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Unveiling of Original Gene Locklear Painting Set For August 5 ...Proceeds go to Strike at the Wind



Gene Locklear fronts one of the recent paintings he has done since retiring from professional baseball and devoting his life fully to art. Now residing in San Diego, California, Gene Locklear will unveil a special painting focusing on Lumbee hero Henry Berry Lowrie and the fabled Lumbee River at a special unveiling next Tuesday night. The unveiling will be the special feature of a dinner and art exhibit which will be held at the Ramada Inn in Lumberton on August 5, 1986. The occasion begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25.00 per person, with proceeds going to 'Strike at the Wind,' the popular outdoor drama showcasing the talents of Henry Berry Lowrie and the Lumbee Indians.

On August 5, 1986 there will be a dinner and art exhibit of a number of original paintings by Gene Locklear, Lumbee Indian native of Robeson County and a former major league baseball player. The event will be held at the Ramada Inn in Lumberton, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The occasion will be the unveiling of an original painting by Locklear, depicting Henry Berry Lowrie and the fabled Lumbee River. Proceeds will go to benefit 'Strike at the Wind!' Guest speaker will be Hector McLean, chairman of Southern National Bank, former senator, and great advocate of 'Strike at the Wind!' Gene Locklear will also have a number of original paintings on exhibit, and will be on hand as Representative Danny DeVane auctions off the first print of a limited

100 to a lucky buyer. Tickets are \$25 per person and more ticket information can be obtained by calling 'Strike at the Wind!' at 521-3112 or 521-2489. Board members of Robeson Historic Drama, Inc., the sponsoring agency of the popular outdoor drama, are also selling tickets. The function is the special brainchild of Harvey Godwin, manager of Hill's Food Stores in Pembroke, and well known for his portrayal of Henry Berry Lowrie in the outdoor drama in its eleventh season.

Gene Locklear, whose ten years as a professional baseball player brought him to the attention of millions of American sportsfans, is now achieving recognition in his new career as an artist and interpreter of the American scene. Locklear began painting

as a child in Pembroke, N.C. at the age of seven. He continued studying and perfecting his skills as an artist throughout his baseball career with the New York Yankees, Cincinnati Reds and the San Diego Padres. Since his retirement from baseball in 1978, Locklear has devoted full time to his art.

In recent years, his paintings of Carolina farm life, sports and Indian lore have achieved national acclaim. "The Tobacco Farm," a painting depicting life in his native home of North Carolina was chosen to be hung in the White House in Washington, DC. His life and works of art was the subject of the nationally televised ABC Wide World of Sports program hosted by Joe Garagiola prior to a recent World Series. A collection of 24 paintings by Locklear have been purchased by Pete Rose and now hang as a permanent collection in Cincinnati, Ohio. On January 31, 1976, Governor Holsinger and the citizens of North Carolina declared Gene Locklear Day to honor his dual achievements in sports and art.

Gene Locklear brings to the canvas his own instinctive sensitivity inspired by his American Indian heritage as well as his experience as a renown sports figure. He sums up his future in art with this statement, "It is my goal to become the painter that one day can be admired, appreciated, and criticized with pleasure."

Now making his home in San Diego, California, Gene invites all of his fans and friends to this special occasion.

Will Five Go Into One? Merger Possibilities In Robeson County

EDITOR'S NOTE
This is the ninth 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.

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction and representatives from the then six school boards in Robeson County surveyed as early as 1970 the educational needs of the county. An example of their findings was their major recommendation to "organize all public schools and school systems in Robeson County into one administrative unit under the direction of one superintendent and one board of education."

In a news release from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction released March 20, 1985, it was noted that thirty-two city school units in North Carolina have merged with their host counties since 1960, according to a recent report from the State Department of Public Instruction.

Entitled "Special Chartered (City) School Districts in North Carolina," the report on these city school systems was made by State Superintendent Craig Phillips. With approved school mergers to become effective in Cumberland County in July 1985 and Pitt County in July 1986, the merger total in the last 25 years will reach 34 leaving the state with a total of 140 school systems including the 40 remaining city school units. Robeson County now contains 10% of all city units in North Carolina.

In explaining what prompted these special charters by the General Assembly between 1881 and 1957, Dr. Phillips, in a news release to area newspapers, said parents in urban areas in general had higher expectations for their children and were willing to tax themselves to provide "better schools."

"Through the years, however, citizens in rural areas have demanded more and more of their schools to the point that there's little difference in the expectations of urban parents and parents in rural areas where small family farms previously dominated the economy," he added.

Data for the report on the state's 42 city school districts was prepared by the Department of Public Instruction's Division of School Planning which is directed by Darrell Spencer. In citing other changes in the economy that have diminished the original reasons for city systems to be formed, Spencer reported that the tax base in rural areas has frequently grown faster than in urban areas.

Only 19 of the 29 special chartered city school districts which levy a special school tax now have a higher tax base per pupil than their host counties...and only eight of these 29 have kept pace with their county tax base growth per pupil. Spencer said this means the tax base advantage for most city schools has, in effect, declined.

City school systems also have experienced a faster rate of decline in student population than county systems, and eight chartered city districts now have less than 2,000 students which results in high schools of less than 600 students. Spencer said, "Many authorities consider a high school with fewer than 600 students too small to offer a comprehensive high school program at a reasonable cost."

Other student population changes in the city systems cited in the report included the loss of more White students than non-White students as school enrollments decreased. And the school planning director said the percentage of disadvantaged students appears

to be increasing in the special districts. Dr. Phillips added that the North Carolina Basic Education Program, developed by the State Board of Education and currently under consideration by the 1985 General Assembly, has implications for these special city school districts.

Under this plan, every child in North Carolina, whether residing in a poor or wealthy county, would have access to a curriculum which meets an established minimum level. School planners have acknowledged that additional resources to provide and maintain this basic program in a small school or small school system would be difficult to justify if the same results could be accomplished through consolidation.

The detailed report on the state's current 42 special chartered city school districts, which was prepared to assist local boards of education, school administrators and legislators as they consider the issue of consolidation, cited Western Rockingham (1957) as the last city school system to be chartered by the legislature preceded by St. Pauls in 1953, Elkin in 1947, Whiteville in 1945 and Greensboro in 1943.

The first charters among city school districts still in operation went to Goldsboro in 1881, Durham and Reidsville in 1887, Shelby in 1891 and Mt. Airy in 1895. Greenville and Fayetteville where consolidations with the county systems have been approved were chartered in 1903. The trend shifted in 1960 when Charlotte and Mecklenburg merged through referendum. Craven/New Bern in 1981 and Cabarrus/Concord in 1983 are the most recent mergers.

In light of this, and other state trends, Robeson County should, without a doubt, merge their five school systems into one.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

WHAT'S HAPPENING

ARDELL LOCKLEAR WINS BOAT RAFFLE
Ardele Locklear of Rt. 1, Maxton, NC won the boat recently raffled off by the Pembroke Rescue Squad. J.W. Oxendine, chief of the Rescue Squad, presented Mr. Locklear with the boat. The Rescue Squad thanks those who helped make this fund raising a success.

PEMBROKE SENIOR HIGH CLASS OF 1976 HOLDS REUNION
The Pembroke Senior High School class of 1976 will hold their ten year reunion Saturday, August 16 at 7 p.m. at the Pembroke Jaycee Hut. Price per person is \$15.00. The deadline for reservations is August 6. Any reservations made after this date will be at the cost of \$20.00 per person.

Call Dollar Bill Oxendine for tickets at 521-3346. Class members are asked to call even if they do not plan to attend.

PRESTON LOCKLEAR FAMILY REUNION PLANNED
The Preston Locklear family will hold a reunion August 9, 1986 at Preston Gospel Chapel from 11:30 a.m. until. Guests are asked to please bring a covered dish. All descendants of Zachariah Locklear, father of Preston, are invited to attend. For information call 919-521-2216 or 919-521-4107.

CHURCH NIGHT AT SATURDAY
Church night will be held at Strike at the Wind on August 1, 1986. The ten largest groups receive an award certificate. Pre-show gospel singing begins at 7 p.m. Strike at the Wind, the outdoor drama begins at 8:30 p.m. Make plans to attend this annual event at Strike at the Wind.

LRDA HIRES JIM HARDIN AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Board of Directors of Lumbee Regional Development Association, Inc. on Monday night hired Mr. James A. Hardin as Executive Director of the agency. In making the announcement, Paul Brooks, chairman of the board stated, "Mr. Hardin comes to the Agency with an extensive background in the area of working with and for Indian people. He has conducted training workshops, evaluated programs, and negotiated contracts with funding sources at the local, state and federal level (including private foundations)."

Hardin has served as Executive Director of the Cumberland County Association for Indian People for the past twelve years. When asked if he would relocate to the Robeson County area, Hardin replied that it was not a stipulation of the position and he felt that remaining in Fayetteville and commuting would not pose any problems. He stated that he was only thirty minutes away from Pembroke. And it was his desire to remain in Cumberland

County. He represents that county on the Board of Directors of Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation. Hardin stated that if he moved, it would be necessary to resign from that position. He stated that he felt that remaining on the EMC Board would be beneficial to his position at LRDA. It would give him an opportunity to keep people informed on the programs offered by EMC. He did state that he had no objections to relocating if the board of directors of LRDA felt it best.

Mr. Hardin is a native of the Saddletree area. He is the son of Lawrence and Addie Hardin. He has served on various boards at the local, state and federal level. He is a past President of the National Urban Indian Council and past President of the United Tribes of North Carolina. He is married to the former Amanda Locklear, daughter of Melton and Sopronie Locklear. They have two children. Hardin will assume his new duties on September 1st.

To Participate in National Night Out

Pembroke Police Chief Kirby Ammons announced today that the Pembroke Police Department will participate August 12 in the observation of National Night Out, a national anti-crime vigil involving over 4500 towns and cities and over 10 million citizens last year.

Sponsored by the National Town Watch Association, a non-profit organization, the local observance is being organized by the Robeson County Chapter of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE). Local co-ordinators for NARFE, Robert Klein and Robert Stevenson say, "Our local chapter has undertaken to promote an anti-crime program for Lumberton and Robeson County. We think our area should participate strongly because North Carolina is one of eleven states in the U.S. having the largest number of participants in National Night Out."

Chief Ammons has joined with the Robeson County Sheriff's Department and the Lumberton Police Department in giving his endorsement to the project. According to Chief Ammons, "Our department encourages the citizens here to take every advantage to use their neighborhoods and to use their police department. We work together and always have to make our neighborhoods safe places to enjoy."

Local co-ordinators say they intend to follow the national pattern of observance, with 8 p.m.-9 p.m., August 12, being the key hour. They remind others, "The unique thing about National Night Out is that, while the theme is the same everywhere, each area adds their own special touches." Area churches, civic and social organizations are being encouraged by the local co-ordinators to stage whatever additional celebration they choose. Assistance in planning such events can be obtained through the crime prevention units of police departments in Lumberton, Robeson County, Fairmont, Maxton, Red Springs and St. Pauls.

THE ELEVENTH SEASON OF "STRIKE AT THE WIND"

The Eleventh Season of "Strike at the Wind" is being presented each Thursday through Saturday night at 8:30 p.m. at the Lakeside Amphitheatre, three miles west of Pembroke. The

drama will continue through September 6, 1986. Harvey Godwin returns in the lead role as Henry Berry Lowrie. Performing opposite him as Rhoda

Strong Lowrie is Dale Ann McKinney, her first year in this leading position. Norma Lowery returns to the drama this time in the role of Momma Cumbo. And David Bryant stars as the

leader. For more information on the exciting drama, Call 521-2480, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday thru Saturday or 521-3112 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. on performance nights.



Harvey Godwin as Henry Berry Lowrie

David Bryant as Leader

Dale Ann McKinney as Rhoda Strong Lowrie

Norma Lowery as Momma Cumbo