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Gantt Looks Ahead

By Herb White
Post Staff Writer

Although he's on the verge of stepping down as mayor, Harvey Gantt says he isn't through with the political arena.

Gantt, Charlotte's first black mayor, lost a close election to Sue Myrick last week in what many observers labeled an upset. A week after the election, Gantt says he has been able to reflect back with a sense of reality that wasn't possible at first.

"You never expect to lose, but always be prepared to lose is my motto," he said. "It was a shock to me as it was very disappointing but that's the nature of politics."

Gantt reflected upon the campaign as a strange occurrence politically: a popular incumbent who is unexpectedly beaten. But he refused to point out one single factor as to why he failed to win.

"I don't intend to look back at why I lost a race," he informed. "You think it over for a few days then you move on."

Like it or not, Gantt said, race is



Harvey Gantt

a fact of political life. He got nearly all the black vote and 36 percent of white support, but it wasn't enough to overcome Myrick's support among whites.

Ron Leeper, who just missed out on the fourth city council seat, as-

serted that the election turned along racial lines.

"Race was a factor, there's no getting around that," Gantt stated. "It's tough to win in a city that's 75 percent white, but we knew that going in."

Some observers charge that Gantt's campaign suffered from its own success, that the candidate and his supporters felt the election was wrapped up when he announced a reelection bid.

Myrick, on the other hand, built support as the campaign progressed by attacking Gantt on traffic congestion, leadership and his character. By election day, the momentum was clearly on the challenger's side.

Gantt agreed to an extent about complacency, but he insists that his campaign was run on the issues, not personal attacks.

"There wasn't the fire or enthusiasm of other campaigns," he recounted. "It may be providence, maybe the third time wasn't intended. Clearly this wasn't in the

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Bulls Triumph At Homecoming!



J.C. Smith's Maurice Flowers, No. 14, eludes N.C. Central defenders on the way to a seven-yard touchdown run last week.

Photo By Cabeta Ferguson

HOMECOMING VICTORY: Johnson C. Smith University ends 10 years of Eagle Domination. See story on page 3B.

Leeper To Shift Political Gears

By Herb White
Post Staff Writer

Ron Leeper says he will now devote more time to his family and community projects when his term on city council is over.

Leeper, District 3 representative on the council for 10 years, lost a bid for an at large seat Nov. 3. Out of a field of eight, Leeper finished fifth, just out of position for the fourth and final seat.

Now that he is free of doing the city's business, Leeper informed that he will turn his attention toward his family.

"I'm going to spend more time with my wife and kids (Rhonda, 16 and Akiba, 13) who have grown up with me in politics," he said. "I probably have neglected them in being a public official."

Even after his loss, Leeper said he indirectly heard about mayor-elect Sue Myrick's invitation to join an advisory panel she plans to implement. Leeper said he never talked to Myrick about the position and would rather do some things that aren't related to politics.

"Mrs. Myrick had not talked to me," he stated. "I have some things of my own that I want to do."

The at large campaign, Leeper said, was a good idea although he gave up a safe seat to try to run in a field of eight. After serving District 3 since 1977, Leeper felt his record and experience could carry him to a win.

"I ran at large because I thought I had the best chance of anybody to get elected," Leeper explained.

But, that didn't happen: Leeper's campaign raised \$25,000 to get him elected and yet he came up short. When asked why he wasn't elected, the subject of race came up. Leeper believes that some whites won't vote for a black candidate no matter what his record and experience says.

According to a poll done by the

Charlotte Observer, 9 out of 10 people knew who I was, Leeper surmised. "Given the name recognition and my experience, I should've come in second. After you wipe everything off, it comes down to race. It was at least an 800 vote difference."

Although he got some white support, Leeper didn't get enough to win election. He suggested that white voters look at more than labels when they go to the polls.

"It's always been tough for blacks to win citywide and I don't see it getting any easier. Progress can only be attained when everybody moves at the same time," he said. "If you're pushing one way and the other fellow is pulling the other way, you're not going to get much done. But sometimes you just have to push by yourself to change things."

During the campaign, Leeper denounced the practice of single-shot voting in a four-seat race. To single shot, supporters vote for one candidate only, in hopes of padding his total while keeping the opposition's down.

Leeper suggests that while single-shot elections may not be the best way to elect blacks to citywide offices, some other method may be needed to win.

"It's time to go to the drawing board," he said. "There are other methods for blacks to win at citywide elections, and they should be explored. We have to analyze every option to determine what is best to get the people we want."

Black voters, though, shouldn't take the election results as a backlash against black candidates, Leeper asserts. Blacks should try to work even harder within the system to effect change.

"The best candidate doesn't always win," he said. "My concern is that we're moving to a point where people are less likely to vote. We sought to take some risks. Too many people in the community have copped out on the

system. If we participated to our full potential, we could have a tremendous impact on every election."

Black Colleges Threatened By Federal Loan Plan

RALEIGH (AP) — U.S. Education Secretary William Bennett's proposal to end federal loans to schools with high student loan default rates would have a chilling effect on students who attend black colleges in North Carolina, officials say.

"I would describe the secretary's policies as Neanderthal," Robert L. Albright, president of Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, told the News and Observer of Raleigh. "It's designed to punish institutions, and ... it would probably close us."

In Raleigh, officials at Shaw University and St. Augustine's College said Bennett's threats showed a lack of compassion for students from low-income families who rely on federal aid.

Bennett said Wednesday that the government would have to spend \$1.6 billion this year, nearly half the federal Guaranteed Student Loan budget, to cover loans that students failed to repay, a situa-



Albright

tion he called "intolerable."

In interviews Friday, educators from black schools attacked Bennett for threatening to end federal student loans to schools if their student loan default rates exceed-

ed 20 percent by 1990. Black colleges rank near the top of the list of North Carolina schools with high default rates.

Nationwide, according to federal figures, there are 2,190 colleges or trade schools with default rates of 20 percent or higher. In response to high numbers of students failing to pay off their loans, the Senate is considering a bill that would allow guarantors to refuse to guarantee loans to institutions with a default rate higher than 25 percent.

A list issued by federal educators showed 55 colleges or trade schools in North Carolina with default rates at 20 percent or higher. Among those were several predominantly black colleges including St. Augustine's with a default rate of 54.6 percent; Shaw with 33.3 percent; Johnson C.

Smith with 47.7 percent; and North Carolina Central University with 33.5 percent.

On Friday, members of the N.C. Association of Colleges and Universities split over the issue during their annual convention in Durham, narrowly defeating a resolution that would have expressed opposition to any legislation calling for punitive actions against students and schools that default on student loans. The 29-28 vote was split along racial lines, with most black colleges of officials supporting the resolution.

Oscar S. Smith Jr., director of marketing and communications for the 1,671-student St. Augustine's, said that the four-

year college had been working to reduce its default rate for several years. Smith said efforts to reduce the rate were hampered by a lack of enforcement power over students who wouldn't pay.

"We don't have the authority to enforce those laws," Smith said. "It lies with the individual or parent or guardian of whoever takes out that loan. We do everything we can to encourage them to pay it back, but we can't enforce it."

Half of Shaw University's 1,600 students receive federal aid, said Thomas E. Kee, Shaw's executive vice president. Kee said Bennett's proposal to end aid would be "very serious for our students."

Kee disputed the Department of Education list showing his college with a 33.3 percent default rate.

"At our last report, we were slightly over 20 percent and ... we expect to be lower than that by the end of the year," he said.

Albright suggested the federal government could find other means of getting students to repay loans, such as seizing tax refund checks and garnishing paychecks. He said Bennett's proposal "had the potential of actually closing" many colleges and trade schools.

Albright Reappointed To College Board

Robert L. Albright, President, Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, North Carolina, has been reappointed Chairman of the Advisory Panel on Minority Concerns of the College Board for 1987-88.

The College Board is a national nonprofit association serving students, schools, and colleges

through programs designed to expand educational opportunity, higher and secondary education institutions and schools, systems, and associations. The College Board's programs in guidance, admissions, placement, financial aid, and credit by examination, assist the school-to-college transition of some 2.5 million students annually.

Business League To Present Awards At Fete

The Charlotte Business League will present its 1987 Business Awards recipients and Business Hall of Fame inductees during its Tenth Annual Awards celebration on Thursday, November 19, 1987.

The awards recipients and inductees will be announced and introduced at a luncheon news conference at 11 o'clock at McDonald's Cafeteria on Beatties Ford Road at Interstate 85.

The Charlotte Business League is an eleven-year-old organization of minority-owned companies, black professionals and major corporations whose primary objective is the promotion and enhancement of black business and economic development.

The awards are presented in three categories: "New Business of the Year" for minority-owned company in business two years or less; "Business of the Year" for minority-owned company in busi-



Jean Webber

ness five years or more; "Business Hall of Fame" for minority business person in business at least 20 years and/or retired after minimum 20 years.

In addition to their business successes, the awardees and inductees are cited for their community and



Nasif Majeed

civic involvement and leadership, and for their support of the promotion and enhancement of other black businesses and economic development.

Nominations for the business awards and Hall of Fame are submitted to a committee of former

Charlotte Business League Presidents who make the final selections. Some of the previous awards winners have included:

Jean Webber, former owner of a manufactured computer cards company and now president of Metro-Crescent Communications, which owns and operates WJZY-TV CHANNEL 46; Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt and his partner Jeff Huberman recognized for their successful architectural firm of Gantt-Huberman & Associates; Nasif Majeed, owner of the Burger King franchise on Beatties Ford Road at I-85; the late Dr. C. Warren Williams, Sr., a Charlotte surgeon, businessman, and founding organizer of a West Charlotte Health Center that now bears his name.

For more information about the awards presentations or the Charlotte Business League, call the League Office at 376-3185.

Blue Speaks At Banquet

North Carolina House Representative Daniel "Dan" Blue will be the guest speaker at the Charlotte Civic League Holiday Banquet. Representative Blue was the major force behind the bill to make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a State holiday. He has been in the House of Representatives

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