

Republican Party Claims "Staunch" Black Supporters

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

According to figures from the Mecklenburg County Elections Office, there are twice as many registered Democrats as Republicans in the county. Although the Elections Office spokesperson could not say how many blacks are registered to each party, it is probably safe to assume that the ratio of Democrats to Republicans in the black community is even greater than two to one.

Nevertheless, the Republican Party can claim some staunch black supporters. Two of these are Felicia Pine and Hubert Jefferson, both of whom actively volunteer for the Republican cause.

"I've always been a registered Republican," Ms. Pine remarked. "Basically, two things attracted me — a belief in the two-party system and a belief in the fundamental principles of the Republican Party."

She believes that, by more blacks becoming active in the Party, they can make it more responsive to community needs. In talking with other blacks, Pine emphasizes the need for a two-party system and the importance of not voting the straight party ticket, but looking at the candidates and the issues. There are some people, however, she doesn't even try to talk to. "Hard-core Democrats I usually leave alone, because they will not change," she said.

Pine, normally a management consultant for a company out of Chicago, is presently devoting full time to campaign activities, especially in the Martin-for-Governor race. She described what she likes about Jim Martin. "My basic impression of him is that he is a man of integrity with traditional beliefs. Jim Martin is a sincere, honest, hard-working person. He has addressed the issue of contracts with minority businesses and has asked for input from the black community. He wants to know our concerns and what he can do to help."

Pine admitted that she gets a lot of jokes from friends about being a Republican. The biggest challenge, she feels, is minority recruitment. "It feels good when you get someone to register who has never been registered to vote," she acknowledged.

Unlike Pine, Hubert Jefferson is a



Felicia Pine
.....Active volunteer

former Democrat. His "conversion" came 34 years ago. "In 1948, I was a Democrat working for the Democratic Party," he began. "I was a persuader, selling white candidates to blacks. We were paid to do this. When I saw that the Republicans didn't operate that way, I switched parties."

Jefferson further articulated his belief that black leaders have sold fellow blacks "down the river" since Depression days through rhetoric proclaiming that Democrats are for blacks and Republicans are for the rich. "To me," he declared, "the



Hubert Jefferson
.....Former Democrat

Democrats have been keeping black people on a low level. They're for 'the common man,' but there's no motivation to be somebody in life."

He believes Republicans tend toward more individualistic thinking. As for the widely held view that Republicans are rich, he noted, "Since I've been in the Republican Party, we've always had less money than the Democratic Party."

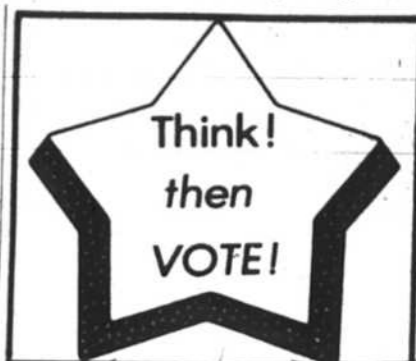
Jefferson, who is working in both the Alex McMillan and Jim Martin campaigns, admitted he does not vote straight Republican. "If a black

is running, no matter what, I vote for him, just to get a black voice in office," he asserted. Noting that he himself ran for County Commissioner in 1974, getting 17,000 votes, predominantly from the east side of Charlotte, Jefferson pointed out that the Republicans have had a number of black candidates on the local level.

He denied the allegation that blacks suffer under Republican administrations. During Nixon's term of office, for instance, "more blacks bought homes and started businesses than any other time," he stated. While he thinks Reagan cut too much from social programs, he pointed out that other programs were cut as well. And, by providing a target against which to rally around, Jefferson believes Reagan "is motivating us to work harder and educate ourselves more."

Jefferson commented that black Democrats should evaluate their party and know why they believe in it, rather than basing their affiliation on what he termed "rhetoric." Most of all, however, he believes blacks should vote for the person, not the party. "Stop being led by the tail of the ass and look the

elephant in the face," he advised. The Republican volunteer sees progress being made by both parties in terms of candidate selection. His prediction: in 1988, the Republicans will have a woman vice-presidential candidate, and the Democrats will have a black running for one of the two top offices.



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Nov. 4 Afternoon of Fashion and Entertainment King & Queen Club 119 N. Brevard St.

Endorsed by: The Black Political Caucus, Local N.C.A.E. Unit, SSPACE, All Black Elected Officials, Mayor Harvey Gantt, Councilmen Charlie Dannelly and Ron Leeper, Dr. Mildred Baxter Davis, Commissioner Bob Walton, Mrs. Sarah Stevenson, and Rev. Dr. George E. Battle Jr., among others.

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DON'T FORGET THE COUNTY COMMISSION. A MESSAGE FROM SUPPORTERS OF RANDY KINCAID.

This election year, our local political races have been so completely overshadowed by national campaigns that, when you go to the polls, you may overlook the ten candidates running for Mecklenburg County Commission. Unfortunately, the County Commission contest has attracted so little attention that it is probably hard for you to list the candidates, much less make an informed judgement of their qualifications. And that's a shame. The issues facing your County Commissioners next term will be as important to your future as any national controversy. The selection of your Commissioners deserves your careful attention.

Your local government is too important to neglect. When you go to the polls, please don't forget the County Commission. And we strongly urge your consideration of one candidate in particular, Randy Kincaid.

Randy Kincaid's seven years on the Davidson Town Board, his experience as a small businessman, and his background as a professional economist and teacher, provide him with unique sensitivity to issues facing our community. Randy Kincaid has the ability to evaluate situations open-mindedly, to solve problems creatively, and to implement decisions with integrity and insight. Remember the County Commission race, and remember Randy Kincaid.

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