

Alexander saga drags on

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those charges and then they will make a final decision along with Mfume.

Alston said the delay is proper.

"If you are going to charge a person or allege certain things about a person, that person should have an opportunity to prove his innocence," Alston said. "We do live in a democratic society. You are innocent until proven guilty."

Alexander has said in earlier interviews that the complaints against him are the political motivations of those who wanted to oust him, including Alston, a Guilford County commissioner, and longtime nemesis Valerie Woodard of Charlotte, now second vice president of the state NAACP conference.

He denies any wrongdoing, save improper use of several pre-signed checks after a new treasurer took over last

spring.

The delay in board action on Alexander will likely cast a shadow on the upcoming state chapter annual conference in Winston Salem next week.

Alexander and the local NAACP chapter, of which his brother Alfred is president, are hosting a civil rights conference Friday in conjunction with the local chapter's annual Kelly M. Alexander Sr. Freedom Fund Dinner.

Ads polarizing voters, some say

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"This is the ad that set up the hands-crumbling-the-letter ad (in 1990). You had the first part, which came about this time, that Gantt profited from affirmative action, and then they closed it a couple of days before the actual election with, 'here's the reverse of that, a white man suffering,'" Paletz said.

That ad showed a pair of white hands crumpling a sheet of paper while an announcer said a sought-after job went to someone else because of an affirmative action quota. The ad links Gantt to support for racial quotas, which the Democrat denies.

Rep. Mel Watt, who has taken some negative hits in his 12th District re-election campaign, said "negative campaigning is probably out of control."

"There's no code of conduct," Watt said. "People go away at the end of the campaign feeling very negative toward the process. That's why some people are so negative toward politicians now. It is becoming a mud throwing contest."

But, Watt said, negative campaigning can be effective because many people believe what they see on television or read in the paper.

"That's why political campaigns have come up with the notion that you must respond immediately (to negative attacks)," Watt said.

He said the answer to negative campaigning is for voters to "quit being so gullible in believing all this crap. It is almost disingenuous the way Helms has used it."

A campaign spokeswoman for Helms said the ad was not about race.

"This ad has nothing to do with race. Take a look at what some of the major newspapers

in North Carolina had to say about Mr. Gantt's shady business deals," Julie Wilkie said Tuesday. The Helms campaign provided reporters with scores of articles to support claims made in the ad.

The new Helms ad said: "In 1986, Harvey Gantt used his minority status to purchase interest in a TV station under false pretense. ... Weeks later, he and his partners sold the station to a white-owned corporation, making millions."

The ad also said Gantt, who is an architect, used his minority status "to get preferential treatment on public school contracts." The ad does not specify the contracts Gantt may have landed.

The Helms campaign backed up its claim with a copy of a 1994 article in The Charlotte Observer in which school board members said they wanted to give Gantt's firm more time to negotiate a contract because it would help meet minority contracting goals.

Paletz called the Helms campaign ads clever because they do not directly attack a group, such as gays, but identify Gantt as supporting gays. The new ad takes a similar approach.

"He's not attacking blacks, he's attacking something that is of benefit to African Americans which is unpopular in the state and then he identifies Gantt with that. There's an important distinction here, which makes him less vulnerable to accusations of race-baiting or gay baiting, even though that is what he is doing," he said.

The Helms ad also complains that Gantt ads wrongly say the 24-year Republican incumbent repeatedly voted to cut Medicare. Helms has voted for Republican budget-balancing legislation that would have

curbed Medicare spending increases.

"I think Jesse Helms is desperately trying to change the subject. He would rather rerun false attacks than defend his record on Medicare and Social Security," said Gantt spokeswoman Dalit Toledano. "The fact is that Harvey Gantt is a successful, award-winning architect and businessman who does not use his minority status to get business."

The television license was raised against Gantt when he ran for re-election as Charlotte's mayor in 1987 and by Helms in 1990. Gantt lost both contests.

Gantt applied with other investors in 1984 to the Federal Communication Commission for a license to build a new television station in Belmont, about 10 miles west of Charlotte.

Gantt's investment was about \$50,000. His return was \$450,000, plus 10 percent interest, over 10 years.

The ads won't affect Carolyn Moore's voting for Gantt.

"I don't think there is any room for negative campaigning, be it TV or be it written or verbal," she said.

Bonds up for voter approval

Money for roads, infrastructure

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communities on the westside. City officials say the bonds will be used for street improvements, storm drainage, curb and gutters, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.

The idea is to use the bonds, along with other city programs, to stop the deterioration of the affected neighborhoods and promote development.

Other neighborhoods in the bond package: Beatties Ford/Trinity Park - \$2.3 million; Choyce Avenue - \$1.2 million; City View - \$1.1 million; Cummings Avenue/Lincoln Heights - \$1.3 million; Druid Hills - \$5.2 million; Grier Heights - \$2.5 million; Hidden Valley - \$4.4 million; Lakewood - \$1.1 million; Moores Chapel - \$1.7 million; Oakhurst - \$1.5 million; Orchard Park - \$200,000; Plaza-Midwood - \$2.2 million; Sterling/Sterling Forest - \$500,000; Wilmore - \$1 million; Wilora Lake - \$1.1 million; Wingate - \$1.2 million.

Much of the money will be used for basics like curb and gutter and sidewalks in the selected neighborhoods. Druid Hills, Lakewood, Reid Park, Sterling/Sterling Forest, Villa Heights and Wingate had received some improvement funds earlier.

Bond supporters compare the infrastructure plans to city funding of similar projects in four neighborhoods - Belmont, where \$3,725,000 was spent on curb and gutters, sidewalks and storm drains; Genesis Park, where \$615,000 was spent on

similar projects; Lockwood, \$650,000; and Seversville, \$2.6 million.

The claim each of those neighborhoods has improved as

places to live as a result of those expenditures.

The new bonds will not cause an increase in property taxes, according to city officials.

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Drug program gets grant

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Johnson Foundation grant will allow Charlotte to continue the pursuit of innovative solutions to substance abuse and related problems," Spickard said.

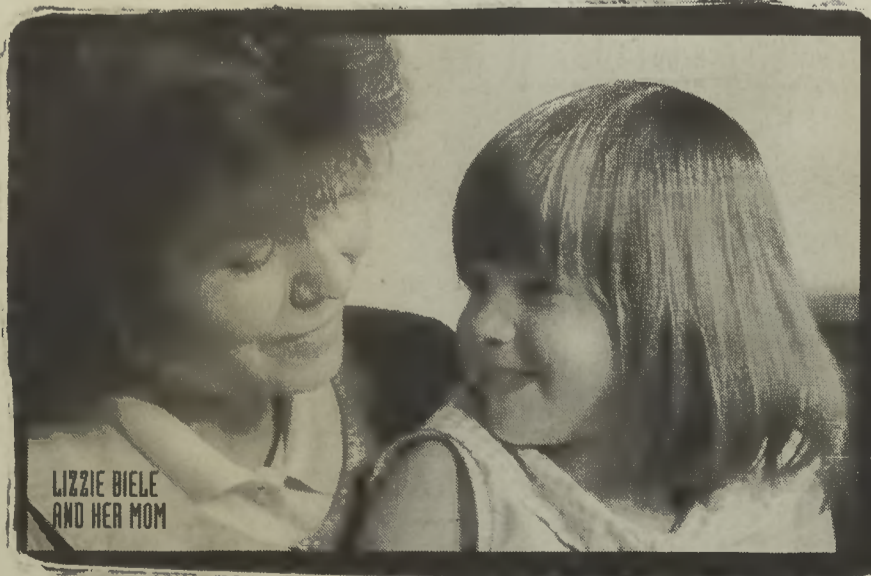
The Stop the Killing Crusade founded by Rev. James Barnett will be honored Monday as one of the most effective anti-drug efforts sponsored by Fighting Back. The crusade is the only similar organization among the 14 Fighting Back chapters across the country.

Other activities Monday include a bus tour of some west Charlotte neighborhoods, a 5:30 p.m. candlelight vigil and a citywide cookout, led by Barnett. The public is invited to the cookout.

Fighting Back director Hattie Anthony praised Barnett's efforts. "The crusade has picketed suspected drug houses, stared down drug dealers in practically every troubled neighborhood in Charlotte and jotted down the license numbers of suspected buyers," Anthony said.

Said Barnett, "In Charlotte, we do more than raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol and illegal drugs, we confront the problem head-on."

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SHE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO A WORD HER PARENTS SAID.



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