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## ROBESON PEOPLE SUFFER GREAT LOSS OF MINORITY LEADER



by Barbara Brayboy-Locklear

Robeson County lost a giant of a person on Tuesday afternoon when minority rights activist John Langford Godwin died in Southeastern General Hospital in Lumberton. He died of complications resulting from injuries received in a March 10 automobile accident.

Godwin, 72, a Lumbee Indian and a Pembroke resident, was one of the founders of Concerned Citizens for Better Government, a tri-racial coalition formed in December 1986, after the November shooting of a Lumbee Indian by Robeson County Sheriff's Deputy Kevin Stone, son of Sheriff Hubert Stone. Godwin served as chairman of the group until December 1987. He said the organization was founded to dispel the belief that "It's always been like that. There's nothing you can do about it. There's something you can do about any situation."

His work with the group helped earn for him in 1987 a Nancy Susan Reynolds Award for service. The award is given annually by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to three North Carolinians who have worked without recognition on behalf of others.

"Mr. Godwin wanted justice for all people. He felt that justice consists in taking from no man what is his. He lived many years in a very short period of time. And he's going to

live on and right on with our race of people," Lumbee Wilson Chavis said on Wednesday. "Some people were critical of Godwin and his work for social justice, but having seen the achievements of his efforts...its going to mean a lot to our people," he added.

Godwin organized an Easter Monday protest March in 1987 to help publicize a coalition which he said represented eight different organizations and thousands of citizens.

The Rev. Jerry Lowry, pastor of Sandy Plains Methodist Church, said of Godwin: "He acted as an instrument of peace and equality in the county. He was a bridge builder, and he viewed people as people and dealt with principles. His actions in fighting social injustice in the county were wise and timely."

Godwin, a long-time advocate for unity among minorities in the county understood that the function of wisdom was discriminating between good and evil. And that wisdom often-times comes through suffering.

Connie Brayboy, editor of the Carolina Indian Voice, said Godwin was ahead of his time for his race of people simply because the county is so far behind.

"Or it could be said, he was on time. It's just the county isn't on time in addressing its social issues and injustices, she said from her newspaper office in Pembroke.

"We as a people should learn something from Mr. Godwin's life. We should learn that we must take a stand for what's right no matter who turns against us."

Brayboy, a close personal friend of Godwin, said his work for social justice and equality will be carried on by his people. "He said the merger vote March 8 gave people the courage to recognize the need for social change in the county."

Godwin, the son of the late John Henry and Kitty Godwin of Pembroke, was preceded in death by his wife, Gertrude Godwin. He is survived by three sons: Reginald Vance of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Robert Glenn of Miami, Fla.; and Dale Anthony of Wakulla; one daughter, Minnie Barbara Godwin of Pembroke; one brother, Rudolph Godwin of Orlando, Fla.; one sister, Stella Godwin Oxendine of Pembroke; eight grandchildren. Godwin resided with a granddaughter, Jonette Godwin.

A "Song Fest" funeral service is scheduled for Saturday, 3 p.m. in First Baptist Church, Pembroke. Burial will be in Revels Family Cemetery, Union Chapel Road, Pembroke. The family will receive visitors at Locklear and Son Funeral Home Friday, night 7-9 p.m.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Charles David McNeil



Charles David McNeil displays one of his prized antique guns.

by Barbara Brayboy-Locklear

Special to The Carolina Indian Voice

There are among all three races of people in Robeson County who say Charles David McNeil is a walking miracle. The life of the 66-year-old Scot-Irishman epitomizes the claim.

By all the reckoning of electrical experts, the Lumberton resident should be dead. In November, 1959, 110,000 volts of electricity passed through his body. Yet, the Robeson native, who owns an automobile repair and wrecker company, lives to tell the story about the day he got that big charge.

He was working under contract to demolish a theater near Lumberton. The building had been built under a main line of a power company. With his big boom crane, McNeil was tearing down steel beams. Suddenly, one of them tilted toward the high-voltage lines. He tried to drop the beam, but its weight carried it to the line.

"There was a loud explosion," he recalls. "My body lit up like a fireworks display." He says it was as if the whole sky was afire, and in the middle of the fire he could see the face of Jesus. The six-foot one-inch, 290 pounds man lost consciousness. He remembers saying, "I'm dead. I'm dead!"

When the tremendous voltage hit him, it burned the heels of his feet and etched their imprints in the concrete floor. After a 54-day stay in a Wilmington hospital and medical care from a personal friend/physician, he returned home for an eight-month convalescence.

"To this day, they haven't figured out why I wasn't electrocuted. I guess the good Lord had other work for me to do," he says. Philosophically, he points out that he isn't the man today that he was. Even so, he's still quite a man.

This man's attitude towards his fellowman is said to be a miracle. He has knack for getting along well with blacks, Indians and whites in the county. He gives his parents, the

late Elmer S. and Leita McGill McNeil, credit for instilling in him the value of respecting people of all races.

"I've always treated my fellowman like I'd like to be treated," he comments. He says his father who was a Lumberton merchant, contractor and boarding house owner and operator, always got along with everyone. He remembers a time years ago when he was a young boy, he called an elderly black man a name which degraded the man's race. "I still remember the severe beating my daddy gave me over the incident," he adds.

He, too, tells of the time Rhoda Lowrie, accused of selling whiskey, was jailed in Robeson County. It was after the mysterious disappearance of her husband, Henry Berry Lowrie, and she had just been released from jail in Lumberton.

"She walked over to my daddy's meat market on Fourth Street and asked if he would help her in getting a meal and a way back to Pembroke," McNeil says. His father bought her the meal and walked with her to a nearby delivery stable where she was given a horse and buggy for her return home. "From that day until the day Rhoda died, my daddy was one of her favorite people."

The history of the Lowrie era fascinates McNeil, who admits to having a curious mind. When he was a young boy growing up in the county, he visited his grandmother often to listen to a neighbor, Amanda Nash, tell of tales of Lowrie and his gang.

When young McNeil wasn't in school or listening to Lowrie tales, he was boxing using young neighbors as opponents. He did it for sport and competition. "I loved to box," he laughs. He became so good at the sport that at the age of 16, he became heavy weight Golden Glove champion of the southeastern U.S. He fought from 1934 until he went into the U.S. Navy in 1942. He then fought in military boxing meets for three years. And how did he do in that competition? "I won there, too," he chuckles. He served overseas in South Pacific for 25 months. He says he once ran up with a long time Indian friend, J.W. Thomas while on overseas duty. "And we had old home week."

He is endowed with community spirit and has strong feelings about those who don't return service to their community. "I don't have much to do with people who aren't willing to contribute to their community."

He is a longtime volunteer fireman and is a staunch supporter of civic group activities. This past winter on Saturday mornings, he could be found at woods sites sawing wood with fellow Kiwanians to give to needy families. He never asks for monetary rewards in helping those in need. And his modesty lends little room for glory or accolades either. "I always like to help my fellowman if I can," he says.

His expertise in roasting mullets is recognized throughout the southeast. For forty years, he's fed hundreds on fish he prepares "Indian style" on hot oak coals. Even he claims, "It's the most-delicious fish in the world."

Occasionally McNeil steals away some time to engage in a favorite hobby of game hunting on a 1,500-acre camp in Bladen County. A lover of nature, he admits he'd rather feed the ducks, deer and bears than hunt them. During a recent snowstorm, he delivered two truck loads of corn to the camp's wild animals. He collects antiques, guns included. "He is quick to say he has some prized firearms in his collection. "I don't keep them at home, though," he more quickly states.

And when time allows, his ever-curious mind takes McNeil to the book shelves which line the house he built on a 100 acre

## OXENDINE BACK TO DIRECT SATW



DAVID OXENDINE  
Director

David Oxendine formerly of Pembroke now living in New York City will return after a two-year absence to direct Randolph Umberger's *STRIKE AT THE WIND* this summer.

David is the son of Mr. & Mrs. Grady G. Oxendine of Pembroke. He graduated from Pembroke Senior High in 1978. He graduated from Catawba College in 1982 with BA in Theatre. After graduation he toured the U.S. for a year with a national touring company performing in 38 states. He returned to Pembroke and SATW! in 1983 as Assistant Director and playing the role of Boss Strong. In 1984 & '85 he directed SATW! During that time also he arranged for himself and local people to be involved with the NC 400 Minutes a series a commercials for UNC Public TV, and the American Playhouse Production of Roanoke in which he acted as well as being the Indian Extras Casting Director.

In 1986 David went to New York City to study at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts where the likes of Robert Redford, Kirk Douglas, Lauren Bacall and many others have studied. David graduated in April 1987 and since has worked in several commercials and many voices in New York.

David is married to the former Bethann Souza of Lumberton who is an educator and dancer in New York. David urges all through a telephone interview to audition for SATW! which will be held March 26 and 27 at the Riverside Country Club three miles West of Pembroke. All who are interested can call for more information at the SATW! offices at 521-2480.

AUDITIONS  
*STRIKE AT THE WIND*  
March 27 & 28, 1988  
12:00 NOON - 8:00 P.M.  
ADOLPH DIAL  
AMPHITHEATRE  
ALL ACTING PARTS AVAILABLE

## Trial Lawyers Endorse Dr. Adolph L. Dial

Raleigh-Dr. Adolph L. Dial has received the endorsement of the political action committee of the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers for the North Carolina State House of Representatives. Raleigh lawyer James Fuller, PAC chair, said, "There was no limtust test for the statewide selection of our candidate." He added, "All endorsements were based on candidates' records and their platforms."

The trial lawyers' PAC was formed in 1976 to support candidates who would help preserve citizens' rights, including the jury system, according to Fuller. It operates independently of the Academy of Trial Lawyers, with a separate board of trustees and officers. He added, "Our primary concern is the election of someone with a history of supporting the rights of working men and women often represented by trial lawyers and a fair jury system in which everyone has the same chance to achieve justice."

## Robeson Three Defense Fundraising Activities

The Robeson Three Defense Fund is planning several fund raising activities to raise funds for the defense of Eddie Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs.

The Robeson Justice Committee and The Robeson Three Defense Fund are sharing offices at the Gathering Place in Pembroke (next to Johnson Shoe Shop). Shirts, caps and bumper stickers are on sale at the office.

A hot dog sale is planned for Saturday, March 26, in the Pembroke Park beginning at 11:00 am.

On April 8, 1988 beginning at 11:00 am Barbecue and chicken plates will be on sale at the Prospect Head Start Center. Plates will sell for \$3.50.

Tickets are available for \$1.00 for a drawing on a beautiful home-made quilt. Tickets may be purchased Monday thru Friday 8:30-5:00 pm at the Gathering Place. The drawing will be held April 25th at the office.

Supporters of Hatcher and Jacobs meet every Monday night at 7:30 at the Gathering Place in Pembroke.

For further information call 521-0488 or stop by the Gathering Place.

tract of land off I-95. The pages on American history consume him. He is especially interested in American Indian history and call roll off passed down tales of the Lowrie Gang. Listeners become spellbound at them. The tales are of personal interest to McNeil in that his aunt Nancy McNeil was married to Robeson County Sheriff, Reuben King who died from the hand of a Lowrie Gang member.

It could be the reason God spared the life of McNeil 28 years ago was so as he could carry on with a life in human service to others. And just that, the easy-going "Bear" has done...And done well.

## local bulletin

Over seven years ago, 700,000 people from across the nation gathered together in Washington, D.C. to humble themselves, repent of their sins, and seek God's face to heal our land.

The next "Washington for Jesus" prayer is planned on the mall on April 29, 1988.

It is conservatively estimated that over one million Christians will be coming in the greatest congregation of people this nation has ever known, to pray.

### TENTH ANNUAL ST. PAULS FOLK FESTIVAL PLANNED

Do you crochet, knit, carve, paint, grow vegetables, bake cakes? If so, you should be part of this year's Saint Pauls Folk Festival on Saturday, May 14th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This year's event will be the Tenth Annual Celebration of the Heritage and Culture of the Area, with music, dancing, food, arts and crafts.

There will be almost continuous stage shows, featuring singing, instrumental music, and clogging. Festival organizers invite anyone who wants to sell their wares to do so.

Anything that is home-made or home-grown can be sold. There is no charge for the exhibition space, and no pre-registration is necessary. All you have to do is bring your own card table or whatever to display your wares."

Some of the things people could sell are pottery, woodcarving, leather crafts, knit goods, hand-made jewelry, crocheting, macrame, string arts, cross-stitch, needlepoint, decoupage, cloth flowers, latch hook, home-made stuffed animals and dolls, home-made clothing, weaving baskets, quilts, original paintings, prints, etchings, photographs and sculptures.

Also, home-cooked and canned goods, baked goods, pickles, jelly, canned fruits and vegetables, honey, home-grown vegetables, fruits, house plants, and herbs.

Does that leave you out? Festival planners say, "Surprise us." Anything that is home-made or home-grown is welcome.

We don't want to turn it into a yard sale, so don't bring yard sale junk keep it home made and home grown. It'll be a place for people to show their work and make a little cash- there's no admission charge, no entry fee, no red tape- Just folks getting together.

The festival will be held on the grounds of the Saint Pauls Middle School, and is sponsored by Saint Pauls City Schools and the N.C. Arts Council. For more information call Tommy R. Belch at (919) 865-4288 or 865-4070.

### Miss Lumbee Pageant 1988

The Miss Lumbee Pageant Committee is now accepting applications for the 1988 Miss Lumbee Pageant. Applications may be picked up at the Revels Plaza, Room # 4, or will be mailed upon request. Requests for mailing may be made to Ms. Madeline Deese, at 521-8602.

All applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. A contestant must be single and never been married, or had her marriage annulled and must not be and never have been pregnant.
2. A contestant must be a high school graduate by the Labor Day immediately preceding the National Finals in which she will compete.
3. A contestant must be a female whose age shall not be less than seventeen, nor more than twenty-six years on the Labor Day immediately preceding the National Finals in which she will compete.
4. A contestant must be of good moral character and shall not have been convicted of any crimes and shall possess talent, poise, personality, intelligence, charm and beauty of face and figure.

### NELL LOWRY ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP IN AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

Nell Lowry, Pembroke, NC, has been elected to membership in the American Angus Association, reports Dick Spader, executive vice-president of the national organization with headquarters in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The American Angus Association, with over 30,000 active adult and junior members, is the largest beef cattle registry association in the world. Its computerized records include detailed information on nearly eleven million registered Angus.

The Association records ancestral information and keeps records of production on individual animals for its members. These permanent records help members select and mate the best animals in their herds to produce high quality, efficient breeding cattle which are then recorded with the American Angus Association. Most of these registered Angus are used by the U.S. farmers and ranchers who raise high quality beef for U.S. consumption.

### FUND RAISER PLANNED FOR JULIAN PIERCE

The Committee to Elect Julian Pierce Superior Court Judge will sponsor a supper at the Parkview Terrace Recreation Center in Lumberton on Thursday, March 31, beginning at 6 p.m. The Center is located on Inman Street in Lumberton, off Martin Luther King Boulevard.

### RALLY PLANNED IN MAXTON

A Rally is planned in Maxton on Wednesday, March 30 at 7 p.m. The rally will be held at St. Matthew AME Church, Hwy 130, Maxton. The Rev. Franklin Reaves will be the guest speaker. The rally will be held to give people an update on the Patterson case.

### SKATE A THON PLANNED

A Skate-A-Thon is being sponsored by the Pembroke Optimist Club and will be held at Pembroke Skateland on Thursday, April 7, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

You may sponsor a youth by pledging 10, 25, 50 or 75 cents or a dollar or more per hour for a day of skating fun. Proceeds to be used for youth projects in the Pembroke area.

### 4-H CAMPS PLANNED

The 1988 4-H Homemanship Camp will be held at Millstone 4-H Camp in Richmond County near Elerbe June 12-18. The camp is open to all youth, ages 9-19, who are interested in learning more about horses and equitation, according to Cathy M. Lowery, associate Extension agent, 4-H.

Campers should bring their own horses and will participate in horse shows, demonstrations, judging contests, trail rides, and workshops. In addition, campers will learn techniques for