

# The Daily Tar Heel

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## On the Record

State law says people need not provide a reason for requesting public records, but chances are agencies will ask for one.

The results of a recent test of North Carolina's public-records access law revealed that residents could expect to be denied one-third of the time when requesting a city or county public record.

In addition, the study showed that law-enforcement agencies had a higher refusal rate and often violated state law by asking the requester to identify themselves.

State law explicitly states: "No person requesting to inspect and examine public records, or to obtain copies thereof, shall be required to disclose the purpose or motive for the request."

The investigation was sponsored by the N.C. Press Association and the N.C. Associated Press News Council and involved reporters from across the state who presented themselves as average residents seeking access to records that had been deemed public by the state.

Most county and city agencies complied with the requests and reports stated that some were very pleasant to deal with.

However, reporters ran into the most trouble when requesting records from law-enforcement officials.

Some were pressured into revealing their identity, which is against state law. Others were told that the records were confidential. One reporter was threatened with being put in jail and two others had license-tag checks run on their cars.

This disregard for state law raises real questions when considering the fitness of the men and women that are expected to protect residents' rights.

It is alarming that police officers, sheriff's deputies and, in some cases, sheriffs were not aware of the law or did not care about the law.

It is the equivalent of a speeder arguing to a state trooper that he or she was not aware of the speed limit or did not care, therefore the law does not apply to them.

The result is that government gets stronger and residents are made weaker.

N.C.'s public-access statute was created to provide residents with information about a number of governmental activities.

The statute ensures that individuals moving to new areas can see crime reports from the neighborhood they are moving to.

In addition, the statute makes information available about property taxes, county and city fees and the salaries of officials that were elected by the people.

It is time for law-enforcement and other public servants to realize that just because they tote a badge, carry a gun or hold a high-ranking position they are not above the law.

In our system of government residents are forced to comply with the law whether they agree with it or not. The process provides legal recourse but requires initial compliance.

Law enforcement and public officials should be forced to adhere to the same set of rules.

After being denied access to a pistol-permit application a reporter told Orange County Sheriff Lindy Pendergrass what the public-records access statute stated.

Pendergrass replied to the reporter, "Don't you tell me what the law is. I know what it is. I'm the sheriff."

It is this pervasive attitude that should alarm and outrage residents.

Clearly, the message that a statement like this imparts is that law-enforcement view their role as that of law maker and not law enforcer.

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK - RACHEL CARTER

## UNC: Soccer Mom

UNC's proud soccer legacy is on center stage as eight of the twenty members of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team are from UNC.

Of all the things UNC prides itself on, from low tuition to being the first public university in the nation, the University is still known for one thing - Michael Jordan.

It doesn't seem to matter what leaps and bounds the school takes, Jordan still remains the most famous alumnus and he seems to be UNC's greatest claim to fame.

But now eight women might have something to say about that and kick Jordan from his place of eminence in UNC's heart.

The World Cup this year has suddenly turned a spotlight to a growing audience - young girls. And it is those girls who have made Mia Hamm a household name.

Soccer has become more popular every year and children learning to play the game look at the best players and try to learn.

The best is the U.S. National Team. The U.S. Women's National Team.

Saturday's title game against China stands to break the crowd record at a women's only sport - the record set at Giant Stadium in June by U.S. Women's World Cup fans when the team beat Denmark 3-0. Officials are expecting 90,000 fans.

Little girls have posters on their walls of Hamm, Julie Foudy, Michelle Akers and Briana Scurry. It's the first time in sports history that girls in America have had brilliant athlete role models like the U.S. team.

Two of the team members - Joy Fawcett and Carla Overbeck - have children and many, including Hamm, are married. Fawcett and Overbeck are proof to girls that

they can balance sports with family.

Leading the team are the eight UNC women. From Lorrie Fair, who will return for her final year of eligibility in the fall, to 31-year-old Overbeck, the Tar Heel influence is enormous. They are a credit to the University, because they are smiling, well-behaved, excited and damn talented.

To honor the memory of Michael Hooker, who was a supporter of Tar Heel sports, the UNC team wrote 'Michael' on one sock and 'Hooker' on the other during Sunday's game.

The team knows that making women's soccer a popular and thriving sport depends on them. So they are reaching out to the fans.

On the U.S. national team's Web site, Fair, armed with a digital camera, gives fans an up-close look at the team's fondness for nail polish and hair dye, their shopping exploits and the clutter of their hotel rooms.

Figure skating star Tara Lipinski has been recruited to make commercials begging President Clinton to go to World Cup games and he listened, showing up to the July 2 victory against Germany.

Nike has jumped on board too, with several commercials that emphasize the importance of "team" for the women.

And of course, there's the Gatorade commercial where Hamm challenges Jordan to a series of contests - and beats him.

With the team's strong drive into the minds and hearts of the public, it might soon be a question of Hamm beating Jordan in popularity too.

## Chapel Hill Race War Imminent

Last weekend while most people were lighting sparklers and grilling hamburgers, Benjamin Nathaniel Smith was planning a shooting rampage in the suburbs of Chicago.

He killed two men and wounded six. He joined the World Church of the Creator, a church where white supremacy is gospel. The members ain't boy scouts. They advocate white power masked in religion. They have turned hate into a profession.

The members of the World Church of the Creator have every right to hand out hate literature.

But, they should have more integrity. They should come right out and say who they think should die. They don't because they know that fighting words are not protected by the First Amendment. After all, they're leader wants to be a lawyer. Tricky racists.

Its leader, Matthew Hale, claims that the group does not condone violence.

Sure. And Hitler aspired to be a rabbi. Claims that white supremacy groups aren't into violence are ridiculous. Picture it. You are a self-proclaimed neo-Nazi. The hate literature you distribute is all nigger-this and kike-



CARA BRICKMAN  
Guest Columnist

that. You want them all dead, but you just want to talk about it? Come on. Hitler did not make a name for himself by being all talk now did he?

He thought Jews sucked. He wanted them all dead. They were to blame for unemployment in his motherland. They hoarded all the money while his Aryan brothers went hungry. They were sneaky backstabbers with hideous hook noses. Hitler wrote that the only way to cleanse the Aryan race was to do away with the undesirables, including Jews, gypsies and homosexuals.

Of course there is no way of knowing what they talk about at their church meetings. But,

something tells me the discussions have more to do with stringing up black people from trees and less to do with the Blessed Trinity.

"Gee, we never saw anything like this coming," Smith's neighbors told news crews.

Whether or not Smith had violent tendencies or looked like he was capable of murder, he did in fact kill two people before turning his gun on himself after a police chase. There was something about hearing day after day that blacks, Asians and Jews among others were parasites of the United States that got to Smith. And while the World Church of the Creator does not condone violence, it has indisputably bred it.

Smith went on this killing spree in affluent neighborhoods not unlike our own in Chapel Hill. It might be wise to remember that while we are out walking our dogs or at the drive-thru window at Wendy's.

You never know when a walk can turn into a crime or when a dispute over french fries can turn into a race war. Thank the racists.

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## READERS' FORUM

### Hooker 'Pain in Neck' For University Mired In Unchallenging Ideas

TO THE EDITOR:

Michael Hooker was a pain in the neck to every tweed-jacketed educational bureaucrat in the UNC faculty and administration. He was the whirlwind of change, ruffling the feathers of every smug academic hack who had grown too comfortable with non-management by committee.

Michael Hooker came to the university thirty five years ago a callow youth from the hardscrabble coal fields of rural Virginia. What went on in the classrooms and libraries of Carolina was not a luxury for him, it was a miracle. It opened worlds to him that his own father would never see or understand. And it salvaged him from a lifetime in the dark, cramped burrows, and a lung full of coal dust by the time he was 40. He never forgot what miracles could be wrought in the halls and classrooms by passionate teachers, who cared about their students, and who believed in the power and glory of knowledge. Miracles that could transform a coal miner's son into a chancellor.

To paraphrase Wordsworth, "The University is father of the man."

A quarter century later, he proved another great alumnus wrong. He could go home again. And when he did, he had a vision of what the university should be. He believed in the promise that education held for all those who sought it, the power it had to elevate the humble and bring hope to those, who only a generation before knew only despair. He wanted nothing short of a revolution, a return to UNC's original ideals, a university of the people, by the people, but most importantly for the people.

He had a vision, and it was not the stuffy, etiolated, sarcophagus the university had evolved into under the layers of dust deposited by the creaking leadership of academic pedants.

The University had lost sight of its mission, and sunk into a parody of the self-absorbed university.

Michael Hooker seized the University by the scruff of the neck and shook the dust from every corner of campus. He kicked open the doors and windows and pointed to the far horizon and declared that the true campus of this University lay there in the tiny valleys of the mountains, the sprawling mill towns of the Piedmont, the isolated tobacco farms of the east tidewater plains and the tiny fishing villages of the coast. He returned with vigor to make good the promise of Chancellor Battle in the university's first renaissance, where "the boundaries of the University would be co-terminus with the boundaries of the state itself."

The Chancellor ordered the school of education to reach out to the high schools of the state. He smashed the ivory towers and insisted the University live in the world of business and government across the state. He dragged the University kicking and screaming into the real world. He insisted that the university cease its role as chief beneficiary of the people's largesse, and return again to its role of servant of the people.

Previous chancellors were the noble keepers of flame, acolytes of the grand tradition. They loved the bricks and mortar set by General Davie and the stones trod by Thomas Wolfe. But for Michael Hooker, his university was the people, and the people who mattered most, his students. He sought to return the campus to the electric atmosphere of his youth. He fought to revive a university where the faculty cared more about molding a generation's leaders than what was on the lunch menu at the faculty club.

He refocused the attention of the University back to the undergraduate school that defined its character, history and meaning. He demanded that the faculty lavish its best efforts, not just on the tiny graduate classes of tomorrow's professors, but also on the undergraduates who would stream

back across the state, changing the face of society.

He wanted the very best for every student, and embraced technology to ensure the world would hold as much promise for them, as it had for him. He mandated that every freshman be able to own a computer by 2000, and that every professor integrate computers into the classes as fundamental tools of learning. He fought to establish four new Kenan Professorships for undergraduate faculty and made it clear that excellence in undergraduate teaching was the keystone of his administration. He restored the promise that education held for those who had none without it.

The last time I saw Chancellor Hooker was in the spring of 1998. It was bright April afternoon, and I spotted him charging down a walkway on the south quad, in that perpetual bounding gate that marked his personality, pushing through the swarming sea of students. I watched as he nodded and flashed that famous smile at each and every student, starting them as he charged through their midst. One lanky youth raised a clinched fist over his head and called out with a toothy grin, "Yo, Captain Hook" and the Chancellor smiled back and waved. "Most Excellent Chancellor" cried a scuffy, overweight kid with glasses. He responded with a Cheshire Cat grin and a mock imperial turn of the wrist without breaking stride, leaving a fleet of grinning, startled students, bobbing like tiny boats in the wake of a great carrier, awed by the sudden encounter with the leader they all felt knew and shared their own hopes and dreams.

That is the way I will always remember Michael Hooker, striding down the sun-dappled quad of his youth, surging through the innocent, the eager, the hopeful sea of beaming faces that reflected back his charismatic grin, joyful to be surrounded by his true university.

Randolph Ryan  
Class of 1982

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