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A Voteless People is a Hopeless People - L.E. Austin

For Superior Court Judge: Kerr-Davis Vs. Baxton



MRS. JOSEPHINE KERR-DAVIS



MS. DAWN BAXTON

By Cash Michaels
Contributing writer
CashWorks Media
Editor's note: With the all-important Nov. 6th general election just weeks away, The Carolina Times reminds its readers about the importance of voting in our community.

By casting your ballot, YOU will be choosing public servants to represent your interests at various levels of government, and also to dispense justice in our legal system. This election, you will also be deciding on six proposed state constitutional amendments.

Study the issues and the candidates, make your choices, and then make the time, and take the time to vote.

One-Stop Early Voting/Same - Day Registration begins October 17th thru Nov. 3rd. Go to <https://www.dconnc.gov/home/showdocument?id=26112> for the schedule and location of early voting sites in Durham County.

Unless you are registering for the first time, no photo ID is required. However, you should have an official government document that displays your current address, like a utility bill, with you if you are registering to vote for the first time, or have had a change of address since you last voted, during this early voting period.

Tuesday, Nov. 6th is Election Day. Polls countywide open at 6:30 a.m., and close at 7:30 p.m.

Superior Court judges in the state of North Carolina are elected to eight-year terms in office. They conduct jury trials involving felony crimes, or civil cases involving claims of more than \$25,000 in damages.

Josephine Kerr-Davis

If Durham attorney Josephine Kerr-Davis is elected as Superior Court judge November 6th, she says that she is "...committed to start a poverty court, to address and help individuals of low-wealth means."

"We have to decriminalize poverty," Kerr-Davis insists in her Youtube campaign video. She adds that "excessive [court] fines and fees that only hurt individuals of low-wealth means..." must be stopped. "Justice requires fairness, and justice requires access for all."

With more than fifteen years practicing criminal and civil law, Kerr-Davis touts that varied experience in properly preparing her for the Superior Court bench. From working to help struggling members of color who had been discriminated against by the federal government through the

Landloss Prevention Project, to researching death penalty cases with the Center for Death Penalty Litigation, to representing far too many defendants of color in criminal court who face untenable obstacles, not just to justice, but life.

As an assistant Durham District Attorney currently, while Kerr-Davis says she works hard to fairly prosecute those who are found guilty of crimes against the citizens of Durham County, she is also cognizant of the fact that too many who are convicted of first-time and nonviolent offenses can be helped to put their lives back together subsequently, and pave their way to a more constructive life.

Last year, ADA Kerr-Davis was instrumental in instituting a pilot program that allowed those with suspended drivers' licenses for at least 18 months, and initial minor violations involving no DWI's, to text or email to enroll, eventually having their cases dismissed by the DA's office.

Out of 2500 applications, approximately 500 motorists were able to get their charges dismissed, and their licenses restored.

Josephine Kerr-Davis is a Durham native, alumna of Durham Public Schools, N.C. A&T University in Greensboro, and N.C. Central University School of Law.

In her career, she has served as an Assistant Attorney General with the North Carolina Dept. of Justice; a quasi-judicial hearing officer with the Employment Security Commission; and an Assistant Public Defender with the Fayetteville Office of Public Defender.

Kerr-Davis has been endorsed by the People's Alliance. She is married, with two children, and lives in Durham.

Dawn Baxton

"As a Resident Superior Court Judge, I will uphold the trust of the citizens of Durham to be fair and impartial, and to treat those who appear before me with respect and dignity."

That's the vow Senior Assistant Public Defender of Durham County Dawn Baxton has made, and if elected Nov. 6th, she'll have the opportunity to make good on it.

Baxton, a native of Roper, NC, was raised by her grandparents. It was at age 13 that she decided she wanted to become an attorney.

"What influenced me to seek a career in the legal profession was the unsolved murder of

a disabled family member," Baxton told The Carolina Times. "It was obvious to me that access to justice was limited based on the economic status and race of the victim. This is not how the system is supposed to work. Victims and defendants should have the access to justice regardless of their race, gender, socio-economic status, or the status of their attorney."

"I became a lawyer to do my part to make the system work for everyone."

After graduating North Carolina State University with a B.A. in English, Baxton attended NC Central University School of Law, ultimately receiving her Juris Doctor.

While there, Baxton was very active with the Trial Advocacy Board, ultimately serving as president, and winning several local and regional competitions.

It was 1999 when Dawn Baxton began her legal career as an Assistant Public Defender. It wasn't long before she was promoted to handle cases in Durham Superior Court. It is there where Baxton developed the skills and experience needed for felony trials, dealing with a range of criminal cases.

In 2006, Baxton was promoted to Senior Assistant Public Defender, meaning that it became her responsibility to manage the office and supervising staff when the Chief Public Defender was away.

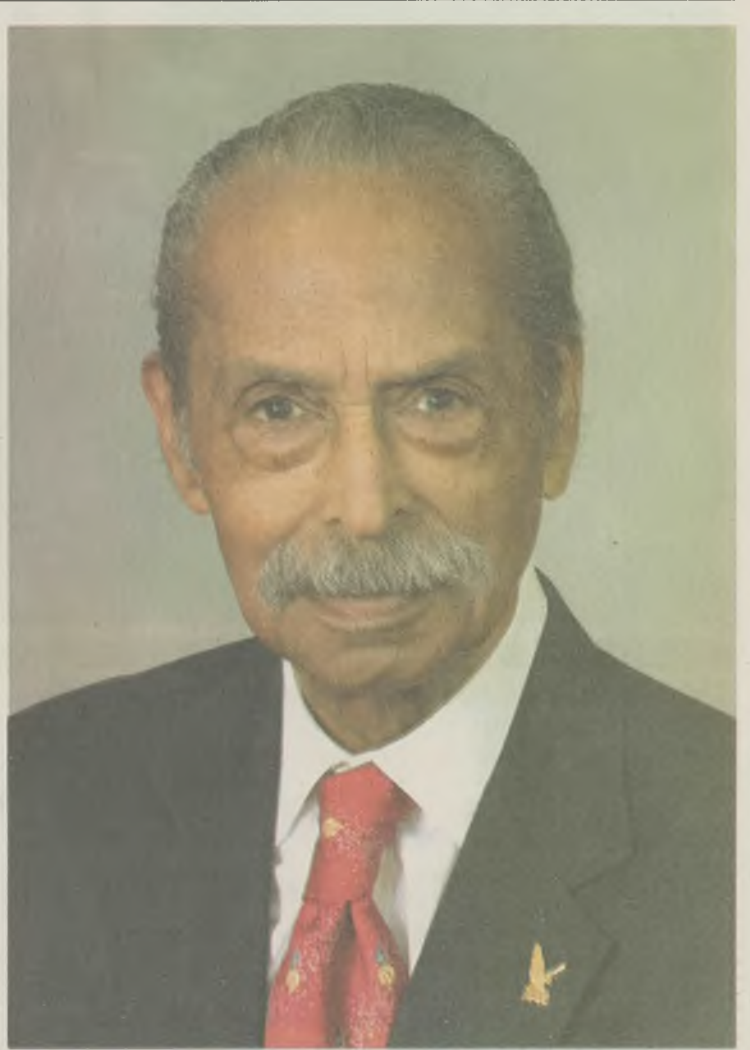
One of the main issues this election is what kind of justice do the poor get in the Durham court system?

"I believe the courts have criminalize poverty," Baxton says. "Excessive fines and fees make it difficult for victims to be compensated for the harm caused, and difficult for the defendant to comply with court ordered programs designed to rehabilitate and restore the defendant to be a productive citizen."

"The justice system should not be funded on the backs of poor people. As a judge, my priority will be to compensate the victim, and to rehabilitate the defendant." Baxton continued, "When the defendant does not have the ability to pay, fines and fees will not be assessed. Also, any available cost efficient community programs will be utilized to assist in efforts to rehabilitate and reform the defendant, so that more funds are available to compensate the victim."

Dawn Baxton has been endorsed by the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People (of which she is a member), the Friends of Durham, and the NC Association of Women Attorneys.

The NCCU Office of Community Engagement and Durham Martin Luther King, Jr. Steering Committee to Hear From Rep. H.M., Michaux. The groups will host the program Sun., Oct. 21, 3-5 p.m. in the Michaux Building, 700 Cecil St., at NCCU. The speaker will be N. C. Representative Henry M. "Mickey" Michaux, Jr. The public invited to attend. Related story on page 7.



NAACP Monthly Meeting

The NAACP monthly meeting will be held Oct. 28, 4 p.m., at St. John's Missionary Baptist Church, 917 Onslow St.

The public is invited to attend.

Ministers call for firing of officer who arrested black teen

WINSTON-SALEM (AP) - A group of black ministers is calling for the firing of a white school resource officer who arrested a black teenage girl at her middle school in North Carolina.

The Winston-Salem Journal reports Winston-Salem police Officer Tyler McCormick arrested 14-year-old Rockell Baldwin this month. Baldwin's mother, Tamkea McLean, also called Oct. 10 for McCormick's firing.

A short clip of the arrest shared online shows McCormick and Baldwin on the ground in a parking lot. Baldwin is heard screaming for help while McCormick handcuffs her.

Baldwin says she was calling her mother and walked past McCormick, who tried to trip her. Chief Catrina Thompson says McCormick was responding to a fight when he arrested Baldwin. She says his body camera recorded the interaction. But that footage isn't public record under state law.

UNC leader apologizes for school's history of slavery

By Martha Waggoner
RALEIGH (AP) - The chancellor of North Carolina's flagship public university apologized Oct. 12 for the school's history of slavery, adding that words alone are not enough to atone for using enslaved people to build and maintain the campus.

"As chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I offer our university's deepest apology for the profound injustices of slavery, our full acknowledgment of the strength of enslaved peoples in the face of their suffering, and our respect and indebtedness to them," Chancellor Carol Folt said during a celebration of the school's 225th anniversary. "And I reaffirm our university's commitment to facing squarely and working to right the wrongs of history so they're never again inflicted."

UNC-Chapel Hill admitted its first students in 1795, just 19 years after the United States was founded, making it the first public university in the United States to open its doors. That's a "unique legacy," Folt said.

"Our apology must lead to purposeful action and it has to build upon the great efforts and sacrifices of so many across the years who fought so hard for much of what we value about Carolina today," Folt said.

The chancellor presided over the University Day ceremony, which marks the laying of the cornerstone of Old East, the nation's first public university building, in 1793.

The apology comes as Folt and other school officials must decide whether to restore the Confederate statue known as Silent Sam to its original location in the campus' main quad after protesters toppled it Aug. 20. The UNC Board of Governors has set a Nov. 15 deadline for Folt and campus trustees to develop a plan for the statue's "disposition and preservation."

Hours after Folt's speech, the school's Faculty Council took a stand calling for the statue and its remaining stone pedestal to be removed permanently from campus grounds.

History professor James Leloudis, who also spoke at the ceremony, detailed the school's plans for signs and educational markers in McCorkle Place, where the base of Silent Sam now sits empty. Leloudis, co-chair of the Chancellor's Task Force of UNC-Chapel Hill's History, said those plans include:

- signs to acknowledge the indigenous people who "were the first stewards of this land, and whose descendants work, study and teach here today."

- a marker near the Unsung Founders Memorial that "will express the University's deep contrition for its role in the injustices of slavery and invite visitors to join us in researching and recovering the full humanity of the enslaved men and women who built so much of the early University and sustained it."

- repair and renovation of the Unsung Founders Memorial site, which also is located in McCorkle Place. Three hundred bronze figurines support a black granite tabletop surrounded by five black stone seats. The inscription around the edge of the table says: "The Class Of 2002 Honors The University's Unsung Founders - The People Of Color Bound And Free - Who Helped Build The Carolina That We Cherish Today."

Earlier this month, the school said it will change the name on a plaque at Kenan Memorial Stadium so it no longer honors a man who participated in white riots against blacks in Wilmington in 1898. The plaque will honor William Rand Kenan Jr. instead of his father, (Continued On Page 3)