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THE AWARD-WINNING "VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY"

50 Cents

# Minority Affairs Task Force OK'd 5-1

By HERB WHITE  
Post Staff Writer

Mecklenburg County Monday came a step closer to resurrecting its Minority Affairs Office nearly one year after it was all but dead.

Commissioners voted 5-1 to appoint a 15-member task force to study the feasibility of bringing back the office, which was merged with the Community Relations department last year. Jerry Blackmon, a Republican, cast the only dissenting vote while Democrat Bob Walton, the only black commissioner, voted for it.

In the past, Minority Affairs advocated services and projects for blacks in addition to serving as an information network.

Walton said the vote for a task force, along with reserving \$40,000 for a minority affairs program is the first step in bringing the office back.

"I'm very pleased that during budget time the commissioners saw fit to set aside money to establish a Minority Affairs Office if that's what they see fit to do," he said.

The commissioners will most likely name the study panel next month, Walton said. Six com-



Walton

missioners will name two members to the task force while chairman Carla DuPuy will name three.

Walton didn't say who he would appoint to the panel, but would likely choose from people who express an interest in serving.

"I'm availing myself to those persons who may be interested," he said, adding that he would recommend candidates if other commissioners ask him to do so.

The Republican-dominated board probably didn't realize the importance of a Minority Affairs Office when the program was dismantled, Walton said. Blacks accused the commission of being insensitive and even racist when the office was trimmed from the county's budget.

"In my mind, the commissioners did not have the full understanding of what the Minority Affairs Office was about," he said.

Election-year pressure from local groups and individuals, however, contributed to the vote for a task force. Walton said black support for the office and his win in the Democratic primary in May helped in his campaign to bring it back.

"I look at it as my job," he said. "Regardless of who I sit with, it is my job to make sure the interests of the black community are heard."

A Minority Affairs program, Walton said, is important to help blacks gain access to county politics and business. He compared the situation to the plight of women before the Womens Commission was established in 1974 behind the leadership of former commissioner Liz Hair.

"Fourteen years hence, we have a woman mayor, a woman who's chairman of the county commissioners and we recently had

a woman chairman of the school board," Walton said. "We need a Minority Affairs Office to do the same thing."

Contrary to speculation, Walton said the task force vote was not linked to his position to deny county money to Planned Parenthood. After 10 years of supporting the agency, Walton voted in June against funding.

"There was no deal pulled regarding the Minority Affairs Of-

ice and Planned Parenthood," he said.

Citing duplication of services, the commissioners merged Minority Affairs with Community Relations. But when it didn't work, Walton said, separate agencies became a possibility.

"The fact that it didn't work out may have helped them say 'maybe we need to bring that back,'" he said.

## Momentum Building To Eliminate Runoff Elections

By HERB WHITE  
Post Staff Writer

When proponents of second primaries dragged their feet about relaxing the choke hold runoffs have on black candidates, civil rights activists like Kelly Alexander were stymied.

Now Alexander, a former candidate for register of deeds feels that second primaries will soon be a thing of the past, and he won't settle for anything less than their total elimination.

"The time to compromise was last year when I was willing to compromise," he said. "But I'm not in the compromising mood now."

The Mecklenburg County board of elections last week denied Alexander's appeal to stay the May canvass certifying Judy

Gibson's win over Alexander in the Democratic runoff. The board, however, will offer a written opinion on Alexander's appeal and will submit it to the N.C. board of elections later this month.

Paul Allen, Mecklenburg's chief registrar, said the board declared Gibson the winner based on the way current law is written.

"The way the election laws are written and interpreted," he said. "There are a lot of different variables."

The board could possibly present its findings on the appeal to the state board as early as next week at meetings in Greensboro, Allen said.

"You never know what the state board is going to do," Allen cautioned about its reviewing process. "If the board turns down the appeal, the next option would be federal court."

Alexander, state president of the NAACP, said that although

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Alexander

## Sen. Helms Backs Black Judge

WASHINGTON (AP) --- Sen. Jesse Helms says prompt action is needed to allow U.S. District Judge Richard C. Erwin of Winston-Salem to become the first black chief district judge in North Carolina.

"I would like to see him set that precedent," Helms told The News and Observer of Raleigh on Tuesday.

But Democrats say Erwin could become chief judge of the state's middle district without the Senate's action. A key Judiciary Committee aide said the Senate would not speed up its normal procedures in order to accommodate Helms.

Erwin would become chief judge if the Senate confirms N. Carlton "Woody" Tilley of Greensboro for a federal judgeship, clearing the way for Chief Judge Hiram Ward to go on senior status," a form of semi-retirement.

But Helms contends the action must be taken quickly.

Helms also accused Senate Democrats of stalling numerous Republican judicial nominations in hopes of killing them if Democrats win the White House in November. Because Republicans hold the presidency, they make nominations for federal judgeships; Helms controls all nominations from North Carolina because he is the state's only Republican senator.

Particularly vexing to Helms is the case of Gastonia lawyer Richard Voorhees, who needs only a Senate floor vote to achieve his two-year battle to become a U.S. district judge in the state's western district.

Helms has said that Democratic Sen. Terry Sanford of Durham and other Democrats are blocking final action on Voorhees. "I don't see any hopes of seeing Voorhees confirmed unless they have a change of heart," he said.

Sanford said several senators objected to a final vote on Voorhees, but he declined to identify them.

Helms has said Sanford's hold on the Voorhees nomination was in response to Helms' blocking of a wilderness bill for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. But Helms said Tuesday the wilderness disagreement was "just one excuse that's being used" to block Voorhees' confirmation.



Erwin



This 1985 collage by Bearden entitled BEFORE DAWN is the model for Charlotte Public Library mural.

## Romare Bearden Mural Is Picked For Charlotte's Main Library

The Charlotte/Mecklenburg Art Commission and the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have announced their selection of a Romare Bearden mural for the 1 percent art in public places project for the new Main Library.

The 9 foot high by 13-1/2 foot wide mural, which will be fabricated from glass mosaic tiles, will be placed on the first floor of the library, adjacent to the main entrance/lobby area. The maquette (model) for the mural is a 1985 collage by Mr. Bearden entitled *Before Dawn*. This work was selected from a group of available works as an excellent example of the artist's Mecklenburg County series. The collage depicts a family's early morning activities as they greet the new day; the rising sun shines through the doorway.

Romare Bearden, who died earlier this year, was born in Charlotte in 1911 and spent much of his childhood here. Although he went on to international acclaim and lived primarily in New York, he was fond of saying that in his heart he never left Mecklenburg. At the time of his death, he was generally regarded as the master living collageist.

The \$125,000 cost of the project was made possible by the one percent of the construction budget set aside under the City/County art in public places ordinance, and by a major gift from The Charlotte Observer. This marks the first time since the inception of the 1 percent program that there has been such public/private cooperation to meet a budget and see a project realized. In addition, other private funds are being raised by a

committee coordinated by Elizabeth Randolph, Library Trustee, and Jeanne Brayboy, member of the Arts Commission, to provide lighting and printed material about the mural.

The mural will be scaled from the original collage and made by the Crovatto Mosaic Company of Italy. It is expected that it will be installed in the Library near the end of February, 1989.

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the Bearden mural in March, 1988. The mural was then negotiated with Mrs. Bearden and the artist's estate, by Jerald Melberg Gallery, Inc., Bearden's local representative.

The collage *Before Dawn*, will be on view the remainder of August in the lobby of the Charlotte Observer building.

## CPCC Threatens To Close West Charlotte Location

By LORA VANDERHALL  
Post Staff Writer

Central Piedmont Community College is threatening to close the West Charlotte High School location due to lack of enrollment.

The site at West Charlotte High has been there for the past 20 years and if the program is to be continued much more participation is needed. Brenda Froneberger, site administrator, says there are several factors which may be contributing to the lack of enrollment.

"Competition could be one of the reasons for the lack of participation. The Double Oaks site is open all day and they offer the same type of courses. In addition to that, there are churches and other organizations with similar type programs."

"But there is still a need for this type program in our com-



Froneberger

munity," said Froneberger. There is also an amount of apathy associated with the lack of enrollment. This is an example of how some black communi-

ties refuse to use the resources available to them, despite their personal need for the services.

Froneberger has been working very hard to generate interest in the program. She has written to thirty churches and passed out flyers in various neighborhoods. Gethsemane Enrichment Pro-

gram will soon become involved in the effort to save the West Charlotte site. The tutorial program at Gethsemane will offer scholarships for parents who are interested in taking classes at West Charlotte. Transporta-

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## Child Care Ctr. To Open In Work Place

Carla DuPuy, Chairman of the Board of Mecklenburg County Commissioners, and Charlotte Mayor Pro Tem Al Rousso will participate in the ribbon cutting ceremonies at the grand opening of the University Child Development Center on August 25, 12 noon.

The center, a new child care concept, is located in the work place at 8303 University Executive Park off Hwy 29, adjacent to University Place.

This child development center is the first of its kind in this area, and is in direct response to the Corporate Champion Task Force Report which called for quality child development centers close to where people work.