

WHAT NEXT???

Lumberton Mayor David Weinstein announced he would not seek a second term. According to our information this was a pretty popular decision for the folks of Lumberton. Smart move, Dave! We'll be looking for you in 1992!

"Doubting Thomas"

The selection of Clarence Thomas to replace Thurgood Marshall on the U.S. Supreme Court is probably viewed by George Bush and a large segment of white conservatives as a measure of poetic justice.

Many "Americans" despised President Lyndon Johnson when he appointed Thurgood Marshall to the court. White conservatives were in a fit in their attempt to discredit Mr. Marshall. In those turbulent years some could not accept a black man who would have such power and influence in our society.

Years have passed and now conservative whites, becoming rather sophisticated over the years, have put the shoe on the other foot by putting forth the name of another black man, Clarence Thomas. Mr. Thomas' views mirror those of the white conservative majority in our nation today and therefore, he is acceptable. The fact he is black is viewed as another bonus. Liberals and minorities are now having "fits" as they are put on the defensive. Conservatives must be snickering to themselves as minorities, moderates, and liberals attempt to dance around the "Thomas issue." Sadly, once again race has become a primary factor which clouds the decision which will affect our country for many years to come. Like Mr. Marshall before him, Mr. Thomas' race, rather than his qualifications, is paramount as groups put their press release machines into service.

From the administration's public relations blitz we've learned Clarence Thomas, like many, many others in our country, grew up in poverty. There is no doubt he struggled to get where he is today. But unfortunately, we are told he represents the American dream in that he struggled and fought his way up the ladder of academic, economic, and political success against all odds. We are led to believe this proves it is possible for anyone if only he or she has the intestinal fortitude to stay the course. But, of course, that is a fanciful myth so often popularized by the right-wing conservatives in our country. This myth is worse than blatant racism because it is a purposeful lie which is used to reinforce the idea of white supremacy. Failure is not a factor of racism, unfairness, double standards of justice, inequality or poverty. Failure, from the conservative viewpoint, is always a personal shortcoming. This idea was roundly dismissed when proposed by reconstruction conservatives in the south of the 1870s. Sadly so many of our nation's conservatives seem to have adopted the ideas of the ol' South to lead us into the 21st century, and on the surface, Mr. Thomas seems to be one of their standardbearers.

Thomas and many others in our society had a fighting chance, an opportunity because of the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, under the leadership of Earl Warren. Thomas was fortunate in that individuals like William Douglas, Hugo Black, and Thurgood Marshall were sitting on the Supreme Court.

But all this is beside the point. In the final analysis, Clarence Thomas owes nothing to previous courts. The courts were merely doing their jobs and Mr. Thomas did his by taking advantage of the opportunity provided. Mr. Thomas owes nothing to his blackness. It's to his credit he was able to overcome the barriers which faced him because of the color of his skin. It would be helpful if Mr. Thomas would remember those barriers when he sits on the Supreme Court because many still exist today in our society and some individuals do not have the resources or strength to break them down.

Mr. Thomas owes nothing to the powerful conservative movement in this country. Even though conservatives will

place him on the court, Mr. Thomas must realize the movement is just a passing swing of the pendulum which invariably swings back and forth in search of balance.

Mr. Thomas owes everything he has and is to the American system. Democracy, in spite of the flaws and shortcomings, in spite of the bigotry and hate of the past, in spite of the fear and uncertainty of the future for some in our society, democracy proves itself each and every day by producing the Clarence Thomas' and Thurgood Marshalls of the world.

Mr. Thomas has been chosen to provide a measure of certainty to our lives. Conservatives hope he will do this in one way. Liberals hope he will do it in another. He will serve his country on the U.S. Supreme Court and to accomplish this, Mr. Thomas will have to put aside the hopes and dreams of pressure groups. He has been chosen to weigh the scales and insure fairness, equality, and justice always win out. That is no easy task!

But Mr. Thomas need not worry. He will be appointed for life. He has a unique opportunity to make major contributions to our collective future. He needs not be a white man's Black man or even a Black man's Black man. In fact, we hope Mr. Thomas chooses to decide issues without regard to his sex, race or religion. He has earned this opportunity and he will be judged by history as to whether he was up to the task. He can never fill Thurgood Marshall's shoes, but neither should he try. Mr. Thomas' time has come. And while we have serious doubts about Thomas, we hold out hope that he too will surprise his fellow Americans. After all, Justice Hugo Black, once a member of the Ku Klux Klan, went on to become one of the court's staunch defenders of equal rights and justice for everyone. Thomas has the opportunity--hopefully current doubts will be but vague, fading memories! While Thomas might become the judge, we will be the jury!

Speaking of the mayor of Lumberton, Mr. Weinstein recently wrote a "guest" editorial for a local newspaper. He continued to cry about the re-districting plan which divides Lumberton into three separate districts. But Weinstein exceeds the bounds of intellectual honesty in his vain, self-serving attempt to draw comparisons between Lumberton and the trouble areas of Croatia and Slovenia. If anything, Lumberton could better be compared to Yugoslavia. Control of the future and destiny of Robeson County has been in Lumberton's hands for many years. Economic and political growth have been defined and controlled by the Lumberton establishment while outlying towns like Maxton, Rowland, and Fairmont have been ignored.

Things are now about to change. The re-districting plan was approved by the general assembly. So Mr. Weinstein can either grin and bear it, or if he continues his public weeping and gnashing of teeth, we will have no recourse but to dub him: "Sir Whine-stein!"

We all know "whiners" will have no chance in 1992!

"Battle of the Network Evangelists"

A \$90 million defamation lawsuit began with jury selection on Monday. Jimmy Swaggart is being sued by Marvin Gorman. If you recall, Gorman is the rival New Orleans "preacher" who released photographs of Swaggart with a prostitute which led to Swaggart's tearful, public "confession" (it would have been more believable if Swaggart had not had to be prompted to make such a confession; if not for Gorman, it's very likely Swaggart would still be sitting in that motel on the Airline Highway). Gorman is now accusing Swaggart of conspiring to destroy his New Orleans television ministry by spreading lies and rumors.

It's interesting that during the trial, Mr. Gorman's lawyers will be unable to bring up Swaggart's sex life

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

The descendants of Zackariah and Matilda Locklear; also the descendants of Preston and Emaline Locklear are invited to the annual Locklear Family Reunion, Saturday, August 10, at Preston Gospel Chapel in Maxton. Those attending are asked to gather at the church at noon for a brief program and lunch will be served immediately afterwards. Those planning to attend should bring a covered dish to be served at luncheon. For further information, contact Holly Floyd Locklear at 919/521-4280, or Lillian T. Harris at 919/521-4107.

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Along The Robeson Trail

By Dr. Stan Kaich, Director of the PSU
Native American Resource Center

We have seen that Thomas Harriot's visit among the Indians of North Carolina in 1585-86 resulted in some astounding "discoveries." We have also seen that Harriot himself clearly did not understand all he saw and described. It is also apparent that Harriot had little or no idea of his own effect on the Indians. This is especially evident as concerns his impact on the Indians' health and world view.

Harriot wrote that the Indians viewed European technology, specifically guns, metal axes, telescopes, and clocks, as "...rather the works of gods than of men, or at the leastwise...given and taught us of the gods." It seemed to Harriot that the Indians had enormous respect for the Europeans, mainly because the Europeans could manage things with their technology which the Indians could not. But we must wonder now whether the Indians were not truly more frightened than they were impressed.

Harriot also tells us that the Indians thought that anything which went wrong was due to some infraction that Indians had committed against the Europeans: "There could at no time happen any strange sickness, loss, (or) hurts...but that they would impute to us the cause or means thereof, for offending or not pleasing us." This kind of reaction on the Indians' part made Harriot think that the Indians held the Europeans "...in wonderful admiration." One example he gives of this is especially bitter:

"There was no town (where we visited)...but that

within a few days after our departure...the people began to die very fast, and many in short space; in some towns about twenty, in some forty, in some sixty, and in one six score (120), which in truth was very many in respect of their numbers...; the disease also so strange, that they neither knew what it was, nor how to cure it...; they were persuaded that it was the work of our God through our means, and that we, by Him might kill and slay whom we would, without weapons..."

This caused these Algonkian Indians to ask the Europeans to use this perceived "power" on their traditional enemies (probably Iroquoian-speakers). Harriot says he explained to the Indians that such a request was "ungodly," and that "...God would not subject Himself to any such prayers and requests of men: that indeed all things have been and were to be done according to His good pleasure as He had ordained."

It is evident from his writings that Harriot did not realize that he and his European companions were the bearers of the germs which caused these epidemics. Since none of the Europeans were killed by the disease, Harriot saw the epidemics as "...the special work of God for our sakes." Imagine the impact which these events and ideas must have had on the world view of the 16th Century Indian.

For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.

READERS' FORUM

Plan for sound financial base for SATW offered

To the Editor:

Much has been written recently concerning the need to move "Strike at the Wind" drama from the current location at the Adolph L. Dial Amphitheater in order to improve the financial condition of the drama. I would like to suggest a plan that could establish a sound financial base for the operation of the drama at the present site on a yearly basis.

The plan is sell seasonal tickets at \$50 each. The tickets could be laminated and the bearer, his family and/or friends could attend the drama. The ticket holder would have the ticket punched for each attendance by himself or others. The ticket could be used for each performance or all at once depending on the number in the group attending. The ticket would cease to be usable after it had been used for the total number of performances for the

year.

According to the 1990 census there are 106,000 people living in Robeson County. The drama has operational expenses of \$125,000 per year, according to published reports. We would sell 3000 seasonal tickets (\$150,000). The additional \$22,000 plus the art show auction and gate receipts could then be used to give better marketing to the drama.

I have discussed this above plan with at least 30 people myself and each one of them said they would buy a seasonal ticket each year. The promotion could start at the end of this season and continue into the beginning of the next season.

Samuel Kerns
Pembroke

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