

Editorials & Comments

The Right To Be Second Best

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

The real tragedy behind the sudden firing of Superintendent Rolland W. Jones by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board is in the fact that we as a community, as well as a nation, have an obsession with success. The late football coach Vince Lombardy put this in focus when he said, "Winning is the only thing."

Yet, for all who succeed, for all who win, and for all who are "number-one," the majority fail, loose or are never better than second best.

Rolland Jones came to Charlotte four years ago as a winner and a Number-One school administrator. He continued in that tradition as he brought calm out of the riots and chaos involved in school desegregation and through the introduction of a number of innovative educational programs - Open schools, Street Academy etc. - he was able to aid the schools in their efforts to meet the growing and diverse needs of the individual students.

However, as time passed, Jones began to show the imperfections that plague mortal men. Basically, he began to have increasing difficulty in articulating to the school board and the community certain actions occurring under his administration. Among these were student test scores, the letter to the parents of youth attending private schools, the administrative reorganization plan, his unannounced trip to the White House to discuss school desegrega-

tion, the summer jobs mess, and the extent of his personal commitment to the concept of traditional education. Whether justified or not, each of these generated some controversy.

Jones was publicly fired because these controversies began to undermine his credibility, particularly among school board members and reportedly the Mecklenburg County Commissioners.

The POST readily agrees that Dr. Jones might have avoided some of these controversies if he had given more attention to the public role that he as the county's chief school administrator must fulfill. Nevertheless, the POST does not believe that such a weakness on the part of Jones was justification for his dismissal.

Therefore, Jones was fired because he was not number-one, and not the best in every aspect of his work. We might ask the question, "Who is?" If the next Superintendent is strong where Jones was weak and weak in the more substantive areas of education administration and leadership we may well wish we had Jones back. We may also wish Jones had been given an objective evaluation of his work, and then, with proper notice and courtesy advised of his employment status.

The harsh, inhumane and emotional manner in which Dr. Jones was fired will cause any individual worthy of the now vacant position to think more than twice before seeking to become Jones's successor.



Blacks Must Not Become "Just Spectators" To Their Own Doom

REPORT FROM Washington

How Bureaucracies Are Born And Grow

By Jim Martin, 9th District Congressman

A few weeks ago I told you the postcard voter registration Act was to be approved by the House of Representatives.

The proposal would set up a nationwide voter registration program enabling individuals to register to vote by using a postcard. While the measure has passed the House and must be approved by the Senate and presented to the President, there are a couple of interesting observations which can be made about the bill.

The proposal provides that the Voter Registration Administration will be under the jurisdiction of the Federal Election Commission. The Commission you may remember was set up in the wake of the Watergate investigations and election-year politics to oversee federal elections.

Now we have the first addition for the Federal Election Commission. Its growth would take the form of the Voter Registration Administration.

No one has the foggiest idea exactly how much this government expansion is going to cost the American taxpayer. Estimates range from \$50 million to \$200 million for a program opposed by many state and local elections offi-



Cong. Jim Martin

cially who say such an effort would result in duplication. Cited as an example of duplication is the fact that 70 percent of all eligible Americans are already registered to vote. You would then have a 70 percent waste factor.

In addition to seeing how much government agencies proliferate, the Voter Registration Act reveals how the federal government imposes itself on state and local governments, making them more dependent on Washington. The Voter Registration Act provides that states would be reimbursed for costs incurred in processing the voter registration forms. In addition, the states would be offered a bonus of 30 percent above their costs if they adopted postcard voter registration for

all elections, not just those involving federal candidates.

Thus, the potential and temptation for turning over all elections to the federal government becomes obvious. I

think we have seen enough evidence in the past to prove that once an agency is born, its administrators feel an obligation to grow and that means the taxpayers foot the bill.

Getting more involved in state and local elections would be just the beginning. This on top of the expected fraud which would occur would make a shambles of our elections. It would be an open invitation for fraud, because there would be no way to verify the signature was valid and not already registered to vote elsewhere.

The local governments in this country are highly aware of the need to improve voter registration. The necessary steps are being taken every day to see that those who are eligible are given adequate opportunity to register. Local civic organizations and the media have been effective in encouraging people to participate in the electoral process once they are registered. The issue of voting should remain at the local level, not relinquished to another new federal agency.

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

America's South African Policy

America's declared policy toward Africa has one of its main points majority rule throughout the Continent. This means that our government supports black participation in Rhodesia, where blacks outnumber the whites that control the country by 25 to 1, and in South Africa, where blacks make up 70 percent of the population.

Both countries are white-ruled today, and blacks have no rights at all. Whether our nation's policy is made up of empty words or of action is still in question.

The private sector's role is more complex; it is unrealistic to expect American companies with investments in South Africa to pull out of the country. But they can do a lot to help bring about changes in the vicious apartheid system.

That's why I've called on all American companies doing business in South Africa to come together in a Corporate Alliance for Black Progress, a declaration that would include:

- : a statement to the South African government opposing apartheid,
- : demands for changes in the labor laws that prevent equal treatment for black voters,
- : standards of social responsibility that would set standards of affirmative action, and education and housing programs for the black community.
- : pledges to disobey the petty apartheid regulations that segregate employees (the South African government would look the other way if American companies took down the "white" and "black" signs and integrated their public facilities),
- : a moratorium on future investment in the country until signs of real change appear, and
- : refusal to invest in the "homeland" areas so long as they remain the cornerstone of a policy that denies citizenship in all of South Africa to blacks.

The leaders of the corporate community are uneasy about their role in South Africa. They're troubled by charges of collaborating with a racist regime and defend their presence there by claiming that the jobs and economic advancement they bring will help foster change.

The black South Africans I talked to don't want to see those jobs leave the country; they're needed by black people who have few economic opportunities. And I was told that if the Americans pull out they'll be replaced by European and Japanese firms less amenable to social responsibility.

But the blacks I spoke with, while wanting the Americans to stay, unanimously agreed U.S. companies should do a lot more to help blacks. And since the companies claim they want to help the country toward peaceful change, my proposed declaration can become a vehicle that allows them to exercise the maximum pressure in that direction.

It's not all altruism either. South Africa will face its day of reckoning sooner or later and the black majority will eventually have self-determination. If it comes peacefully and is helped by our nation, then American interests will be protected.

But if it comes over American opposition, our nation's prestige and its economic interests throughout Africa may be swept away in righteous indignation.

Charlotte Needs L.C. Coleman

Recent published reports that Lewis Coleman, a candidate for the Mecklenburg Board of County Commission, is delinquent in paying \$104 in property taxes and is having other financial difficulties has caused him to consider withdrawing from the primary runoff.

The POST accepts this news with alarm and appeals to the community for support - especially from those who live in a better environment and better communities because of Coleman's leadership and efforts.

The POST certainly believes that all taxpayers should pay their taxes on time if at all possible, however, we share a concern expressed by Mr. Coleman. He said, "I am concerned about why all of a sudden my past has been so thoroughly investigated... (and) I question why I am the only candidate who has been investigated to date and why not before the primary last week?"

We share Mr. Coleman's concerns and we too wonder, why now? Did those who may have opposed Coleman's candidacy believe that because he ran a low-keyed campaign with, in his own words, "limited finances, a very small campaign organization and very little support from either the black or white

political leadership" that he would easily lose in the primary?

It is probably a history-making fact that in spite of a low-level campaign, Coleman attracted enough votes to finish fourth in a field of 11 with 11,656 votes. To have done so well in a first-ever political race without the support of the traditional political and power leaders of the community was probably upsetting to these power bases.

Coleman has demonstrated in the most unselfish way that he is truly a candidate of the people, and probably he would not have the problems he has now if he were not so busy assisting others.

Again the POST appeals to the community to demonstrate its desire to have Mr. Coleman remain in the primary runoff. He is, in our view, a true representative of the people, particularly those people who so often do not get adequate representation in the halls of government and public decision-making.

Let's keep Coleman in the running, and let's elect him to a seat in our county government.

The POST believes that men who do nothing need not fear making a mistake, but men like Coleman, who is seeking to aid others, sometimes do.

as i see it

Superintendent Rolland Jones Fired?

By Gerald O. Johnson

The controversial superintendent of the CMS System, Dr. Rolland Jones, was recently dismissed from his job by the school board. I am still puzzled about why Dr. Jones was fired. Hopefully, after reading this article, you will be puzzled about his firing, also.

Let's take the incident step by step. The school board insists that lack of public confidence was the reason for the firing. Some pointed to the lack of leadership as the reason for the firing. No one has conclusively stated that the reason was the summer jobs controversy.

Using this as a premise I will attempt to show that it does follow that Dr. Jones was fired for none other than the summer jobs controversy.

The school board almost unanimously approved Dr. Jones' two year contract in April of 76. Every controversy leading to Jones firing happened before April. Even the accusation by the federal government about the mishandling of the summer jobs pro-

gram was issued in March. The reading program accusation was the only controversy following the renewal of Jones' contract. Therefore, it would appear that if the school board was adhering to its responsibility, they should have dismissed Jones in April by not renewing his contract.

Instead, the school board waited, until the news media exposed the federal government's audit, to react. Hence, they acted out of embarrassment and made a bad situation worse.

The school board elections aided in Dr. Jones' upheaval. The people running for the school board (with the help of the news media) made Dr. Jones an issue. These candidates knowing little about public opinion said what other candidates had said which turned out to be a unanimous opposition to Jones. Hence the current school board felt compelled to act. Dr. Jones was fired, Q.E.D.

Therefore, having reached the conclusion that the summer jobs controversy was the reason for Jones' firing, I



Gerald Johnson

think the firing was unjustified. I didn't say that Dr. Jones was not wrong in what he did. But I don't think his being fired was the answer.

Now, let me try to justify this. Dr. Jones brought the school system through turbulent times and made this school system a national example. He did this by giving strong leadership when it was needed. He did not conform to southern ideologies which could have made him popular

among his peers, but rather he did what he thought was right. This won him the title of being 'cocky'.

He could have used this job as a stepping stone to social prominence in this area. But luckily for the black community he was not interested in such social grace. He spoke his mind freely and did his job well. No one can deny this, except possibly Bill Booe.

Moreover, I learned a cliché which stated: Show me a man that doesn't cause controversy and I'll show you a man that isn't doing a thing.

The money is not worth firing Dr. Jones over. The school board squanders that much in court in a week. So they couldn't be upset about the money.

Furthermore, they will still have to pay the money back, they will still have to pay Dr. Jones his salary over the next two years, what was gained?

In conclusion, the school board is the policy making body of the school system. The superintendent directs the operation of that system by proposing programs that must

be approved by the board. Correct me if I'm wrong. It seems odd that the board allowed Dr. Jones so much leeway in his position. It is obvious that the lack of school board responsibility was as much the cause of the system's problems as Dr. Jones was.

The derelection of responsibility by the board will not be erased by Dr. Jones' firing. At best the board can hope that with new personnel they can cover up their mistakes.

As one person put it, "Dr. Jones was caught by the new epidemic: The swine Booe!" I hope we don't let it spread.

100 State Groups To Support March

Continued from Page 1

Carolina Civil Liberties Union; Pat Rogers, vice-chairperson, National Tenant Organization of Durham; the Rev. Charles Ward of the Raleigh NAACP; and Sarah Stevenson, president of the Black Womens' Caucus of Charlotte.

In a special interview with the POST, Dr. Helen Othow, a local official of the N.C. Alliance and a professor at Johnson C. Smith University, said, "The purpose of the March is to gain support for the Wilmington 10, the Charlotte 3 and other political prisoners; to show concern for the protection of the rights of workers to organize, with

special concern for municipal workers and textile workers; and to express strong opposition to possible legislative action to re-institute capital punishment."

Dr. Othow added that among the list of prominent speakers to participate in the March and its related activities will be Georgia state senator Julian Bond, activist Angela Davis and Dr. W.W. Finlator, chairman of the N.C. Human Rights Commission.

The POST has also learned from Dr. Othow and M. Mitchell that persons interested in participating in the March may travel to Raleigh by chartered bus for a round-trip fare of \$15.

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