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# THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

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Robeson County

"Building communicative bridges in a tri-racial setting"

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## Whatever Happened to ...

WILLIE G. LOCKLEAR

By Barbara Brubaker Locklear

SPECIAL TO THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

Most mornings the imaginary rooster crows early at the Willie Guthrie Locklear house in southern Robeson County. And that suits Mr. Locklear just fine because for as long as he can remember the retired farmer has embraced daylight's arrival.

"I've never been one to sleep late in the morning. I was raised that way," he explains. "But I can rise early; stir, and later nap anytime I lie down during the day."

During the winter season around three to four o'clock in the morning he goes outdoors to retrieve his daily newspaper from its tube beside a mailbox in rural Rowland. And as his wife sleeps in a nearby bedroom, he settles down in his favorite chair in his living room to read news of the world, nation, state and county. "Even though I'm as old as I am, I'm crazy about the funnies section," the 85-year-old laughs.

Mr. Locklear has lived his entire life on the perimeter of Rowland township. He was the oldest child of five sons and four daughters born to Reddin and Lucy Locklear. He married Omie Hunt 62 years ago. He'd first met her one Sunday as they walked to New Bethel Methodist Church. The couple are the parents of four daughters and five sons, all of whom except one live in the same community near their parents.

Recent weeks of wet weather have caused Mr. Locklear to wonder about whether he'll soon be able to don his tractor-driving clothes. Though he is no longer the sharecropper he once was, he continues to do all the "tractor work" involved in a son's wheat and bean farming operation.

"I continue to drive the tractor because I've always worked. It also keeps me from getting stiff," he comments. "I could have sat down 20 years ago, but if I had, today I couldn't get up. If someone hands me something I appreciate it, but I don't want them to have to do it."

He continues, "If that time comes, I'll appreciate it even more, but I don't plan to sit here for the simple reason I don't want to get tied in this chair."

The small body frame of Mr. Locklear seems to defy the big man within. For more than six decades the modest Lumbee Indian has left footprints in his native county. He's known among political observers as a quiet giant when it comes to causes affecting oppressed people in the Indian community.

"I don't fight and get mad when the other man's views are opposite mine. But I do stand for what I think is right," he admits. "I can disagree in an agreeable fashion. I try to be what I ought to be."

"I may not have a lot of education, but don't consider myself to be the biggest fool in the country either," he chuckles. Mr. Locklear received his early education attending Rowland Indian School and the Dogwood Indian School.

His community involvement began in earnest after he was married and began tilling the soil of Robeson County in order to support his growing family. He'd heard of a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture whereas a parity price formula was revived in 1948 to allow parity prices for individual commodities to reflect a more recent relationship of farm and nonfarm prices by making the base price dependent on the most recent 10-year average price for commodities.

"The government was dropping money in my farming community and my neighbors nor I were receiving one cent of it," he remembers. He recalls having written a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture inquiring about the "parity money." When he received a reply he put his human wheels in motion and worked to see that all those farmers in his community got their rightful share of funds. The result of this unselfish gesture was to bring him recognition among his peers.

From that involvement the humble great-grandfather gained encouragement to work in bettering the way for Indians and non Indians in Robeson County.

Today his is a familiar face at election voting polls and organizational meetings. He says he pushes his political candidates, but is careful not to criticize the other person for pushing theirs. And though he is a registered Democrat, once in a while he crosses party lines in voting for a better candidate.

"I've voted in every election except one since I was 21 years old," he boasts. The former avid hunter says it was a squirrel hunting trip that caused his absence at the voting place that time.

"I'd planned the trip and got caught up in time in the woods that day and didn't make it back in time to vote. But I did get 14 squirrels that day. I sold them for fifty cents each, so my day wasn't totally wasted after all," he laughs.



Willie G. Locklear

Mr. Locklear says he suffered a fall in the 70's and the accident left him with leg ailments which prohibit hunting trips today. He continues to be active in community affairs and served as a member of the Board of Directors to Lumbee Regional Development Association from 1971-79; and as a member of that association's Steering Committee from 1969-71 when he worked tirelessly in securing home improvements for disadvantaged Indian people in the county.

Though the years have somewhat slowed him, Mr. Locklear maintains a rigid schedule in his involvement in his church. He is an active member of his beloved Ashpole Methodist Church where he has sung bass in the men's choir for more than 25 years.

And what does Willie G. Locklear owe to his long life? "I never learned to drink alcoholic beverages. I never had a taste for them. Coffee neither."

A well-disciplined man, he says, "I've never seen anything I couldn't let alone." Then again, he admits he does have a deep liking for Pepsi colas.

And what does he attribute to his long marriage? "Love. You must have it. My wife and I have never gone to sleep mad at each other," he says softly. "It helps, too, that she's a good cook. When she gets sick I don't want to eat other people's cooking."

Give "Mr. Willie" a big breakfast including homemade biscuits and molasses after an early morning newspaper-reading session; a drive into a neighboring town in his pickup; a tractor to drive during planting season; a few catnaps during the day, and a just cause to fight for the welfare of his people and you've satisfied a power giant of a quiet, unassuming man.

## Only in Robeson ...



Last Saturday afternoon Serapinn and I planned to cook some chicken-bog in this old iron wash pot that I got from my grandma. We went over to my trailer which is located on the bank of the Lumber River and set everything up so we could have it going by the time the Washington State basketball game came on t.v. I got me a t.v. dish with one of those illegal descramblers so we could follow all the games. We wanted to see Lumbee Indian Coach, Kelvin Sampson, win another game on national t.v.

I had killed me an ol' hen and cleaned it and I bought some rice, hot peppers, and some links of Polish

sausage. We were set for the night. I was next to my out-house starting a fire. That's where we always cook. Then along came a "big shot" from town. The "big shot" pulled his Cadillac to the side of the road and walked up to my trailer. As he walked up he asked me how much land I owned around here. I told the "big shot" that he could see all of it from where he was standing. The "big shot" puffed out his chest and said, "That sure ain't much land. Over where I live, when I hop on my tractor and cross my property line and head home, it usually takes me two days and a night to reach my house." Smiling sadly at Serapinn, I said to the "big shot," "I used to have a tractor just like that."

## Crowned PSU Homecoming Queen



Elena Lowry of Rowland...Pembroke State University's 1991 Homecoming Queen.

by Gene Warren

Elena Maria Lowry, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Jerry Lowry of Route 1, Rowland, was crowned Saturday as the 1991 Pembroke State University "Homecoming Queen."

In a campus-wide vote, she won over nine other contestants. Sponsored by Pi Lambda Upsilon Fraternity, she was presented a trophy and a bouquet of roses along with her crown.

Both of her parents were '71 graduates of PSU. Her father is now serving his second term as secretary of the PSU Board of Trustees, leads the Methodist campus ministry on the PSU campus, and was instrumental in encouraging many to join the PSU Chancellor's Club of which he is a member.

"I couldn't believe I had won!" said Elena, when her name was announced to the approximately 3,000 fans who jammed the Jones P.E. Center for homecoming. "I was nervous and excited—in fact, stunned."

As she circled the gymnasium floor with her escort, Al Rhyne, PSU student from Cape Hatteras, she waved to her parents, the Rev. Lowry and his wife Doreen who were clapping excitedly.

Elena was a member of the National Honor Society at Purnell Sweet High School plus being the "Most Valuable" cheerleader, winner of the Accounting Award, and a member of the Spanish Club, Future Business Leaders of America, and Yearbook Staff.

At PSU, she is a member of the Gold cheerleading squad, which leads cheers at the women's basketball

games. As a freshman, she is still undecided about her major at PSU, but says she is "leaning toward research in biology." Accounting is also a possibility.

As a member of the First United Methodist Church at Pembroke, where father is pastor, she sings in the choir and is a member of the United Methodist Youth Group.

After all of the pageantry was completed at the Jones Center Saturday, Elena's parents finally had their lovely daughter momentarily to themselves. "They told me how proud they are of me," said Elena, who added that this is the first time she has ever been chosen a queen.

She says her home is only seven miles from PSU and she commutes. "I love Pembroke State because it's not too small and not too big," she added.

She has a sister, Anna, 17, who is a junior at PurnellSweet High School.

## Community To Meet With County Commissioner

Creative Health Ministry and County Commissioner Noah Woods are pleased to announce a series of community development meetings for District IV. These meetings will allow citizens to ask questions and make recommendations regarding issues impacting the county.

Three meetings are scheduled for February 21, 1991 at Pembroke Elementary School; February 28, 1991 at Townsend Middle School (Maxton); and March 7, 1991 at Prospect Elementary School. All meetings will begin at 7 p.m. and will last approximately two hours.

Commissioner Woods and Richard Mathis, director of Creative Health Ministry, will listen to concerns of citizens and will facilitate citizen involvement in trying to improve the well being of the community and county.

## The Coach's Corner

By Ken Johnson

CLEMENS'S \$5 MILLION

Contract is unbelievable, almost. Baseball made \$214 million in 1989. 8-10 teams lost money, however. Boston Red Sox attendance last year was 2,528,986 with a gross of \$40 million. Asher Hana, an economist says "He might pay his way." This does put pressure on ten teams lost money last year. The MEIs have two players—Frank Viola and Dwight Gooden getting \$2 million in their last year of their contracts. Will they get the 5 million. They will demand it. So baseball maybe will be opening another "can of worms." But apparently the t.v. contracts plus the billion the owners have to pay back to the players' association may alleviate some of the financial pressure. Baseball is still profitable but there seems to be no end in sight of the huge salaries some players make. The "goose is still golden," they haven't killed her yet. It's unbelievable in all of baseball, but apparently Clemens deserves it. 21 1/2 million dollars for four years.

## Law Firm Hosts Navy Homecoming

The weekend of February 8th through 9th was homecoming for several locations in Robeson County. Magnolia High School celebrated homecoming most of the day and night on Friday. Pembroke State University observed homecoming during the week with a finale on Saturday night.

There was a different type of homecoming on Saturday afternoon when the law firm of Locklear, Jacobs & Sutton in Pembroke hosted a special reception for Captain Jerry Baker, USN in their office. This was a special occasion due to the long time connection between Captain Baker and Ronnie Sutton of the law firm.

Captain Baker was the recipient of the Outstanding Alumni Award at PSU at ceremonies held on the campus on Saturday. The award is given to those graduates that have distinguished themselves since graduation.

The long term friendship between Jerry Baker and Ronnie Sutton began back in the 1950's at Magnolia High School. It has continued until today. Not only were they in school together at Magnolia, they were at Pembroke State College (University) together in the early 1960's. In addition, they served in various locations prior to Ronnie's retirement from the Navy in 1982.

The unique thing that made this reception a homecoming was the connection to the Navy. The connection reaches as far back as 1964. In that year, several young men from Pembroke showed an interest in joining the Navy as officers. The group took the aviation entrance examination and all passed. That meant a trip to Norfolk, Virginia for the flight physical. Upon completing the physical examination, they began to leave for Navy flight training in Pensacola, Florida.

The group of young Indian men consisted of Ronnie Sutton, Jimmy Ray Locklear, E. Knox Chavis, Gervais Omsdine, Harold (Hal) Cummings, J. Ben Hardin and Jerry Baker. All completed training and received their commission as Ensigns in the U.S. Navy. All served their country as active duty Naval Officers.

Of the seven, three completed the Aviation Training Program and received their "Wings of Gold" as Naval

Aviators. Hal Cummings, a Navy pilot, completed an active duty tour then left active duty and retired as a Commander in the Naval Reserve. He is a Captain with American Airlines flying out of the Raleigh-Durham area.

Ronnie earned his Naval Flight Officer Wings and served in several operation tours primarily in the F-3C Orion Aircraft. He flew more than 600 hours of combat in Vietnam in 1966-67. Ronnie retired in 1982 as the Commanding Officer, NROTC Unit, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana serving Southern University and Louisiana State University. Ronnie retired as a Commander, U.S. Navy in 1982.

Jerry earned his pilot wings and is still on active duty. He is presently the Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station, Memphis Tennessee, the third largest naval base in the country.

It is interesting to note that at one time all seven of the young men were in Pensacola at the same time. In addition, during their first tour, Jerry Baker and Hal Cummings were stationed in Rhode Island together. On their second tour Jerry and Ronnie were both flight instructors in the greater Pensacola flight training complex. Also, at one time Ronnie and Jerry were in the Tidewater, Virginia area together for a tour.

The most interesting tour of all was their 1970-77 student's tour at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island in which Ronnie and Jerry were the first Native Americans to graduate from that most prestigious institution.

After considering the close association involving these individuals, the firm of Locklear, Jacobs & Sutton decided to host Captain Baker upon his return to Robeson County. Of the seven former Naval Officers, five were in attendance with Jimmy Ray Locklear, a California Dentist and J. Ben Hardin, a Lumberton Physician, unable to attend.

Several friends of Captain Baker were invited to share the occasion with him. It is hoped that in future years, maybe all seven of the group can arrange to have another Navy Reunion.

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