

WILSON LIBRARY
N C COLLECTION - UNC-CH
P O BOX 8690
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27515-8690

CD71
C2941

The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNBRIDED

VOLUME 94 - NUMBER 40 DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2015 TELEPHONE (919) 682-2913 PRICE: 50 CENTS

Voting Rights, Affirmative Action On Supreme Court Agenda

By Mark Sherman
WASHINGTON (AP) - The Supreme Court is starting a new term that promises a steady stream of divisive social issues, but also brighter prospects for conservatives who suffered losses than usual in recent months.

The justices are meeting in private Oct. 5 for the first time since a number of high-profile decisions in June that displayed passionate, sometimes barbed disagreements and suggested bruised feelings among the judges.

The first case before the court involves a California woman who lost her legs in a horrific accident after she fell while attempting to board a train inbruck, Austria. The issue is whether she can sue the state-owned Austrian railway in U.S. courts. The court also is expected to reject hundreds of appeals piled up over the summer.

Future cases will deal with abortion, religious objections to birth control, race in college admissions and the power of public-sector unions. Cases on immigration and state restrictions on voting also could make it to the court in the next nine months.

The term will play out against a backdrop of the presidential campaign, in which some candidates are talking pointedly about the justices and the prospect of facing some of them in the next few years. Four justices in their 80s or late 70s, led by 2-year-old Ruth Bader Ginsburg,

commentators on the left and right say the lineup of cases suggests that conservatives will win more often than they will lose in the next few months, in contrast to the liberal side's success in the Supreme Court last term in gay marriage, health care and housing discrimination, among others.

This term, I'd expect a return to the norm, in which the right side of the court wins the majority but by no means all of the cases," said Georgetown University law school's Irv Gornstein. The reason for the confidence that, as Supreme Court lawyer John Elwood said: "This is a term of sequels." Affirmative action and union fees have been the court in recent terms and the justices' positions are more secure than known.

The larger question is whether there are majorities for marriage rulings that, for example, would all but outlaw the use of federal funds in admissions or declare workers' free-speech rights unconstitutional from collecting money from non-members. In cases also could produce power outcomes that would be less damaging to affirmative action and unions.

No single case before the justices in the new term holds the significance of the court's 5-4 decision in June that extended the right to marriage to gay and lesbian couples nationwide. It is the author of that opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy, probably will play a similarly decisive role in the most important cases to be heard by the court. The issue after issue, Kennedy is the deciding vote," said conservative commentator Ed Bradley, no fan of Kennedy.

Conservative ire over some of the opinions is almost palpable. But Chief Justice John Roberts, who marked his 10th anniversary on the court this year, also has faced intense criticism from conservative quarters, particularly for his two votes in favor of Obama health care

overhaul. In a Republican presidential debate last month, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz called Roberts' appointment to the court a mistake. Even former Florida Gov.

Jeb Bush hesitated when asked whether he agreed with Cruz. Bush's brother, President George W. Bush, nominated Roberts in 2005.

Former Attorney General Edwin Meese and 68 prominent conservatives issued a memo Oct. 2 that mentions Samuel Alito, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas as the kind of justices the next Republican president should fight for. There was no mention of Roberts.

Alito alluded to tension among the justices in a speech at the University of Kentucky last month. By late June, "We tend to be kind of angry with each other," Alito said.



RALPH HUNT

Ralph Hunt to Step Down as Chair of Durham Committee

Former state senator Ralph Hunt has announced he will step down as chair of The Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People (DCABP) when the group holds its annual meeting next February. The announcement was made in an e-mail sent to the group's membership on September 22.

Hunt and an almost completely new leadership team took the reins of the DCABP in February, 2014, and he said that since that time he and others have "worked as a team to bring The Committee to a different place than we found it 19 months ago."

Among other things accomplished during his tenure, Hunt said, were the purchase of a building at 601 Fayetteville Street that serves as the DCABP headquarters, establishment of a website for DCABP, holding two successful anniversary banquets at which community leaders were honored, and improved decorum at DCABP meetings. He noted that although the building purchase came during his service as chair, funds for that purpose had been raised over a period of years through the group's annual banquet and other activities.

Another area of accomplishment during his tenure was in the group's political action committee (PAC), which he said also achieved outstanding results in the election of most of the candidates they endorsed in 2014 under the leadership of PAC chair Walter Jackson.

Hunt said he was announcing his departure at this time to allow adequate time for the committee to select his successor. The organization will hold an election to fill his position, Hunt said. Other current officers have terms ending in 2017, he added.

"It has been a great honor and privilege to serve as chair of The Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People during this crucial period," he stated.

Hunt has been involved in service to the city and county of Durham and the state of North Carolina for more than 30 years. From 1973 to 1977 he served as a member of the board of the Durham County Department of Social Services. He served 10 years as a member of the Durham City Council from 1975 to 1985, including four years as vice-mayor of the city. He served in the North Carolina senate from 1985 to 1993, and held positions as majority whip and finance committee chairman.

From 1993 to 2001, he served on the North Carolina Utilities Commission, including a stint as chairman of the commission. He returned to the state senate in 2004 and served another year as a member of that body. He has received the state's highest civilian honor.

Justices reject appeal from inmate over juror's racial slur

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Supreme Court has rebuffed an appeal from an African-American man on Georgia's death row over a white juror's use of a racial slur.

The justices did not comment Oct. 5 in rejecting Kenneth Fults' appeal. He was sentenced to death for the 1996 killing of Cathy Bounds, who was shot five times in the back of her head.

Fults has been trying for 10 years to get a court to consider evidence that racial bias deprived him of a fair trial.

Fults' lawyers obtained a signed statement from juror Thomas Buffington in which Buffington twice used the racial slur when referring to Fults. Buffington died last year.

The case is Fults v. Chatman, 14-9740.

Sewell asks DOJ to investigate drivers' license closures

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) - Alabama Congresswoman Terri Sewell said Friday that she plans to ask the Department of Justice to investigate Alabama's closure of 31 rural drivers' license offices.

Sewell said the closings disproportionately affect the state's poor, rural and African-American residents, and that she's particularly appalled it is happening in a state that requires photo IDs to vote.

"The voices of our most vulnerable citizens have been further silenced by the decision to close 31 driver's license offices across Alabama," Sewell said. Sewell said she is asking U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch to investigate the closures as possible civil-rights or voting-rights violations.

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency this week pulled examiners from the part-time satellite offices to save travel costs in the face of budget cuts. The change means that residents in 28 counties will have to travel outside the county to obtain a license or learner's permit for the first time. Sewell said transportation is already a significant problem for people in the state's high-poverty Black Belt region that she represents.

She said what the state is doing is adding an additional "barrier for certain segments" to get a license.

ALEA said the satellite offices, which were staffed with an examiner part-time, were picked because of low utilization.

Statistics from ALEA showed the offices issued anywhere from a few dozen to several hundred licenses and permits in 2014.

The Greenville location issued 261 permits and 187 licenses and gave 620 exams in 2014. The Camden location issued 145 permits and 42 licenses and gave 403 exams. The Chatom location issued 220 permits and 99 licenses and gave 496 exams.

License renewals can still be done in all counties offices, according to ALEA. They can also be done online.

Sonny Brasfield, executive director, Association of County Commissions of Alabama, said county offices perform license renewals, while state workers give the exams and issue new licenses and permits.

Some state officials have disputed assertions that the closures will be a voting barrier. Secretary of State John Merrill said people can obtain a voter ID card at county registrars.



James H. Speed, Jr.

James H. Speed, Jr. to Retire as N.C. Mutual Life Insurance Company President, Chief Executive Officer

Chief Financial Officer Michael L. Lawrence Named as Successor

James H. Speed, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company (NCMLIC), has announced his intention to retire effective December 31, 2015. He will be succeeded by Michael L. Lawrence, Senior Vice President Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer. Mr. Lawrence joined NCMLIC in January of 2012 as part of the Board of Directors' corporate succession planning process.

Speed, whose role with NCMLIC has spanned nearly 14 years made the public announcement in a town hall meeting with employees on Monday. He will continue to serve as an advisor and Board member after his retirement.

"Under his leadership North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company has earned a reputation as one of the nation's most important economic icons, particularly in the insurance industry," NCMLIC Chairman Elliott Hall said in a statement. "The increased diversity of our product offerings coincided with shifts in the insurance and financial services sectors and kept us relevant. This is due in large part to James' willingness to bring innovative ideas and talent to the company while significantly reducing our cost structure. As a result, North Carolina Mutual was able to survive the most turbulent economic and financial time this country and our company had seen since the Great Depression. James fostered a customer service culture that has allowed the company not only to survive but to move forward successfully. His efforts have kept the African American insurance industry at the forefront of initiatives that emphasize literacy and responsible banking." He added, "James' outstanding contributions to the company are admirable. Our capital position is strong and our financial strength was upgraded by A.M Best in May of this year."

As CEO, Speed ushered in significant changes, altering the company's business model with the Vision 2015 strategy. This plan has allowed NCMLIC to enhance distribution, leverage service platforms with technology, and increase financial service capabilities. Under the Vision 2015 plan, the company launched North Carolina Mutual Insurance Agency, an independent broker age with life and health, annuity, pre-need, and property and casualty product offerings. NCMLIC also acquired North Carolina Mutual Financial, a funeral funding subsidiary of the company located in Gadsden, Alabama. In addition, he shepherded the 2005 transfer of the North Carolina Mutual historical archives to North Carolina Central University and Duke University.

Speed joined North Carolina Mutual as a Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer in 2002, while the company's strategic plan was being developed. He helped guide that process, and in April 2003 was named acting President and Chief Executive Officer.

Lawrence is a business executive with more than 20 years of experience in the financial services industry. He has been Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company since January 2012. His prior experience with NCMLIC as a business advisor spans more than a decade. Prior to joining North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, Mr. Lawrence served as the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer of NCM Capital Management Group Inc., an institutional investment management firm. Mr. Lawrence launched his career and developed his business acumen while advancing through the ranks at the international assurance and advisory firm of Deloitte and Touche. His experience crosses multiple industries while specializing in the financial services sector, including life insurance investment advisory and banking. He serves as a Director of M&I Bancorp, Inc. and for its subsidiary Mechanics & Farmers Bank. He also serves on various committees including Vice-Chairman of the Audit and Risk committee and Chairman of the Information Systems committee. Mr. Lawrence serves on the North Carolina State University Investment Fund Board and has served on various nonprofit boards throughout the Raleigh/Durham area. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting from North Carolina State University and is a certified public accountant. He is married with four children.