pastor of Berea Baptist Church.

The 4,000-square foot, one-story building will be located adjacent to the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association building on property owned by the Baptist State Convention. The building is expected to be completed this summer with volunteer help being utilized.

Chancellor Paul R. Givens of Pembroke State University says, "We are very excited about this new Baptist Student Center as an addition to campus life."

Winston Hardman, in his third year as the first full-time Baptist campus minister of Pembroke State University, is the man who got the project off the ground. He says the new Baptist Student Center "will greatly enrich campus life and help students spiritually, mentally and physically."

The building will be equipped with a chapel and conference room plus a 54x24 foot carpeted room with large sofas and two fireplaces. There will be a kitchen where large meals can be served. It will have a porch provided with rocking chairs. It will also have a patio area for cookouts and recreation.

The energy-efficient building, which is designed by John McCulloch of Charlotte, will also be equipped with an efficiency apartment for a couple who will reside there and be responsible for the building.

Office space for Hardman and his secretary is also provided.



Studying the architect drawings for the \$210,000 Baptist Student Center to be built across from Pembroke State University beginning in March are these three ministers: (left to right) Tony Brewington, director of missions for the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association; Win-

ston Hardman, Baptist campus minister of Pembroke State University; and Lawrence Hardy, pastor of Berea Baptist Church at Pembroke. All three will be among those on the program for ground-breaking ceremonies, scheduled Friday, Feb. 27, at 3 p.m.