

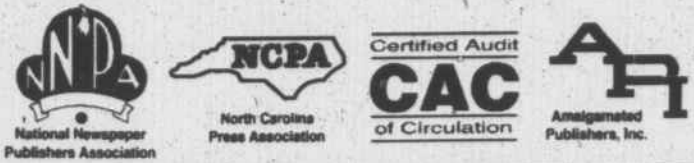
# OPINION

## THE CHRONICLE

WINSTON-SALEM GREENSBORO HIGH POINT

The Choice for African American News and Information

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### Let us validate ourselves

We knew it was only a matter of time before someone took issue with the tactics of the NAACP's educational committee.

And sure enough, Rev. Carlton Eversley and the Winston-Salem NAACP have been criticized by the majority community for using litigation to once more desegregate the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school system.

The lawsuit that the NAACP filed against the school district is key to desegregation. But litigation is only one component of the organization's educational initiative. Self-help is at the core of the NAACP's strategy to improve schools and increase achievement of African American children.

Experience has taught us that, when necessary, we must take our struggle to the courts. We must work on the grass-roots level but also within the legal system to advance our cause. Were it not for legal battles and civil disobedience of the Civil Rights Movement, schools might never have desegregated.

The status quo rarely gives way to change without a fight. For power concedes nothing without a demand. As Frederick Douglass advocated, "agitate, agitate, agitate."

We urge the NAACP to stay the course and for the African American community to support the organization's educational action plan. We should not be deterred by the majority community's disapproval.

Our cause is noble, our tactics are sound, and our timing is correct.

Martin Luther King Jr. took criticism from white religious leaders for using civil disobedience to protest racial oppression. In his "Letter From the Birmingham City Jail," Dr. King explained why African Americans could wait no longer for the United States to fulfill the promise of equality guaranteed by the Constitution.

Inner city schoolchildren can wait no longer for equal educational opportunity. Time is marching on and our children are missing out on programs and resources that affluent suburban schools take for granted. As a result, our children fail to dream big and fall short of their potential.

For too many students, it's already too late. That is why the NAACP is taking action.

Ideally, education is a great equalizer. That is true, however, only when all students have access to a quality education. For our children's sake, we can settle for no less.

We should not be preoccupied with gaining validation from the white community for the course we have pursued. We must not be concerned about whether the white community deems our cause worthy. We must breathe meaning into our own struggle.

The best way to demonstrate our worth is by investing in our own. That means striving to build up our own neighborhoods rather than aspiring to the other side of town. We waste our energy by trying to ingratiate ourselves to the powers that be. Instead, we must support the African American media, businesses, organizations and institutions, which have over the years served our community and advanced our interests.

After all, unless we do for ourselves, no one will ever deem us worthy or take us seriously.

## Letters to the Editor:

To the Editor:

It has been very hard for me to believe what Walter Marshall did to Atkins graduates and the citizens of East Winston.

I have known Walter Marshall for more than 15 years and have listened to some of the comments that people have made about his selling-out black people or selling his influence and wavering.

However, I tried to overlook such comments and work with Walter because I truly believed that he had the interest of black people at heart. Now, I see what other people said was true. I have firsthand experience regarding how Walter operates.

I will not publicly say anything that is disparaging about another brother. I will say that because of Walter's conflict of interest, he has placed himself in a fish bowl, and this community will have to judge his real motives and actual contributions to our African American children.

Victor Johnson Jr.  
Atkins alumnus  
WS/FC School Board member

To the Editor:

When the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education made its Jan. 12 decision not to restore Atkins to a senior high school, Walter Marshall (the traitor of the black community), faculty of Atkins Middle School and current parents were the factions given the most consideration. Walter Marshall is not on the school board, he spoke at the Jan. 11 community forum, and will have a voice when and if the matter comes to the county commissioners. That is more than enough input from such an



opinionated, uninformed person. Faculty usually do not decide where they will provide education for students. Their main concern should be to guide pupil growth and promote academic achievement wherever they are assigned to teach. A school not only exists for present children and parents, but also for future children and parents. Alumni should have been considered because we are parents,

grandparents, taxpayers, voters and residents of the community. With the exception of Walter Marshall, the pros and cons of all groups should have been a part of the decision-making process. For the school board to make a hasty decision based upon the wishes of those who probably put their personal interests before the interests of the masses demonstrated making a decision with tunnel vision.

Now the East Winston community expects that our alternative requests be acted upon. Restore and update the Atkins graduates' history in the school building, and build a senior high school in East Winston. We voted for the 1995 bonds too!

Samuel Puryear Sr.  
Atkins alumnus

### Vinroot stands to benefit from Fetzer's withdrawal



Val Atkinson  
Jones Street

Former Charlotte mayor, Richard Vinroot has surfaced as the front runner for the 2000 Republican gubernatorial primary race.

Vinroot's name arose after Raleigh mayor Tom Fetzer decided that "enough was enough." Fetzer is no longer interested in running for governor or any other political office for now.

Is Tom Fetzer tired of the political pressures, or has he

finally realized that his Raleigh and Wake county prowess does not extend to Manteo and Murphy?

Whatever his reasons, Vinroot stands to benefit and benefit big. Mayor Fetzer released his supporters and contributors to support any Republican candidate they choose. Fetzer may have wittingly or unwittingly given Vinroot the boost he needed to put critical distance between him and the rest of the field.

If Vinroot prevails he will be a formidable opponent for whomever the standard bearer of the Democratic Party happens to be. He's articulate, and could hold his own in debates against the likes of Mike Easley, Norris Tolson or Dennis Wicker.

Vinroot is a fiscal conservative but is less conservative when it comes to social issues. Vinroot is a far cry from Robin Hayes. Hayes was the Republican Party nominee for Governor in 1996 who was soundly defeated by Governor Jim Hunt in the general election.

Vinroot will, in all likelihood, run a campaign that will be 180 degree departure from the campaign run by Robin Hayes. Hayes catered to the right wing of the party and told minorities and women to take a hike, and they did.

I don't think Vinroot will be that mentally dysfunctional. And although Vinroot may attract more minorities and women than Hayes, the question is whether he can get enough minorities and women to make a difference.

Vinroot is smart and very savvy, but like so many Republicans, he's joined at the hip with the Republican "Old Guard" and the purveyors of single-minded moralism. It won't be easy to break-a-way from the likes of Jesse Helms, Taylor, Burr and Carter Wrenn.

If Vinroot should be fortunate enough to win the Republican primary, he'll still have one other major obstacle to deal in the general election, and that's the fallout of the impeachment of President Bill Clinton.

Unfortunately, because of the U.S. House Republican relentless pursuit to overturn the elections of 1992 and 1996, some good Republicans will not be elected or reelected. The way I see it, it's the price of blind conformity. I predict a considerable transfer of seats (from Republicans to Democrats) at the U.S. House and Senate levels, State Legislatures and in the Governors' Mansions.

I disagree with ex-U.S. Senator Alan Simpson when he contends that by November of 2000, Americans will have forgotten all about the Republicans' attempts to remove Clinton from office. Vinroot and all other Republicans will have a decided uphill battle in 2000 mainly because of Bob Barr, Tom DeLay and Henry Hyde.

Vinroot will do well in the primary but he may want to contact his buddy Tom Fetzer again and ask him what did he really get him into.

Val Atkinson is a columnist for the Triangle Tribune.

## VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY...

Citizens in her native Salisbury have begun an effort to lobby Elizabeth Dole to run for President. At a rally last weekend, about 1,000 people came out to show their support for Liddy, the name they affectionately call her. We asked local residents would they vote for a woman if she ran for the highest office in the land.



Darryl Brown

"The reason I would vote for a woman is because she would obviously be qualified to have a legitimate run at the presidency. A woman can prove to be as level-headed and show the ability to make level-headed decisions just as well as a man could."



Njai Dickerson

"Yes, I would vote for a woman. I love women, but if she wasn't doing good I wouldn't vote for her. Just like a man. If he's not doing good I wouldn't vote for him either."



Johnnie Sansbury

"I would, I would vote for a woman. I would vote for her because she is a woman, and I love women."



Ayanna Horne

"Depending on what her issues were. If she was going for the right things like health care, for education just like the other candidates, then sure, I would vote for her. But I would not vote for her just because she was a woman, that wouldn't be right. I would vote for a man who supported the same issues."



Grant Duncan

"I would. I don't think that would be a bad idea because a lot of men don't become great men without women, that's what I truly believe. Women truly have compassion, and we as men came from a woman. It would be a tribute to our own mothers and sisters."