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LUMBEE COUPLE GRADUATES FROM BYU



Susan, Geneva & Jack Lucas

Photos & Text by Sandy Lucas Tevis
A proud Lumbee mother, from Pembroke, N.C., recently joined her son and daughter-in-law at a significant celebration—their college graduation at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Jack L. Lucas, 26, the youngest of seven children, received his MBA degree. He is the second Indian student at BYU to receive an MBA. While in the program, he received various awards and scholarships from the school, the National American Indian Honor Society and Ford.

Susan Lowry Lucas, 23, also received her B.S. degree in Elementary Education on the same day as her husband, Jack. Susan is the daughter of the late Evelyn Lowry of Pembroke, who passed away during Susan's last semester.

"BYU has been a terrific experience and I have obtained a fine education. Now it's time to return home and put my knowledge to work where my roots are," said Jack, who has accepted employment at Southern National Bank in Lumberton, N.C.

It was a graduation weekend of celebration for the Lucas couple, for they had family and guests visiting from North Carolina, Arizona and Colorado. From Susan's family were her aunt Bonnie F. Lowry of Lumberton and brother Dave and nephew Michael of Pembroke.

Jack's family included his mother, Geneva Lucas, Pembroke; cousin Heather Hamlett, Graham, NC; niece Erica K. Satterfield, Ft. Bragg, NC; brother James D. and wife Liz, Arizona; brother Jeff and wife Debbie, Colorado; and sister Sandy Lucas Tevis of Arizona.

Jack and Susan said they would miss Utah with BYU's cheering 65,000 football fans, the snow-capped mountains, the great people, the many "all-Indian" basketball tournaments," but at the same time, they are excited to start their new life and new family

(as they are parents-to-be) in Robeson County, where both were born and grew up as "next-door" neighbors.

Susan was able to accompany her husband at his commencement and the two of them proudly marched across the stage together and graduated as a couple. As they received their diplomas, both gave a big wave to their family and friends, and with diplomas in mid-air, both shouted with achievement, "WE DID IT!!!"

Out of the 23,000 people attending, you could hear their fan club cheering, "Go, Sue, Go, Jack...!!!"

Jack and Susan were two of the 4,012 students who graduated this year, the youngest being 18 years old and the oldest being 59.

A number of Lumbee students have attended BYU over the past few years, six of them from Jack's family. His sister Sandy, now employed with IBM in Tucson, Arizona, was the first Lumbee at BYU to receive a Master's degree. His sister Sarah also did graduate studies at BYU.

Jack explained, "Well, when I saw that my sister Sandy could do it, I thought it would be a good idea for me also to pursue a Master's degree. It's been a long haul, but it's been worth it."

After graduating, Jack and Susan joined friends and family at Disneyland, visited Los Angeles, where Jack served a two-year church mission, and Denver, where his brother resides.

BYU has not seen the last of the Lucas family yet. Jack's oldest brother, Jim, 31, has just returned to complete his degree after taking a break from General Dynamics Inc. of Tucson.

After graduation, Jack's mother smiled and said, "This is terrific. Now if I could just get my other children to move from Alaska, Arizona, Colorado and Utah, I would smile even bigger."

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Foy & Hilda "Bloss" Cummings

By Barbara Brayboy-Locklear
Special To The Carolina Indian Voice

For half a century love, music and children have filled the home of Foy and Hilda "Bloss" Cummings. And they'd have it no other way.

The Lumbee Indian couple, married 55 years, reared 17 children-12 of their own and five grandchildren. "I don't think there's anything on earth any sweeter than a little child," smiles Mrs. Cummings.

Cummings met his wife while they both attended St. Anna Church located two miles from Pembroke. Attending the same church afforded them an opportunity to worship together as well as court a little at church social functions.

In 1933, after finishing studies at Cherokee Indian Normal School, Mrs. Cummings married the young man who had attended the B. Branch School in the St. Anna Community where among his teachers were Oscar Sampson, W.L. Moore and Anderson Locklear.

After marriage, they continued to church at St. Anna while living at the Cummings homeplace. They were engaged in farming. Neighboring and Christian worship became a vital part of the couple's life. They both loved music and were members of the church choir. It seemed only natural that they sing because he'd come from a family of nine children where the father was a musician and church choir leader. And the rule in the James Cummings home was, "You had to learn the shaped notes before he'd let you sing a song with him," remembers 70-year-old Mrs. Cummings. She says her father-in-law taught her how to sing alto, while her husband sang tenor.

Many a Sunday afternoon was spent with the family gathered around the piano at the patriarch's home. "Socializing back then was pretty much limited to gospel singing practice on Sunday," comments Mrs. Cummings. And when the couple moved into their own new home nine years after marriage, the music sessions continued. Missing the old family piano left behind, Mr. Cummings busied himself in finding one for his growing family. He found one and placed it in the house where it remains today.

"We tried to have a Christian home, and the music became a part of our lives," the 80-year-old great-grandfather says. "Music is a great thing for young people to have to entertain themselves," Mrs. Cummings adds.

She admits, though, the entertainment comes with a "noise" price tag. "What you have to understand, and a lot of people don't, is that you have to bear the noise." The couple agrees that after a while, the noise becomes music. Even they trained themselves to sleep through late-night practice sessions by their children over the years.

As the musicians sprouted in their home, Mr. and Mrs. Cummings grew musically right alongside them. When the Baptist Men's Chorus formed in the 1950's, Mr. Cummings was among the first to join the gospel singers. Mrs. Cummings became a charter member of the Pembroke Ladies' Chorus. He retired from the chorus seven years ago, and she sang in the organized chorus until the early 1980's.

"To sing gospel songs is like the gospel all over again," says Mrs. Cummings who has been a Christian since age 11.

Several years after the birth of their last child, Mrs. Cummings took a job outside her home. She says she did it to supplement the family income. The Cummings children by then were entering college, and even though the family farm offered plenty of food, it fell short in producing enough money to pay for tuition.



Foy and Hilda "Bloss" Cummings sit together in their rural Pembroke home.

Her love for people, and especially children, lured her into accepting positions which offered service to helping others. She worked with Pembroke Head Start for seven years, also with a Day Care Center which operated under the auspices of Lumbee Regional Development Association. She went back to the classroom as a student at Robeson Technical Institute and earned a nurse's assistant certificate. She was with the N.C. Cancer Institute for three and a half years before she retired in 1962.

Retirement lasted two weeks. She took a position as a dietician with The Odum Home in Pembroke. She works a six hour workday in preparing nourishment for the bodies of the children who live at the home which is operated by Baptist Children's Homes, Inc. She is affectionately called "Grandma" by the residents.

"The modest grandmother dismisses praise for what she does in feeding, counseling and loving the children. "The children there have done more for me than I've done for them," she says. "I love my work. You would never get tired of something you enjoy doing. My source of energy comes from the Lord."

She thinks about retirement, but has made no definite plans to retire. "Even if I retired now, I'd quickly find somebody else to do something for."

Mr. Cummings retired in 1966. His days are spent in handling "light" chores around home and to driving his wife to work each day. He usually does the grocery marketing for his wife, because he needs something to do, too says his wife.

The family farm is rented out, but a vegetable garden is planted near the house as it has been every year for the past 55. The couple's children and grandchildren help tend it. The food will be served to the 12 children, 30 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren which are drawn home for "Grandma's" cooking. They'll all gather, pray and eat. And after the eating's over, they'll gather around the old family piano. There they'll lift their voices as they sing the "shaped" notes of gospel songs.

Each year the family grows, the noise increases and the love deepens. That's the way it is, and that's the way it'll continue to be. And that is the gospel according to Mr. and Mrs. Cummings.

JOHN D. HUNT ON TRIAL IN ROBESON COUNTY

John David Hunt is being tried in the Robeson County Superior Court this week. He is charged with assault with intent to kill and robbery.

Hunt is accused of beating Luther Oxendine in the head with a stick in an attempted robbery. Luther Oxendine is the brother of Robeson County Commissioner Wyvis Oxendine. He is the owner of County Line Grocery Store on Highway 71.

John D. Hunt was named in grievances by Eddie Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs during the Feb. 1 takeover of the Robesonian newspaper office in Lumberton. Hatcher expressed a desire to have Hunt moved from the Robeson County Jail because he feared for his life.

MEMORIAL DAY MARCH PLANNED

The Robeson County Justice Committee is sponsoring a Memorial Day March May 30, 1988 at 10 a.m. The march will begin at Hill's Food Store in Pembroke and continue on to the Pembroke Town Park. The march will be in memory of John L. Godwin, Julian Pierce, and the Families of Unsolved Murders in Robeson County. Guest speakers will be Ruth B. Locklear, Rev. Joy Johnson, Christine Griffin and others. Following the speakers there will be a gospel singing and a performance by the Kau-Ta-Nok Society Drummers and Dancers. Refreshments will be sold. For further information contact Helen Oxendine at 521-2404.

PRO BONO AWARD TO BE PRESENTED IN MEMORY OF JULIAN PIERCE

The North Carolina Bar Association Board of Governors has resolved to give the 1988 Pro Bono Award in memory of Julian Pierce. The award will be presented at the opening banquet of the Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Bar Association on Thursday, June 23, 1988.

Aerobics Class To Begin May 31

Beginning May 31, an aerobics class for men and women will be held at the Pembroke Odum Home. Class will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. for a session of five weeks. A fee of \$10 per person will be charged. Rebecca Lowry, certified instructor, sponsored by Robeson County Recreation and Park Commission.

MUNSWINGWEAR ANNOUNCES PROMOTIONS

Munswingwear, Inc. has announced the following promotions in the Men's Division: Shird Oxendine from cutting shift supervisor to Cutting Manager in the Fairmont Plant. Oxendine, who joined Munswingwear in January 1986 is a Lumberton resident.

Stacy Hunt from shipping and receiving supervisor/Fairmont cutting plant to Warehouse Manager/Red Springs Plant. Hunt, who resides in Fairmont, joined Munswingwear in March 1987.

Evelyn Daniels from knitter to second shift knitting supervisor. Daniels, who joined Munswingwear in October 1985, resides in Red Springs.

Frances Scott from Assistant Plant Manager/Fairmont Sewing to Personnel Manager/Fairmont Cutting and Sewing. Scott, who joined Munswingwear in January 1977, resides in Lumberton.



STACY HUNT



EVELYN DANIELS



SHIRD OXENDINE

Call 521-2826 and subscribe to The Carolina Indian Voice.

Robeson County Senior Games To Be Held June 3-4 In Lumberton

The first-ever Robeson County Senior Games, which are Olympic-type programs for men and women 55 years of age and older, will be held Friday and Saturday, June 3-4, at different locations in Lumberton.

Opening and closing ceremonies will be held at Lumberton Senior High School.

The opening ceremonies will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 3. They will be preceded by an opening ceremonies dinner at 6 p.m. with reservations required.

Closing ceremonies will be at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, June 4. Prior to them, a closing ceremonies lunch will be served at 12 o'clock noon with reservations again required.

Competition will be held in golf, tennis, bowling, swimming, track, horseshoes, and throws in softball, football and basketball.

Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded to the top three men and women winners in each age division and each event. Age categories will be: 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80-84, 85-89, and 90-94.

Interested participants are asked to register in advance by completing the application/release form and mailing it with a \$5 check or money order to: Robeson County Senior Games, Lumberton Recreation Department, P.O. Box 758, Lumberton, N.C. 28859. For more information, contact Phyllis Thomthwaite at (919)738-6441, Ext. 7777.

Co-sponsors of the event are Southern National Bank and Southeastern General Hospital of Lumberton. Other sponsors are Pembroke State University, Lumberton Recreation Department, Lumber River Council of Government, WAGR Radio, Robco News, Robeson County Recreation Department and The Robesonian.

The \$5 registration fee qualifies the entrant for two meals at the event, a T-shirt and an olympic medal. Other fees depend upon the category of competition. For example, the green fee is waived in golf, but a golf cart fee is \$8. In bowling, the bowling shoes are free, but the cost per game is 50 cents. Winners on the local level will have the opportunity to compete in the State Senior Games at Raleigh.

Senior Games have been going on for the past in North Carolina with 27 cities or towns taking part.

LREMC BOARD SETS JULY 12 ELECTION

The Board of Directors of LREMC met on Tuesday. They decided, in compliance with Judge Craig Ellis' order, to set a July 12 date for the election of four board members. They are Rev. Elias Rogers, Harold Brewer, Bradford Oxendine and Herbert Clark. All four directors will face the voters again July 12. The election is a result of a law suit filed by Rev. Elias Rogers following the October 6, 1987 annual meeting. Rogers was seemingly defeated by Conrad Oxendine. Rogers protested the election, alleging vote buying and other improprieties. The protest was brought before the elections and credentials committee of LREMC. They voted to set aside the October 6 election. Two weeks later they met again and voted to reverse their decision. Rogers then took his grievances to court where judge Craig Ellis agreed with him that the by-laws of the corporation should be followed.

The same procedure for the July 12 election will be used as is used at the annual meetings of the cooperative. Those desiring to run may be nominated by the nominating committee of LREMC or may be nominated by filing a petition. A person may also be nominated from the floor at the meeting.

According to reports, LREMC will accept petitions through June 16 for candidates.

Deaths Still Under Investigation

According to reports, the Robeson County authorities are still investigating the deaths of two county residents. Earl Chavis was found dead at his mobile home west of Lumberton. Keith Oral Jones of Pembroke was struck by train Saturday morning.

An autopsy showed that Chavis had a blood-alcohol content of .37 when he died. State law considers a blood-alcohol content of .10 as intoxication.

Preliminary autopsy results are not yet available on Jones.

NEWS IN BRIEF

COUNTY TO PURCHASE PROPERTY FOR NEW JAIL

The Robeson County Commissioners have agreed to pursue the possibility of buying a 41-acre tract of land owned by K.M. Biggs Corpraion as the site for a new county jail. The price will be \$287,000 and the property is located east of Lumberton Airport. This action was taken in response to a report from Thomas Ritter, the chief inspector of the Jail and Detention Branch of the State Department of Human Resources. He told the commissioners on Monday that they could face state or federal action forcing them to build a new facility. Ritter has said that the present jail was "an antiquated facility, so obsolete it does not meet any kind of standard." He urged the commissioners to find a jail site immediately.

CHANGE OF VENUE SOUGHT FOR SANDY CHAVIS

Attorneys for Sandy Jordan Chavis requested a change of venue for their client during arraignment proceedings Monday in the Robeson County Superior Court.

Chavis is charged with first-degree murder in the shooting death of Julian Pierce.

Chavis' court appointed attorneys are Evander Britt III and Donald Bullard. They requested a change of venue because of the publicity surrounding the case. No trial date has been set and the attorneys, reportedly, have until the August session of court to file any motions.

Chavis has been held without bond since his arrest March 29. Pierce was killed March 27.

MERGER VOTE FINALLY CERTIFIED

On Monday the Robeson County Board of Elections certified the March 8 school merger referendum that will consolidate Robeson County's five school systems. This action is now waiting the approval of the U.S. Justice Department. A submission for pre-clearance has been filed with the U.S. Justice Department by Hal Kinlaw, attorney for the board of elections. No action has yet been taken. Pre-clearance is expected by July.

The interim board which according to the referendum was scheduled to meet April 1, has not met yet. John Barker, chairman of the interim board of education stated that he does not plan to have the 15 member board take the oath of office until the referendum has pre-clearance from the justice department.