

Cross Burning Sparks Inquiry

By John W. Templeton
Staff Writer

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has launched an investigation into the cross-burning and related incidents outside the home of a black family in Lewisville to see if the Fair Housing Act of 1968 has been violated.

James Lassiter, director of fair housing and equal opportunity for the HUD Greensboro area office, said Tuesday that the act prohibits anyone from intimidating persons from buying or occupying a home because of race.

Mr. and Mrs. James Stowe of 7560 Roubly Lane in Lewisville filed a complaint with HUD following the burning of a cross on their yard March 5 and a march by persons carrying guns and wearing robes on March 10.

Lassiter said the complaint has been forwarded to the HUD investigations unit at the Atlanta regional office.

Sheriff Manly Lancaster said a criminal investigation is continuing into the incidents at the Stowe home. Lancaster said

his department is patrolling the area frequently, "hoping we can catch somebody."

The sheriff said arrests were not made by the officer who observed the March 10 parade because the individuals did not wear hoods. The Chronicle mistakenly reported last week that the individuals were hooded, based on complaint reports of "Klan attire."

Lancaster said it is a felony to burn a cross and a felony to wear a mask. However, he noted that a person could burn a cross in his own yard without violating the law or march in robes, but not hooded.

The sheriff said, "It's been a long, long time since we've had any cross-burnings in Forsyth County."

Lassiter said the incident underscores the need for programs such as the New Horizons fair housing program co-sponsored by HUD and the city of Winston-Salem.

"This should shock people who said it couldn't happen here," said Lassiter.



James Stowe with cross

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Letters

ERA Foes Questioned

Dear Editor:

On the eve of the original deadline for the 27th Amendment I ask myself what is the real reason behind the opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment.

I know it can't be concern for breaking up family life since two of the most vocal local female opponents have chosen to leave their families Monday through Friday during the General Assembly session.

It can't be fear of co-ed bathrooms, homosexual marriages, or elimination of rape laws since it is well documented by the Civil Rights Commission that states with Equal Rights Amendments have not had these problems.

Alimony can't be the reason since the Supreme Court has decided in Orr v Orr (1979) that an Alabama law requiring husbands to pay alimony is unconstitutional. Ninety-eight percent of divorced women receive no child support or alimony or less than \$5,000 a year according to the University of Michigan Institute of Social Research.

Christianity can't be the reason since twenty-seven major church groups endorse the amendment. In addition, Jesus, as an exception to his times, talked to women, encouraged them to speak in public, and two of his closest disciples were Martha and Mary.

The draft can't be the reason since Defense Secretary Harold Brown has stated that "Registration should include registration of women if it takes place."

It can't be that women already have equal rights since there is over three years backlog of discrimination cases at EEOC.

What basic difference is there between ratified and unratified states? There is a significant difference in the median family income. Of the 15 unratified states, 11 are ranked in the twenty lowest positions of the 1975 median family income of the 50 states. (N.C. is 44th)

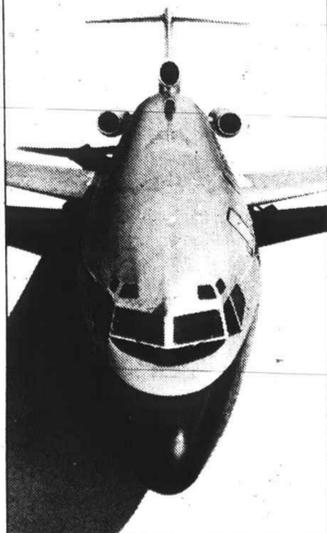
Are the wealthy and businessmen in these states afraid that with ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment they will no longer have a cheap labor force to employ, which would force the southern states to equalize wages and benefits with the rest of the country rather than one of human rights?

Janis Ramquist

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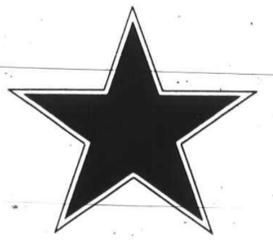
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