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A campaign colored by race

Senate primary could mirror 1990 battle

By John Hinton
WINSTON-SALEM CHRONICLE

Six years ago, North Carolina's U.S. Senate race became a referendum on race.

And it may be again in 1996. While both Harvey Gantt and Charlie Sanders deny using race as an issue, some observers say race would be a factor in the Democratic primary and the general election.

The Associated Press reported recently that many black Democrats believe Sanders - not Gantt - has a better chance of defeating Helms because Sanders is white. Gantt says Sanders is misleading voters with his message that he is the only Democrat who can beat Helms.

"The cynical thing that he (Sanders) is saying is that he can beat Jesse Helms because he is white," Gantt says. "It's sending the wrong type of message, especially to our young people."

Helms has defeated three white Democrats and Gantt in his four election campaigns, demonstrating that the conservative senator can beat white or black candidates.

Sallie Stohler, a spokesperson for the Sanders campaign denied that the retired Glaxo chief was making race an issue in the campaign.

"That's absurd and Mr. Gantt knows that it is not true," says Stohler. "Mr. Sanders does not believe race is an issue in the campaign. He is going after every Democratic vote-white, black and Native American. Charlie Sanders is an outsider. Harvey Gantt is a career politician."

Julius Chambers, chancellor of N.C. Central University and a Gantt supporter echoed Stohler's statements.

"I would doubt whether Charlie Sanders was injecting race into the campaign," he said. "I have never seen Charlie do anything racist."

Gantt ran a strong campaign against Helms in 1990, losing to the Republican senator by 54,000 votes in an election that drew

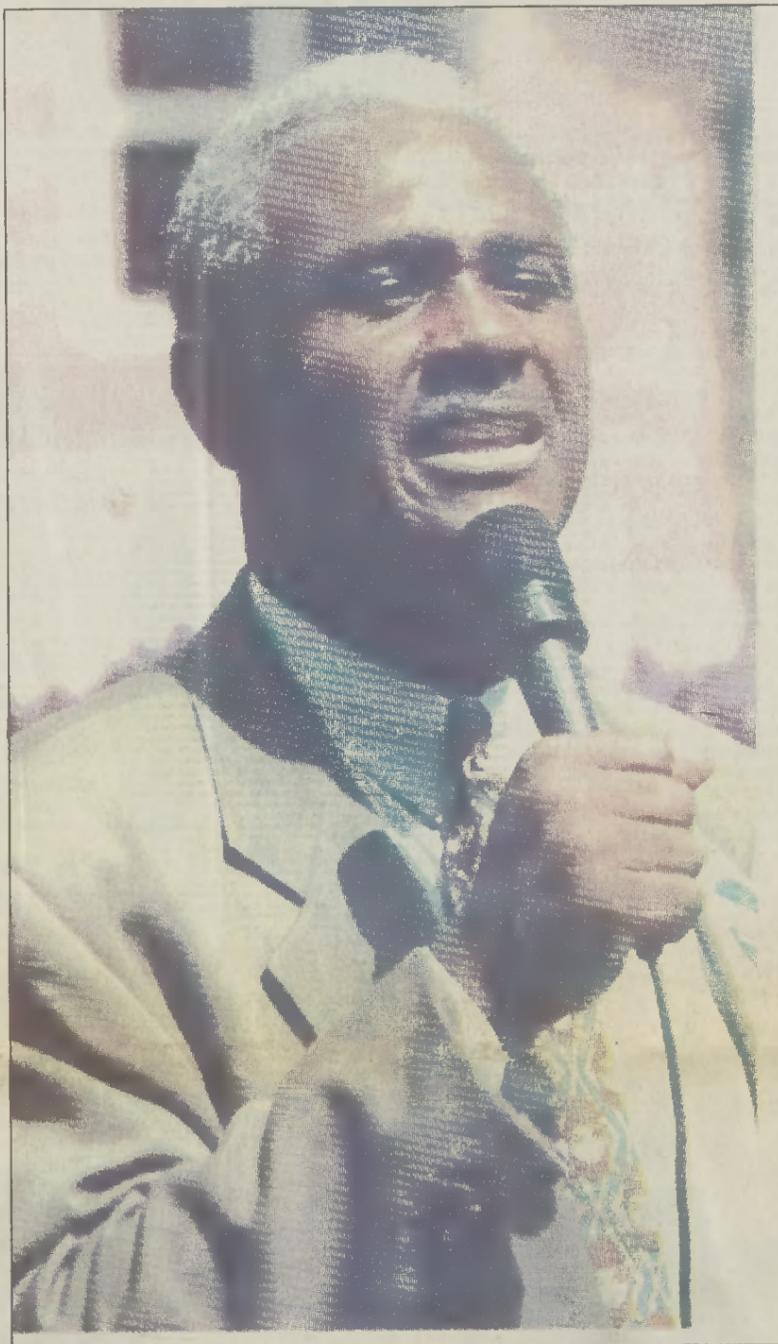
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Sanders retreats on level of black support - sort of

By John Hinton
WINSTON-SALEM CHRONICLE

U.S. Senate candidate Charlie Sanders is stopping short of saying he has official support among African American leaders.

Sanders sent a letter recently to the Rev. John Mendez, Ben Ruffin, and Julius Chambers stating that the black-owned Winston-Salem Chronicle quoted



PHOTO/CHARLES CLARKSON

Harvey Gantt says the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate shouldn't become a referendum on race. The former Charlotte mayor criticized opponent Charlie Sanders for inferring only a white candidate can beat Republican Jesse Helms. "The cynical thing that he (Sanders) is saying is that he can beat Jesse Helms because he is white," Gantt says. "It's sending the wrong type of message, especially to our young people."

him out of context when he was asked about his support in the African American community. He told the three leaders "The implication is that you are supporting me," said Sanders, a Democrat and retired president and CEO of Glaxo Inc. of Durham. "The newspaper quote was incorrect. I was quite specific that I had spoken with a number of prominent African American leaders. However, I was careful to say

that I had no idea whom you would initially support in the primary."

Two weeks ago, the Chronicle reported that Sanders said his support was growing in the black community, especially among African American leaders such as Mendez, Ruffin and Chambers.

Ernest H. Pitt, publisher of the Chronicle, said the newspaper had

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S.C. man fights for new trial

Murder evidence points away from death row inmate Spann, his supporters say

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

FORT MILL, S.C. - Sterling Spann's been on S.C.'s death row for 14 years now. He was convicted - at age 19 - of killing an elderly white Clover woman for whom he'd done some yard work and window washing.

But new evidence, including another man's confession, may grant Spann, now 33, the chance for justice he and his family have sought.

On Feb. 27, U.S. District Court Judge David Norton hearing an appeal of Spann's death sentence directed his attorney, John Blume of Columbia, to seek a new trial in S.C. state court.

A motion for a new trial was filed March 19, but the S.C. attorney general has answered the motion and no hearing date has been set.

Still, Spann and his supporters feel certain he will be freed, based on the new evidence.

"We knew all the time he didn't do it," said Spann's sister, Cheryl Davis, who has organized prayer vigils and petition drives on her brother's behalf.

Spann's mother, former Gastonia elementary school teacher Sarah Spann Powell, didn't live to see him freed. She died on Dec. 6. However, on Nov. 23 - Thanksgiving Day - Rock Hill private detective Pete Sizemore showed her a copy of the confession to the murder for which Spann was sentenced to die.

Powell had hired Sizemore last year to look into her son's case, a task he began believing that Spann, a former classmate, was

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Author: Race still matters in American cultural relations

By Clarence Thomas Jr.
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

DAVIDSON - Americans are desperate to find answers to the nation's racial divide, but don't know how to look for them, author Cornel West said last week.

"Race forces us to examine those hidden realities that are buried deep down in our souls," West, author of "Race Matters," said at Davidson College.

The Princeton University professor was at Davidson as part of the college's lecture series, explained Bill Giduz,



West

Davidson's news director.

"We always try to bring thought provoking people to town," he said. "Mr. West is one of the greatest thinkers of our time, so to expose him to our students was the opportunity of a lifetime."

West addressed many problems facing the country today

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Going on-line: The Post launches Web site

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Post has moved into cyberspace.

This week, you'll be able to access the latest in African American news and information in Charlotte by signing on to our home page on the World Wide Web. The Post's first official day on-line will be Thursday, with text from the April 18 publication available for public consumption.

The home page, which can be accessed at <http://thepost.mindspring.com> gives readers the latest in local news, sports, arts and entertainment, lifestyles and religion. In addition, the Charlotte Post Publishing Co., parent company of The Post, will offer pages from the Black Guide, a directory of African American businesses in Charlotte, as well as information on The Post, its mission and departments.

The Post is one of two African American newspapers (along with the Afro-American papers of Washington and Baltimore) to have a home page on the World Wide Web, complete with text and pho-

tographs. In addition, our page is connected to several keywords on the Internet, which can be linked to The Post through several sites.

We look forward to our days on the Web, and hope to hear from you. We can be reached via e-mail (charpost@clt.mindspring.com).

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Microsoft gift to help UNCF member schools

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

A computer software giant is helping historically black colleges prepare African Americans for the information age.

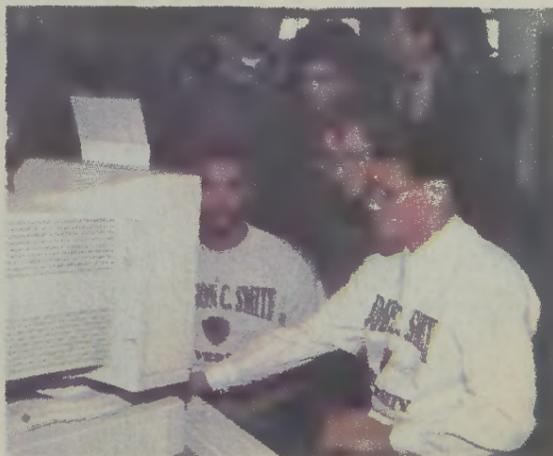
Microsoft Corp. chairman Bill Gates was in Charlotte last week to announce his company's \$6 million software gift to The College Fund/UNCF, with \$2 million going to six North Carolina schools. The total gift of \$16 million brings technological opportunities to students and faculty at 41 UNCF member colleges and universities, including Johnson C Smith University in Charlotte; St. Augustine's College and Shaw

University in Raleigh; Bennett College in Greensboro, Livingstone College in Salisbury and Barber-Scotia College in Concord.

"Today, only 13 percent of black Americans live in a household with a computer, compared with 30 percent of white Americans," said UNCF president Bill Gray. "Microsoft's contribution to UNCF helps our member colleges take an essential step toward closing this technology gap, preparing today's students for tomorrow's jobs, and helping America compete successfully in the global marketplace"

Microsoft, a world leader in

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PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Johnson C. Smith University students (from left) Louis Griffith and William Watkins II demonstrate their computer skills as Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates and JCSU President Dorothy Cowser Yancy look on. Microsoft donated \$2 million in software and services to six historically black N.C. colleges.