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"The Voice Of The Black Community"

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Members of the Black United Forum (BUF) met at the King & Queen Lounge with several of the local black political candidates. The purpose of BUF, a Political Action Group, is to give financial support to selected candidates' election campaigns. Present for the event were: (Seated, l-r) Attny. James E. Ferguson II, Rep. Pete Cunningham, Kathleen Crosby, Attny. Carl Atkins, Senator Jim Richardson, (foreground, l-r) Rep. Howard Barnhill and guest.

BUF Backs Blacks

By Jayne Strong
Post Managing Editor

Black candidates running for Charlotte political offices in this fall's election gathered at the King & Queen Lounge last Thursday night to present their perspectives on community issues, before a group that could be very important to their political success.

The group is the Black United Forum (BUF), an assemblage of local citizens whose purpose is to raise funds for selected black candidates.

"BUF is a registered Political Action Committee," explains James E. Ferguson II, a partner in the law firm of Ferguson, Stein, Watt, Wallas & Atkins P.A. and co-convenor of BUF. "Its purpose is to raise funds to support black candidates. Our goals are to encourage qualified black candidates, who are sensitive to the needs of the black community, to run for political office and to increase the level of black political participation in elective offices."

The fund raising group assesses black candidates sensitivity to the community through meeting with the individual office-seeker, as was done last Thursday. Sev-

eral of Charlotte black candidates were present for the occasion. The worth of their presentation is one of the determining factors considered by BUF before financial support is given.

"We look at each candidate and what they have to offer," comments Ferguson. "We then make a consensus-type decision as to which candidate(s) campaign we will contribute."

BUF was formed approximately 10 years ago. Aside from Ferguson, the group's chief officers are Elizabeth Randolph, co-convenor, and Kathleen Crosby, treasurer. Membership in the group fluctuates around 20 persons each year, according to Crosby. Membership dues are \$250 per year for regular members and \$100 per year for retired members.

Over the years, Ferguson assures that BUF has definitely had an influential effect upon black participation in the political process. "We've been able to support a number of candidates financially," he points out. "And we have made the community more aware of the need to provide financial support to black candidates."

Ferguson underscores this point stating, "No other group exists solely for the purpose of raising funds for black candidates."

"Understandably, to increase the number of blacks in elected office, we must be willing to make the financial sacrifice," he adds.

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New Harrassment Law Brings Racial Suits To Local Courts

By Herb White
Post Staff Writer

After recalling media accounts of attacks against Blacks in Alabama, New York and nearby Monroe, state Rep. Pete Cunningham (D-Mecklenburg) decided to sponsor a bill that could stem racist harrassment in North Carolina.

And after a few amendments, Cunningham's bill is now law.

The legislation, initiated as House Bill 226 in the recent General Assembly session, enables victims of racial harrassment to sue individuals or organizations for damages in local courts.

"It sends a message that the state of North Carolina won't tolerate racists violating the civil rights of its citizens and it gives the victims of such acts the right to sue," Cunningham asserted.

After hearing of recent civil rights violations against Blacks, Cunningham related that he sponsored the bill to give victims of racial harrassment another means of collecting damages through the court system.

"There has been an increase in violent acts against blacks and minorities," he said. "The reason to have a state law is to close the gap in the federal law."

The law, similar to one in Alabama, gives victims the chance to file suit in local court to collect



Rep. Pete Cunningham

damages for civil rights violations. The Alabama law was used earlier this year when Beulah Donald of Mobile sued the United Klans of America for damages in connection with the murder of her son, Michael.

Mrs. Donald was awarded a \$7 million judgement against the hate group, the largest Klan organization in the United States.

With federal courts located in large cities as the only remedy, some suits didn't get to trial because complainants from smaller towns found it too time-consuming and expensive, Cunningham said.

With the new law, racial harrassment suits can be argued lo-

cally, which should speed up the judicial process.

"As it was, if someone violated your civil rights, you could take them to federal court, but the dockets are full. The federal courts are in cities like Charlotte and Raleigh, so people have to go a long way to file a suit. With this law, you can sue at a local court," he explained.

Getting the legislation passed was an exercise in compromise between its supporters and both houses of the General Assembly.

Coming up with a final draft that satisfied everyone wasn't easy, Cunningham stated.

The original bill was amended to exclude government officials and supervisors executing their duties at work. Cunningham said he didn't like the changes, but the law still has teeth.

"You can't get the whole loaf, but the law does get to the core of the problem," he concluded.

Cunningham said he has received positive responses from civil rights groups and lawyers, about the bill's passage, but public awareness may be slow in coming.

"I've talked to some lawyers and organizations like the NAACP about the bill, but the Ku Klux Klan hasn't called and threatened to burn a cross in my yard," he joked.

Leeper Finds New Challenges In Campaign

By Herb White
Post Staff Writer

Running for Charlotte city council as an at-large candidate is presenting different challenges for incumbent Ron Leeper.

More money and campaign time is required to win at-large, he said, than when he ran in District 3. Leeper, who has been on the council 10 years, said about \$25,000 in campaign funds will be needed going into the Nov. 3 general election as opposed to \$1,500 to run a campaign in District 3.

As of press time Thursday, about \$9,000 was raised for immediate needs, such as yard signs and campaign stickers.

"Obviously, it helps to have the money as soon as you can get it," Leeper said. "You need a little money early for the primary, but you need it more for the general

election, which is the tough time."

Instead of going all-out in the Sept. 22 Democratic primary, Leeper's campaign is looking to the general election, which will be made up of four Democrats and four Republicans.

"We're not going to spend a lot of resources on the primary. We're going to save our big push for the general election," Leeper stated. "It's a calculated risk, as it is running for public office."

One of six Democrats on the ballot in the primary, Leeper related that he is counting on name recognition to gain reelection. Unlike many candidates, Leeper said he is known around the city and has a constituency on which to build.

"There's no question you have to have a base. My base is the black community," Leeper re-

marked. "Name recognition is the key factor, but you have to let people know that you're running. I can't leave any rocks unturned."

To turn those rocks over, Leeper has tried breaking new ground among voters. He has been campaigning to garner support in a city whose districts have their own special problems.

"In a district, you can run on one or two issues of concern to voters, but when you go city wide, every neighborhood has different concerns," he said.

With nearly a third of the money raised for the campaign, Leeper said he believes the remainder can be gathered before November.

Campaign money has come from various sources, primarily fundraisers and contributions by mail, Leeper reported.

Response to Leeper's candidacy has been favorable among blacks, but also by Whites and business leaders.

"Two-thirds of the support has come from the white community," he stated. "I think that means something, because when you put your money in it, that means you're likely to support me."

Race has not been a factor in the campaign, Leeper pointed out, although he assumes voters may think about it.

"Obviously that's a factor for any black candidate," he stated. "One of the things we've done is that we have a record and that outweighs other considerations like race."

Former NFL Star To Speak

Pettis Norman, former NFL standout with the Dallas Cowboys and San Diego Chargers and presently a successful Dallas, Tx. businessman will be guest speaker at the third annual banquet of the West Trade-Beatties Ford Road Area Merchants Association (WTBAMA) on Friday, September 18, 7:30 p.m., at McDonald's Cafeteria, Beatties Ford Rd. and I-85.

Norman is owner of Pettis Norman Investment Company, Inc. The company's holdings have included Burger King franchises, Golden Helmet Apartments and Norman & Ketch, Inc.

A native of Lincolnton, Ga., Norman is a graduate of West Charlotte Senior High School, Charlotte. He is also a Johnson C. Smith University alumnus and Norman continues to serve his alma mater as a member of the Johnson C. Smith University President's Club and member of the University's Board of Trustees.

In 1975, he was the WRET-TV commentator for the World Football League Charlotte Hornets.

In addition to his business interests, Norman has taken time for civic service in Dallas by serving on the Board of Directors of several organizations including the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce, the Moorland Branch YMCA, The Dallas Urban League, the Dallas County Democratic Forum, the Dallas



Pettis Norman

Commission on Children And Youth, the Boys Club of Dallas, and the Martin Luther King Center. He also serves as President of the Concerned Voters Council, Inc.

His activities have garnered Norman several prestigious awards and honors including the Liberty Bell Award by the Dallas Bar Association; inclusion in the Hall of Fame for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association; and invitations from three U.S. Presidents to attend the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C.

For the banquet, Norman's speech will center on the occasion's theme: "Working Together For Economic Dignity."

Ticket price for the WTBAMA Banquet is \$35 and reservations may be made by calling Beatties Ford Memorial Gardens at 892-9394.

Democrats To Have Fun In High Point

Presidential candidates Bruce Babbitt, Governor Michael Dukakis, Congressman Richard Gephardt, Senator Albert Gore Jr. and Rev. Jesse Jackson are all expected guests for the North Carolina Democratic Party FunFair, to be held in Market Square, High Point, NC, Friday and Saturday, September 11 and 12.

The two-day event is sponsored by Jim Van Hecke Jr., Chairman of the North Carolina Democratic Party, and Senator Terry Sanford, Honorary Chairman.

The purpose of the FunFair is to kick off the 1988 campaign.

Black Artists Object To Process, Not Art

By Loretta Richardson
Post Staff Writer

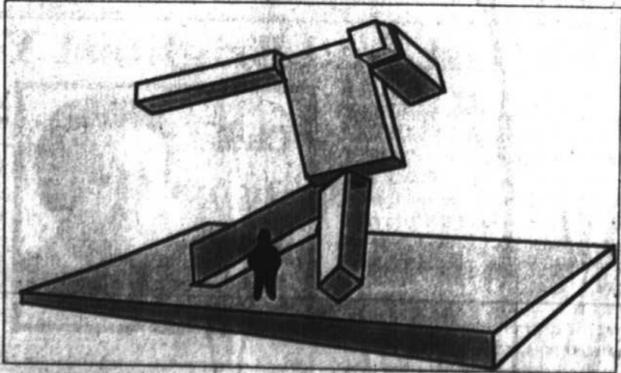
Most of the expressed controversy surrounding the proposed sculpture, a 22-foot-tall stack of greenish bronze planned for Charlotte's new coliseum has been isolated to one concern, the sculpture's appearance.

But three of Charlotte's well-known black artists, T.J. Reddy, Juan Logan and Tommie Robinson have less problems with the way the sculpture looks than they do with the selection process involved in the project.

"The Arts Commission people involved were not clear on what they wanted. And because of the unclarity a number of people went through unnecessary scrutiny," began Reddy.

Reddy acknowledges that not only did he apply for consideration, but so did Logan and Robinson. "We (Reddy, Logan, and Robinson) were under the impression that the art piece the commission was looking was one to be included inside the coliseum. We went through a rather lengthy process of filling out applications, preparing slide presentations, and submitting resumes, detailed Reddy.

According to Logan, the prospectus was opened to all art mediums. But contrary to that infor-



mation Logan also learned that Litchen Stein, a noted sculptor was the commission's first choice, but was unavailable for the project. "If that was the case, someone would have had to contact him."

"Personally, I feel that the Arts Commission already had a good idea on what they wanted and who they wanted from the beginning," related Logan.

"And if that was the case-the commission should have targeted the sculpture art form and let it go at that," added Logan.

Reddy agreed saying, "If we had known that the commission was considering sculpture,

we would not have gone through the process. Their whole approach to the project was inappropriate and inexcusable."

Robinson's objections, while coinciding with those expressed by Reddy and Juan, also touched on the subject of race. "I believe in the public funding aspect of art. But I don't think much of the process. Black artists don't get a chance. They're excluded every time, no matter how much we apply. I hate to say it, but it's gotten to be the attitude I've accepted."

"Art is clannish and if you don't frequent the right circuits or

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