

Death penalty faces enmity

Groups hold vigil before execution

BY BROOKE M. GOTTLIEB
STAFF WRITER

On the eve of North Carolina's second execution in two weeks, opponents of capital punishment gathered on campus to reflect upon the execution of a convicted murderer.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro Congregations for the Abolition of Capital Punishment hosted a vigil for Charles Roache at the Newman Catholic Student Center Parish.

Roache was scheduled for death by lethal injection at 2:00 a.m. today at Central Prison in Raleigh. Although he has confessed his crimes to authorities, attendees said he still does not deserve to die.

"I'm against (capital punishment) because I think that if God were standing here, he would tell us not to kill his child," said Kristen Brown, a Chapel Hill attorney and member of the University United Methodist Church.

In April 2001, the Haywood County Superior Court sentenced Roache to death for the murders of Mitzi Phillips, 44, and her 14-year-old daughter, Katie.

He also received life sentences for the murders of the three other Phillips family members. The Alexander County Superior Court also sentenced him to life for the murder of Chad Watt.

During the service, attendees stressed that Roache suffered hardships throughout his childhood that might have given him a skewed moral perspective. Brown said he lived with alcoholic and abusive parents, dropped out of school and began using drugs at a young age.

"His father would give away his toys and clothes, and his mother would kill his pets in front of him," she said. "That Charles Roache developed from an abused child who begged his bus driver to take him home with him ... into an adult who abused drugs and alcohol, and who was filled with anger and rage, is no surprise to most of us."

Nancy Jeannechild, another church member, mentioned that childhood abuse affects the devel-



Wanda (right) and Tye Hunter participate in a candlelight vigil at the Newman Catholic Student Center on Thursday. The vigil was held before the execution of Charles Roache, convicted of the murders of Mitzi and Katie Phillips.

opment of the brain. "It's not that (convicts) won't act in caring ways, it's that they can't," she said. "... Terrible things happen to children when they're little, and they learn that that's OK."

In the closing prayer, the Rev. Suzanne Dornsmith, associate pastor for University United Methodist Church, hoped for the well-being of those affected by the execution.

She also prayed for an end to capital punishment. "God, we pray for our state and for our nation when we allow this death to happen," she said.

Before attending the vigil, UNC's Campaign to End the Death Penalty met to acknowledge N.C. death row inmates.

People at the gathering read aloud the names of those on death row and stated their reasons for opposing capital punishment.

"I'm against (capital punishment) because I think that if God were standing here, he would tell us not to kill his child."

KRISTEN BROWN, ATTORNEY

"I oppose the death penalty because you cannot honor life by taking a life," said UNC junior Josh Glasser.

Others cited mitigating factors, such as poor performances by public defenders, as reasons that cause juries to choose capital punishment over life imprisonment.

In addition to acknowledging inmates, attendees kept in mind the victims and those who knew them.

Members then dipped their hands into red paint and placed them onto a petition supporting a moratorium on the death penalty

they will send to Gov. Mike Easley.

UNC freshman Ryan Presley said the high emotions that accompany violent crimes can lead to support for the death penalty.

"Sometimes we get caught up in the descriptions of their crimes," Presley said. "Our instinct tells us that by getting rid of them, we're serving justice."

But Presley said opposing capital punishment demonstrates the human capacity for compassion.

Contact the State & National Editor at statedesk@unc.edu.

MLK facilitator divulges plans

Road renaming to kick off after delay

BY ADAM W. RHEW
STAFF WRITER

The president of a Durham consulting firm said good communication and courtesy should take center stage when local residents take up the issue of renaming Airport Road.

Gita Gulati-Gulati-Partee runs OpenSource Leadership Strategies, the group that has been hired by the town to ensure that meetings of the town's Special Committee to Consider Renaming Airport Road go smoothly.

The issue of renaming the road in favor of Martin Luther King Jr. has been a point of debate since January, when members of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People petitioned the town to make the change.

"These kinds of important discussions require a lot of focus and time," Gulati-Partee said.

The four-person consulting team will first interview all 20 members of the committee.

Committee members then will take part in two full-day workshops Nov. 5 and Nov. 6 and a half-day meeting Nov. 20.

During the two longer meetings, committee members will be engaged in large- and small-group discussions, as well as one-on-one conversations.

"We really want to facilitate good conversation," Gulati-Partee said.

But tackling the renaming issue isn't Gulati-Partee's only goal.

"Our process will support the committee's work to address this immediate question, and, more importantly, will open a pathway to authentic, courageous conversations throughout the community," she stated in a Tuesday press release.

The committee was formed Sept. 13 and was supposed to start work immediately.

But some council members thought the committee needed

a facilitator to keep it on track. Others were concerned about the price proposed for those services.

Mayor Kevin Foy, Mayor Pro Tem Edith Wiggins, and council member Sally Greene, the three Town Council members on the special committee, reviewed applications for the position and made the decision to award the contract to OpenSource last week.

The firm will be paid \$15,000 for its services — the lower end of the price range Foy initially proposed.

Council member Mark Kleinschmidt, who expressed concern during the hiring process, said that the price for the facilitators is high but that he's ready to move on.

"The council has spoken, and it's been approved," he said. "I really want to be able to do what we can do to make this work."

Gulati-Partee said committee members should be close to a decision on a recommendation after they meet Nov. 6 and will be able to present their findings at the Dec. 6 council meeting — within the time frame Foy set for receiving the presentation.

Committee member and former council member Joe Herzenberg said he sees that as a reasonable goal.

"If we were only meeting for a couple of hours a day, then it could be a problem," he said. "These intensive meetings should get the job done."

Assistant Town Clerk Amy Harvey said three of the 20 people initially appointed to the committee cannot attend all of those meetings. David Kroninger, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, and J. Darren Thompson will be replaced by alternate members.

Harvey said those appointments will be made at the Town Council's Oct. 27 business meeting.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Groups try to nail down Kennedy talk

BY ERIN ZUREICK
STAFF WRITER

UNC students soon might have the chance to shake hands with a member of one of America's most famous families.

Environmental activist and political advocate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. likely will speak at UNC during Earth Week this spring through the collaboration of several UNC organizations.

The Campus Y executive com-

mittee approved \$1,000 in funding to bring Kennedy to campus during its Tuesday meeting.

Students from UNC's Department of City and Regional Planning first suggested Kennedy as a possible featured speaker.

They then brought the idea to the James M. Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence, which asked the Campus Y and the Carolina Environmental Program to become involved, said

Anup Dashputre, treasurer of the Campus Y.

Although Kennedy has not officially confirmed his appearance and details still are being worked out, he expressed a definite interest in speaking at UNC, said Randi Davenport, executive director of the Johnston Center.

Kennedy will speak either April 20 or 21 and remain on campus for about one day if all goes as planned, said Douglas Crawford-Brown, director of the Carolina Environmental Program.

Officials from all of the sponsoring campus groups heralded Kennedy and said his message will be valuable to students.

"Mr. Kennedy talks about tangible issues and how students can make a difference in the environment," Dashputre said.

The son of former presidential candidate and U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy is prominent among environmental activists as a strong proponent of sustainable development.

His résumé includes prosecuting government organizations and companies for polluting the Hudson River and the Long Island Sound and suing treatment plants to force compliance with the Clean Water Act.

"Mr. Kennedy stresses the new problems in the environment that involve sustainability and how we design our communities differently to stress environmental decision-making," Crawford-Brown said.



Political activist Robert Kennedy Jr. might speak at UNC during Earth Week in the spring.

Kennedy currently works at Pace University School of Law as a professor of environmental law and is also a co-director of the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic in White Plains, N.Y.

The interest in bringing Kennedy to campus stemmed from his innovative work in environmental advocacy and the chance to link undergraduates with an activist who is accessible to students, Davenport said.

She said the groups hope Kennedy will have more personal contact with students instead of the standard speech with a question-and-answer session.

Though Kennedy gives speeches on several topics, University groups requested that he give his "A Contract With Our Future" speech, Crawford-Brown said.

The agency that coordinates Kennedy's speaking engagements, Keppler Associates Inc., outlined the speech in a summary sent to CEP, describing it as an eloquent explanation of good environmental and economic policies.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

CORRECTIONS

■ Due to a reporting error, the Oct. 20 sports column "McCants behind bars after 'Late Night' soundbite" stated that UNC basketball player Rashad McCants made comments about his time at the University after the team's "Late Night With Roy" event, held Oct. 15.

McCants actually made those comments Oct. 14 during the team's Media Day.

■ Due to a reporting error, the Oct. 20 article "Staying On His Heels" misspelled the name of North Carolina town Whiteville in a quote from U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre, a North Carolina Democrat.

■ Due to an editing error, the Oct. 21 Diversions column "TV news drops ball with poor coverage" misspelled the name of Ferrel Guillory, Southern politics expert and director of UNC's Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life.

To report corrections, contact Managing Editor Chris Coletta at cocoletta@email.unc.edu.

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Congress to deliberate bill about flag burning

Resolution responds to Oct. 6 incident

BY KRISTLE SPELLMAN
STAFF WRITER

After a recent incident in the Pit that resulted in an arrest, Student Congress members will deliberate on Tuesday a resolution condemning the desecration of the American flag on campus.

On Oct. 6, Kevin Sellers, a homeless protester, set to fire an American flag that belonged to Richard Bean, a member of College Republicans.

In response, Kris Wampler, vice chairman of Congress' Finance Committee, has introduced a resolution to Congress that condemns flag burning in hopes of preventing similar occurrences in the future.

He said he believes the incident was a display of political activism that transformed into criminal activity.

"Because we represent the students, and (the flag burning incident) was so symbolic, we have to make a statement about this," Wampler said.

Speaker Charlie Anderson said some representatives have expressed concern about the resolution in its initial format.

Wampler said their concerns include the fact that such a resolution, if passed, could stifle political activism on campus.

"My only concern is that people might think we are condemning flag burning in general," he said.

The resolution now reads, "While the Student Congress of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill affirms the right of every American to freedom of speech and encourages civil debate, the body condemns the criminal act of desecration of another's American flag."

Because the wording has been adjusted, the resolution more clearly speaks to the targeted incident while welcoming political debate within legal boundaries, Congress members said.

Anderson predicted that the resolution should fare well Tuesday night when it re-emerges during the next full session of Congress.

"I think it will be received pretty warmly. I don't think anyone disagrees that (the burning of the flag) was inappropriate," he said, noting that he cannot speak for everyone.

Luke Farley, chairman of Congress' Rules and Judiciary Committee, said he supports the resolution.

"I think it's a great idea," he said. "It puts the emphasis on the fact that the desecration of the flag was the only crime committed."

Farley predicted that the resolution will be well received by members of Congress.

He also speculated that if members oppose the resolution, their rationale will be political and not concerned with the issue at hand.

Wampler acknowledged that civil debate at UNC is welcome and important, especially during an election season.

But he said he also believes Congress has the responsibility to make sure students remain civil when espousing their views.

"We encourage all students to speak their minds, but there is a line between good political speech and hurting people, and we don't want people to take it too far."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@email.unc.edu.