

Strong GOP support



Reagan falls to E. Forsyth



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THE CHRONICLE

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EXCLUSIVE

Alleged injustices targeted

BY CASH MICHAELS FOR THE CHRONICLE

A grassroots group consisting of families deeply concerned with allegations of corruption in the Forsyth County Clerk of Court's Office is planning to call wider attention to what they consider to be allegedly questionable practices of that office, and the public administrator who works with it, guardian Bryan C. Thompson.

At issue is a practice The Chronicle first and exclusively reported about in 2015 regarding the failure of the Forsyth Clerk of Court's Office to properly file-stamp documents pertaining to elderly people being legally designated as "mentally incompetent," making them wards of the state, and assigning attorney Thompson as their guardian to manage their properties and assets.

Doris Tucker of Washington, D.C., is the leader of the still-evolving group that is demanding answers. She is also the niece of the late Mary Ellen Brannon Thompson,



Thompson



Frye

whose story The Chronicle first reported on in October 2015 when a lawsuit was filed on her estate's behalf against attorney Thompson (no relation) and the Forsyth Clerk's Office, among others, alleg-

ing that a \$1.4 million estate belonging to the retired African-American nurse had been allegedly squandered when that attorney was illegally appointed as her estate guardian.

According to its website, "The Clerk's Office provides administrative support for the judicial operation of the Forsyth County Courts" and that administrative support must comport with state statute, and longstanding rules that codify legal procedure in doing the public's business.

File-stamping or "entering" orders from a judge or court officer, complete with name, date and time for the court record, is part of that legal procedure.

The lawsuit alleged that in May 2007, the guardian and the Clerk's Office colluded to have himself assigned to Ms. Thompson before she had been legally designated as mentally incompetent; that there was no medical substantiation for the designation to begin with; and that

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NEW JUDGE



Carrie Vickery is sworn in by Judge Denise Hartsfield as her husband, Phillip "Skip" Skipper Jr., holds the Bible and her young niece, Anna, on Thursday, Jan. 5.

Vickery sworn in as district court judge as 'foe' looks on

BY TODD LUCK THE CHRONICLE

A packed courtroom watched as Carrie Vickery was sworn in as a district court judge on Thursday, Jan. 5, at the Forsyth County Hall of Justice.

It was standing room only for the nearly hour-long ceremony that was attended by her fellow judges, Mayor Allen Joines and numerous elected officials. Sheriff Bill Schatzman called the court to order for the ceremony, which was symbolic in nature, since Vickery has been acting as a



Rev. Dr. John Mendez

judge since Jan. 3. Vickery won the position in last year's election after a long campaign.

Emmanuel Baptist Church Pastor John Mendez told attendees that when Vickery attended a service at his church, he was impressed by how she stayed the whole time and interacted with congregates afterward. He said he called his friends, telling them to support her immediately after that.

"Given the climate of division that is reflective within our nation right now, we need people who have a sense of community, who believes in diversity and have sworn and

See Vickery on A4

Gov. Cooper is building diverse Cabinet

BY CASH MICHAELS FOR THE CHRONICLE

Since he took the oath of office on Jan. 1, Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, has wasted little time to make good on his promise to appoint a diverse Cabinet, and administration.

Last week, North Carolina's 75th governor announced his appointment of State Bureau of Investigation veteran Erik Hooks as the new head of the N.C. Dept. of Public Safety, and environmentalist Michael Regan as secretary-nominee of the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality.

Both are African-Americans, and both will be subject to state Senate confirmation before they take office.

Secretary-nominee Hooks, 50, will oversee the State Bureau of Investigation, the state Highway Patrol and Alcohol Law Enforcement, in addition to the state prison system. Hooks, who began his law enforcement career with the SBI as a resident agent in 1989, is a former assistant SBI director, and is currently a special agent in charge of the inspections and compliance division.

Cooper says he hopes Hooks can help bridge the gap between communities of color and law enforcement.

Hooks is a native of Spring Lake, and an alumnus of N.C. State University.

Michael Regan is a 10-year veteran of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. and the Research Triangle Park until 2008. In February of that year, Regan served as National Director of Energy Efficiency and Southeast Climate & Energy Policy, and then associate vice president, U.S. Climate and Energy & Southeast Regional director, for the Environmental Defense Fund in Raleigh until July 2015.

In September 2016, Michael Regan founded M. Regan & Associates in Raleigh "to help organizations



Gov. Cooper

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