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Robeson County

"Building communicative bridges in a tri-racial setting"

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Charles Gregory Cummings announces for town council seat



Charles Gregory Cummings

Charles Gregory Cummings has announced his candidacy for the Pembroke Town Council. As a lifetime resident of the town for 43 years, he stated, he is very concerned about internal and external programs of his town.

Charles is married to the former Myra Warriax and they have two children, Teana, 19, and C.G., Jr., 15. Charles is a member of Sandy Plains United Methodist Church where he is very involved with different church activities.

He has worked with Lumbee Regional Development Association for 17 years with the Job Training Program as a Placement Officer and working with Economic Development.

Cummings has been involved with community projects and committees at the county and local level. He has

served in various capacities, including: past president of the Pembroke Chamber of Commerce; past president of the Pembroke Jaycees; Pembroke Economic Development Panel; Pembroke Zoning Board; Pembroke and PSU Day; Robeson County Strategic & Economic Development Board; past Chairman of the Robeson County Committee of 100; C P & L Southeastern Economic Panel; Robeson County Bicentennial 200th Anniversary. Projects include: Welcome to Pembroke and PSU signs; Christmas Parade for 16 years; Chairman, Lumbee Homecoming; N.C. Indian Heritage Week; Robeson County Industrial Video; and needy family services.

In making his announcement, Cummings released the following statement:

"With federal budget cuts affecting state and local governments, town councilmen must be more dedicated to their positions in the decision making process. As a council, we should search diligently for correct data, talk with our citizens, look at other similar situations and make a decision for what is best for the future of Pembroke.

"I am concerned about the following areas of Pembroke: (1) governmental process; (2) housing; (3) recreation; (4) police security; (5) town maintenance; (6) upgrading of our existing businesses; (7) town beautification; (8) senior citizens programs (meals on wheels); (9) town grants; (10) town sewage disposal plant; (11) roads; (12) new business growth (franchises), industrial economic development. Economic growth is a critical priority for our town. It would increase tax revenues for our town, therefore, eliminating any new tax increases for our citizens and maintaining a high quality of living.

"A councilman's job isn't just meeting once a month and making decisions, but councilmen should be personally involved in community programs and civic organizations, if they are concerned about their town."

"One other major concern is Pembroke State University of the UNC system. I'm very proud of this institution and we are very fortunate that this institution is located in our town. The time has come for us as citizens and business leaders to get more involved with the University. The students and staff are our guests. We need a planned program to look at our town weaknesses and strengths to meet the needs of this institution. We are a university town.

"Citizens, I need your support on November 5th. Working together these ideas can become a reality."

Lumbee Bill requires tribal referendum vote on constitution

While a spokesman for Sen. Jesse Helms reports that Sen. Helms will oppose the Lumbee Bill to be considered in the Senate within a few weeks, the attorney for the Lumbee Tribe, Arlinda Locklear, states that the Tribe is legally barred from standard procedure for tribal recognition. "The 1956 act prohibits the Lumbee people from petitioning for recognition," Locklear stated. "The preamble to the 1956 Act which designates the Lumbee as Indian, also bars us from any services of the Department of the Interior. The 1956 Act makes it impossible for the Lumbee to petition for recognition."

In addition to Sen. Helms' office, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has indicated that they will ask President Bush to veto the Lumbee Bill if it passes the Senate. The BIA also states that the Congressional route to recognition circumvents the recognition process. In view of these and other misconceptions about Lumbee, Attorney Locklear feels that it would help if both those opposed and those in favor of the passage of the Lumbee Bill were more knowledgeable about the Bill itself.

H.R. 1426 amends the preamble to the Act of June 7, 1956 "by adding at the end thereof the following new clauses:

"Whereas the Lumbee Indians of Robeson and adjoining counties in North Carolina are descendants of coastal North Carolina Indian tribes, principally Cheraw, and have remained a distinct Indian community since the time of contact with white settlers;

"Whereas the Lumbee Indians have been recognized by the State of North Carolina as an Indian tribe since 1885;

"Whereas the Lumbee Indians have sought Federal recognition as an Indian tribe since 1888; and

"Whereas the Lumbee Indians are entitled to Federal recognition of their status as an Indian tribe and the benefits, privileges, and immunities that accompany such status....

FEDERAL RECOGNITION:
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

"Sec. 2. (a) Federal recognition is hereby extended to the Lumbee Tribe of Cheraw Indians of North Carolina. All laws and regulations of the United States of general application to Indians and Indian tribes shall apply to the Lumbee Tribe of Cheraw Indians of North Carolina and its members.

"(b) Notwithstanding the first section of this Act, any group of Indians in Robeson or adjoining counties whose members are not enrolled in the Lumbee Tribe of Cheraw Indians of North Carolina, as determined under section 4(b) may petition under part 83 of title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations for acknowledgement of tribal existence.

"SERVICES. Sec. 3(a) The Lumbee Tribe of Cheraw Indians of North Carolina and its members shall be

eligible for all services and benefits provided to Indians because of their status as federally recognized Indians, except that members of the tribe shall not be entitled to such services until the appropriation of funds for these purposes. For the purposes of the delivery of such services, those members of the tribe residing in Robeson and adjoining counties, North Carolina, shall be deemed to be resident on or near an Indian reservation...."

The Bill requires the Tribe to adopt an Indian Reorganization Act Constitution. Members will decide who serves on the tribal council, how long the terms are, how much power the council has, and other standard Constitutional questions.

Under the requirements of the Bill it could be as long as three years before funding begins. The first step following Federal Recognition would be a needs assessment for services conducted by the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This needs assessment will be conducted to determine which services are needed and a request for the monies will be made based on the assessment of needs.

The Secretary of the Interior will review the tribal rolls for the purposes of verification. The Secretary will also be available to assist in the process of the adoption of a Constitution. A referendum vote will be required on the Constitution and the constitution will specify the process for the election of tribal council members, the tribal chairman or chief. Every enrolled member will be eligible to vote on the Constitution, as well as on the tribal council itself.

Appropriations for the Lumbee would be in a block grant to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and all funds set aside to be administered by the tribe itself. This procedure will eliminate the BIA from relieving administrative costs from the "line item" monies.

Upon ratification of the Lumbee Bill, the tribal rolls will be re-opened for a stated period of time (180 days prior to the vote on the Constitution. This will give persons enrolled in other tribal groups or organizations an opportunity to enroll in the Lumbee tribe, if they meet the criteria of the tribe.

The Bill does not eliminate the opportunity for other groups in the county from petitioning the Department of the Interior for separate recognition, but allows it. The same exclusion that applies to Lumbee Indians also applies to other Indian groups in the county. The passage of the Lumbee Bill would in fact make it easier for other groups in the area to receive recognition.

The tribe would have the governmental powers to regulate taxes and to regulate laws to

Mitchell Locklear considering bid for board of education



Mitchell "Bosco" Locklear of the Prospect community has announced his intention to seek a seat on the board of education of the Public Schools of Robeson County in 1992. Always concerned with statistics, Locklear said that the drop out rate for local students was astounding. "When you hear that 720 students have dropped out of our schools and 450 of them are Indian, it is time for all of us to become more involved in the educational process."

Locklear has long been active in the Native American Political Action Committee. The organization was the first to address the issue of re-districting of the board of education. In addition, NAPAC spoke publicly for the elected positions as opposed to the appointment process that was included in the merger of the five school systems in the county. "The organization saw the need," Locklear said, "for taxpayers to be allowed to vote for those persons who make decisions governing the education of their children."

Locklear continues to be very vocal on the issue of electing representatives, and extremely vocal about the re-districting process. He believes that the re-districting should be done in accordance with the racial percentages as documented by the 1990 Census figures.

The re-districting plan submitted to the U.S. Justice Department by the board of education was presented to the board by NAPAC. If the Justice Department approves the plan, eight members will be elected by districts, four of them in 1992. District 4 which presently has no

representative residing in the district is comprised of: Burnt Swamp, a portion of North Pembroke, Philadelphus, Red Springs # 1 and Red Springs # 2 and Shannon, North Smiths and South Smiths.

In announcing his intention to seek election to District 4, Locklear stated that many people had encouraged him to run for the position and to announce his intentions early. "As a parent of a student in the public schools, I am making myself available to serve. Quality education for all children is my primary concern," he said. "Our children are our most valuable resource, to quote an old adage," he said. "I have a problem when I read statistics that say our children are at the bottom of standardized test scores. There is nothing wrong with our students. There is something wrong with a system that continues to score low on academic tests. Our SAT scores are at the bottom. Our drop out rate is astronomical. Something is wrong. And there is a reason for it. It appears that somewhere in the administration there is a break down between the central office and the classroom. We have 15 board members and none of them, thus far, have addressed the problem publicly. The problems must be identified before solutions can be set forth. I would recommend dealing with the problem and laying all politics aside. Whoever gets hurt in the process will get over it if changes have to be made administratively."

Locklear is forceful in his expression of educational concerns. "I know that I won't be popular with those politicians who are only concerned with ensuring seats on the board of education. But I am not concerned about that. I am concerned that none of our students receive less educationally than they are entitled to."

Locklear is presently employed with the Robeson County Department of Social Services. Prior to his employment there he worked as a community organizer with the Rural Advancement Fund.

Civic affiliations include serving as a member of the Prospect Volunteer Fire Department, Chairman of the Prospect School Advisory Council, member of the N.C. House of Representatives District Executive Committee, Chairman of South Smiths Precinct.

He is a past member of the Rural Advancement Fund Justice Project Advisory Board; past chairman of the Four County Head Start Policy Council and past member of the Board of Directors of Prospect Volunteer Fire Department.

The 31-year-old Locklear, his wife, Doris and daughter, Jessica are active members of Galilee Baptist Church.

CUMMINGS ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY

Lumberton, NC--Frances McArthur Cummings, a candidate for the North Carolina House of Representatives, District 87, formally announced her candidacy to seek election in the May 5, 1992 Democratic Primary. Ms. Cummings spoke to the Robeson County, Hoke County and Scotland County Black Caucuses in their meeting on Saturday, October 12, 1991 in Fairmont, NC.

In her statement, Ms. Cummings said, "My Campaign Advisory Committee, representatives from their counties, other leaders, and interested citizens--tri-racial-- from across North Carolina met over a June 22, 1991 brunch to make the decision and lend support."

Ms. Cummings was a N.C. House District 16 candidate in May 1990. "I was extremely pleased to have these individuals look at some of the May 1990 primary election results in making the vital decision," she said. "The fact that I won a seat in Hoke County, came within a run-off in Robeson County, was fifth in Scotland, and ended an eighth-person race gaining a fourth place status, some 2,000 votes short of a House seat, is indicative of my electability."

"This data along with the continuous grassroots support and encouragement indicates that I am a viable and electable candidate and that I should make another attempt in 1992," she concluded.

Cummings is a life-long resident of Robeson County, a member of the Hilly Branch Baptist Church and lives in Lumberton. Currently she is employed by the Public Schools of Robeson County as Assistant Director of Vocational Education. She holds a B.S. degree from Livingstone College, a Master's degree from N.C. Central University, and Vocational Education Director's Certification from UNC-Greensboro.

Cummings is an active member of several local and national association. Some of which are American Vocational Association; NCVA; NC Council of Local Vocational Administrators; the Robeson County Black Caucus; the Robeson County Democratic Party; and the Eastern Women's Program Council. She is currently an Association of Executives Sponsored Fellow in the N.C. Institute of Political Leadership and was recently appointed to the Lumber River Private Industry Council by the Robeson County Commissioners (July 1991). "I feel very comfortable offering myself as a public servant. My extensive experiences, training, leadership and representation span from local organizing to representing N.C. education and women across the state and nation, including Nairobi, Kenya, Africa and Canada," she said.

"We will govern 'our own people,' according to H.R. 1426. It would be possible in time for the tribe to petition the State of North Carolina to transfer civil and criminal jurisdiction to the tribe.

Attorney Locklear is optimistic about the Lumbee Bill. He is "confident" that the Bill will come out of the

"The people of N.C. House District 87 and the state need a representative who understands the problems of today, who cares, and who will engage in and provide strategic planning to bring about positive changes and solutions for the people. I can lead and follow. And strong leadership is needed as we move into the 21st Century.

"I am committed to helping improve the quality of life for all people. I honestly and sincerely believe and feel confident that I have a new insight of director; a proven method working with, for, and representing the ethnic diversity of people in District 87 and across North Carolina," she stated.

"My campaign strategies will include well-organized campaign; key issues; campaigning door to door and media. My emphasis as a N.C. House of Representative candidate are education, economic security and job opportunities, health care and prenatal services, elimination of crime, violence and drugs.

"The people of District 87 can be assured of representation of integrity and competence. I will work to see that all children are educated; that people are on jobs and off the streets and that they re in their own homes. I want to see taxpayers' dollars spent wisely. Taxpayers deserve a strong economic base and peace of mind that somebody cares. I care about the suffering people of our state and those who wish to move progressively in the future.

"My leadership is positive and progressive, and I feel that I hold a 'key to progress.'"

Senate Select Committee and receive a vote by the entire Senate. There are 100 Senators in the United States and 51 are needed to pass the Lumbee Bill.

Members of the Lumbee Tribe and supporters are urged to contact their Senators and encourage them to support the Lumbee Bill.