

Ruling
from page A1

deeply rooted in the culture of African Americans, the court ruled Sept. 15 that CMS's decision to rescind Jones' job offer was based on a grooming policy that doesn't have anything to do with race.

According to the Court of Appeals, while hairstyles are associated with race, traits in a person's appearance that are tied to their culture but are otherwise changeable are not protected and can be used to deny job offers.

Last week The Chronicle asked people on the street and on a social media site how they felt about the controversial ruling. We asked: How do you feel about the U.S. Court of Appeals decision that makes it legal for employers to discriminate against people with dreadlocks?

First year Wake Forest medical school student Joy Spaulding, who has dreadlocks, said, "I haven't really thought about it that much, but I think it's pretty ridiculous."



Spaulding

"If it was between me getting a job and cutting my hair, I don't know if I would be willing to make that decision to cut it," Spaulding said.

"It makes me wonder why now? People have had dreadlocks for centuries. It's kind of a disgrace because I don't think it's different than any other hairstyle. I think it's a step in the wrong direction."

Others gave their opinions, too.



Superior Court Judge Mike Morgan, who is running for N.C. Supreme Court, shows Charlie Wilson the candidates on a card at the Forsyth County Democratic Headquarters on Thursday, Aug. 25.

N.C. Supreme Court race could shift partisan balance

BY GARY D. ROBERTSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH, N.C. — The philosophical and political balance of North Carolina's Supreme Court could shift as voters this fall choose to keep a long-time justice or replace him with a veteran Wake County trial judge.

Associate Justice Bob Edmunds is seeking to stay on the court after winning eight-year terms in 2000 and 2008. His challenger is Superior Court Judge Mike Morgan, who has been hearing cases since the late 1980s. Edmunds and Morgan advanced to the general election as the top vote-getters among four candidates in the June 7 primary, with Edmunds finishing first.

Both highlight their experience and what they call an ability to be fair and impartial.

Morgan, however, is citing recent Supreme Court rulings that favored Republican legislation and Edmunds calling himself a "conservative" on campaign placards as evidence change is needed. Edmunds say backing from county sheriffs, former chief justices and heads of attorney groups that wear all partisan stripes shows he's doing his job well.

While state Supreme Court elections are officially nonpartisan, four of the seven current justices, including Edmunds, are registered Republicans. Three are registered Democrats, as is Morgan. A Morgan victory would give Democrats a majority on the court for the first time since 1998.

Most opinions of the

court are unanimous, or divisions don't fall along party affiliations. Still, some recent opinions addressing legislation approved by Republicans at the General Assembly highlight the partisan split. The Republican jus-



Edmunds have backed majority opinions over the past two years upholding legislative and congressional districts and the use of taxpayer money as scholarships for K-12 students to attend private or religious schools. Morgan argues Edmunds has contributed to the "politicization" of a court that is supposed to use its constitutional authority to keep checks and balances on other branches of government.

"My lens will be clear. It will not be shaded in any political direction," Morgan said, adding that Edmunds' conservative designation in the campaign "shows a political orientation and a political bent."

Edmunds said that's not true. In a recent televised forum with Morgan, Edmunds argued "conservative" refers to his judicial philosophy of following the rule of law and deferring to previous court decisions. The justice also cited opinions where the entire Supreme Court has agreed that the General Assembly overstepped its powers, though legislative appointments to the state's now-defunct coal ash commission and taking away

tenure rights promised to public school teachers who had already earned them.

"People are satisfied that I'm a judge that makes decisions based on the law and the facts," Edmunds said in an interview, suggesting later that Morgan is the one trying to make the campaign partisan. "I am not trying to inject politics into this race."

Morgan, 60, previously worked as an assistant state attorney general before being appointed as an administrative law judge in 1989. He became a District Court judge in 1994 and moved to Superior Court in 2005, winning elections for both.

Morgan has been the presiding judge in a lawsuit challenging a 2013 law requiring photo identification to vote. A trial was expected to begin last month but Morgan put it on hold after federal judges struck down the law over the summer. A conservative group questioned whether Morgan should have removed himself from the case, given the upcoming election. Morgan said he would continue to preside, citing a judicial ethics official's correspondence finding no conflict.

Edmunds is a former assistant state and federal prosecutor and U.S. attorney for central North Carolina who was elected to the intermediate-level state Court of Appeals in 1998. At 67, Edmunds would not be able to complete an additional eight-year term if he's elected next month because state law requires a mandatory retirement for judges at 72. The governor at the time would appoint a replace-

People on the street



Xavier Wallace-McGrew

"This law is a terrible way to continue the institutionalized racism and prejudice in America."



Aaron Lybrand

"It sucks, but if it's a privately owned company, I believe they should have the right to hire whomever they want to hire."



Josh Crowell

"We need to partner to build a company that won't allow anyone in our community to be systematically opposed of an opportunity."



Andrew Lee

"I don't care what the court says, that's discrimination. Equal rights and equal opportunity is a joke."



Rashard Ingram

"When it comes to employment, if we want to get ahead in this country, we can't act black or even embrace our African culture. This is what happens when we don't own anything."

Obama
from page A1

gap has widened since the tape came out. The RPC average of polls found Clinton had a 5 percent lead nationally and 2.6 percent lead in the state.

Democrats are hoping that down ballot races will get a boost from Clinton's surge. Obama encouraged attendees to vote for Democratic candidates for governor and senate.

Obama's poll numbers are up too. A recent CNN/ORC poll has Obama's approval rating at 55 percent, which is the highest in his second term and tied with his highest approval rating ever.

Obama talked about progress made during his eight years, such as dropping unemployment, continued job growth and a historic number of Americans with health insurance.

"All that progress goes out the window if we don't make the right choice just four weeks from today," he said. "The closer we get, the clearer the choice becomes."

Obama acknowledged that there was still work to be done. He said there were still uninsured Americans, racial division, families struggling to pay their bills and areas that still haven't recovered economically. He said his victories haven't been perfect and

that work must be done to make them better.

Also during the rally, he praised the efforts of North Carolinians to help each other after the flooding caused by Hurricane Matthew. He pledged that the federal government would help the state recover.

Obama was introduced by Henry Frye, who was the first African-American chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court. Earlier in the day Obama visited N.C. A&T State University to tape "A Conversation with The President: Sports, Race and Achievement" for ESPN's The Undeclared. It was scheduled to be shown at 10 p.m. Tuesday.

Democrats
from page A1

borhoods] on every Wednesday and Saturday. We're going out on Saturday at 10 a.m., 12 noon and 2 p.m."

Ellison adds that because voters will be dealing with "the longest ballot in the history of voting, and there's no straight-party ticket voting," poll greeters are being recruited to ensure that all voters get the Democratic slate "of our excellent candidates."

"We're ready, man. We are ready," Ellison exclaimed. "We are so ready. The whole state is taking notice that Forsyth County is about to put it on the map."

"We're going to fight for those votes in Clemmons. We're going to fight for those votes in Kernersville, in Lewisville, and everywhere."

There is controversy, however. Chairman Ellison accused Republicans running the local board of election of having "such an aggressive method of scrubbing the voting logs" that about 150 new voter registration applications for new

Democrats will be handed in per week, "[but] we'll only see an increase of 70," he charged, further labeling it "an aggressive campaign" to keep the number of new Democratic voters at a minimum in the county.

Ellison says thanks to the recent U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal's ruling striking down parts of North Carolina 2013 voter suppression law, disenfranchised new voters can fall back on same-day voter registration starting next Thursday, when early voting begins.

Regarding absentee balloting, the Forsyth County Democratic chair says there "has been an explosion" of it on the Democratic side, something that was cultivated when it was assumed that voter ID laws would still be in force for the Nov. 8 election.

Again, early voting/same-day registration begins Thursday, Oct. 20.

Note - Friday, Oct. 14th is the deadline for voter registration in North Carolina. To check online to make sure that you're properly registered, go to https://enr.ncsbe.gov/voter_search_public. If there are any problems, contact the Forsyth County Board of Elections at 336-703-2800.

5 seats up for election on North Carolina Court of Appeals

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In addition to one seat on the state Supreme Court, North Carolina voters next month get to choose who will hold five seats on the state Court of Appeals. The 15-member intermediate appeals court sits in three-judge panels to hear cases.

Four races feature an incumbent and challenger.



A fifth race had three candidates, but candidate Donald Buie, a Winston-Salem attorney who was unaffiliated, dropped out because of personal reasons. The seat is vacant because Court of Appeals Judge Martha Geer stepped down this year too late after the March 15 primary for another primary to be held to whittle the candidates down to two. Court of Appeals terms are eight years.

While Court of Appeals races remain officially nonpartisan, the Legislature recently passed a law putting each candidate's party affiliation on ballots. Supreme Court races still don't provide those desig-

nations. The Court of Appeals races on the ballot:

*Incumbent Linda Stephens (Democrat) and Phil Berger Jr. (Republican), an administrative law judge.

*Incumbent Bob Hunter (Republican) and Abe Jones (Democrat), a former Wake County Superior Court judge.

*Incumbent Richard Dietz (Republican) and Vince Rozier (Democrat), a Wake County District Court judge.

*Incumbent Valerie Zachary (Republican) and Rickye McKoy-Mitchell (Democrat), a Mecklenburg County District Court judge.

*Hunter Murphy (Republican and Waynesville attorney), Margaret Eagles (Democrat) and Wake County District Court judge, Wendy Enochs, who was appointed to fill out Geer's position through the end of the year, is not running for the seat.

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636 Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

Have a Story Idea?
Let us Know
news@wschronicle.com