

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 UNBRIDLED

VOLUME 99 - NUMBER 8

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2020

TELEPHONE 919-682-2913

PRICE 50

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

### Populism vs. pragmatism underpins North Carolina Senate primary

By Gary D. Robertson

(AP) - Voters seeking to take back a U.S. Senate seat in closely divided North Carolina must choose whether liberal populism or centrist pragmatism is best suited to unseat Republican incumbent Thom Tillis, a devotee of President Donald Trump.

Next month's Democratic Senate primary has some parallels to the presidential race in that voters are trying to decide which candidate - and which philosophy - have the best shot at defeating the Republican incumbent. But it's not neatly delineated.

The stakes are high in North Carolina, a presidential swing state that Trump won in 2016. Tillis is among a handful of Republican incumbents whom Democrats are targeting to take back control of the chamber.

Underscoring the seat's importance, a mysterious PAC funded by a group with ties to Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has spent around \$3 million in the Democratic primary to help a Senate candidate well behind in fundraising - an effort to create a taxing Democratic battle that could help Tillis stay in office.

The leading candidates are ex-state legislator Cal Cunningham, an Iraq war veteran who ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Senate 10 years ago, and current state Sen. Erica Smith.

Democrat Ella Nelson, 65, who attended a Black History Month parade in Durham where Cunningham and Smith appeared, said she was undecided on a choice but focused on finding someone who can beat Tillis.

It's about "replacing those that are not working for the people," Nelson said.

Cunningham has the endorsement of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. The committee, two pro-Cunningham super PACs and Cunningham's campaign have spent over \$10 million for the primary, campaign finance reports show.

Cunningham's campaign is "performing at a very high level, the level that the campaign needs to perform to unseat a Republican incumbent in a purple state and a battleground," he said in a recent interview.

Smith, a former engineer turned K-12 teacher and pastor from northeastern North Carolina, criticizes Cunningham as "the establishment's pick" and says party leaders are stacking the deck against her as a black woman.

(Continued On Page 16)



Mses. Janelle Monae, from left, Taraji P. Henson, and Octavia Spencer pose with Mrs. Katherine Johnson, seated, backstage at the Oscars on Sunday, Feb. 26, 2017, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (Photo by Matt Sayles/Invision/AP)

## Pioneering black NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson dies

By Ben Finley

Katherine Johnson, a mathematician who calculated rocket trajectories and earth orbits for NASA's early space missions and was later portrayed in the 2016 hit film "Hidden Figures," about pioneering black female aerospace workers, has died. She was 101.

Johnson died Monday, Feb. 24 of natural causes at a retirement community in Newport News, Virginia, family attorney Donyale Y. H. Reavis told The Associated Press.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in a statement that Johnson "helped our nation enlarge the frontiers of space even as she made huge strides that also opened doors for women and people of color."

Johnson was one of the "computers" who solved equations by hand during NASA's early years and those of its precursor organization, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics.

Johnson and other black women initially worked in a racially segregated computing unit in Hampton, Virginia, that wasn't officially dissolved until NACA became NASA in 1958. Signs had dictated which bathrooms the women could use.

Johnson focused on airplanes and other research at first. But her work at NASA's Langley Research Center eventually shifted to Project Mercury, the nation's first human space program.

"Our office computed all the (rocket) trajectories," Johnson told The Virginian-Pilot newspaper in 2012. "You tell me when and where you want it to come down, and I will tell you where and when and how to launch it."

In 1961, Johnson did trajectory analysis for Alan Shepard's Freedom 7 Mission, the first to carry an American into space. The next year, she manually verified the calculations of a nascent NASA computer, an IBM 7090, which plotted John Glenn's orbits around the planet.

"Get the girl to check the numbers," a computer-skeptical Glenn had insisted in the days before the launch.

"Katherine organized herself immediately at her desk, growing phone-book-thick stacks of data sheets a number at a time, blocking out everything except the labyrinth of trajectory equations," Margot Lee Shetterly wrote in her 2016 book "Hidden Figures," on which the film is based.

"It took a day and a half of watching the tiny digits pile up: eye-numbing, disorienting work," Shetterly wrote.

Shetterly told the AP that Johnson was "exceptional in every way."

"The wonderful gift that Katherine Johnson gave us is that her story shined a light on the stories of so many other people," Shetterly said Monday. "She gave us a new way to look at black history, women's history and American history."

Johnson considered her work on the Apollo moon missions to be her greatest contribution to space exploration. Her calculations helped the lunar lander rendezvous with the orbiting command service module. She also worked on the Space Shuttle program before retiring in 1986.

Johnson and her co-workers had been relatively unsung heroes of America's Space Race. But in 2015, President Barack Obama awarded Johnson - then 97 - the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

The "Hidden Figures" book and film followed, telling the stories of Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson, among others. Johnson was portrayed in the film by actress Taraji P. Henson. The film was nominated for a Best Picture Oscar and grossed more than \$200 million worldwide.

In 2017, Johnson was brought on stage at the Academy Awards ceremony to thunderous applause. Jackson and Vaughan had died in 2005 and 2008 respectively.

## Event marks 60th anniversary of sit-in against segregation

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) - The historically black university where students launched Alabama's first sit-in against racial segregation is marking the 60th anniversary of the protest with three days of events.

Five of the surviving demonstrators were set to be on hand Monday, Feb. 24, for a remembrance at Alabama State University in Montgomery. The attorney who represented the students, civil rights lawyer Fred Gray of Tuskegee, also will participate, according to the school.

Alabama State, a center of activity during the civil rights era, also will host events through Wednesday, including a panel discussion of elected officials and a presentation of scholarly papers about the sit-in and its legacy.

A student sit-in began on Feb. 25, 1960 at the Montgomery County Courthouse snack bar, where 35 black women and men asked to be served in defiance of the city's segregation law. The protesters, mostly Alabama State students, were inspired in part by the Greensboro four, who started the sit-ins campaign at a lunch counter in North Carolina that Feb. 1.

The Alabama sit-in participants weren't arrested, Gray said in an interview. But then-Gov. John Patterson, a segregationist, made Alabama State discipline any students who participated by threatening its state funding. Nine students identified as leaders were kicked out of school.

"I didn't understand how I could be expelled when I was doing what I was taught at school," sit-in participant St. John Dixon, 82, said Monday during a phone interview. Dixon now lives near San Francisco.

The students filed a federal lawsuit that resulted in an appeals court decision that said the students were improperly punished, Gray said.

"The importance was the lawsuit established that students at a state-supported school couldn't be disciplined without due process," Gray said. "This was during the civil rights period, so that encouraged other civil rights protests."

In 2018, the state apologized to the demonstrators and expunged expulsions from academic records.

## Police: Man forced woman to watch 'Roots' for racism lessons

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) - An Iowa man is accused of forcing a woman watch the nine-hour miniseries "Roots," threatening her and telling her the episodic drama would make her better understand her racism.

Robert Noye, 52, is charged in Cedar Rapids with harassment and false imprisonment. His attorney didn't immediately return a call Feb. 18 from The Associated Press.

The Gazette reported that the woman told police that Noye made her sit with him to watch the miniseries. It was based on author Alex Haley's family history, from the capture and enslavement of his ancestor Kunta Kinte in Africa to the liberation of Kinte's descendants.

When she tried to move, the woman said, Noye told her to remain seated or he would "kill her and spread her body parts" across the interstate.



8 60002 71800 2

WILSON  
NCU