

# The Charlotte Post

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## Editorials

### Hall Was Man For All Seasons

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Editorial Writer

Rarely in the many years that it has been my privilege to write this column have I felt the need to express in a deep personal way a perspective on an issue or a personality. This is one of those times because the personality in question is that of the late Dr. Warner Hall. He was a great man, not so much in the direct political, economic or even in the theological sense. He was a great man in that he was a statesman and an activist in a quest for all that represented social justice. He was great too in that he included a Christ-like social justice theology in his preaching ministry at Covenant Presbyterian Church at a time when such preaching was offensive to most white people.

Warner Hall stood tall against the tide of racism and segregation. He accepted the chairmanship of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee at the time of emerging racial unrest in the 1960s. He helped to make the committee a permanent and effective part of both city and county gov-

ernments and left an impressive legacy. Having seen and heard Dr. Hall preach from his pulpit and having served on the Community Relation Committee for six years long after the chairmanship had passed to other hands, I can personally attest to his commitment to social justice and to the life long legacy that he left with the committee and the community-at-large.

Dr. Hall was a man that I had the privilege to know personally, one whom I witnessed help to move the City of Charlotte beyond the riots and chaos of other cities in the '60s, and, as I recall, was one of the first white community leaders to endorse scattered site public housing.

Almighty God has seen fit to take Warner Hall from us. However, we are a better city, a better community and a more tolerant people because he once lived among us. Dr. Warner Hall deserves that rarely endowed right to be called truly a "man for all seasons," a man who helped us all to be better than we might have been.

### Find New Midway School Site

We have listened to and observed the debates and depths of emotion over the midway school concept. In its simplest terms, it is a good concept but should not be applied to the Chantilly Elementary School. Again, in its simplest terms, the Chantilly school meets the ideal situation of a racially integrated neighborhood which naturally should allow for a racially integrated school. To use a cliché, "it ain't broke, so don't fix it."

However, let us hastily add that our endorsement of what some have called the "parent choice plan" in the Chantilly situation should not be viewed as an abandonment of our continued commitment to an on-going fully integrated public school system via the pupil assignment plan and the required use of school busses.

Retaining the Chantilly school as a neighborhood school in an integrated neighbor-

hood should be a conceptual part of the county-wide school integration plan. That is, other neighborhoods meeting the same criteria should be allowed to have similar neighborhood schools.

However, Charlotte is very segregated by residence. We very likely do not have any more Chantilly-like neighborhoods. The fact is, past years of segregated housing and some continued "steering" have created our current housing patterns. Such patterns have shifted the burden to the public schools to create some degree of an integrated society.

Yet, considering the forces of political, economic and social vested interest, we will have segregated residential neighborhoods for many years to come. Therefore, the school board needs to continue to explore school integration concepts.

### Risk-Taking Black Entrepreneurs Needed

With the Afro-Americans' historic emphasis on pursuing professions in medicine, law and the ministry, black entrepreneurs - business owners - have been viewed as people with relatively low status by most black consumers. This fact, combined with some degree of discrimination in the market place, has discouraged black students from seeking business careers. In fact, there were more black-owned businesses between 1940 and 1960 than there are now more than 20 years after the civil rights revolution of the 1960s.

Paraphrased, these were the opening remarks of Harvey Gantt, managing partner of Gantt Huberman Architects, in the keynote address at the Ninth Annual BEEP Conference held at Johnson C. Smith University, March 5-7. BEEP is an acronym for Black Executive Exchange Program. Sponsored by the National Urban League, BEEP sends black executives from many of the nation's largest corporations to black college campuses for the purpose of creating opportunities for dialogue with students and faculty.

Mr. Gantt's words reflect a truism about our Afro-American experience and attitudes today.

Following the Revolutionary War, George Washington took his victorious officers to a farewell dinner at a New York tavern owned by a black man.

But, eventually, white hostility toward

black economic success led to laws and acts of violence, in a historic pattern, that served to undermine black business success.

Segregation became a blessing in disguise because whites had no fear of economic competition from blacks serving other blacks in such businesses as barbering, funerals, cosmetics, food service and medicine.

Unfortunately, under these circumstances, many black businesses felt less inclined to see the need to be strongly competitive, thus many poor products and services were provided to black consumers. While products and services have improved substantially in the 70's and 80's, a strong risk taking competitive spirit continues to be a missing value among many black business. Continued racism and its related side affects are a contributing factor to this problem.

Gantt challenged the 110 students, faculty and others at the conference to recognize that economic development is just as important as political development. In commenting on the relative success of his own business, he noted the need to be a risk taker, to pursue excellence, to get a good education, to develop marketing strategy skills, and to be prepared to make many personal sacrifices.

This is good advice for all of us no matter what our professional or occupational interests may be.

### Are Our Schools Relevant?

What's wrong with our schools? It all depends on who you ask.

School administrators will say, "sure we have some problems, but overall the system is great".

School teachers will say that the system could be great, if it wasn't for those darn administrators.

Of course, parents complain about the schools, because they expect the schools to take over parenting, something more of them are getting away from.

Finally, the students complain because they just think there are better ways for them to spend their time.

Unfortunately, few people will talk about the irrelevancy of our school systems. The system's structure is still geared around the agricultural age. Our society is embarking on the third wave of a technological age. This fact presents some very interesting dilemmas for a school system. However, most school systems don't acknowledge these problems exist.

The technological age has created very clear class distinctions between the haves and the have-nots. Technology has become sophisticated enough to replace people in routine, repetitive jobs. Individuals who do not get training for skill labor positions get left out. Individuals who get adequate training to cope, ultimately become more dependent on technology. Consequently, the gap between the have and the have-nots widens.

The educational systems of our society falls both classes. The haves are not motivated by the curriculum because it is out of date. The have-nots are not motivated by the curriculum because they can't identify with



what's being taught. In both cases neither group can relate to the curriculum.

The current curriculum has as its base the student's ability to retain, then to recall facts about an array of subjects. It does not focus on teaching students to think. Retention and recall was an important technique when our society was advancing from an agricultural age to an industrial age. Farmers were being brought in to run machines and to do repetitive work. They had to be trained on retaining and recalling information. The sheer number of people that had to be trained to get us heavily into the industrial revolution dictated that we formalize the educational process. That formalized process with little variation is still in existence today.

But computers have taken over the ability to retain far more data and recall it much faster than humans could even imagine, let alone do. Why then, do we still utilize an educational system that has as its base retention and recall.

More importantly, how can you get kids of the haves to get excited about the war of 1812, when

they can come home to a 48 station cable television set with remote controlled VCR, two way telephone, stereo system with CD player, and a home computer. Recalling information about the war of 1812 is simply irrelevant.

The kids of the have-nots can not associate the relative importance of the war of 1812 with their current plight. They are more attuned to those things that will help them to become one of the haves. Have-nots will be more apt to turn to sports and crime as vehicles for changing their plight in life.

The need for a complete overhaul of our educational system is long overdue. We must thrust the system into the twenty first century. This will require a heavy investment into automation and into qualified teachers.

The curriculum must be changed to become more relevant to what is going on in our society. One of the first things companies have to do with recent college graduates is to retrain them to write effectively. The school system apparently awards verbosity. However, in the hustle and bustle of everyday living, most people prefer that you get to the point. In a business environment getting to the point is a necessity. Why then do we not teach effective writing in school?

Moreover, we live in a capitalistic society. Business is the heart of a capitalistic society. We educate the majority of people to become participants in the business sector. However, business courses are rarely taught prior to getting into college. Either we must revamp the school system, or we better start learning Japanese.

### He's Back! Run For Cover!

Watch out! He's back. And he is dangerous to you if you are the least bit liberal—or even middle of the road. Or if you just happen to be a Democrat. Or a country club Republican. And no matter what your pretentious or you put airs.

Bob Windsor is back. And paranoia has set in. Everybody in public office or in any kind of politics thinks Bob is after them.

He probably is. Do you remember who Bob Windsor is?

He is the self proclaimed protector of the common man. Anti big government. Anti big business. Anti big institution. Anti rich man. Anti phonies of every sort.

Maybe he is just an old time populist.

So why is he so dangerous? He is smart. He is hard working. His sharp writing projects a pretty wide mean streak.

So what? He puts all of this together in The Landmark, a publication that is widely read all over the state—but especially in the area near Chapel Hill, where it is published. At least a lot of people talk about it—probably because Windsor's irrelevant attacks on everything and everybody incite all who read it.

Windsor's attacks have frightened away some of our best potential leaders. They just don't want to risk getting tarred and feathered in the Landmark. On the other hand, in some circles, being roasted by Windsor is a badge of honor. A liberal or moderate politician whom he has not attacked just has not made it yet.



stopped helping those who are trying to recover in the Alcoholics Anonymous programs.

Even though I am repelled by Windsor's attacks on many people that I admire, there is something about him and his paper that takes me back to a time when it was okay for a journalist to be a partisan advocate of his own views. Back then it was expected that the owner would use his newspaper to propagandize the readers and incite them to action.

In the old days, a lot of papers were the agents of various political parties and interest groups.

They were unapologetic in pushing their party line. Different papers had different views—and the papers fought for their principles almost as hard as the modern newspaper business fights for profits.

Windsor's vicious, partisan style contrasts with the bland, neutral posture taken by most newspapers. "We have to be objective and fair," say most of today's newspapers. "We try to confine our opinion to the editorial pages."

Bob Windsor laughs, "Not me! I will tell it like it is. Say out loud what others only dare to whisper."

He takes a long puff on his cigarette, pats the tummy under the overalls that have become his constant uniform and his trade mark. Then, he laughs again, and thinks about something mean he can write about me or you.

So watch out. Bob's back. Don't tell anybody, but I'm sorta glad.

### Like Democrats, Republicans Discover They Can't Have It Both Ways

The GOP got more than it bargained for. When they courted the votes of the Reagan Democrats, whose ranks include the George Wallace "Dixiecrats" of the deep South, their goal was to win the White House. They didn't realize that the David Dukes of the world would come out of the woodwork and run for office as Republicans. What an embarrassment!

Like the Democrats, who courted the votes of black Americans during the 1960's and 1970's, the Republicans have discovered that they cannot recruit a faction into their party without giving them the opportunity for representation in leadership roles, especially a group which they have worked so hard to win over.

The Republicans pursued this constituency with the fervor of a love-sick suitor wooing his bride-to-be.

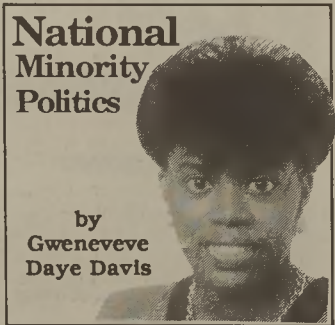
The courtship commenced with Reagan's overtures to Southern white conservatives

during his 1980 presidential campaign. Reagan spoke in defense of "states rights," which are code words for "Jim Crow" and "segregation."

He avowed the GOP's loyalty and asked for the Dixiecrats' hand in marriage while in office, by virtually dismantling the Civil Rights Commission, condemning affirmative action as reverse discrimination, and replacing liberal and moderate Supreme Court Justices with those who shared his right-wing conservative views.

The relationship was consummated during the Republicans' 1988 presidential campaign when they displayed Willie Horton's photo at every opportunity, avoided the inner cities like the plague, and, for all practical purposes, wrote off the black vote.

After achieving the goal of wedding its intended, the GOP looked forward to marital bliss, but evidently the honeymoon is over. Persons of David Duke's



ilk have decided that they are not content to be docile and submissive—they want a more assertive role in the relationship.

David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard who recently won a seat in the Louisiana state legislature, represents the sentiments of members of this long-sought-after faction. He ran during the past eight years: Eradication of minority set-aside programs, low

taxes, and decreased subsidies to the "rising welfare underclass."

The GOP was apparently not prepared for someone of Duke's political prowess to challenge one of their own, as they had a weak candidate opposing the former Klansman. John Treen, endowed with a milk-toast personality when compared to Duke's charisma and frey oratory, is sort of the Michael Dukakis of the Louisiana Republican Party: If he yelled fire in a theatre, no one would be aroused.

For their part, all the powerful Republicans spoke in Treen's behalf and against Duke. Letters from Bush promoting Treen's candidacy arrived at most homes in the city by election day, and Reagan's voice was heard on area radio stations.

"We repudiate him and his views and we are taking steps to see that he is disenfranchised from our party," said Lee Atwater, Chairman of the Republican

National Committee.

Unfortunately, their efforts were to no avail. It was a close contest—Duke won by only 234 votes—and the combination of media attention and a high turnout by his supporters, worked to Duke's advantage.

Atwater refers to Duke as a "pretender, a charlatan, and a political opportunist who is looking for any organization he can find to legitimate his views of racial and religious bigotry and intolerance." Evidently, Duke has found his home in the GOP.

Only time will tell if the election of David Duke was merely a fluke, or if this typifies the beginning of a trend within the ranks of the Republican Party. The manner in which party leaders respond to these events in the future will, to a large degree, determine the staying power of these extremist, right-wing forces.

I do, however, agree with one thing that Duke said: "That's

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what is so wonderful about America. We had the governor opposed to us, we had the political bosses opposed to us, we had no PAC money, we had no political endorsements, even the President of the United States came out against us, but we won. The people decided."

Despite the nature of Duke's views, American democracy has triumphed and the people of Metairie, Louisiana have spoken.

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