



Parks Helms
Democratic candidate

Helms' Special

Talent Is Getting

Things Done

by Susan Ellsworth
Post Staff Writer
"My special talent is to understand the policies and mechanics of getting things done in the legislature," asserted Parks Helms, Democratic candidate seeking re-election in the state House of Representatives, 26th District.

Helms introduced 35 to 40 specific pieces of legislation in the general assembly (House and Senate), this year.

One of these bills, which was defeated, would have eliminated the death penalty and substituted a term of life imprisonment for first degree murder and rape. After serving 25 years a convict could request a jury hearing to determine if he is eligible for parole.

Another bill introduced by Helms would allow for the merit selection of judges. Instead of many judges running unopposed, 60 percent of the voters would have to vote "yes" for that judge to stay in office. If a judge is rejected by the voters, the general assembly would nominate another candidate and the governor would appoint a new judge.

This bill would require a public vote because it involves an amendment to the constitution. Although this bill was rejected last year, Helms is planning to introduce it again when the legislature convenes in January. Helms expressed his belief that the bill will have support from the governor and more public approval.

Helms engineered the liquor by-the-drink bill, supported the Equal Rights Amendment, and legislation such as allocating one million dollars for a health care facility, grants for Spirit Square and a new classroom building at UNCC, and raising the state minimum wage standards to equal the federal standards.

"You've got to be able to put in acceptable legislation and get that legislation through the House and Senate members," commented Helms; he continued, "One must understand the mechanics, know how they think and have their respect."

Helms stated that decisions must be made for the best interest or good of all the people. Pressure from special interest groups must not force a decision, according to Helms.

A representative "must be willing to listen to everybody, and that's what I try to do," Helms declared. "One has to hear what special interest groups are saying, but also hear other groups no one is lobbying for and take them into consideration."

Born and raised in Charlotte, Parks Helms was graduated from UNCC and law school. He has been a lawyer for 17 years in the general practice of civil and criminal law with the law firm of Lane and Hill.

Elected to the House of Representatives in 1973, Helms has served two terms and is seeking a third term.

He is married to Eleanor Helms and has a daughter, 18, and two sons, ages 12 and 15.

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