

DAVI7 12/01/17 **CHILL
UNC-CH SERIALS DEPARTMENT
DAVIS LIBRARY CB# 3938
P O BOX 8890
CHAPEL HILL NC 27599-0001

The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNBRIDED

VOLUME 96 - NUMBER 49

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2017

TELEPHONE (919) 682-2913 PRICE: 50 CENTS

A protest in Trump Country brings home nation's race divides

By Claire Galofaro

ROWLAND (AP) - They put down their pompoms and lined up along the football field behind their tiny high school in their tiny town.

Their classmates marched the American flag onto the field. "The Star-Spangled Banner" began, and six teenage girls with blue bows in their hair each dropped to one knee.

They had for days been quietly planning this protest, against discrimination and police brutality, but also against the nation's ratcheting racial tensions, against those white supremacists they'd seen on television with torches in a city not so far away. They had agreed in the moments before that they were ready to accept the consequences, and braced for the response.

No one booded. No one applauded them, either. No television cameras zoomed in for a close-up. As the anthem ended, some of them wondered if anyone had noticed at all. They got to their feet and launched their first cheer.

"Go Mustangs!"

By morning, however, the culture wars splintering the nation would land here in miniature - in the most racially diverse rural county in America, a community so small a sign welcomes visitors to the "town of 1,000 friends."

A parent from the away team had snapped a photo. Out it went onto social media. In poured calls for the girls to be punished, their principal fired.

Many lined up along ideological and racial divides, and some saw people they'd known all their lives on the other side. Those who gazed into the gulf in between were left with the same unsettling sense - that something is souring in America's soul.

Aajah Washington is a shy girl, merely 14, unaccustomed to conflict. She likes to cheer and sing and dreams of becoming a nurse. She grew up here in Rowland in Robeson County - where the population is split among whites, blacks and Native Americans, and many often remark at how well they've overcome the scars of slavery and segregation to get along, side by side.

She awoke the Saturday after the game, opened Facebook, and found that people had deemed her and her friends a disgrace. "Pure sick to my stomach," one wrote. Another opined that they must have intellectual deficiencies. One woman offered that she'd break her child's knees if she'd done the same thing.

Aajah hadn't told her mother what she and her fellow cheerleaders had planned to do. And so when they talked that Saturday, Tiona Washington asked her daughter if she'd had her reasons. The girl did.

The only president Aajah had ever really known was African-American, like her. Then her county, which voted twice for Barack Obama, joined with the nation to elect Donald Trump, whose comments about Muslims and minorities seemed to only further divide Americans between "us" and "them."

Aajah saw her new president say there were "very fine people on both sides" of the deadly white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. He

called on NFL team owners to fire any "son of a bitch" player who continued kneeling to protest police brutality. He suggested in a speech to law enforcement officers that maybe they weren't being rough enough.

"I watch TV every day and that's all we see, police brutality or the KKK is coming out,"

says Aajah. She'd never before felt the sting of racism, at least nothing obvious, but the ferocity of America's divisions frightens her. She and her friends tallied up their worries as they debated whether their protest would be worth it.

"It just seems like the world
(Continued On Page 6)

Redistricting expert: No 'racial targeting' in map fixes

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - The expert who federal judges asked to redraw some North Carolina House and Senate district lines defended his final recommendations Dec. 1, rejecting Republican arguments that he created boundaries with racial population quotas and helped Democrats.

Stanford University law professor Nathaniel Persily released his proposal, which altered two dozen of the General Assembly's 170 districts, mostly in the counties in or around Raleigh, Greensboro, Charlotte and Fayetteville. Some adjusted districts returned to the shapes that the legislature first drew in 2011.

The judges will meet Jan. 5 in Greensboro before deciding whether to adopt the changes, about five weeks before candidate filing begins for next November's elections. GOP lawmakers already have said it was premature for the judges to hire Persily as a special master, and House Speaker Tim Moore already has signaled map changes could be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Persily produced a draft three weeks ago designed to address the concerns of a three-judge panel that redistricting performed by the Republican-controlled legislature in August didn't shed previously unlawful racial bias from four districts. Other district changes, the judges wrote, appeared to violate a state constitution prohibition because they were redrawn when they didn't have to be.

Reacting to the draft, a lawyer representing GOP leaders accused Persily of creating his own "racial sorting" by reducing - without legal justification - the black voting-age population in the four districts where the judges still worry racial gerrymandering exist. Lawmakers said they used no racial data while forming lawful maps in August.

Persily wrote Dec. 1 there was no "racial targeting," that he focused on "race-neutral criteria" like creating more compact districts and minimizing precincts split between districts, and presented data to prove it. Still, he said, it should be expected that the black population would fall in the districts when other redistricting principles are emphasized.

The "plan is inoculated against the kind of attack that the legislative defendants seek to lodge with respect to racial predominance," Persily wrote. It eliminates "all of the constitutional infirmities the court has identified."

Persily's final plan tweaked lines and precincts so that only one pair of senators - Democrat Gladys Robinson and Republican Trudy Wade of Guilford County - were put in the same district, compared to several House or Senate pairs in the draft. Eliminating all the potential "double-bunking" in the House was designed to "avoid even the appearance of partisanship," Persily wrote.

That didn't stop the chairmen of the House and Senate redistricting committees from blasting Persily's proposal as one that helps Democrats, which have been in the legislative minority since the 2010 elections. They want the maps approved in August used in the 2018 elections.

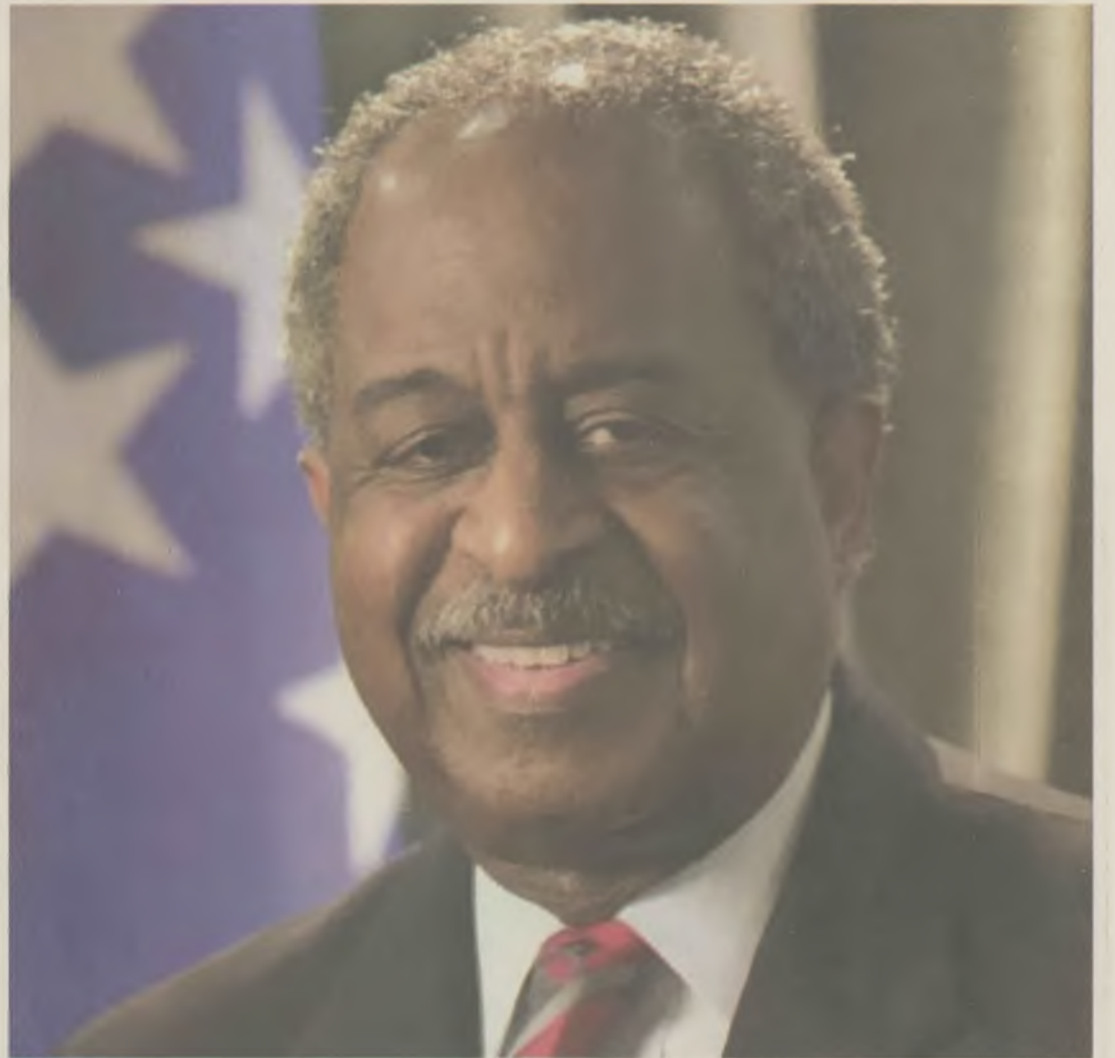
The process is "a thinly-veiled political operation where unelected judges, legislating from the bench, strip North Carolinians of their constitutional right to self-governance," Rep. David Lewis and Sen. Ralph Hise said in a release.

Persily's proposal likely would improve Democratic chances for winning two or three more House seats and two in the Senate. The maps approved in August kept Republicans able to retain veto-proof majorities in the chambers. But Democrats are bolstered after successful elections in Virginia last month.

In a release, state Democratic Party Chair Wayne Goodwin said Persily did his job and Republican "efforts to delegitimize the special master and our judicial system are dangerous and destructive."

Last summer's remapping came after a 2015 lawsuit filed by voters that successfully challenged the 2011 maps. Critics argued those boundaries packed black voters in certain districts so surrounding districts were more white and Republican.

Allison Riggs, a lawyer for the voters who originally sued, said Persily's work will make sure "North Carolinians have fair districts and an equal voice in our democracy."



After 16 Years, Mayor Bell Steps Down, With Honor

By Cash Michaels
CashWorks Media

After 16 years, Durham Mayor William "Bill" Bell will be stepping down as the Bull City's titular administrative leader December 4. Under his leadership, the city has gone from being perceived as a sleepy little also-ran to nearby neighbor Raleigh, to now being one of the hottest, ever-growing destination areas in the Southeast, with jewels in the crown like North Carolina Central University, Duke University, the American Tobacco District, Duke Medical Center, and of course, the Durham Performing Arts Center, attracting tens of thousands of new businesses and residents.

One early afternoon recently, Mayor Bell welcomed *The Carolina Times* to his office, and reflected on his years of service to Durham not only as mayor, but prior to that, as county commissioner.

He looked back with pride, couched in his trademark cool, insight and thoughtfulness.

"By and large, we've sort of found a niche," Bell said, regarding why Durham is such a hot location right now. "Durham is sort of a funky-type town anyway. With the revitalization we've had downtown, and the way we've done it, up until the past few years, it has all been renovations of existing factories."

"Now we've got new buildings that are coming online, but as a part of that,

A Lesson in Preparation

As we send off Mayor William V. "Bill" Bell, we want to make mention of something we believe is a character trait that must not be overlooked. That is preparation.

Throughout his tenure in the Mayor's Office, County Commission, and other civic functions, preparation was paramount.

In a low-key, calm demeanor Bell could not be mesmerized by false claims on legislation and policy. In the era of Trump and his bombastic, shallow charges, having someone that is fully "on top" of his subject meant that coming to a well-reasoned policy that served its purpose and for all was almost always the result.

No one is perfect in life or policy, but with a belief in trying to do what is "right" for all is a legacy to be forever proud.

Many tributes recently talked about how Durham has prospered for all under his leadership..

He has done that.

But for African Americans in Durham, we believe he has continued a legacy of excellence and leadership, whether in business or government. His standard of excellence is one that we all can be proud of. It is a lesson for all of those in the political arena and in life.

We wish him well as he goes forward and we hope his leadership will NEVER be forgotten.

-- Publisher

we've created a place to be, rather than a place to be away from, particularly in downtown. People are able to work there; live there; entertainment - DPAC has been a great success, the Durham Bulls a tremendous success. With that has come restaurants, and we've come to be known as sort of the "foodie" type town in the south. More hotels, so all of those things coming together, I think have sort of put a spotlight on Durham, in terms of what it had been in the past."

Bell recalls how in the early days, he and a delegation from Durham would travel to other

growing metropolitan cities to see how they were managing their attributes. Now, delegations from other cities like Dayton, Ohio and Columbia, SC are all coming to Durham to get their own primers on good growth, responsible management, and rebuilding their downtown areas.

Durham's renaissance on Mayor Bell's watch has also attracted young entrepreneurs, like software engineers, to the city, with new ideas, new businesses, and capital to grow. Developers and outside investors, have also found their way to

(Continued On Page 6)