



NEW COMMISSIONERS received their oaths of office Monday morning, administered by Chief District Judge Frank Grady. Left to right are Commissioner Bill Stanley and his wife; Mrs. Clemmons and new chairman Cletis Clemmons;

Marvin Watson; Mrs. Vereen and vice-chairman Pearly Vereen; and Willie Sloan, the only member of the former board who gained re-election.

Williamson 'Ripped Off,' He Tells Commissioners

By BILL ALLEN

"Instead of ripping off, I am being ripped off all right because I have been discriminated against and nothing has been done about it."

Thus spoke Ocean Isle Beach developer Odell Williamson at a meeting of Brunswick County commissioners on Tuesday afternoon.

Williamson said he wanted to address the board because newspapers "with the exception of The State Port Pilot" were leading people to believe he had been a "big rip-off receiving special treatment."

The State Tax Commission has recently ordered that all of Williamson's property be revalued since it was lower than other land in the county. Williamson strongly denied that he had been given special treatment by Tax Supervisor K.T. Bellamy.

"I don't believe K.T. has ever supported me in a political race in his life," Williamson declared. "He has never done me a favor and I have never asked him to do me a favor."

He said there has been nothing done to his property values that Monty Blackmon, who was in charge of the revaluation for Allied Appraisal Company, did not do.

He said the only thing he knew Bellamy did was to present to the Board of Equalization and Review the area in front of his house. "It should have been in acres to

black with and should not have been in lots since I never will sell it," he stated.

Williamson said the law allows the tax supervisor to put five - acres more or less projects in acres if he believes it is the best thing to do.

"Instead of putting it in acres, he (Bellamy) messed around cutting the price down in lots," Williamson stated. "It should never have been handled that way."

Williamson said he was told the Republicans were out to get him because he was chairman of the Democratic party in the 1972 election. He said he was told the plan was to appraise his land so high he would be driven from the county. "They were really going to take care of me," he declared.

After happening to see some of his appraisal cards and meeting former Tax Supervisor Charles Mills for the first and only time, Williamson said he contacted Allied.

But he said Allied would not send anyone to Ocean Isle Beach until Blackmon and Bellamy came one day.

Williamson said he pointed out old third - row lots selling for \$250 to \$300 being valued at \$10,000. "I showed them a 100' by 500' piece of back stuff valued at \$100,000," he continued. "A parcel was valued at \$25,000 that was stand. They were talking about at least 40 of them."

He said Blackmon agreed the values were wrong and something should be done to correct them.

Williamson pointed to a sales map of the eastern end of Ocean Isle Beach. He said the map was used to record first - and second - row lots and "a few third - row lots" although it included marshland an unimproved land in lots.

Since Allied did not have the staff to do the job, Williamson said that girls in the office used the sales maps to put values on lots that did not exist.

"I don't care what you reduce something," Williamson declared. "If you have some values that are 15 times too high to start with and it is cut in half, you still are seven times too high. That is exactly what happened to Odell Williamson."

Williamson said Allied agreed that the base price for canal lots at Ocean Isle Beach should be \$8,000. "(Former Commissioner) Rusty Russ will tell you it was agreed on by Allied," he stated.

He said he believed that Bellamy forgot about the agreed values during the hearing in Raleigh. "He said he did not go to Raleigh to defend my values, but to prove the other men's values," Williamson stated.

"If Blackmon, Russ or Bellamy were here this afternoon, they would tell you \$8,000 was the base price for value at Ocean Isle Beach," Williamson said.

He said he never had the chance to check to see that the \$8,000 base price was used at Ocean Isle Beach because he had other problems since

his taxes went up 10 to 20 times because of the "unfair revaluation."

He said the top price he received for canal lots in the best of times was \$3,000 to \$4,000. But he said the lots have been valued at \$8,500.

He said newspapers were saying that his second-row lots were valued at \$5,000. "The truth is that all my lots on Ocean Isle Beach are valued at \$13,000 except the few in front of my house which should be in acres."

He said he had found the values at Ocean Isle much higher than at other beaches in the county. He said he owned a lot with 75-foot frontage on Holden Beach that was valued at \$1,000.

He said Allied agreed that third - row lots at Ocean Isle should be valued between \$800 and \$1,000. But he said the value placed on the lots was \$10,000.

"I have been discriminated against and my values are not in line with values at other beaches in the county," he declared. "Nobody has done Odell Williamson any favor. On top of that, I never asked for a favor."

He admitted that he supported former Chairman Steve Varnam, Jr., who lost to Chairman Cletis Clemmons in the primary.

Williamson said he was the "only developer he knew about in the county that had the majority of his value in lots. All others have unsold land in developments in acres," he stated.

He said no \$14,000 or \$10,000 base values were ever established at Ocean Isle Beach.

"I have not sold enough property this year to pay my taxes," he declared. "I think I have sold four or five lots this year."

He said he had been told that the present board was out to get him, but he did not believe it. "If other developers are treated like me, this county will be ruined," he stated. "I hope no one gets the treatment I have received."

Chairman Clemmons said the board was not out to get Williamson. "The board will never discriminate against anyone," he stated. "All taxpayers are going to be treated fairly and equally. I intend to get the tax situation straightened out."

To The Editor

To the Editor:
We would like to thank through your newspaper the many, many people in Southport and throughout the county who so graciously cooperated in making the Holiday House a success this past weekend.

There are so many people to whom we are indebted we cannot single out individual efforts that made our job a pure pleasure.

Julia Coan and Jean Fairley, Co-Chairmen

Early Fighting

(Continued from page 1)

only \$300 less than Mrs. McKeithan after almost 16 years in the office.

Commissioner Pearly Vereen suggested that Gaither pay lower salaries to new employees. "We all live with less than we want," he pointed out.

Gaither said the salaries were not high since assistants in other departments of county government received higher pay. Watson said the board plans to look at all salaries.

Commissioner William Stanley, Jr., said he would not go along with the transition and higher salary costs to the county.

Vereen said he was "definitely" opposed to the level of salaries Gaither proposed to pay.

Flowers said Gaither needed to discuss the matter with Personnel Director David Swain. "I can't communicate" with your personnel man (Swain)," Gaither answered. "He is not going to dictate to me."

Flowers said Swain was following the pay schedule recommended for the county by the state.

Gaither said County Attorney John Hughes told him he could set the salaries in his department.

Chairman Clemmons said the board was interested in saving tax money. "We have been spending money over the years like we had a money machine," he added.

If the higher salaries and severance pay is paid, Chairman Clemmons said, the Register of Deeds budget would have only \$5.59 left at the end of the year. The \$1,000 for overtime and \$2,000 for part - time help would be eliminated.

Swain said he had refigured the cost and found that the budget would be \$469.07 in the red if the money was spent in the way Gaither requested.

Flowers suggested that county officials and Gaither review the matter and present a recommendation to the board. But Gaither said he was opposed to the proposal. "You are trying to override the statute," he told Flowers.

Hughes said it was true that Gaither could do his own hiring and set salaries. But he said the board had the final say since it had control of the money.

Stanley made a motion that no extra funds be approved for the office and Gaither reduce the proposed salaries. Gaither said he was opposed.

"Mr. Watson, would you like to tell me how to run my office and who to hire and fire?" Gaither asked at one point.

"I am going to be the champion of the taxpayer behind Mr. Stanley," Watson stated.

The board voted unanimously to have Gaither reduce his request and report back. But Gaither told the board that he did not intend to reduce the salary requests.

Vereen said he did not believe employees should start working at a new job at the top or near the top of the pay scale.

Gaither said the Register of Deeds office was different since employees only work

four years. "You made that a policy yesterday (with the firings)," Flowers stated. "That is not county policy."

Gaither said it has always been county policy. He said Sheriff Herman Strong helped establish the policy when he fired most of the employees upon taking office.

"Emily (McKeithan) did not know that," Flowers responded. "She has been at the office almost 16 years."

Gaither said he would not pay low salaries to his employees. "I don't intend to start my employees at step one since they are qualified employees," he declared. "They are already making less than employees in other departments."

School Fund

(Continued from page 1)

remaining on the schedule. Member Frank Randolph said the board should "sit down and make policies" that would suspend guilty parties - "not just individuals, but the teams."

The board decided to extend the employment of Food Service Director Mrs. Edna Baugh through the end of the school term, June 30. Asst. Supt. P.R. Hankins said he has had only four prospects and has interviewed only one, and recommended that a change not be made in the middle of the school year.

Hankins said he had a petition signed by 75 or 80 food service workers asking that no change be made during the school term, but Rabon said he didn't even want to see it.

Mrs. Baugh has reached retirement age of 65, but her employment was continued originally through this month.

The board rejected a request from architect L.R. Evans to pay the salary of a full - time, resident inspector (Cliff Rogers) for the Leland Middle School project. Instead, the board will pay half of the \$39,000 cost, with the Evans firm to pay the balance.

Part of the contract for architectural services, the board noted, is for inspections, but the agreement does not say on what schedule inspections would be made. On the project involving work at four county schools Rogers was employed full - time, with the school board and the Evans firm splitting the cost on a 60-40 basis.

Chairman Rabon, who had an appointment with an insurance adjuster, left the meeting at 10:05 p.m. The three - hour, 55-minute meeting, attended by all board members including newcomer Shirley Babson, ended at 11:10 p.m. Vice - Chairman W.T. Bowen presided after Rabon left.

Asst. Supt. Hankins reported that School Food Service was "pretty solvent," and that participation is up among students. The board discussed a "universal free lunch program," favored to some degree because only 25 percent of the lunches are being paid for by students at

this time.

"We would be a whole lot better off (offering the free lunch program)," said member Barbara Yount.

The board appointed Julia Daniels to the Local School Committee for Southport Middle School, replacing May Barbee. The appointment expires in April, when all school committees will be re-appointed.

Randolph reported leaks associated with the air - conditioning units at Lincoln school cafeteria, but King said the problem was known and was being corrected.

The board approved the lease of two mobile units to Sencland Community Action, Inc., for use in the Headstart program for children. King said a Mrs. Young and Mrs. Ballard had come to the Board of Education office earlier in regards to the request while other business was being discussed, but could not stay because of other commitments.

At the request of Mrs. Babson, the board approved a resolution in support and promotion of good international relations through school activities. The resolution was suggested at the N.C. School Boards Association meeting, which she recently attended in Asheville. Supt. King called it "a splendid gesture on the part of the board."

Mrs. Babson also questioned whether students are allowed to take reading books home. Associate Supt. Robert Elkins said any books except the basic reading instruction in primary grades can be taken home with the consent of the teacher.

Mrs. Babson also noted problems in the availability of school supplies to students, and King was asked to investigate the matter.

Randolph, who said he had received numerous calls asking where the school board "found" the money to help match bids for Leland Middle School, requested King to detail where the money came from, and have the information published "so the people will know."

Mrs. Yount objected to county commissioners charging that the school board request "changed" between two meetings, but the vice - chairman said money was received, contracts were let and the matter should be dropped.

The board received for informational purposes the State School Board biennium budget request for 1977 - 79, which listed reading, exceptional children and occupational education as the top priorities.

At the suggestion of Supt. King, the board will start meeting twice monthly, with the second meeting for the purpose of learning about school programs.

The board okayed the professional resignations of Martha A. Horton from Bolivia Elementary School; Howard R. Elkins, Southport Middle School; and Randy M. Riley, South and West Brunswick.

Also, the board approved the employment on probationary status of Mary Catherine Brooks, white, of Wrightsville Beach, eighth grade at Southport Middle School; Bertha M. Bell, black, Supply, guidance counselor at South Brunswick; and Wayne Holden,

white, Holden Beach, assistant instructor in Marine Occupations at South and West Brunswick.

Hosts Shower

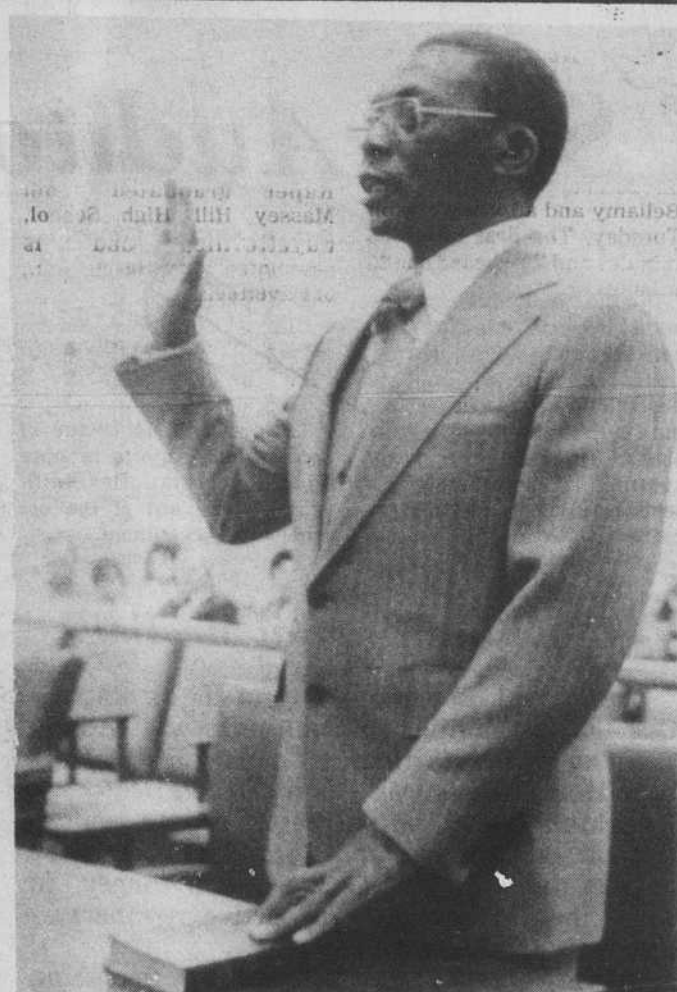
The Southport Sewing Class, under the instruction of Mrs. Mabel Hewett, held a baby shower in honor of Mrs. Dorothy Davis on December 6.

Attending were Nina Davis, Connie Holmes, Elnora McNeil, Lois Price, Hattie Gore, Mabel Hewett, Iris Bernard, Ophelia Gore and Mamie E. McNeil.

The menu consisted of ice cream, cake, punch, nuts and candy.



SHIRLEY BABSON
Board of Education



W.T. BOWEN
Board of Education



ENTERTAINMENT WAS BOTH continuous and enjoyable Community Building in Southport. Here, Mrs. Tillie Sugg Sunday afternoon as a part of Holiday House activities at the directs the bell choir as a sizeable audience listens attentively.