

ALONG the ROBESON TRAIL

by Dr. Stan Knick, Director,
PSU Native American Resource Center

To begin with, I need to say right up front that this segment of "Along The Robeson Trail" has more questions than it does answers. This is because it deals with an extraordinarily tough topic — a topic in which questions come more easily to mind than do clear and satisfying answers. But it is a topic I believe we all need to think about. The topic is: comparison of average 1993 SAT scores among different groups of people in North Carolina and nationwide. It's important to remember that this discussion is about average scores from the different groups, not any one person's individual score.

Pembroke State University's Office of Institutional Research recently released a "fact sheet" which shows average SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores. It divides the scores by gender, ethnic group, and several other variables including parental education level and family income. Once you start reading down the page, questions immediately arise.

1. The average score in North Carolina is 859, while nationwide it is 902 (out of a possible score of 1600). Why is this? Are North Carolina's high school students less intelligent than students nationwide? I don't believe it — but something's going on.

2. Male students score higher on average than their female counterparts, both nationally and in North Carolina. Does this mean that males have more "scholastic aptitude" than females? I don't believe that either. Could it be simply that males are generally better at taking tests than females — that males are somehow better prepared to manage the test experience itself, and not that they are any more intelligent than females? Could this be the result of what some people call "gender bias" in the classroom (where boys get more attention, especially in math class)? Why would these things be true?

3. Nationwide, Asian Americans score higher on average than anybody else (950). Next in line come European Americans (938), followed by Native Americans (847) and

African Americans (741). These ethnic groups fall in the same order in North Carolina, although the actual numbers are slightly different (920, 904, 775, 722). Some racially-minded people might take all this to mean that Native Americans are "smarter" than African Americans, but that would imply that European Americans are "smarter" than both, and I don't believe that for a minute! I have been teaching at university level for fourteen years, at three different universities, and I haven't seen any evidence whatsoever that one ethnic group is any "smarter" or has any more "scholastic aptitude" than any other ethnic group. Some Native Americans and African Americans make high scores; some Asian Americans and European Americans make low scores. Students who want to work hard and learn a lot, do so. Ethnic group has nothing to do with it. So why do the average SAT scores for these ethnic groups look like they do? Are Asian Americans just better at taking tests than everybody else?

4. The higher a student's parental education level, the more likely the student is to make a high score on the SAT. Both nationally and in North Carolina, the average score of students whose parents didn't complete high school is lower than students whose parents did complete high school. Students whose parents finished college score higher still, and students whose parents completed a graduate degree (Master's or above) score even higher. Why should this be true? Do parents who are themselves educated tend to expect more of their children than parents who have less education? Everyone knows of exceptions to this generalization — cases where Mom and Dad didn't finish high school and want their children to "have more" than they did, and thus strongly encourage Junior to work extra hard in school to make a "better life" for himself. Some students from lower parental education levels do make high scores; some from high parental education levels make low scores. So why do these average SAT scores look like they do?

5. Then comes the part of the "fact sheet" where average SAT scores are compared according to family income. The families were divided into income groups of \$10,000 — less than \$10,000; \$10,000 to \$20,000; \$20,000 to \$30,000; and so on up the economic ladder. I was amazed at how the average SAT scores seemed to find their way up the ladder. In both national and North Carolina comparisons, the farther up the economic ladder a family operates, the higher the average SAT score. The North Carolina average score for students whose family income is less than \$10,000 is 729; for students whose family income is more than \$70,000, the average score is 970. Does this mean that people with more money are "smarter" than other folks? Not a chance! Does it mean that people with more money have more opportunities to educate their children? Maybe so. But is that all there is to it? We know that some students from lower income families make high scores, and some from higher income families make low scores. Is there a hidden relationship between family income and ethnic group here somewhere — for example, could it be that Native American and African American students just happen to be heavily represented on the lower end of the economic ladder, and that's why their scores are lower on average than other students?

Can parents and educators have a positive influence on the SAT scores which their children and students make in the future? Should there be policies in place which seek to address these issues at the state and county level? Do SAT scores mean anything at all?

As I said, there are definitely more questions in this topic than there are answers. But the inequalities we see in average SAT scores are telling us something. I wonder what it is...

For more information, or to discuss this topic and maybe what could be done about it, visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.

Interior Design With Impact

A Profile of RDA International, Atlanta, GA

RDA International is one of the country's most interesting and unique interior design firms. Since 1984, they have provided services on more than 15 million square feet of space, completing over 1,500 projects. The company's president, Ken Rhyne, is a Tuscarora Indian. His heritage is just one of the many differences that helps RDA stand out in the competitive interior design industry.

Interestingly enough, the firm started out almost by accident. Rhyne originally set his sights on a career in baseball. He proved himself to be a talented ball player, and he was awarded an athletic scholarship to Pfeiffer College. After school, Ken went on to play professionally. An injury in 1973, however, cut short his sports career.

Growing up near High Point, North Carolina (the furniture capital of the world), Ken was exposed to the furnishings industry from an early age. After he was forced to abandon baseball, Ken began selling furniture and providing interior design services for his clients. Through his work in the contract interior design field, Ken gained tremendous product knowledge and earned a solid reputation as a talented designer. After working for 11 years in the design industry, Ken founded his own business — Rhycof Design Associates (now known as RDA INTERNATIONAL).

Now, with over 20 years of experience, Ken has become a recognized leader in the interior design industry. Because of his knowledge, he regularly speaks before groups about interior design and was a featured speaker at NEOCON in 1993 (the interior design industry's largest annual trade show and conference).

"I believe that RDA INTERNATIONAL is the most innovative and progressive interior design firm in the Southeast," says

Rhyne. "In the early stages of our business, rapidly-growing high tech clients like Hayes Microcomputer Products forced us to rethink interior design and facilities support. The volume of work was so great, our design staff had to use automation. We were one of the first Atlanta firms to widely use CADD and have remained at the forefront ever since."

RDA INTERNATIONAL uses computer-aided drafting and design for almost 100% of their space planning, construction documents and specifications. Their design studio is fully AutoCAD automated, and all designers are trained on the latest drawing, specification and project management software.

In addition to their advanced technology, partner Susan Lawson attributes success to many factors. "We truly offer client-focused design services," she says. "We have a unique management philosophy, and we operate as a team. Our facility management services are outstanding, and we are an American Indian minority business enterprise. The combination sets us apart from other firms!"

"Over the years," says Rhyne, "the firm has worked with such companies as Unisys, KnowledgeWare, Prudential, AT&T and IBM. We have been nationally recognized as an INTERIOR DESIGN GIANT by Interior Design magazine for the past six years. We are currently working with such clients as the Smithsonian Institution, Holiday Inn Worldwide and the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG). It's the quality of our work, depth of experience, and commitment to our clients that wins us contracts."

One of the firm's recent commissions is from the

Smithsonian Institution. RDA INTERNATIONAL has been named as the lead interior design firm for the Cultural Resources Center for the National Museum of the American Indian. (The CRC is part of three facilities that will comprise the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian.) This 150,000 square foot facility will serve as the "home" for over a million cultural objects.

"As an American Indian and a design professional, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work on a project that is as rewarding personally as it is professionally," said Rhyne. "It is truly an honor to be selected for such a significant project, and I look forward to designing the Cultural Center so that it embraces our traditions and serves as a lasting monument for all Native Americans."

"We consider ourselves very fortunate to be working on a premier project such as the Smithsonian Institution's Cultural Resources Center," says Partner Phil Boyette. He is also quick to point out that the partners feel very lucky to employ such a talented design team. "We are only as good as our people," says Boyette. "We recognize that selecting and keeping the 'right' employees is vitally important to the continued success of the firm. We treat our employees like family, and we give them every opportunity to grow and to shine. In return they produce high quality work and everyone is happy."

Rhyne sums up the company philosophy as such, "We treat our clients the way we would want to be treated. We ask a lot of questions, and we find out what they want. We customize solutions for their needs. I think communication is the key to our positive relationships with our clients. Without our clients, we have nothing. Customer services is our top priority."

On May 3, 1994 Elect

LUTHER JOHNSON BRITT, III District Attorney



I am seeking your vote for the office of District Attorney. I have the experience and knowledge that is needed to improve the District Attorney's office of Robeson County. My experience as a prosecutor both in Robeson, Bladen, and Columbus counties has provided me with the trial and administrative experience that is needed to be an effective District Attorney.

This election is about the future of our county and court system. I represent the change that is needed. This change is needed because of the way our District Attorney's office is presently operated. Currently there is a lack of organization, lack of leadership, lack of responsibility, lack of communication, and a lack of concern for the people of Robeson County.

We deserve a District Attorney who is concerned about victims, their families, and the safety and security of our community. We deserve a D.A. who is hardworking, honest, fair, consistent, and willing to accept the responsibility of the office. I am the man for the job.

Robeson County is a great place to live and this is why I returned home. With me as your District Attorney it will be an even better place to live. It currently takes longer to bring a case to trial in Robeson County than it does anywhere else in the state. We deserve to be FIRST, not last. Crime is a problem in our nation, state, and county. My management of the District Attorney's office in the prosecution of violent criminals will deter crime.

I will always be accessible, always ready to listen, and always willing to help. I will be a servant of the people. Those in need will know that they have a friend in Johnson Britt.

WE DESERVE BETTER! Some candidates promise, I will deliver. Please show your support for our county with your vote for LUTHER JOHNSON BRITT, III for District Attorney on May 3, 1994.

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Johnson Britt

ELECT JO ANN LOCKLEAR CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT



We encourage the voters of Robeson County to vote and support Jo Ann Locklear for Clerk of Superior Court.

Jo Ann Locklear has served Robeson County as an Assistant Clerk of Superior Court, being responsible for all estates, wills, property divisions and other special proceedings.

Jo Ann Locklear has served as an Assistant Clerk of Superior Court to the Honorable BEN G. FLOYD, JR. and is presently serving as an Assistant Clerk of Superior Court to the Honorable DIXIE I. BARRINGTON.

Jo Ann Locklear has earned the respect of the citizens of Robeson County. Robeson County will continue its forward progress with Jo Ann Locklear as Clerk of Superior Court.

We encourage you to join us in support of Jo Ann Locklear.

- H. Mitchell Baker, III, Attorney
- Ida T. Baker, Attorney
- James Gregory Bell, Attorney
- Donald W. Bullard, Attorney
- Edward John Bullard, Attorney
- Ertle Knox Chavis, Attorney
- William L. Davis, III, Attorney
- Dale Deese, Attorney
- Charles E. Floyd, Attorney
- J. Gates Harris, Attorney
- Everett L. Henry, Attorney
- Bruce W. Huggins, Attorney
- Grady L. Hunt, Attorney
- Arlie Jacobs, Attorney
- Robert D. Jacobson, Attorney
- Bruce F. Jobe, Attorney

- Brent D. Kiziah, Attorney
- W. Osborne Lee, Jr., Attorney
- Arnold Locklear, Attorney
- J. Max McManus, Attorney
- John McManus, Attorney
- Douglas P. Murray, Attorney
- Dallas M. Pounds, Attorney
- Robert E. Price, Attorney
- David J. Ramsaur, Attorney
- Kenneth E. Ransom, Attorney
- George Regan, Attorney
- C. Christopher Smith, Attorney
- Earl Homer Strickland, Attorney
- Ronnie Sutton, Attorney
- Joseph C. Ward, Jr., Attorney
- Jeffrey Wynn, Attorney

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Jo Ann Locklear