



## Eye Witness to History

by Dexter Brooks,  
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge

When I was sworn in as Senior Resident Superior Court Judge on January 2, 1997, I became the first non-European to ever hold that position. I am humbled by the thought that I am a part of the history of our great county. Ironically, when I became Senior Resident Judge, I replaced the infamous Joe Freeman Britt in that position. Many of my friends have commented on the irony of that.

Also of historical significance at my swearing in was the fact that the oath of office was administered to me by the Honorable Burley Mitchell, Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. To my knowledge, it was the first time that the Chief Justice of that prestigious court had administered the oath of office to the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge in our District.

I was honored also on this occasion to be introduced to the court by possibly my best friend and former law partner, Attorney Arnold Locklear of the Pembroke Law Firm, Locklear, Jacobs and Hunt.

On the same day of my swearing in, funeral services were held for my friend, Dr. Joy J. Johnson of Fairmont. We had been friends for many years and I was saddened by his absence on this occasion.

Following are the remarks made by the Chief Justice, the comments by Rev. John Campbell, Director of the Robeson County Human Relations Commission who gave the invocation:

Thank you very much. It is a real privilege and honor to be with you today. As you've heard in the opening, I am Chief Justice Burley Mitchell, the Chief Justice of North Carolina. And it is my high privilege and honor to be here today for this ceremony and administer the oath of office to my friend, Dexter Brooks, as Senior Resident Superior Court Judge for this district.

You all know him well. He is an exceptional man. We have a lot in common. We both graduated from North Carolina State University which is not too common among judges. So Dexter I can say is one of the few of our judges who really has a superb education. We're proud of him. And after going through engineering school at North Carolina State, of course law school at Carolina was a breeze for him and he's been doing well ever since.

He's a Vietnam veteran. We share that and many other points in our background. So it is a particular privilege for me to be down here on this historic occasion.

Judge Brooks will become the first

Native American ever to serve in this state as a Senior Resident Superior Court Judge. And for that reason, if no other, it is a very single honor for me and a high point in my public career to be here to be a part of this ceremony.

I'm not going to drag on forever. You are not here to see me, but to see and be with and honor our friend, Dexter Brooks.

I am going to ask the reverend John Campbell, Executive Director of the Robeson County Human Relations Commission to give our invocation. Just a moment, Reverend, but let me mention this while I'm here.

Robeson County has always been a... meant a great deal to me. Back in the early years of my political career I used to come down here and be led around by some of the folks who told me what to do like John Willie Oxendine and some of those folks. I started our coming down here to--years ago to Jaycee meetings at Pembroke Jaycees and thoroughly enjoyed that. So it is a real pleasure for me to be back here and see so many personal friends long standing out here in this courtroom today.

I'm not going to get started on trying to recognize you all. But one of my dear friends from this county, which has caused me to launch into this has passed away. It was a friend of you all's, Dr. Joy Johnson, a well-known and respected leader from this community. And those of you who are going to that funeral today, I would appreciate it if you would convey to the Killians and the rest of the family my regrets that I have to get back to Raleigh to meet with the Senate on the court's budget for the state court system and I will not be able to be there, but I will certainly--my thoughts and prayers will be with Reverend Johnson and his family.

And now if I could ask you, Reverend Campbell, to give our invocation.

Reverend Campbell: Thank you, Judge Mitchell. Here within the last few days I've had occasion to revisit what Dr. Johnson wrote some years ago entitled from "Poverty to Power." And I want to just share a couple of quotes excerpted from that book that I think is so appropriate, so appropriate at this historic hour to preface my prayer. He writes: "Our experiences may be different, our skin color different, our religions different and our bank accounts may even be different, but as humans we have a basic common, divine connection. No man, no community, no race is an island unto itself. We can't fight the challenges of our day descending to the level of

the problems around us. We must rise above racism until it does Rise about intolerance until it dies. Rise about sexism until it dies. Rise about disunity and discrimination until they die. In all we do we must take the high road rather than the low road until the day come when we all learn what Martin Luther King, Jr. said was true. We must learn to live together as brothers and sister or we will surely perish as fools."

Even now he speaks to us on this late occasion. Let us pray.

God of our weary eyes, God of our silent tears, thou who has brought us thus far along the way, thou who has by thy might led us into the marvelous light, keep us forever in the path we pray. And God we pray a special blessing upon this thy servant who shall take a special oath to serve you in this county as he always has. But to continue that service may he never become misguided on the path to truly abundant living as he listens to the directions that come from all of those whose culture or color or class may be unlike his own.

May this servant use the precious hours you give him to create community. May he continue to use his lamp to light the way to brotherhood and sisterhood and create the environment in which crime some day will become extinct and law enforcement officials will be singing of guides instead of misdeeds.

Bless him now and bless all of us. Be thou our chief in light and life. Be his present help and help him be steadfast and move and will always abound in the work of the of the Lord. We pray in the name of our lord and Savior Jesus Christ for this great county and for this great people. Amen.

Next week we will continue with my introduction by Attorney Arnold Locklear and my remarks on that historic occasion.

**PEOPLE ARE SWEET ON THE FRESH TASTE OF HONEYBEE.**



**NOW IN PLASTIC CANS.**



## Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

### LENT

This is the special season of Lent, leading up to Jesus' arrest, persecution, crucifixion, and finally his glorious Resurrection! At both West Lumberton's Branch Street and Pembroke's First UMC, I've been hearing thought provoking sermons I would like to share. Also I would like to just concentrate on my grandson, Byron. But every day I learn of some new world or national problem I feel SOMEONE needs to address in a different way from what others are now doing.

### A DECADE

It's been a decade since I discovered that many peace and justice groups have been secretly used to promote communism in this country. Later that year (1987) I read that a communist cell had even been set up in an organization related to my Methodist denomination before I was born.

Since then I have made a VERY serious attempt to research the impact of communism upon our country and the rest of the world over the past 80 years.

### DESPERATION

Maybe desperation is a good term for what we see happening all around us these days.

Personally, I'm still in a state of shock over on going campaign finance revelations.

In 1956, on my way back from my yearly visit to my Montana family (shortly before moving from Caswell to Robeson County) I stopped in Washington to visit Maxine, my room mate while at Scarritt College in Tennessee. Besides meeting her medical student husband and enjoying their cute baby boy I took a tour of the Capitol and the White House.

In all my mental images of our "First Family's" dwelling, I have never pictured anyone other than family members, close friends, or a staff member spending the night in the Lincoln (or any other) bedroom there!

Of course, that does NOT mean it has never been done before. I suppose I'm just naive. Now I'm curious to know how many past presidents have carried out the same kind of practice.

Apparently there's no law against it. And president Clinton's defenders have said it was NOT a matter of "renting out" the room by REQUIRING a campaign contribution.

ONE thing seems to come through loud and clear. Members of the Clinton administration were "running scared." They were so afraid of losing the election that they were desperate.

Back in 1972, according to an article in the November 28 issue of the Fayetteville Observer Times, Richard Nixon and his aides were also scared of losing their bid for a

second term. In their desperation they talked about resorting to a different king of questionable strategy.

Whether or not any of these men had racist feelings toward Black people, tapes reveal that they considered "using" a Black (as so many whites have done for various reasons in the past) to assure that they could win. There was talk of secretly paying a Black candidate to run, as an independent, just to drain off democratic votes. (According to the AP article, nothing was actually done to carry out that idea.)

In fact, it seems that Nixon and his staff discussed a lot of different ideas from time to time. Of course the most damaging one they actually carried out was the Watergate break-in and the later cover-up, which led to Richard Nixon's impeachment and his replacement as President by Vice President Gerald Ford.

### LOVING PEOPLE: CONDEMNING SIN

Perhaps Lent is a good time to reflect on Jesus' life while He lived here in this world.

I've decided that He was consistent in both LOVING every person unconditionally, and CONDEMNING sin wherever he saw it.

One of the best examples is the woman caught in the act of adultery who was about to be stoned (killed with stones) by religious scribes and Pharisees as reported in the eighth chapter of John's gospel. These men reminded Jesus of the commandment (in Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22) to put adulterers to death.

Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her."

The men left, one at a time. Then Jesus said to the woman, "Hath no man condemned thee?" She answered, "No man, Lord."

Here are Jesus' timeless words to a woman caught in the very act of sinning, whose life was on the line: "Neither do I condemn thee: GO, and SIN NO MORE."

**Carolina Indian Voice** is published every Thursday by First American Publications  
304 Normal St. - College Plaza  
Post Office Box 1075  
Pembroke, North Carolina 28372  
Phone (919) 521-2826  
Fax (919) 521-1975  
Connee Brayboy, Editor  
Subscriptions  
One year in NC, \$20.00  
Out of state, \$25.00  
Second Class Postage Paid at Pembroke, NC



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