

Schwacke Loses Re-election Bid

The first openly gay Southern Republican loses primary race after three terms as prosecutor.

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Prosecutor David Schwacke, the first openly gay Republican to hold office in the South, was back in his office preparing for a murder trial just hours after election officials verified he lost his re-election bid in a primary.

"The one thing I'm most proud of is I never let what was going on in my personal life ever interfere with my coming in to do my job," said Schwacke. He lost to former federal prosecutor Ralph Hoisington on Tuesday, although the margin was so close there will be a recount.

"Clearly the gay issue came into play for

some voters," said Schwacke, who sought a third term as solicitor after acknowledging in 1997 that he was homosexual.

He said being the incumbent helped him with other voters, who "ultimately discounted it as an issue because they were able to look at the record."

Hoisington won by 255 votes out of 29,915 cast, less than 1 percent, triggering an automatic recount under state law.

Charleston County will recount on Friday while the recount in Berkeley County is expected next week.

Hoisington's campaign included signs with the slogan "For Our Families," which were taken in some quarters as a not-so-veiled reference to Schwacke's homosexuality.

"It is unfortunate that anti-gay activists and Schwacke's opponent have apparently misled a bare majority of the voters to buy into the pol-

itics of fear over fact," said Brian Bond, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, which endorsed Schwacke.

"My campaign slogan in November is going to be 'For Our Families,' said Hoisington. "That's why I was running. If it did cast any negative light on David Schwacke, it was not my intention."

The same year Schwacke acknowledged he was homosexual, his marriage of 14 years broke up.

The following year, local GOP leaders sought an investigation into whether he used his office computer during business hours to solicit sex on the Internet. A grand jury investigated, but did not return an indictment.

Many lawyers who supported Schwacke in previous elections contributed heavily to Hoisington this time and Schwacke estimated he was outspent 4-to-1.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Celebration Raises \$42,000

CHARLOTTE — The annual Carolina Celebration attracted 1,200 people to the Grady P. Cole Center on June 10, and raised a record \$42,000, according to a report in the *Charlotte Observer* (6/12/00).

"This thing has gotten bigger than any of us ever imagined," said Ed Depasquale, who served this year as treasurer. "In the beginning, it was us doing everything, even all the cooking and the bartending. Now, we have to have it catered, with bartenders and live music."

No one profits from the party and none of the organizers gets paid. Instead, they rely on sponsors to cover costs. Organizers donate 100 percent of the proceeds to the direct care of people with HIV/AIDS, and they look to the Metrolina AIDS Project to handle distribution.

The money raised goes to a little known HIV/AIDS program called "The Dennis P. Thaw Memorial Fund," named in honor of one of MAP's first clients in 1987. Monies from the Dennis Fund helps PWAs who find themselves in a short-term financial emergency.

The fund was nearly bankrupt 10 years ago. Since then, 3,000 people have been helped with money raised by the Carolina Celebration. Last year alone, 228 payments were made for emergency needs, says event secretary Dan King, who joined the effort in 1998. In all, the group has raised \$170,000 in 10 years.

Carolina Celebration is seeking individual and corporate sponsors. To help, call Ed Depasquale at (704) 365-2308 Sundays through Tuesdays, 9a.m. to 5p.m.

Congregation Excommunicates Man for Anti-Gay Disruptions

Dean of All Souls Cathedral in Asheville takes rare step in banning member over homophobic remarks

ASHEVILLE (AP) — Lewis Green, an anti-gay critic of his Episcopal parish in Biltmore, N.C., has been excommunicated and banned from the Cathedral of All Souls until he stops attacking the church and apologizes for making obscene gestures during worship services.

Green publishes homophobic diatribes in his own newsletter, attacking the church because it welcomes gay and lesbian members in its congregation. Church officials said the final straw came last December when Lewis made an obscene gesture to the congregation during Mass.

Green accused the church of trampling on his right to free speech. "I've been writing bad things about gays for some time, deleterious things, and that's what this is about," said Green, 68. "What I'm doing is exercising my

First Amendment rights, and if it's about them, too bad. There's nothing they can do about it."

But the Very Rev. Todd Donatelli, dean of the cathedral, says it has nothing to do with Green's free speech rights and that he can say and think whatever he wants — but not disrupt worship services.

Donatelli said the church can and will have Green arrested for trespassing if he shows up and refuses to leave.

"Due to your refusal to seek reconciliation with the parish of All Souls and its members, and your continued efforts to attack this parish and its members, I hereby place you excommunicate," Donatelli wrote in a letter to Green.

Donatelli urged Green to study the Bible for models of how to resolve conflicts among Christians and that he should apologize in writing for his past disruptions.

Green has refused to back down: "I said, 'It'll be a cold day in hell before I apologize.' I don't look at this as a church; it's a liberal

Democrat precinct."

Church leaders sent Green a letter May 30 notifying him that it was banning him from church property and denying him the sacrament of communion. The rare but reversible step of excommunication is so infrequently imposed that the Episcopal Church USA does not keep statistics.

"In my experience, and I've been in this position in this church for 20 years, I've heard of this maybe three times," said Todd Duffy, director of archives for the Episcopal Church USA.

Green was warned that if he sets foot on church property and refuses to leave, "a warrant for trespass will be issued and a restraining order obtained." The ban and excommunication will remain in place, church officials say, until Lewis apologizes.

Green regularly has criticized church officials for their acceptance of homosexuality, writing in *The Independent Torch*, a local newsletter he has published for 13 years.

"It'll be a cold day in hell before I apologize"

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