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Are "Fighting Back"
Against Drugs



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The Charlotte Post

Vol. 15, No. 27 Thursday, December 7, 1989

THE AWARD-WINNING "VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY"

50 Cents

McCombs Parole Still Creating Stir Among Officials

By WINFRED B. CROSS
Post Staff Writer

John Excell McCombs began a new life last week, but it won't be easy to escape the past.

Despite efforts from Lt. Gov. Jim Gardner, McCombs was paroled Dec. 1 after serving 13 of 65 years for killing Larry Bullock, a Durham police officer during a drug raid in 1976.

McCombs, a native Charlottean, was a 20-year-old sophomore at North Carolina Central University when he shot Bullock at his apartment. He testified that he did not know Bullock was a police officer when he shot him. He currently works at the Windows On Trade restaurant as production manager and chief buyer.

McCombs is out on "intensive parole," which means he can't change jobs, leave the city or change his address without permission of the N.C. Parole Commission. He also must meet with a parole officer as many as five times per week.

He also isn't talking to the press.

"I've been advised by my lawyer not to speak to any members of the press," McCombs, 33, said in a recent phone interview. He is being represented by James Ferguson of Charlotte.

But that's not stopping other people from speaking in McCombs' behalf or against it. Gardner said Tuesday in a telephone interview that McCombs' parole was "sending the wrong signal to drug dealers and murders."

"I'm under the impression that if you kill a police officer in a drug related crime, that is the most serious crime," Gardner said. "If you don't send a strong message today to the people who sell drugs and buy guns, we'll never get it across."

"The question that needs to be asked is this: Did this man pay society the proper amount of time for killing a police officer?" he said. "I think the parole board has made a mistake and it didn't just start with them. It started with the man just serving six years in maximum security for a 65-year sentence."

Gardner has been accused by some political analysts and Democrats of using this case to further his own career. He said he got involved in the case after hearing of it through the media. Once he had spoken to police officials in Durham, Gardner said he knew a mistake was about to be made.

"It was a situation I thought was wrong," he said. "After talking to the parole board I was convinced they were misled to believe that McCombs did not know he shot a police officer."

Lou Colombo, chairman of the board, said in a telephone interview from Raleigh that was not the case. He said the board had been reviewing the McCombs case for four months.

"The parole board had all the information available before we made our decision, including the additional information provided by Lt. Gov. Gardner," Colombo said. "And we went through his file very carefully, which we had done before."

Colombo also said: "If we felt McCombs was a threat to society, we would not have made the decision we made."

Larry Bullock, brother of the slain police officer, said he is unhappy with the parole board's decision, but said he is not angry with McCombs.

"He was shown all of the ways to beat the system and he used them to his advantage," Bullock said. "I have no reason to be mad at him. I'm mad at the system."

Bullock said both Gardner and Gov. Jim Martin called him and said they did not think McCombs should be paroled.

"I can't see how people in power can see something bad happening and let it happen," Bullock said. "I hope the police officers in Charlotte are like the ones in Durham. . . To put their life on the line for someone you don't even know says a lot. If the public does not stand up for them and believe in them, they are less than human."

Gardner said a jury convicted McCombs of second-degree murder after hearing McCombs neighbors testify the undercover police officers identified themselves. Gardner was outraged by an editorial that appeared in The Charlotte Observer Monday suggesting otherwise, calling it "the most irresponsible editorial I've ever read."

"They either through ignorance do not know the facts or are intentionally misleading the public."

Democratic N.C. Rep. Pete Cunningham, along with N.C. Sen. Jim Richardson, Rep. Howard Barnhill and some concerned citizens, helped get McCombs paroled. He said he agreed with the Observer's editorial.

"As far as I'm concerned the lieutenant governor is playing politics," Cunningham said. "If you looked back over his past record of civil rights and human rights, he has not been concerned."

"McCombs has served more time than most prisoners under the same circumstances. My support of him is based on his accomplishments," Cunningham said. "Secondly, I know he is not a hardened criminal as the lieutenant governor and some newspapers have made him out to be."

McCombs' records have not been made available to the press. Cunningham said he is familiar with McCombs' records and said "he has

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Dominique Mason, 3, and her mother, Vera Mason, did a little Christmas shopping Wednesday

at Sun Toys and Gift Shop in Freedom Mall. There are 18 shopping days before Christmas.

Photo/CALVIN FERGUSON

Gantt Still Quiet On Senate

By M. L. LANEY II
Post Correspondent

As the Friends of Johnson C. Smith University filed into Grimes Lounge last Thursday night, there was an obvious air of anticipation. JCSU President Dr. Robert Albright made humor about the fact that he was about to introduce a soon-to-be candidate for the U.S. Senate, former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt.

Moments later, Gantt took the podium and the reaction was one of celebration. The evening's agenda included recognition of the SLAM program, an attempt to help teenagers through adult interaction. The program represents one of the concerns Gantt contends are fueling his interest in the Senate seat Jesse Helms may try to reclaim in 1990.

In his remarks, Gantt's first order of business was to remind his listeners that the idea of opposing tree-time incumbent Helms remains tentative. There would be no announcement. But neither did Gantt fail to note with gravity his other concerns for North Carolina's future and its underrepresentation in the national forum. He prepared statements listing items that Gantt perceives as essential to the continuous growth and stability of the state's overall well-being.

The former mayor seems poised and primed to run for Helms' seat. Saturday, in a brief telephone interview, Gantt gave some insight as to what might make for a "Run, Harvey, Run" campaign for the Senate.

Gantt has answered a question he asked himself regarding "what the people of North Carolina require of a senator?" "It's time for a change. After 19 years of a senator like Jesse Helms, I am going to ask the people of North Carolina to fire him and hire me. He is a senator who

confines his activities to looking toward the past.

"He does not deal with people issues. He has no interest in domestic matters, areas where our people are at risk. Our women in the workplace, child care programs, health care, drug prevention . . . (and the like), do not enjoy the favor of Senator Helms."

Gantt characterized Helms' worldwide hard-line views as "particularly out of place and unfortunate" with the continuing improvement of East-West relations and in need of serious re-examination. "Don't get me wrong, I don't think we can afford to forget about the world. At the same time, I see a need for more investment right here at home."

Asked what was paramount in his decision to run, Gantt says the supportiveness of family members, close friends, long-time business and political leaders, made him want to explore the possibilities. To defeat Helms will take lots of money and Gantt says he believes he can find the support he'll need.

With an air of optimism, Gantt conveyed a sense of purpose, a mission. His possible candidacy is a challenge to his party. But North Carolina's Democrats must pursue "a course to new aspirations commensurate with the complexities that face North Carolinians today," according to one local elected official. Some observers have already made much-to-do over the racial connotations inherent if such a campaign does develop; Gantt, the black liberal democrat opposing white conservative Republican Helms. Helms' staff insiders have suggested with relish that Gantt's liberal connections to factions that support Jesse Jackson would make the race easier for Helms to win.

Easley In Nomination Race

RALEIGH, NC -- Michael ("Mike") F. Easley announced last week that he'll enter the race for U. S. Senate in 1990. The seat is currently held by Republican Jesse Helms.

Speaking before supporters at North Carolina Democratic Party headquarters on Hillsborough Street in Raleigh, Easley said he wants to serve in the Senate "because the decisions our nation makes today are going to shape the twenty-first century. . . I am deeply concerned about the problems facing our country and our state, and I believe I can make a constructive contribution toward solving them."

Easley, who is in his second term as District Attorney of the 13th judicial district (Brunswick, Bladen and Columbus Counties), is widely known for his tough prosecution of drug dealers. He has also played a leading role in developing and pushing new laws to crack down on drug traffickers in the state.

The 39-year-old prosecutor issued a challenge to other potential candidates for the seat to agree to refrain from negative, mudslinging campaign tactics: "Like most people who proudly call North Carolina home, I have been disappointed by low-road politics in our state that fail to reflect the good-hearted decency and integrity of North Carolina's people," said Easley. "I intend to meet with all opponents to reach agreement on running clean campaigns," he added.

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Council Veterans Move On

Dannelly, Leeper Plan To Move To Private Lives

By GWENDOLYN DANIELS
Post Staff Writer

Political ambitions will have to take a back seat to the personal pursuits of two former city council members who are stepping out of that arena for a while.

Ron Leeper, who just finished the remainder of Al Rousso's term as mayor-pro-tem Monday, said he wants to get involved in community activities, especially with youth.

Former District 2 councilman

Charlie Dannelly said he is looking forward to getting some rest as well as participating in community functions.

Leeper said he wants to focus his attention on youth because they are faced with drugs and other negatives of society.

"Young people are having difficult times right now," he said. "Drugs will be the number one problem in

the next decade."

Deciding what approach to take and how to combat the evils of drugs is a priority for Leeper, who said he doesn't want to "jump into something head first."

"I have to pick and choose the best way to do this," he said.

As far as politics is concerned, Leeper said he won't be getting involved in public office for a few years. He will be eligible for election to a full two-year term on council in 1991.

"I really don't have any personal political plans right now," Leeper said.

Leeper, who was appointed by city council to replace Rousso's in October, said his term during a crucial period was positive.

"I enjoy difficult situations," Leeper said. "I inherited a position on the council at a time when they had difficult decisions to make."

Addressing issues such as housing for the poor, the need for an NFL stadium and west-side concerns were positive accomplishments.

"I was able to have some input about issues that have been near and dear to me for 10 plus years," Leeper said.

Other personal pursuits for Leeper are spending time with his family and business interests.

"I plan to spend some time with a 15-year-old, my son, and do some family rebuilding," he said.

Dannelly said he wants to "simply rest."

"This was a taxing job, more taxing than people think," he said.

Dannelly said he wants to reinvolve himself in community

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Leeper

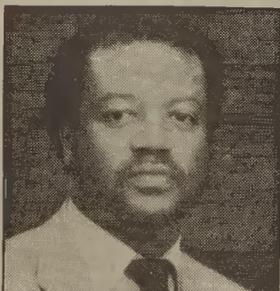


Dannelly

King Day Parade Planned

A Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade sponsored by the North Carolina State Conference of Branches, NAACP and co-sponsored by the Greensboro NAACP Branch and WQMG Radio Station will be held on Monday, January 15, 1990 starting at 10 a.m. in Greensboro, North Carolina. A ribbon cutting ceremony will officially dedicate Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and will start the parade. The parade route is approximately 1.5 miles going north on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and ending at the Governmental Plaza, downtown Greensboro. To climax the parade, a rally will be held at the Governmental Plaza at approximately 1 p.m.

Gaston DA Warns Abusers, Pushers



Hamrick

By MILLICENT LINK
Post Staff Writer

Gaston County district attorney Calvin Hamrick is sending a warning to all drug abusers and drug pushers in Gaston County.

As district attorney of the fourth largest judicial court system in the state, he plans to make it hard on the lawless by

not letting them off on misdemeanor charges.

Hamrick is not concerned with whether or not it is a drug dealer's first offense. "If a drug pusher comes into my court he is looking at a felony charge," he said.

Among the staples of marijuana and cocaine, dilaudid is fast becoming a sought-after drug in Gaston. The pain killer sells for about \$45-60 on the street. "This drug is prevalent among the streetwalkers and prostitutes," said Hamrick.

"Drug addicts commit all different types of crimes to support their habit," he said.

Hamrick said the increasing rate of residential breakins are drug related. "More than 50 percent of residential breakins and armed robberies are caused by drug addiction," he said.

In the past year more than two-thirds of the DA's case load has

included drugs, breakins, and larcenies.

The county is also seeing an increase in embezzlement and check forgery cases committed by drug users.

"Cocaine has no class barrier," said Hamrick. "The poor, middle class, and affluent are engaged with drugs."

Hamrick said dealers normally do not use drugs. "They just sell drugs to acquire material possessions," he said.

Hamrick is attacking the drug problem by repossessing personal property of alleged offenders. "We are taking cars right and left," said Hamrick, who said police recently repossessed a Porsche and Cadillac.

In order to crack down on the drug problem in the county undercover cops are walking the streets. "People don't suspect that undercover work is occurring," Hamrick said.

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