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Directing Pembroke's public housing is a position that coincides with personal beliefs



Lemark Harris, Executive Director of Pembroke Housing Authority

by Connee Brayboy

Serving as executive director for Pembroke Housing Authority is rewarding as well as challenging. When Lemark Harris began that position two years ago, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had issued a mandate to the Pembroke Housing Authority. They had twelve months to get the public housing in order, or face a take over by HUD. Each year HUD does a Management Review. It is rated with 60 being passing. In 1992 Pembroke Housing Authority had a rating of 53%. The areas of weakness were listed and the mandate was given. Since becoming Executive Director, Harris has worked diligently to correct those areas of weakness. The operations of the Authority have been computerized and all areas of concern have been dealt with. In 1994 the Management Review by HUD rated Pembroke Housing Authority at 95%. That is quite an accomplishment and Harris is proud of the progress and growth of the Housing Authority.

Harris moved into the position as executive director from Pembroke State University where he served as a budget analyst. He recalls his years there as a great learning experience. "Two people provided invaluable assistance to me: Paulette Dial, Director of Accounting, and Ruby Smith, Grants Officer. Both of these ladies helped me tremendously. Working at PSU was a challenge and I really enjoyed it."

Why would anyone leave the security of a state position to take on the duties of directing public housing with a mandate from HUD? "It was a challenge and I wanted to do what I could to be beneficial to the public housing in Pembroke. There is a stigmatism associated with public housing that should not be there, and I felt that I

could help to eliminate the negative image of our public housing."

There are five housing projects in the town of Pembroke: Strickland Heights, the largest with 100 units; Dial Terrace with 44 units which caters to the elderly and disabled; Chavis Park has 45 units and Locklear Court has 27. The offices are located at Locklear Court. Because Strickland Heights was the largest project, there were many problems when Harris became director.

Soon after become director, Harris implemented a contract with the town of Pembroke to provide increased police protection at Strickland Heights. "The problems in Strickland Heights did not necessarily come from the residents, but was a combination of outside traffic and drug dealing. The implementation of increased policing resulted in the decrease by 50% of calls to the police department. Several drug busts were made and things slowly began to change in Strickland Heights.

Harris continues to pursue grants to continue a program for a Youth Center in the projects. The 4-H Club meets once a week at each site and once a week the participants meet at the park for fun and fellowship. "The idea is to change the way our young people feel about themselves. We are offering positive programs for the youth in public housing and we are happy with the changing attitudes of our youth," Harris said. The program is geared to the 6-17 age group. "These kids appreciate the effort we are making and are responding in a very positive way." Harris is looking forward to an even more effective and innovative program for the youth in October.

Harris is proud of the change in the reputation and stigmatism associated with public housing and Strickland

Heights, especially. "Public housing was designed to provide adequate housing for low-income families. There is nothing wrong with that concept. Every family is entitled to decent, affordable housing. Somewhere along the way, some people took advantage of a situation and public housing got a bad name. It never should have been that way. We have residents in Pembroke who are honest and full of integrity. The majority of the residents are upstanding citizens and do not deserve the reputation that has become associated with public housing." The 243 units of the Pembroke Housing Authority house between 700-100 people, that is almost 1/3 of the population of the town of Pembroke. "One-third of the population of the town of Pembroke reside in public housing," Harris said. "What is wrong with that? People are entitled to decent, affordable housing, and I will continue to work diligently to assure they have that without the stigmatism that has become associated with it."

While changes have been made in the public housing in Pembroke. There is still much work to do.

The Pembroke Housing Authority is an independent entity in the town of Pembroke. It is governed by a Board of Commissioners who are appointed by Mayor Milton Hunt. The board of commissioners set forth policy and Harris and his staff carry out the policy.

"In order for it to work properly, it has to be a joint effort between the board of commissioners and staff. We have a working combination and the commissioners are dedicated to the integrity of the housing authority," Harris stated. The Board of Commissioners include: William E. Locklear, Chairman; Wesley Revels, Vice-Chairman; Olivia Revels; Dr. Gerald Maynor; and Garth Locklear. The Commissioners serve five year terms.

Harris is a 1984 graduate of West Robeson High School. In 1988 he earned a B.S. degree in business administration from Pembroke State University. For a short period of time he was employed by Edwards and Lewis Accounting in Lumberton. He earned his Master's in Business Administration from Campbell University in 1994. Harris is married to the former Billie Jo Hunt, daughter of Ray and Anita Hunt. They have one daughter, Kelsey who is six years old.

With the vacancy rate averaging 3% over the past two years, one would think Harris had accomplished his goals at Pembroke Housing. Not so. "I really enjoy working in the area of public housing. I think maybe this is my calling." And anytime a man's profession coincides with his beliefs, there is no way to fail.

Indian Heritage Gala planned

The Triangle Native American Society will sponsor the Eleventh Annual Indian Heritage Gala on August 19, 1995. The public is invited to attend. This event will be held on Saturday evening at the North Raleigh Hilton. The Hilton is located off Interstate 40, Raleigh 440 Beltline (Exit Number 10 of the 440 beltline--3415 Wake Forest Road).

The Gala is an opportunity for American Indians and non-Indians to come together to support and raise funds for the Mark Ulmer Native American Scholarship Fund. Each year two scholarships are awarded to American Indian students enrolled in an undergraduate degree program leading to a bachelor's degree from one of the state's colleges and universities.

Individuals, groups, and organizations wishing to participate in this most important program can do so by being a Gala sponsor. Sponsor levels receive Gala tickets and special recognition in the Heritage Gala program. General admission to the Gala is \$25 per person.

The primary goal of the Triangle Native American Society is to increase public awareness of the cultural and economic contributions made by North Carolina's Native American citizens. The Society seeks to sensitize the general public to existing needs of Native Americans with emphasis on education and employment.

For more information, contact Gwen Locklear (919) 779-5936, Darlene Jacobs or Kerry Bird (919) 733-5998, or Lana Dial (919) 467-2424.

Photo, print, and television opportunities will be available.



Lonnie G. Revels honored on 90th Birthday

A birthday celebration honoring Lonnie Gaston Revels of Pembroke on his 90th birthday was held August 5, 1995 at 6 p.m. at Pembroke Middle School. He was the son of the late William (Billy) Revels and Della Hardin Revels of Saddletree, Lumberton area. The honoree was born August 5, 1905.

Family and friends joined in the joyous celebration. The welcome was given by Mrs. Gwen Locklear with the invocation by Rev. Romie Revel. Dinner was enjoyed during a musical tribute by the First Baptist Church Trio, Pembroke Men's Chorus and the Plainsmen.

A tribute to ninety years was given by Mr. William Lonnie Revels of Greensboro. Reflections and tributes were also given by Mr. Levi Chavis, Mrs. Mable Oxendine and Mrs. Mary Martin Deese. The children presented a special tribute entitled "Daddy's Hands" and Spotted Turtle presented an Eagle Feather to the honoree.

Other tributes were by the Revels Clan, Mrs. Mona Bowen and Vickie Ranson. Musical tributes were presented by Rev. and Mrs. Mike Cummings, Blood Brought and Ms. Teresa Oxendine.

Mr. Bob Winfree offered the benediction. See Page 4 for additional photos and tributes. (Photo by Trigg, Mrs. P. Revels)

Workshop on services for elderly held in Pembroke

The Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, along with the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs and the Division of Aging sponsored a workshop on Friday, August 12, at the Baptist Building in Pembroke. The purpose of the workshop was to inform interested persons about the various programs and services available to the elderly.

Thirty-nine percent of the American Indians ages 66-74 live below the poverty level. There are 7,398 American Indians age 60 and over. These statistics make it important for people to know what services are available for the elderly.

Invocation for the workshop was by

Rev. Steve Locklear. The welcome was given by Greg Richardson, executive director of the NC Commission of Indian Affairs.

Participants included: Darlene Jacobs, Director of the Community Services Program for the Commission; Shirley Locklear, with the Low Income Energy Assistance Program of LRDA; Andy Hunt of Section 8 Housing in Robeson County; Marilyn Harris; Food Stamp Division of Robeson County; Madie Rae Locklear, Center Supervisor for Four County Community Services; and Diantha Parnell, Income Maintenance Supervisor, Medical Assistance Section of the Department of Social Services and others.



Greg Richardson, Executive Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs.



Madie Rae Locklear, Center Supervisor, Four County Community Services, Inc.



Marilyn Harris, Food Stamp Division-Robeson County.



Andy Hunt, Section 8 Housing, Robeson County

Public Hearing planned on status of Office of Indian Education

Re: Status of the Office of Indian Education

An Indian Education Issues Forum will be held on Monday, August 14, 1995 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A panel of presenters from across the state will discuss the current status of Indian education in North Carolina. A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, August 15, 1995 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., to gather public information and testimony for submission to Congress. The location is at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Auditorium # 150, 301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27601. NACIE is requesting testimony, either written or oral, concerning the current effort to eliminate the Office of Indian Education in Washington, DC.

Purpose: NACIE, in collaboration with the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs and the State Advisory Council on Indian Education, is holding a regional hearing to gather testimony and oral comment from the people interested in the education of Indian children and adults. Specifically, programs authorized by the Indian Education Act are targeted for elimination in FY 1996 by the U.S. Congress. The Indian Education Act has been in existence since 1972, and in 1994 assisted 410,000 Indian children attending public schools throughout the U.S. An additional 20,000 students and adults were served through adult education, Indian fellowship and teacher training, educational service grants, and gifted and talented education programs. The Indian Education Act was enacted to enhance parental guidance for the education of Indian children attending public schools and to help reverse years of neglect and termination efforts by the Federal Government. Most treaties signed between Indian people and the U.S. Government contained provisions for education in one form or another. NACIE has, and will always, consider the sovereign nation status of Indian people as the basis for continued educational support. This status results from past treaty obligations. Executive Orders, statutes, course of dealings, and in honor of the Federal Government's legal and moral obligations to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

NACIE requests the following information be included when submitting written testimony: 1) Name, Tribal Affiliation (if any), Address, Phone Number, and Job Title. 2) Statement of no more than three pages in length. Written testimony should be mailed to: The North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, 217 W. Jones Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27603. Oral presenters should sign in and keep remarks to five minutes. For more information contact NACIE's North Carolina contact person is Agnes Chavis, Member, NACIE (910) 739-4226. The North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, Greg Richardson, Executive Director, (919) 733-5998, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Olivia Oxendine, education consultant, (919) 715-1735. RSVP: North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs (919) 733-5998.

Dial family reunion set

Dial Family Reunion Saturday August 12, 1995 at 4 p.m. at Hopewell Church. Descendants of George and Mary Dial, parents of Sarah Dial, mother of John Dial. Bring a covered dish. For additional information call (910) 738-1466.

Locklear family reunion planned

Long Swamp/Prospect-The descendants of Zackariah and Matilda Locklear; also the descendants of Preston and Emmaline Locklear will gather for their annual reunion on Saturday, August 12th at Preston Gospel Chapel. Please bring covered dish to be served at noon.

For further information call: 910/739-0058.

Six file for three seats in town elections

Six people have file for election to the Mayor's position and two seats on the Pembroke Town Council. Incumbent Mayor Milton Hunt has filed for re-election. Harry Oxendine, presently serving on the Town Council, has filed for the position of Mayor.

Incumbent Town Councilmen Larry McNeill and Greg Cummings have filed for re-election. Also filing for a seat on the Pembroke Town Council are Mildred Jacobs and Allen G. Dial.

Filing for Tribal Council seats ended

Seven seats on the Lumbee Tribal Council will be decided on September 30. Filing for that election ended on Wednesday, August 8, with eight persons filing. Walter Lowery filed for re-election in District 1. Rhonda Locklear is seeking re-election in District 7. Gary Wayne Locklear has filed for re-election in District 10. Emma Lee Locklear is seeking re-election in District 13. Terry Smith filed for re-election in District 19. Rev. Jimmy Hunt has also filed for that seat. Elton Hunt chose not to seek re-election in District 16. Carvicious Barfield filed in that District. Rev. Sam Wynn filed for re-election in District 4.



Pembroke State University Tuition and Fees lowest in UNC system

Pembroke State University has always had the reputation of having the lowest tuition of any university in the University of North Carolina system.

Although the North Carolina General Assembly raised the tuition at Pembroke State by approximately 2.2 percent for this upcoming academic year, it still remains one of the least expensive of all sixteen universities in the system.

The cost of in-state tuition will be \$386 per semester for full-time students. The cost of out-of-state tuition will be \$3,606 per semester.

Student fees at Pembroke State will increase from \$222 per semester to \$276.50. This is an increase of approximately 2.05 percent.

The total cost for a full-time student in Fall 1995 will be \$662.50 in-state and \$3,882.50 out-of-state.

Parking fees will be: Commuter Student (day) \$20 and (night) \$10; resident \$24; faculty/staff \$27; faculty/staff reserve \$43.

Pembroke State University continues to offer a high quality education to students at a low cost.