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REGIONAL

Daughter of Salisbury mayor to lecture at Catawba

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Listed among the names of prominent local women lecturing next week at Catawba College, is one familiar to African American Salisbury natives.

Adrienne Lash Jones, associate professor and former chair of the Department of African American Studies at Ohio's Oberlin College, returns home

Sept. 12 to talk about the many forces acting upon the lives of African American women.

Jones is the daughter of Salisbury's first African American mayor, Wiley Lash. Her mother, Thelma Lash Spaulding, was a respected English instructor at Livingstone College.

Her grandmother, Mary Lash, opened a string of grocery stores in the early 1900s

that catered to a Salisbury's segregated African American community.

"Grandmother Lash was the confidant of politicians," Jones said. "The friend of the great and near great. I grew up working in the stores."

Jones, a graduate of Fisk University, knew there had to be more to life than just raising her children. Twenty years after her graduation from Fisk, she went back to school

at Case Western Reserve University where she received her master's and Ph.D.

"My mother was a college professor," she said. "I was just arrogant enough to enroll, after 20 years, for my Ph.D."

Jones believes she returned to school at the perfect time.

"It was after the civil rights movement," she said. "There was an evolving consciousness. It was lucky for me. I came along at a time when both

fields were emerging."

Jones remembers a Salisbury very different from the one today.

A child during the height of segregation, Jones remembers well the segregated water fountains and restaurants that were indigenous to the South. She also remembers an African American community that was "still intact."

"Teachers had high expectations," she said. "We were

expected to give back to the community."

And give back Jones has.

She served as a member of the international team of observers for the independent elections in Namibia and she was tapped to serve the State Department as a public member of the U.S. delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

She is also at the forefront of See JONES on page 7B

A state divided by race and politics

S.C. grapples with districts

By Robert Tanner
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C. — There are those fighting South Carolina's political status quo in federal court who say, if they win, it will vastly change the state's political landscape.

Others say nobody but politicians will notice this struggle about South Carolina's legislative districts. Rooted in race and partisan politics, it also is tinged with resentment of the federal oversight imposed in the name of civil rights.

And still others say it is an attempt to go back to the days before blacks had seats in the General Assembly and Republicans had power.

There were a few fireworks during the recent trial — a map-writer who said the new lines would "screw white-boy Democrats" and allegations that Republicans sacrificed one of their own to oust a Democratic state representative.

But at its heart, the nearly three weeks of testimony was about whether it was proper to create 12 majority-black districts when the state House and Senate maps were redrawn after the 1990 census.

The challengers, Democrat and Republican, say the U.S. Justice Department pushed the 1965 Voting Rights Act too far, using its veto power over the state's voting laws to emphasize race above all other issues.

The flip-side is that besides electing more black lawmakers to the General Assembly, the maps also created more districts where white voting strength was solidified, and that in turn helped give the GOP control of the state House in 1995.

"What we've done is we've resegregated the state, electorally," said Dick Harpootlian, a white Democrat and a lawyer for those challenging the House districts. "Politicians look at who is going to vote for them."

Harpootlian predicts that if his side wins, it will mean a wholesale shift in how the



ILLUSTRATION BY E. WILLIAM HARRIS

state elects its leaders and how they govern.

"Instead of worrying about the pigmentation of one's skin being the predominant factor in decision-making, we'll get down to what are our common interests here," he said.

Black legislators scoff at his arguments. "That's a crock," said state Sen. Kay Patterson, D-Columbia.

His take on the fight is that white Democrats want back the power they lost to the GOP by returning to a system where blacks must support white Democrats to have a say in state policies.

"That's going back to 'the good old days,'" Patterson said, who first was elected to the House in 1974. He doubts the courts will order significant change.

"It matters only to politicians," said state Rep. Bob Sheheen, a white Camden Democrat who was heavily involved in redistricting but lost his position as House speaker after Republicans took control. "It doesn't touch the average voter."

Some voters could be touched, however.

If the three federal judges agree that some districts are unconstitutional, they could order new primary elections, and that could potentially affect November elections in those districts.

Since each district touches several others, the domino effect could mean quite a few districts must hold new primaries. Sheheen says at most it is 35 districts out of 170 across the state.

More confusion may dis-

courage people from voting, said Blease Graham, a University of South Carolina political scientist.

"Voting is demanding enough," he said.

Federal judges have found race was too dominant in drawing congressional districts in North Carolina, Texas, Louisiana and Georgia, but only in Texas were elections thrown out.

There is a feeling in some quarters that no matter what the outcome, too much has changed in South Carolina's culture to go back to the old system.

Blacks have won more representation, Republicans have gained strength and the state has moved from its agricultural past to a future marked by industry, tourism and suburban strength.

"It would have happened anyway. People haven't changed, but the representation of the parties has changed," said state Rep. Billy Boan of Kershaw, who was a Democrat but became a Republican after the GOP assumed control of the House.

But those challenging the maps say that ignores the political polarization based on race.

House Minority Leader Jim Hodges, a Lancaster Democrat, denies the assertion that this is nothing more than a bunch of white Democrats trying to turn back the clock.

With fewer districts based on race, it would mean more politicians who appeal to both races, he said.

"It makes a difference," Hodges said.

Patrol to check on troopers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — The state Highway Patrol has begun monitoring all roadside vehicle searches to prove the patrol does not target motorists by race, the patrol commander said.

Col. E.W. Horton said last week that the patrol is tracking every roadside search and compiling information on the driver's sex, race, age, home state and several other facts.

"Just in case the public wants to know, we'll be able to say, yes, this is what happened on this many occasions," Horton said.

His statement came after an analysis the patrol's special emphasis team, which is assigned to intercept illegal drugs on Interstates 85 and 95. The analysis by The News & Observer of Raleigh showed that the team charged black male drivers at nearly twice the rate of other troopers working the same roads.

In most cases, the drivers were charged with minor traffic violations and no drugs were found.

Horton emphasized his belief that the patrol does not use race as a factor in choosing which drivers to stop. But by tracking the vehicles, Horton said, the patrol will be able to allay public concerns about discriminatory practices.

Now, the patrol does not have records of the race of drivers whose cars are searched.

'Phantom' is a must-see play

By Gerald Johnson
THE CHARLOTTE POST

In a lot of ways Charlotte's quest to become a world class city is on target. We now have professional football to go with our sometimes professional basketball. But we are also bringing quality plays to the city. Normally, the quality plays would require a trip to the Big Apple.

But the Carolinas' premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera" was a superb production. The strong voices of the cast was something to behold. Thomas James O'Leary gave a spectacular performance as the Phantom, while Andrienne McEwan from York, S.C. was excellent as Christine Daae.

The storyline of this opera is well known. It is based on the novel by Gaston Leroux where the deformed Phantom creates havoc for all occupants of a Paris Opera House. He falls in love with a young soprano, Christine and he uses all of his powers to make her a star. She falls in love with another, Raoul, and the drama begins.

The preview talk of the town was the crashing of the chandelier on the stage. But the most fascinating part of the play for me was the introduction of the Phantom in Christine's dressing room. While she was looking in

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President slams Bragg incident

By Emery P. Dalesio
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — President Clinton lamented the racially-tinged vandalism at a Fort Bragg dormitory last month in his acceptance speech to the Democratic National Convention.

Clinton decried the incident in which swastikas were found spray-painted on eight doors inside a barracks that primarily houses members of the 7th Special Forces Group. Black soldiers lived in six of the rooms; the other two rooms were vacant.

He said near the end of his

hour-long speech that the vandalism reflected that "we still have too many Americans who give into their fears of those who are different from them."

"Folks, for those of you who don't know what they do, the Special Forces are just what the name says; they are special forces. If I walk off this stage tonight and call them on the telephone and tell them to go halfway around the world and risk their lives for you and be there by tomorrow at noon, they will do it. They do not deserve to have swastikas on their doors," Clinton said.

North Carolina delegates said

the vandalism was a disgrace to the Army's elite troops and deserved the attention Clinton gave it.

"He was exactly right about that. These people protect us in the same way as the police. These people are protecting us. We should take care of them," said ToNola Brown, a black attorney from Greensboro.

James Sears of Gates said juxtaposing the apparent insult of black soldiers with the fact they are pledged to defend the country "puts the thing in exactly the right context."

"I think it was wonderful that he said it. It needed to be said."

S.C. politician 'slick racist?'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLESTON — A leading black church official blasted South Carolina's conservative political leaders, calling one senator who defends the Confederate flag a "slick racist."

Bishop John Hurst Adams, presiding bishop of South Carolina's African Methodist Episcopal Church, also said state officials often seem more interested in imprisoning black people than in helping them work their way out of poverty.

"One of the roles of the church is to be prophetic in the face of conservative leadership like Gov. (David) Beasley and racist senators like Glenn McConnell," Adams told The Post and Courier of Charleston.

He cited McConnell's outspoken support for flying the Confederate battle flag atop the Statehouse and the Republican lawmaker's interest in Confederate memorabilia.

"I call him what I think he is," Adams said. "He is a slick racist. And in the face of that, those of us who minister have to fulfill our

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