

In Loving Memory of Herbert Locklear

Dear Editor
Last week I buried my father, Herbert Locklear, a native of Fairmont and a resident of Baltimore, Maryland for the last 40 years. A former official in Baltimore's Department of Social Services and the founder and first director of the Baltimore American Indian Center. On several occasions he wrote an article called The Baltimore Experience for the CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE. On April 18th, he died a senseless and violent death in his Lumberton Ramada Inn Limited motel room at the hands of two accused local men.

This tragedy not only effected our family but the impact was felt by hundreds of people he helped both in Baltimore and his native land, North Carolina. Such was the impact, that the Honorable O'Malley, Mayor of the City of Baltimore eulogized his memory during the funeral last Monday. Hundreds packed our church, which my father was a trustee, to pay their last respects. It was a funeral he would have been proud of, but his most moving moment was when his grandson, Donavin Bentley, spoke the words below. His profound words not only rang true for Herbert Locklear, but they are a reminder for all of us to embrace our love ones and hold them dear because life can be short.

Dedication To My Grandfather by: Donavin Bentley

I'm still waiting to wake up from this nightmare, but unfortunately, this is reality. A great poet named Robert Frost once said, "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life. It goes on." During this terrible time, we must look for a

way to move on with our lives, and I know it will not be easy. Ladies and gentlemen, friends and family, we shouldn't even be here today. Some of us should be at work, some in school, and some of us should be home relaxing just enjoying the day. However, due to three immature, savage young men, we're forced to gather here today to pay our final respects to my grandfather, Herbert Locklear. I could stand here and tell all of you how much anger is in my heart right now. Or, I could examine this magnificent crowd and look into each individual's eyes, and observe all the anger contained deep within each of you, but where does that leave us? We're not here today to focus on the frustration and anger that has consumed all of us since the news of my grandfather's death. Today, I want to praise my grandfather, a man whose life was undoubtedly cut short due to a senseless act of violence.

Whether you knew my grandfather for forty years or forty minutes, he had this impeccable gift to make a strong impression, so, as you could never forget him. To call him a kind man wouldn't even scratch the surface. An endless amount of stories about his acts of kindness are waiting to be told by the people in this church. Stories that will make us smile and stories that will make us laugh are needed right now. The most useless day is the day in which we have not laughed, so I need everybody even on this sorrowful day to take at least a minute to laugh and smile. For a couple of moments, you'll realize how good it feels to escape the pain.

A couple of days ago, I found myself thinking about all the events my grandfather will miss in the up-

coming months and years. Eventually, I realized I had to stop tormenting myself about the future. I hope anyone who was experiencing the same thoughts as I have come to the same conclusion. Let's not focus on the high school and college graduations he'll miss, or the retirement parties and weddings he can't attend, but rather let's redirect our focus on reflecting on the past. We all have unique and shared images of my grandfather that we can keep in our minds. I know I do. I can remember spending the night at my grandfather's house and waking up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to go fishing with my granddad. He always made me feel as though I was the best fisherman on the boat even if I was only catching the smallest fish. I remember going to my grandfather's house as a kid and the very first thing you did was walk in and give granddad a hug and a kiss. Well, as I was hugging him, he would start tickling me and wouldn't stop. I would be laughing so hard, I would be crying and I know a couple of times, I came close to peeing in my pants, but that's a whole different story for another time. I simply remember how proud he was of everyone in my family. He was always telling people how pretty we are, handsome we are, smart we are and so on. Sure, it was embarrassing at times, but my family and I would give anything to hear him compliment us one more time.

If there is one thing, one lesson I want embedded in your minds, it's please don't take your friends and family for granted. When they leave for work, school, or just to go down the street to get some groceries, there aren't any guarantees they'll come

back. Don't hesitate to tell somebody "I love you." Don't hesitate to wrap your arms around somebody and give them a kiss. You never know if that will be the last time you see them. Let people know how proud you are of them, or how happy it makes you feel to call them friend or family. The last thing you should do is assume a person knows how you feel...never assume.

To my grandmother and family, we have lost one and there's a huge void in our hearts. There will be times when you feel weak and depressed, but I say to you, look all around this church and realize how much support is on your side. You'll never be without a shoulder to cry on.

To finish, I want to leave you with a Dakota Indian chant of defiance. "Over the earth I come, Over the earth I come, A soldier I come, Over the earth I am a ghost." My grandfather was a soldier who fought for what is right in the community and for his people. He will be truly missed.....I LOVE YOU GRANDDAD. WE ALL LOVE YOU.

May justice be swift and severe for those who are found guilty. Also, I pray for a world free from senseless acts of crime, so that no other family has to endure the pain my father's death has brought to our family and community.

The Family of Herbert Locklear expresses words of gratitude and thanks to all of those for their acts of kindness and expressions of support during this most difficult time of bereavement. May God's blessings be with you always.

Kirby Locklear
Fort Walton Beach, FL

Report to the People from Rep. Ron Sutton, House District 85,

Money will be the major topic when lawmakers return to Raleigh this week for the 2000 session of the General Assembly.

The state budget is always the biggest single issue for the Legislature. It looms even larger in even-year, "short" sessions, which were designed to fine-tune the two-year budget.

The rules make it difficult for lawmakers to debate any bills not related to taxes, fees and the budget. With few exceptions, non-monetary bills can be considered only if they passed one chamber during the regular session or were recommended by a study commission. Most study commissions save their major recommendations for odd-year sessions.

Local bills--those that apply to a city or county--can be introduced only if every member of the local delegation supports them.

Introducing a bill that does not fit within the narrow rules requires a two-thirds vote--a high hurdle for any measure that is remotely controversial.

Despite the restrictions, short sessions have not always been short. In 1998, lawmakers stayed in town until almost Halloween. Few, if any, legislators want to repeat that experience.

As they prepare for the 2000 session, leaders of the House and Senate are making it clear that they want a truly short "short" session. Next year, not the 2000 session, will be the time for the General Assembly to take up sweeping initiatives and controversial legislation.

Legislators will have their hands full this year tweaking the budget to pay for Hurricane Floyd, court settlements, tax cuts and big-ticket initiatives launched over the past several years.

The General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division projects a revenue shortfall of more than \$450 million for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, and closing that gap will be difficult.

"Due to the limited funds availability and the vast need for those funds statewide, the Short Session will probably not produce many local dollars for local projects," said Representative Ron Sutton.

Big-ticket items on the budget agenda for this year include the final phase of a four-year plan to raise teacher pay to the national average (\$260 million), expansion of Smart Start (at least \$40 million), a 3 percent pay raise for state employees (\$153 million) and additional funding for health insurance for state employees (\$147 million).

Lawmakers also must appropriate \$240 million as part of the settlement of a lawsuit filed by those who paid intangibles taxes without protesting.

In another money matter, the General Assembly is expected to approve a bond issue presently in the three billion-dollar range for critical construction needs at the state's universities and community colleges.

The House and Senate passed different bond bills last year, and could not reach agreement on the size of the bond issue and a referendum. A majority of the House wanted to put

the proposed bonds before the voters.

"The university and community college systems are in dire need of funds to move them forward and maintain their outstanding stature in the nation and we are ready to provide the opportunity for the voters to express their opinion on the issue. I strongly believe a referendum on a bonds funding package will be before the people soon. I wholeheartedly support the referendum concept as I did last year when we were unable to get it passed," said Representative Sutton.

The governor will present his budget recommendations to the General Assembly after the session begins.

One money issue that was prominently discussed in the governor's race--a lottery--does not appear likely to come up during the short session.

House and Senate leaders have said they would be surprised if lawmakers consider the controversial issue this year. The lottery issue will probably surface early in 2001.

"I am a member of the House Special Lottery Committee that can meet during and after the Short Session to work out a proposal for next year. We will continue our work and everyone will have a chance to get their views before our committee," Sutton said.

Lawmakers could begin implementing some of the changes to the state's mental health programs recommended by the state auditor, who proposed a major overhaul of the state's \$1.2 billion system. A recommendation to close Dorothea Dix

Hospital in Raleigh drew much of the attention, but the auditor also called for sweeping changes that would shift management responsibility and mental health services to the local level.

Bills recommended by study commissions include several proposals to provide more protections for those enrolled in managed-care health plans. The measures would allow members to sue their HMO, require the state Department of Insurance to oversee independent committees of doctors set up by HMOs to review consumer appeals, and make HMOs pay claims quickly.

Legislators also could dust off some of the measures that passed one chamber last year. But the difficulty in crafting a balanced budget, and memories of the last "short" session dragging on until Halloween, will likely keep the session focused on the budget. There is also a need for many members to get back to their home districts to campaign for fall elections.

Purnell Swett High News

Purnell Swett High School had its annual blood drive April 5th, directed by Mrs. Patty Ledwell.

The Student Council of Purnell Swett High School, sponsored its annual elderly dinner February 29.

The Purnell Swett Ram Battalion held its 28th Annual Military Ball, Saturday March 18th at the Pembroke Jaycee Hut. Tiffany Locklear was crowned Ram Battalion queen, and Shane Tyner was crowned king.

This has been a great year for Purnell Swett HOSA. The year started with an increase in membership of 75% to 40 members. In October the officers attended a leadership conference. The officers learned how to lead effectively. Students participated in prepared speaking, Hosa Bowl, extemporaneous speaking, and job seeking skills at Clinton High School. In March, Hosa members attended the State Hosa Convention in Greensboro N.C.

Deidra Kelly Chavis, Marcus Locklear, Kim Oxendine, and Nicole Ivey have all served as a governor's pages at the statehouse in Raleigh. They ran errands, answered phones, delivered mail, and faxed information. They visited the house floor and watched sessions, and bills being voted on. They also visited the governor's mansion and met the governor. The program was sponsored by Indian Education and Mr. Robert Brayboy.

Amy Le'Ana Dial, a sophomore at Purnell Swett High School, has been named Kodak Young Leader under the National Program sponsored by Eastman Kodak Company.

The JROTC Raider Challenge competition was held at Purnell Swett High School on Saturday, March 25. It is a physically and mentally demanding competition that consists of a PT challenge, first aid skills compe-

dition, 2 - kilometer liter carry 1 rope bridge building crossing competition, and a 5 - kilometer speed road march. This year's top team went to Purnell Swett. Second and third place went to South Robeson and Saint Pauls High School respectively. Top female PT honors went to Cadet Paula K. Lowery Purnell Swett High School, who scored 292 out of 300 possible points. Cadet Shane Alton Tyner, Purnell Swett High School and Cadet Dwight Moran Saint Pauls had perfect scores of 300.

April 20th dance students participated in the dance showcase concert at the Givens Performing Arts Auditorium.

The Rams participated in Prom Promise April 5 as students signed a promise not to drink and drive. Students also participated in a drama depicting students drinking and driving which resulted in a car accident where a friend was killed.

The Home and Garden show was held April 20 as various groups and clubs sold crafts and items. Students participated in games.

Teachers and students have integrated themes and projects throughout the school which included: art, vocation, and exceptional children designing quarter dollars for each state, math, vocation Exceptional Children, and English classes learning about the life of Thomas Jefferson and building a green house similar to Jefferson's greenhouse and math, guidance and business classes learned how to write checks, balance checks, and take care of business matters.

Tyson Meadors was selected as Sophomore Student of Excellence, by the Chamber of Commerce.

Gertie Mariani's students participated in the Biotechnology Institute sponsored by UNC-Pembroke.

Ronda "Ronnie" McNeill still in critical condition but ...

Brother Ronnie McNeill and I grew up spiritually together at Deep Branch Baptist Church. He was already there when I joined the church and was saved under the preaching of his father, Rev. Chesley McNeill, in 1978.

I am also a spiritual groupie of the Singing McNeill Family, which includes his sisters, Virginia and Carolyn, and brothers Johnny and Jimmy. But Ronnie was the front man, the one who did most of the talking and introduced the group at singings and church services. Another brother, Rev. Jerry McNeill, is pastor of Riverside Independent Baptist Church where the McNeills worship. The McNeill Family also operate a day care center and Riverside Christian Academy on Highway 74 near Lumberton.

In spite of all that has happened, Ronnie McNeill, as I see it, is a man of God and called to do a mighty work in the name of Jesus.

He was shot in the stomach Friday morning (April 28) inside his home in Jamestown Mobile Home Park by an unknown assailant and remains in critical condition at Southeastern Regional Medical Center. But prayer can change things dramatically. The only thing left to do is to pray fervently that God's will be done. No arrests have been made in the case.

Prayer indeed makes the difference. Pray for Brother Ronnie. Like all of us, he really needs prayer. by Bruce Barton

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The Trouble With Lumbee Houses

A bill was passed in '98 that provided Lumbee houses from HUD. But it, as all good things became another stick in the mud

To many it seemed a dream come true To others somewhat ironic and funny Could it be possible we would finally see some of that infamous "Indian money"

Then came the fussin' and bickerin' As they say we Indians do Finally when all the hollerin' stopped We had not just one housing plan, but two

Lo and behold the cry came down from ol' Capitol Hill If you Injuns don't come to some compromise you're gonna blow a cool 50 MIL

So off to the courthouse we go Lord, to the point we're willing to beg Help Tribal Council--Help LRDA We want big bucks, not a big GOOSE EGG

So with the help of Rep. Ronnie there peeks a ray of sun To our surprise they at least agree For two committees of 4+1

So now we wait on pins and needles just a hopin' and a prayin' That when all is said and done in ther' Lumbee houses we'll be a stayin'

Be not deceived Tribal Council and LRDA Lums don't play that game of silent mouses Woe to you who throw your big stones While nestled in your tidy glass houses

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