

# Editorial and Opinion Page

## Letters to the Editor

### Local Artist Unhappy With Requirements for Unity Conference Art Contest

To the Editor, All Native American Artists and the United Tribes of North Carolina Board

About four years ago I went to sculpture only show in Lenoir, NC to show some of my art work. While I was there I met a fine Cherokee artist from the mountains of North Carolina. I thought his work was great, so I asked if he had ever shown his work at the Unity Conference. He stated that he had not. I then suggested that he should strongly consider entering the show the following year. We then started talking about various galleries in the state. I happened to mention the Greensboro Native American Art Gallery. With the mention of this gallery his tone of voice changed and I could see the frustration in his eyes. He stated that he had shown his work there and asked if I had ever shown there. I said no, but that I had heard good things about it. He went on to tell me about how he had sold a piece of art work there and how hard it was to get paid from the sell. He warned me about all the calls it would take to get my money, if I ever sold a piece there.

Well, I didn't take the warning seriously. It wasn't long afterwards that my work was shown at the Greensboro Gallery. I sold one piece of art there. It wasn't an expensive piece, but that is not the point. The point is, as artists we shouldn't have to beg to get paid for our work.

The director of the gallery never did send me my money. Fortunately,

I knew her mother who eventually sent the money to me. I said all that to say this. Last year I entered my favorite art show. It was the Unity conference Show (which I would title "Our Winters Work" show). Miss Wanda Locklear was kind enough to take my work to the show for me. It was aware of the fact that as an option, our work would travel to Greensboro after the Unity Conference, if we wanted it to. I was not aware that it has now become a requirement to enter the Unity Conference Show. If I would have known that last year, I never would have entered last year's show. I also know that the Cherokee sculptor, who when given these new requirements for the Unity Conference Show, would not have entered either. When I went to pick up my art work from the Conference Show last year, I was told that if I didn't let my work travel to Greensboro that I would not be allowed to enter this year's show.

So there you have it! I've been banned from the show. As an optimist however, I see it as a personal boycott because after having read the requirements in black and white in the Carolina Indian Voice, I wouldn't have entered anyway.

Thanks for hearing me out.

I am not trying to start a revolt, but I think it is time we as artists stop allowing ourselves to be taken advantage of.

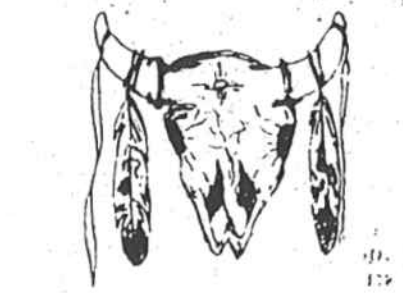
Signed by a Disgusted Artist,  
D. Michael Wilkins

### LRDA Head Start Accepting Applications

Lumbee Regional Development Association/Head Start Program is now accepting applications for children ages 3-5 from low-income families and children with special needs. Applications may be picked up between the hours of 7:30 a.m.-3:30 P.M. at the following locations: Fairgrove Head Start-628-9570, across from Green Grove Elementary School; Rennett Head Start, 843-2562, on Rennett road; Allenton Head Start, 618-0032, located on Hwy 211, Bladenboro Road.

Applications are also available at the Head Start office in Pembroke at Revels Complex. If any additional information is needed please call 910-521-8602 and ask for Amanda Hunt.

### Say You Read It In The Carolina Indian Voice.



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## Eye Witness to History

by Dexter Brooks, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge

One of the most exciting times in my life was when I had the privilege of administering the Oath of Office to Jo Ann Locklear, Clerk of Superior Court. I performed this ceremony on July 1, 1994. Ms. Locklear was elected Clerk of Court in May, 1994 and there was no Republican opposition. Ms. Dixie Barrington, her predecessor, chose not to seek re-election and retired in June, 1994. Ms. Locklear official became the first Native American elected to the county wide position of Clerk of Superior Court. It was truly an historic event. Following is the remarks I made on this occasion:

At this time I feel that it would be appropriate to make some remarks given the historic event in which we are involved. It is not every day that we install a new Clerk of Court for Robeson County. People who hold this particular office do so for extended periods of time and so it is a rarity to swear in a new Clerk of Court.

The lady that we are about to install is Mrs. Jo Ann Locklear. Before doing so I am going to set the stage from a historical perspective. Her tenure with the Clerk's office began on December the 5th of 1966. After the election of 1966, the new Clerk of Court, Mr. Ben G. Floyd, Jr., fulfilled a campaign promise to his supporters by hiring Mrs. Locklear as the first non-white employee of the Clerk's office. Mrs. Locklear is a very confident Christian lady. She went about her duties over the next several years with distinction so that she rose through the hierarchy to become an Assistant Clerk of Court in charge of estates and special proceedings. This is one of the most important positions as she was in charge not only of the estates but also a host of special proceedings, including land divisions and adoptions. In that role she actually served as a judge convening her own court making judicial decisions in the matters under her authority.

Although I knew of Jo Ann as a student at Pembroke High School we became much better acquainted after I became an attorney. During the twelve years that I practiced law, before I became a Superior Court Judge, I had the pleasure of appearing before Mrs. Locklear in her court on numerous occasions. On each of these occasions you could always count on these two things: first, that Jo Ann was well-prepared for the hearing, having read the file and being familiar with the facts of the case as well as anyone who appeared before her, including the attorneys; and secondly, she was well-prepared on the law. You could always count on Jo Ann to have read the applicable statutes and delved into the case law so that she was in a position to talk about the legal niceties of the statute and the technical, procedural aspects of the case before her. In my appearances before her I always found her to be confident, courteous and fair to be persons who appeared before her--be they Democrat or Republican, be they

rich or poor, or be they native American, African American or European American. I commend her. She is well-prepared to assume the duties of a her new office. As I look about the courtroom I see a number of attorneys. I tell these attorneys that during the course of the next twelve to twenty years, or however long Jo Ann chooses to be Clerk of Court, you are going to be appearing in her court just as I did in days past. I admonish you to be prepared when you go into her courtroom. Win your case below because I assure you that Mrs. Locklear's rulings will not be reversed on appeal--regardless of which judge just happens to be occupying this seat. In the past, any time I saw Jo Ann Locklear's signature on an order I knew that everything was in proper form, that all the (i)'s had been dotted and all the (t)'s had been crossed, that everyone had had a fair hearing, and that she had made the best decision that anyone could have made under the circumstances presented to her. Based on my experience, I assure you that as a judge when I see one of Jo Ann's orders, I shall have no problem affixing my signature in order to confirm or affirm any such order.

Mrs. Locklear went about her duties first as a deputy clerk and then as an assistant clerk with distinction so that upon the retirement of our able former Clerk, Mrs. Dixie Barrington, Mrs. Locklear was urged by many to offer her services for the position of Clerk of Court. In the primary election there were a number of well-qualified candidates for the position, including Frederia Stephens with whom I have had a very pleasant association over the years. Mrs. Stephens has served with distinction as a district court reporter for more years than I have practiced as an attorney. But, in the primary election the voters of Robeson County chose to nominate Mrs. Locklear as the Democratic candidate for the position of the Clerk of the Robeson County Superior Court. Having won the primary Mrs. Locklear is now the Democratic candidate in the general

election. However, with the early retirement of our former Clerk, Mrs. Dixie Barrington, our Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, the Honorable Joe Freeman Britt, saw fit to appoint Mrs. Locklear to the vacancy so created. This is the seat we are filling today. Mrs. Locklear will serve the remainder of the term of Mrs. Barrington through the first of December at which time the newly-elected Clark will be installed. It is my understanding that Mrs. Locklear is unopposed in the fall election.

The election of Mrs. Locklear is an historic event in Robeson County because it is the first time that a Native American or a non-white has been elected to a county-wide office. Furthermore, she did so in impressive fashion in that she polled substantial votes from all three racial groups. This impressive victory is a tribute to the fairness and the dili-

gence with which Mrs. Locklear has performed her duties over the past twenty-eight years. It heralds the beginning of a new era in our county where people--regardless of their race--can run for office, and if they have paid their dues, as we like to say in the system, and if they have been fair to people of all races and all socioeconomic backgrounds, and if they have gone about their duties in a quietly efficient manner as Mrs. Locklear, they can expect to be treated fairly by the voters of Robeson County--European American, African American or Native American. When I say that, I am reminded of a famous speech of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King spoke of having a dream of a society when the content of a person's character would be more important than

the color of their skin. With a premonition of his own death--he realized that he would not survive the struggle that he was involved in--he said that his life did not matter because he had gone up upon the mountain, and he had looked down, and he had seen the promised land. The promised land that he described, Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe is Robeson County during the 21st century. What we are building in this county is a society where racial and socioeconomic differences are not going to have the over riding importance that they have had in the past. A society where anyone can aspire to any office or any position in this county. If you are competent, and if you are courteous and fair to all of the people of Robeson County, you can be successful in your aspirations.

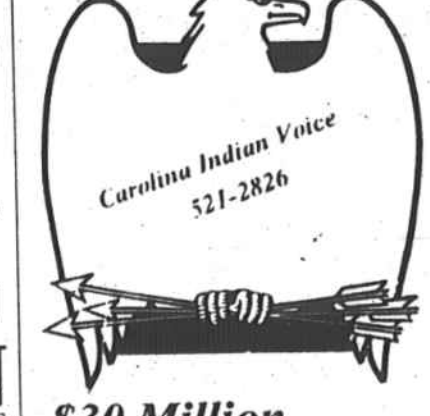
I remember Mrs. Locklear once describing herself as a little girl who grew up off the chicken foot road in Back Swamp Township in Robeson County. Now, that little Native American girl who grew up in those modest circumstances is now about to assume one of the most important offices in the county. I say to the group here, and I say to the entire population of Robeson County, that you can be successful whether at the time of your birth you be rich or poor, or black, white or Indian. The opportunity is there. You can rise as far as your ability will take you, unfettered by the shackles of discrimination. We should thank trail-blazers like Mrs. Locklear who participated in the history-making events that brought about these changes.

We live in a world of change. Who would have thought only five years ago that in the country of South Africa there would be a democratic election wherein a native African would be elected as president, and that the black African who was elected had spent over twenty years in prison simply because he espoused the principle that all people are created equal and that every person's vote should count the same as any other person's vote? Who would have thought that such could have occurred in South Africa as recent as five years ago? Nelson Mandella is now a figure of historic proportions. The quality I like best about him is that while some people are broken by events other people are shaped by these events. I am reminded of the Book of Job in the Bible. I am reminded of how the Lord takes people and puts them through trials and tribulations, not to punish them but

to temper their humanity and to temper their Christianity. Nelson Mandella went through that process and he emerged as a sterling example of Christian charity because today he espouses not revenge but brotherhood. He urges that all South Africans of whatever color and whatever socioeconomic background join together hand-in-hand to cause the country to progress.

We have seen much change in Robeson County in the last five years. For example, who would have thought that they would see an African American as Chairman of the Board of Education, as Chairman of the Board of Elections, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Robeson Community College, as Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission, and an African American female as the Executive Director of the County Housing Authority, or a Native American as Chairman of the County Commissioners and as Superintendent of the County Schools? Much change has occurred in this county the last five years. Much more change is going to occur in the next five years. All of us--regardless of who we are or where we come from--have an obligation to make that change progressive. To see that by reason of that change Robeson County becomes a better place for all of us--regardless where we come from or what racial group we just happen to have been born in. Robeson County has people with much talent. The county will progress when we begin to utilize the talents of all of our citizens so that a person--whether they be Black, Indian or white--growing up on the chicken foot road in Robeson County can aspire to any office that their abilities qualify them to hold. To me this is the significance of Mrs. Locklear's victory in this past primary. This is the significance of the life of Jo Ann Locklear. She is a devout Christian. I say Jo Ann Locklear is a Christian because to me that label is much more important than the fact that she happens to have been born Native American or the fact that she happens to have been born in modest circumstances off the Chicken Foot Road in back Swamp Township in Robeson County. Let us collectively work toward the ideas that were espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Let us look to people such as Nelson Mandella for an example of how change can occur so that all benefit and the county progresses by reason of the change.

Now, with your having allowed me to make those remarks where I have tried to set to the tone of this occasion, at this time I am going to recognize Mr. Grady Hunt who is going to present Mrs. Locklear to the court and to this assembly of her constituents.



**\$30 Million Available for Youth Build Program**

by John "Tall Bird" Marshall HUD has announced that \$30 million is available in Fiscal Year 1997's funds for the "Youthbuild Program."

Eligible applicants are American Indian Tribes, Local Housing Authorities, Private or Public Non-Profit Agencies, and State or Local Units of General Government.

The "Youthbuild Program" is designed to help economically disadvantaged, young adults with opportunities such as: employment skills, on-site construction work experience, furtherance of education, and a means to achieve self-sufficiency through the application of learned leadership skills in the community.

Date of availability for applications are yet to be announced. Applications will be accepted at the Processing and Control Unit, Office of Community Planning and Development, HUD, 451 7th Street, South West, Room Number 7255, Washington, DC 20410.

Application materials will be available through the "Internet" at Gopher: II.COMCON.ORG:75/11 or from Community Connections, 1-800-998-9999.

## ALONG the ROBESON TRAIL

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

In last week's segment, we looked through the perspective of Arthur McDonald (Oglala Sioux) at two issues concerning Indian education. McDonald believes that the national drop-out rate for Native American college students is high because of the clash of cultural values which occurs when students leave their traditional communities and go away to school on "the white man's road (Native Heritage: Personal Accounts by American Indians 1790 to the Present, edited by Arlene Hirschfelder, page 17)." McDonald also believes that many Native American students either never go to college, quickly drop out of college or have difficulty adjusting once they get back home because of an attitude widely held in traditional Indian communities -- the attitude that education represents a rejection of "the old traditional ways (ibid., page 17)."

McDonald's view of Indians and education is in contrast to the view of some other Native Americans, including Shoshone-Bannock poet Ed Edmo. Edmo believes that there are positive aspects to both the old and new ways:

"On one hand, the family will try to hold onto cultural values that have been handed down. On the other hand some of those values have changed.... It used to be that when a family saw visitors approaching, the family would automatically get up and begin cooking a full meal for the visitors.

The visitors were then expected to sit and eat; if the family did not cook...then the visitor would be offended. Also, if the visitors refused to eat, then the family...would be offended.

"Nowadays, the family will just ask the visitors, 'Have you eaten yet?' ...Some traditions have changed to suit modern times....

"The child is living in two worlds. Some Indians say that we can take the best of both worlds for ourselves. Maybe the child will be taught how to Indian dance at home and do school work to the best of their ability. Many of the leaders stress to the children the importance of getting an education (meaning a formal education) because the old people know that education offers a person more choices for employment.... (ibid., page 21)."

This difference of opinion between Edmo and McDonald illustrates an important fact. It is a fact which no doubt will seem obvious to some people, but which has apparently been overlooked by many others. The illustrated fact is that not all Native Americans see things the same way. Despite the truth of this (perhaps too obvious) statement, we still hear people speaking of "the Native American perspective" as though they thought there were only one worldview shared by all Indians. A researcher comes to town looking for "the Native American perspective" on federal recognition. A reporter asks an Indian leader for "the Native

American perspective" on public school curricula. A Native American claims to speak with the voice of all his fellow Native Americans. Meanwhile, the fact remains that not all Native Americans see things the same way.

This fact is no more or less true of Native Americans than it is of any other ethnic group. No one Asian can truly speak for all Asians. No single European knows what all the Europeans think. Not even all Christians see everything the same way. This is human nature -- the researchers and reporters and leaders and everyone else might as well get used to it.

The difference of opinion between Edmo and McDonald also demonstrates the value of Arlene Hirschfelder's book (Native Heritage: Personal Accounts by American Indians 1790 to the Present). Because it contains the words of so many Native Americans -- from diverse tribal backgrounds and different times and places -- it allows us to glimpse the true diversity of Native America. The book provides an essential clue for anyone who would study, speak about or speak for Native Americans: there is a lot of homework to be done.

For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in historic Old Main Building, on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke.