

Naming delayed

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split equally on the issue along racial lines.

The four black aldermen said they were ready to vote for the resolution, while the four white aldermen appeared to want more time.

Then Northwest Ward Alderman Martha S. Wood, who is white, said she had made up her mind and was ready to vote.

When Mayor Wayne A. Corpening prepared to call for a vote on the matter, Northington moved for no consideration.

The motion means that no vote will be taken on the matter until the next board meeting, which is scheduled for Feb. 17. At that time, the board may decide to continue the public discussion or to go ahead with the vote.

A no consideration motion on an item can only be used one time, after which the board must vote.

Mrs. Wood said Tuesday that she was indeed ready to support the motion.

"I did intend to vote for it," Mrs. Wood said. "While I was prepared to listen and consider the viewpoint of all my constituents, when it comes time to vote, I must vote in the public interest. This is my overriding concern. This is the critical test for me.

"This coliseum is for our children, it's for the future -- it's not for the past," she continued. "For our children we must lift up as an example of self-sacrifice and brotherhood the kind of life that Lawrence Joel's story tells.

"If we were to ask young people, they wouldn't take three hours to decide," Mrs. Wood said. "Talk about taxpayers -- they are the ones that will have to pay for it."

A steady stream of speakers, both black and white, many

representing veterans' groups, made impassioned speeches both for and against the motion to the aldermen and a packed audience.

They were responding to East Ward Alderman Virginia K. Newell's resolution to name the facility the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, a change from a resolution drafted last Thursday to name the facility the Lawrence Joel Coliseum.

Mrs. Newell said she made the change to better represent the position of some veterans' groups.

Joel is the only Winston-Salem native to win the nation's highest military honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was decorated in 1967 for saving the lives of 13 of his fellow soldiers in Vietnam, although wounded himself, during a 1965 attack by the Viet Cong.

Joel, who served as a medic, was honored by the city in 1967 with a parade and has had a street named for him at his home base of Fort Campbell, Ky. Joel was black.

The Triad Vietnam Veterans Association has led the effort to name the coliseum in honor of Joel. A petition the organization circulated last November included the support of 11 area VFW post commanders.

At a meeting Sunday, however, 20 VFW posts voted unanimously to oppose the measure, voting instead in support of naming the facility the Veterans Memorial Coliseum. Both groups expressed their positions at the aldermen's meeting.

Members of several American Legion posts joined their VFW brothers in opposing Mrs. Newell's resolution, saying the facility should be named for all veterans.

Vietnam veterans, some of Joel's Atkins High classmates, black American Legion post members and Joel's nephew spoke in favor of the measure. Among other things, they cited the value to the youth of the community in having an example like Joel's to emulate.

Several of the supporters told the aldermen that opposition to the Joel name was based on racism.

Chronicle Publisher Ernest H. Pitt, speaking as a Vietnam veteran, charged the Legion and VFW members with racism and bigotry in opposing the Joel name.

"Let's face it -- only a racist and bigot could deny this recognition to such a gallant and noble man," Pitt said. "I'm deeply saddened and angered that this racism is clearly aimed at Mr. Lawrence Joel both because he is a Vietnam veteran and black.

"There are those among you who despise this man simply because he is black, and I challenge you to search your souls as God is your witness and say otherwise," Pitt said.

"If Mr. Joel were white, we would be planning the ceremonies tonight instead of

debating the issue."

In opposing substitute motions by aldermen Frank L. Frye and Lynne Harpe to send Mrs. Newell's motion to committee for study, Northeast Ward Alderman Vivian H. Burke said there was nothing to wait for.

"Mrs. Newell brought an innocent resolution here tonight," Mrs. Burke said. "I'm looking at a hero of this community, not at black and white. I believe this matter has racial overtones.

"I've struggled hard and prayed hard for this community," she added. "This evening we had a chance to show the people how we feel about this community -- to do what's right and fair. But it seems that any time the majority wants something, it's done very quickly. But if the minority wants something, it must be delayed -- it's always, 'Wait.' I'm for fairness and justice in this city, and I felt we had people on this board who could look beyond race."

Joel's 79-year-old mother, Mary Joel, and his widow, Dorothy, of Fayetteville, along with many relatives, were present for the meeting.

Joel's widow, in tears after-

ward, said she had hoped for more.

"I thought Joel did a good deed," she said. "He truly went there (in the service) to serve and help people. It would have been a tribute and honor to him, and to his family, and to his children.

"We talk about fighting communism, but how can we when there's no unity amongst us?"

she continued. "We need to see people as the deed they do -- not as black and white. If they do a good deed, then that should speak for itself. If they do a bad deed, that speaks for itself. Joel did not see people as black and white -- he really didn't."

"I was hoping to see a coming together of the races," she added.

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Ties to S. Africa

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South Africa protesting its injustices and, after her husband's death, retired to her native Winston-Salem.

Bryan said author and poet Maya Angelou, who now lives in Winston-Salem, also provides a positive connection to South Africa as she was once married to another leader of the African National Congress, Vusumzi Maki. Miss Angelou, who lived with her husband in Cairo after he was banned from South Africa, became acquainted with many of the black South African leaders.

On the other side of the coin, Bryan said there are some people in Winston-Salem who have a vested interest in apartheid.

"There are elements in Winston-Salem that have a stake in apartheid," Bryan said. "For instance, there are all those people here who have stacked away Krugerrands. It's a good, solid investment and some brokers are advising people to invest in them."

Bryan also pointed to the national headquarters of companies that are located in Winston-Salem as further examples of the city's involvement with South African politics.

"Here in Winston-Salem we have several company headquarters," he said. "They're part of the multinational structure of Winston-Salem. It's the little things that become so big because what it means is that Winston-Salem has a direct stake in the South African crisis, in its future and in its viable economy."

Bryan, who says he "makes no apologies for his comments," said it is time that Winston-Salem realized the "evil of silence and the evil of consent."

"I get sort of fed up with the local media and with local people who say, 'Let's have a debate and talk about this,'" said Bryan. "It's appalling to me that we don't understand the crisis over there. Let's don't think of South Africa as distant. We must somehow be involved, and be

positively involved. We must bring moral and economic pressure to bear so that it will bring about some measure of South African freedom.

Bryan challenged his audience not to repeat the pattern of complacency that he says was prominent during the early '60s.

"We can't afford to have nice, moderate attitudes and wait for things to get better," Bryan said. "In the 1960s we thought we could be moderate and wait but we couldn't. People never anticipated the sit-ins, or the Martin Luther Kings or the Jesse Jacksons. Again in 1986 we're in a contemporary situation and we trying to have a nice, moderate attitude, but the crisis in South Africa is not going to wait on us. We must allow our voices to be heard and identified if, for nothing else, than to let black South Africa know we hear them. Our future integrity depends on our immediate response."

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