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PEMBROKE, N.C.

"Building Communicative Bridges In A Tri-racial Setting."

ROBESON COUNTY

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## WILL FIVE GO INTO ONE?

### MERGER POSSIBILITIES IN ROBESON COUNTY

**EDITOR'S NOTE**  
This is the second in a series of articles about school merger possibilities in Robeson County. Will five go into one? History shouts "No!" We hope history will be proven wrong. The series of articles was written by Bruce Barton, editor of this newspaper.

#### ROBESON COUNTY'S RECORD: FIVE SCHOOL SYSTEMS

It is the enlightened responsibility of a democratic government to provide an education to its citizenry. The North Carolina Constitution states: "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, libraries and means of education shall forever be encouraged." It is interesting that the constitution used the word "encouraged" instead of a more suitable word like "enforced" that might have been more adequate in realizing an education for all the children of North Carolina. The State Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education have also traditionally maintained a hands-off policy concerning the question of merger. In a recent study,

they "...maintained that the question of merger is a local question and outside (our) purview."

Local control has always been at the heart of the educational issue in Robeson County. Robeson County holds the record for the most school systems in North Carolina, and most likely the world. Records affirm that Robeson County has five of the 140 school systems in North Carolina. There are four city school systems—Lumberton, Red Springs, Fairmont, and St. Pauls. And there is one county system—the Robeson County Administrative School Unit. Lumberton was chartered as a special school district in 1907; Red Springs followed in 1913; Fairmont in 1939; and St. Pauls in 1953. Robeson County had six school systems until Maxton's special school district merged into the county system in 1979.

Besides the five public school systems, Robeson County also offers "Flora McDonald Academy" a private school, offering Kindergarten through 12th grade, and St. Francis de Sales Catholic School providing Kindergarten through 6th grade. Funds to operate the public schools come from the State of North

Carolina (66.3%), the Federal Government (18.6%) and Robeson County (16.9%).

The lack of local support seems to be an indictment of a fragmented, educational policy in Robeson County. To understand the provincial, crazy-quilt nature of education in Robeson County though, it is necessary to understand something about the history and ethnic make up therein.

Robeson County, the second largest of North Carolina's 100 counties, contains approximately 944 square miles. The county is rural, sprawling, low coastal plain; with a dependency on bright-leaf tobacco and other agricultural crops, although mechanization is rapidly overtaking the county's traditional agrarian dependencies.

It is difficult, indeed, to draw sociological conclusions about sprawling Robeson County, a tri-racial isolate of 101,577 citizens made up of 35,511 Lumbee Indians, 39,989 whites, and 25,590 Blacks (according to the 1980 U.S. Census Report); but few would argue that education is the key to the future of the racially, schizophrenic county. The three racial winds blowing create turbulent, sociological storms sometimes. ....More next week.

## Committee of 100 Kicks Off Campaign in Pembroke



Interim Chairman Greg Cummings recently brought together a number of Pembroke's movers and shakers to kick off the Committee of 100 Campaign. Shows, above are (left to right) Dr. Richard Pisano, representing PSU; Dr. Adolph Dial, local entrepreneur and educator;

Pates Supply Co.; C.A. Maynor, owner of Southern Interiors; Lindsey Locklear, representing Pembroke Hardware; and McDuffie Cummings, town manager for Pembroke.

These were the first to buy \$100 memberships in the Committee of 100, a county wide organization emerging from efforts of the local chambers of commerce in the county. Their stated purpose is to "improve the quality of life in Robeson County by promoting economic growth and development."

Members of the organization will consist of those

contributing \$100 per year to support the committee's goals. Permanent officers will be chosen later in the year after a concerted membership drive. Any interested Robesonian is eligible to join.

Cummings kicked off the membership drive on the campus of PSU because, as he noted, "PSU is one of Robeson County's most valuable assets and an appropriate starting point for our effort."

Similar membership drives are also underway in other towns within Robeson County. (Bruce Barton photo)

## Happy Birthda



Mrs. Hattie E. Locklear of Route 3, Maxton, celebrated her 90th birthday on Sunday, June 1, with family and friends.

Mrs. Locklear is the widow of James L. Locklear and lives in the home with her daughter, Letha Mae Locklear. She is a member of Baker's Chapel Baptist Church. She was born May 30, 1896. Happy Birthday!

## Robeson County Retired School Personnel Celebrates Another Successful Year

Lumberton-The Robeson County Retired School Personnel, a division of the North Carolina Association of Educators, recently gathered at the Ramada Inn in Lumberton to note another successful year, and to install officers for the upcoming years 1986-1988.

The outgoing president, Mr. James H. Brewington, formerly the principal of Piney Grove School, thanked the large turnout for their support, and asked them to exhibit the same enthusiasm and hard work for the officers serving 1986-88.

The Robeson County Retired School Personnel is made up of retired educators from all five school systems in the county, including Robeson County, Lumberton, St. Pauls, Fairmont and Red Springs. Special guests were the local superintendents of Robeson County's five school systems.

The retired educators heard from Dr. A.C. Dawson, long time executive director of the North Carolina Association of Educators, now retired and devoting much of his time to the effort of retired teachers as lobbyist in Raleigh in the North Carolina General Assembly.

Dr. Dawson recounted some of the legislative battles in their behalf, and reminded them that the retired school personnel have enjoyed many increasing benefits over the last few years because of their continuing interest and because of their organizing efforts as a group.

Another special guest was Dr. Woody Suggs, former director of the N.C. Retired School Personnel, who had the pleasure of installing the new officers for 1986-88. Both Dawson and Suggs encouraged the retired edu-

cators to remain diligent, and continue working for educational concerns, including their retirement benefits that seem to be a favorite concern of politicians. In light of that, the assemblage passed a number of resolutions, at the behest of Dawson and Suggs, asking that their retirement fund not be used for venture purposes, and that the high way patrol not be paid out of the general fund—the source of teacher retirement and health benefits.

Providing special music for the delightful meal and occasion was a musical chorale from West Robeson High School under the tutelage of Ms. Cathy Thomas.

New officers for 1986-88 are: President—Mrs. Gladys Bullock; Vice President—Mrs. Novella T. Whitted; Secretary—Mrs. Lois B. Arnette; and Treasurer—Mrs. Toxic Waters.

## Gospel Sing Planned For Kayla Leigh Smith



A Benefit Gospel Sing is planned for Kayla Leigh Smith to help defray medical expenses for her liver transplant. The gospel sing is planned for Friday night, June 20, 1986 at 7:00 p.m. at the PSU Performing Arts

Center. Featured singers will be the D & L Gospel Singers; Mt. Sinai Young Adult Choir, the Scott Sisters, East Lumberton Church of God Melody Four, the McNeill Family, Sandy Grove Baptist

Church Choir of Lumberton, George Edwards of the Robeson County Department of Social Service, the Pierce Family, Debbie Williams and others.

A love offering will be taken upon entry.

## PSU'S LARGEST SINGLE GIFT EVER Belk Foundation Makes \$100,000 Gift to PSU

by Gene Warren  
Pembroke-In what was described as the largest single gift ever made to PSU, the Belk Foundation, Inc., of Charlotte has given the school a check for \$100,000.

The money will go toward establishing a Belk Chair of Business and Economics at PSU.

Chancellor Paul Givens, who accepted the check on behalf of PSU, acknowledged that "it is the largest single gift the University has ever received."

Givens praised the work of Joe Sandlin, PSU Distinguished Executive in Residence, for helping to make the gift possible. "Mr. Sandlin deserves a lot of credit for this," said Givens. "He made the contact with the Belk family."

John and Thomas Belk of Charlotte made the recommendation that the gift be made following a visit to Charlotte by Givens, Sandlin (former president of Southern National Corporation and Southern National Bank), and Dr. Richard Pisano, PSU vice chancellor for institutional advancement.

Presentation of the check to Givens was made by Von Autry Jr. of Fayetteville, executive vice president and secretary-treasurer of Bell Hensdale Stores who has been with the organization for 37 years. "This gift is on behalf of all 350 Belk stores, which are a family of corporations," said Autry. "We are extremely proud and pleased to be part of PSU."

Belk is making this special effort to help PSU since the N.C. General Assembly, through the UNC Board of Governors, has provided a matching fund plan to establish distinguished professor chairs at each UNC System school. The provisions of the funding say that for each UNC System school which raises \$300,000, the state will add \$187,000 to provide an endowed chair of \$500,000.

three-year campaign to raise \$1 million through 1987, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the school. This gift from Belk, said Givens, brings the total PSU has raised to \$650,000.

"We appreciate so much Belk's assistance in helping us become a stronger institution. This is building a stronger relationship between PSU and the business world," said Givens. "In my seven years at our institution, I've seen a lot of growth. I see PSU as being in the focal point of the area we primarily serve, helping it grow socially, economically and educationally."

Givens described the \$100,000 as "a milestone in giving to PSU" and thanked Sandlin and Pisano for coordinating the gift. Dr. Leon Bolich, chairman of the PSU Department of Business Administration and Economics and himself holder of the Angus McLean Chair of Business and Finance, was at the presentation. Bolich commented that earnings from the Belk gift will enable PSU "to hire an outstanding professor" in his department.

Autry, in referring to "the family of Belk stores," said John Belk is chairman of the board of most Belk stores, while Thomas Belk is president of most Belk stores. "We are a family of corporations," said Autry in defining the Belk organization.

Autry said Belk had had a long-standing business relationship with Southern National Bank and SNB leaders like Sandlin and Hector MacLean, chief executive of the corporation. "Between Hector and Joe, they have chaired many worthy causes," said Autry in praise. "We are indebted to people like you, Joe. And the Lumberton area and Robeson County would not have progressed where they are without Hector MacLean. We consider it a real privilege to have PSU in our midst."



Dr. Woody Suggs addresses the assembly of Robeson County Retired School Personnel. Looking on [at the dias] left to right are Dr. A.C. Dawson, [speaker] and Mr. James H. Brewington, outgoing president. (Bruce Barton photo)



Providing special music was the chorale group from West Robeson Senior High, under the direction of Mrs. Cathy Thomas [center]. (Bruce Barton photo)

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PSU is in the midst of a  
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