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North Carolina Gov. McCrory concedes he lost re-election

By Emery P. Dalesio (AP) - North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory conceded the governor's race Dec. 5, clearing the way for Democrat Roy Cooper to be declared the winner nearly four weeks after Election Day.

The win by Cooper, the state's outgoing attorney general, gives Democrats an important consolation prize after a disappointing election across the country. However, Republicans retain super majorities in both legislative chambers.

In a video message from his office posted to YouTube, McCrory said, "Despite continued questions that should be answered regarding the voting process, I personally believe that the majority of our citizens have spoken, and we now should do everything we can to support the 75th governor of North Carolina, Roy Cooper."

McCrory, who became the first sitting North Carolina governor to lose a re-election bid, was weighed down by a series of divisive laws he signed, including House Bill 2.

That law limited LGBT rights and directed transgender people to

use restrooms in schools and government buildings corresponding to the sex listed on their birth certificates. It led to companies, sports organizations and entertainers pulling their business from the state, costing hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in spending.

With appeals drying up and postelection counts padding Cooper's narrow lead, McCrory announced he was giving up.

McCrory, who won the office by a comfortable margin four years ago, was unable to generate the same voter support that lifted Republicans Donald Trump and Richard Burr to victory in the state.

Unofficial results at the State Board of Elections showed Cooper leading McCrory by slightly more than the 10,000 votes needed to avoid an automatic recount. A total of about 4.7 million votes were cast. The state board still must officially certify the results.

Cooper has stated he wants HB2 repealed because he said it promotes discrimination and has harmed North Carolina's brand as good place to do business.

McCrory defended signing the law and unsuccessfully tried

to focus his campaign on the state's recovering economy and finances during his four years in office. Flooding after Hurricane Matthew in October also gave McCrory the opportunity to project the image of a leader as he directed recovery efforts as cameras watched.

Cooper, a former state legislator first elected attorney

in 2000 won't enter office from a position of strength. Republicans hold veto-proof majorities in both chambers of the legislature, making it difficult for him to push his agenda - or stop theirs.

Associated Press writer Gary Robertson contributed from Raleigh



City of Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane presented City of Durham Mayor Bill Bell with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award during the 15th Anniversary & Legislative Awards Dinner of the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition on December 1, 2016. The award is among the most prestigious awards conferred by the governor for exemplary service to the state.

Durham Mayor Bill Bell named to prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine

City of Durham Mayor William V. "Bill" Bell was named to The Order of the Long Leaf Pine last night at a ceremony held during the 15th Anniversary & Legislative Awards Dinner of the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition.

Considered among the highest honors the Governor can confer, the award recognizes citizens for their exemplary service and outstanding contribution to North Carolina. Other recipients have included Andy Griffith, Bill Friday, Reverend Billy Graham, and Michael Jordan.

City of Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane presented the award to Mayor Bell, who was recognized for his decades of service to the Durham community as well as his statewide and national leadership.

For more information about The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, contact The Office of the Governor or visit The Long Leaf Pine Society website.

Louisiana lawmaker tapped to head Congressional Black Caucus

WASHINGTON (AP) - Louisiana Democratic Rep. Cedric Richmond has been elected chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The three-term lawmaker will take over for the current chairman, Rep. G.K. Butterfield, D-N.C., in January when a new Congress is sworn in.

The 43-year-old Richmond has a reputation of working with Democrats and Republicans.

Butterfield says he is confident Richmond will provide strong leadership. Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland says the CBC is the "conscience of the Congress" and says Richmond will bring energy to the job.

The CBC filled out its leadership ranks with Reps. Andre Carson, D-Ind., Karen Bass, D-Calif., Brenda Lawrence, D-Mich., and Gwen Moore, D-Wis.



Mrs. Valeisha Butterfield Jones

Google Executive Valeisha Butterfield Jones to Address NCCU Fall Graduates

Valeisha Butterfield Jones, director of Black Community Engagement for Google and co-founder of the national Women in Entertainment Empowerment Network (WEEN), will deliver the keynote address during the 128th Commencement Exercises at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) on Dec. 10.

The ceremony for approximately 600 graduates of the university's undergraduate, master's and professional programs will take place at 9 a.m. in McDougald-McLendon Arena.

Butterfield Jones is a 2000 graduate of Clark Atlanta University. She began her career at Rush Communications, owned by music industry executive Russell Simmons, working first as an assistant and later as national director for Simmons' Hip-Hop Summit Action Network.

In 2009, she was named by President Barack Obama as deputy director of public affairs for the International Trade Administration. She went on to serve as the national youth vote director for President Obama's 2012 re-election campaign and gained a reputation for her ability to connect with millennials and other young voters.

In 2007, she and actor-producer Sabrina Thompson founded WEEN, a national nonprofit, to foster mentoring relationships and other supportive programs aimed at counteracting biased portrayals of women, especially women of color, in the entertainment industry and society.

Butterfield Jones is married to 2016 NBA champion Dahntay Jones and is the daughter of U.S. Congressman G.K. Butterfield and N.C. State Legislator Jean Farmer Butterfield. Her parents are alumni of NCCU.

For more information on Commencement Exercises, please visit <http://web.nccu.edu/commencement>.

Durham police: Officers heard shot before 1 fatally shot man

(AP) - Three North Carolina police officers involved in last week's fatal shooting of a 34-year-old man heard a gunshot before one fired his weapon, according to a preliminary police report.

Frank Nathaniel Clark of Durham reached for his waistband while being questioned Nov. 22 by two of the officers at a public housing complex, and a struggle ensued, according to the report, which did not provide the officers' full first names. Officer M.D. Southerland fell to the ground, and officer C.S. Barkley shot Clark.

Radio communication given in the report suggests confusion.

Officer C.Q. Goss called for help, saying "Shots fired! Suspect down!" Another, unidentified officer says, "Shots fired! I got an officer down." Seconds later, Goss replied, "We have one officer that is injured. He is not down. The suspect is down."

Clark died at the scene. Southerland was treated at a hospital for a leg injury and released.

The report does not say where Clark was struck, how many shots were fired or whether Southerland was shot.

A woman who identified herself as Clark's sister told reporters last week he didn't have a gun when he was shot. The report says officers found a loaded 9mm handgun on the ground next to Clark that was reported stolen in January.

Police met with residents of the public housing complex where Clark was killed, but an attorney representing members of his family said that law officers didn't share their preliminary report before it was released publicly.

"We have no definitive narrative. A gun may have gone off. We don't know whose. We can speculate all day long it was an officer's gun" or another gun, said attorney David Hall, who is representing Clark's two brothers and a sister. "I'm saying that at this early point in the investigation, the police narrative leaves lots of questions unanswered."

State prison records show Clark had a criminal history dating back 17 years, starting with a 1999 conviction for possessing stolen goods and including assault on a female and possessing a firearm as a felon.

He was released from prison in April 2015 after serving five years for trafficking opium or heroin.

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NCCU's Mack Voted AFCA Regional Coach of the Year

WACO, Texas - North Carolina Central University football head coach Jerry Mack has been recognized as an American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) 2016 Regional Coach of the Year after leading the Eagles to their third consecutive conference championship and the program's first NCAA Division I-FCS national ranking.

Mack, the 2016 Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Football Coach of the Year, guided the Eagles to their most wins in the program's Division I era with a 9-2 overall record and an unbeaten 8-0 mark in league play. NCCU defeated nationally-ranked North Carolina A&T 42-21 on Nov. 19 to capture the MEAC championship. After sharing the league crown in 2014 and 2015, the Eagles are the conference's first outright champion since 2012.

The Eagles received their first national ranking as a Division I-FCS program on Nov. 7, when the FCS Coaches Poll announced NCCU at No. 25. By the end of the regular season, the Eagles jumped to No. 18.

Mack has achieved unprecedented success in his first three seasons as head football coach at NCCU.

Taking over a program that posted a losing record prior to his arrival in Durham, Mack has led the Eagles to three consecutive MEAC championships and an overall record of 24-10, including a 21-3 mark against conference opponents. His 24 victories are more than any NCCU football coach has ever collected in their first three seasons.

In addition to the AFCA Regional Coach of the Year and MEAC Coach of the Year awards, Mack has been named as one of 15 finalists for the Eddie Robinson Award as the FCS Coach of the Year.

Mack is just the second coach in school NCCU history to receive the AFCA award, as George Quiett captured the honor in 1972.

The 2016 FBS and FCS Regional Coach of the Year winners will be recognized at the inaugural American Football Coaches Awards, televised live on CBS Sports Network on Tuesday, Jan. 10, at 9 p.m. EST.

The AFCA recognizes five regional Coach of the Year winners in each of the Association's five divisions: Football Bowl Subdivision, Football Championship Subdivision, Division II, Division III and NAIA. The winners are selected by Active members of the Association who vote for coaches in their respective regions and divisions.

