

Black judge

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decision by a special five-judge panel of the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to pursue the charges against him.

Hastings, the first sitting U.S. judge tried on criminal charges, was acquitted in 1983 on federal charges of conspiring with his friend, Washington lawyer William Borders Jr., to solicit a \$150,000 bribe from two convicted racketeers seeking to shorten their sentences. In a separate trial, Borders was convicted and sentenced to five years.

Following Hastings' trial, a judicial complaint was filed by a federal judge in Tampa and one in Brunswick, Ga., alleging that Hastings committed the crime and engaged in other improper conduct.

An Aug. 4 report from the 11th Circuit panel recommended that the Judicial Council determine that Hastings fabricated his defense, which was that Borders acted without his knowledge in soliciting the bribe.

The council will make its

recommendation to the Judicial Conference, which in turn reports to the U.S. House of Representatives, which can impeach federal judges.

Hastings' lawsuit challenges the 1980 Judicial Conduct and Disability Act, saying, Hastings explained, "that judges shouldn't be judging judges." He said that having judges accusing each other of wrongdoing would ultimately harm the judicial system.

But the 50-year-old judge, a 1979 Jimmy Carter appointee, said that if his attorneys can't get the judicial probe thrown out, he welcomes impeachment hearings.

"I firmly believe that some of the brightest Americans that we have serve in Congress, and I believe it is there that I may get my very first fair airing of the circumstances pertaining to this matter. In that sense, I welcome the opportunity," he said.

Although at the time he called the federal sting operation and prosecution of him racist, he said he couldn't speculate about the

motives behind his fellow judges' accusations.

"I'd like to believe they are sincere. ... But I do believe that if I were a white man, in the same circumstances, I wouldn't be in this situation."

To the chagrin of his friends, Hastings followed his acquittal in 1983 by stepping up his public speeches, which have resulted in harsh criticism of President Reagan, Attorney General Edwin Meese and Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger, among others.

Hastings, a divorcee who lives with his invalid mother and supports a son in college, said he makes speeches to help defray his legal expenses. He accepted \$150,000 raised for his 1983 defense by attorneys organized by F. Lee Bailey, despite criticism from observers who questioned the propriety of a judge accepting money from defense attorneys.

He was criticized for appearing at a 1984 campaign rally with then presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, a friend of the 1950s

and 1960s when Hastings was jailed several times during civil rights protests. Hastings lost several bids for public office in the 1960s, including a U.S. Senate race.

"I am not a typical federal judge when I am not on the bench," Hastings agreed. "But when I am presiding, as it pertains to upholding the law, then I do that as well or better than most judges."

"The fact that my butt is being nipped at is not in any way causing me to act or react when I go into the courtroom."

"I truly do not like Ronald Reagan, and I don't know anything on Earth that suggests that because I'm a judge I can't say that. But in that courtroom, very frequently, the minions of Ronald Reagan, folk that like Ronald Reagan, come before me. You can check the record, and you won't find that dislike of Ronald Reagan seeping into my decisions."

"Outside the courtroom, I speak out because I'm a citizen, and I have the interests of a great number of people of this country at heart. I think it's better to have public officials express themselves. I don't think being a judge means I'm neutered."

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Task force

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C. Douglas Carter, assistant superintendent of support services for the school system, said that the committee members represent all segments of the community.

"That's the only way you can tackle the problem," he said.

Carter said he expects wonderful things to happen as a result of the task force.

The task force's work will be supported by a \$15,000 anonymous grant, Eargle said.

The task force's first meeting will be held on Sept. 9.

Dr. Barbara K. Phillips, assistant to the superintendent, said that the meeting will be an organizational orientation meeting.

"We will set the parameters of the task force and look at job responsibilities," she said.

Setting parameters involves looking at what is to be explored, Dr. Phillips said.

Suggested activities for the task force include defining or establishing a frame of reference to determine the underachiever, reviewing research data on student performance, and identifying strategies that will help lessen the problem.

Different criteria can be used to determine whether or not a student is an underachiever, Dr. Phillips said.

"If a person's ability level predicts he should be performing at a certain grade level, and he is not performing at that level, you might say he is an underachiever," she said. "You have to look at it from a holistic point of view. A person might be doing well in other areas. We're basically saying that there are a lot of students out there who could be better."

The task force is expected to make a report recommending plans of action to the superintendent by the end of this school year.

Mrs. Allen said that she is looking forward to working on the task force.

"I hope that we can find why students don't achieve and come up with some solutions," she said.

She said that the NAACP has long been concerned about the problem of underachieving students, particularly black students.

The NAACP's Education Committee will operate a Community Tutorial Education Program in local churches this year. The program will offer tutoring services to students after school.

Task force members from the city/county school system are Shirley Atkinson, reading coordinator for kindergarten through 12th grade; Margaret Bagley, teacher, Cash Elementary School; Fleming El-Amin,

teacher, Glenn High School; John Jessup, principal, Mount Tabor High School; Mary Parker, social worker, administrative center; Gay Pitts, teacher, Jefferson Elementary School; Dr. N.L. Shearouse, principal, Konnoak Elementary School, and Kaye Shutt, principal, Mineral Springs Middle School.

Other task force members are Robert Anderson, president, Forsyth Association of Classroom Teachers; Lynn Bitting, president

of Noble Gents, a social organization; Magdalene Watson, teacher and parent; Hoyt Wiseman, principal of Forest Park Elementary School; Janet Wheeler, RJR; Sara Austin, family services; Henry Carter, Winston-Salem Foundation; Linwood Davis, Greater Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce; the Rev. James Fatzinger, president, Forsyth County Ministers' Fellowship; Dr. Melvin Gadson, Winston-Salem State University; Dr. George E. Hamilton Jr., area director, Forsyth-Stokes Mental

Health Center; Jerry W. Hardesty, Forsyth County Agricultural Extension Service; Jean Irvin, Forsyth Juvenile Justice Council Inc.; Cathy Knecht, Forsyth County Department of Social Services; Bob Law, Experiment in Self-Reliance; Judy Mountjoy, WS/FC PTA Council; James T. Robinson, Forsyth Medicine/Business Coalition; David L. Thompkins, Winston-Salem Housing Authority; Louise Wilson, former director of ESR, and Beth Williams, Junior League.

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