

## National and World News

### FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

#### Grief for Obama on campaign trail

CHARLOTTE (MCT) — During his final day on the presidential campaign trail, Democratic candidate Sen. Barack Obama's will was tested Monday by the death of his grandmother, someone who desperately wanted to see the election's outcome.

Her passing as he was on the brink of potentially realizing his political goal was a tragic final installment after nearly 21 months of exhaustive campaigning.

He had only learned of his grandmother's death just hours before touching down on the tarmac in Jacksonville.

#### Five swing states to determine win

CHICAGO (MCT) — Traditionally, a presidential candidate has required victories in at least two of the three "swing" states Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida to win. Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama is favored in Pennsylvania.

Yet, even if Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain prevails in tight races in Ohio and Florida, victories for Obama in either Virginia or North Carolina, both longtime Republican strongholds, could tip the contest to the Democrat.

#### Spiritual leader says little hope left for Tibetan liberation from China

TOKYO (MCT) — Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, said Monday that talks with Beijing to win greater autonomy for his homeland had been a failure and that Tibet was "now dying" under China's firm grip.

He said that six years of direct talks between his personal envoys and Beijing had brought no substantial achievements.

"Inside Tibet, the situation (has) become much worse. Sometimes I describe Tibet as passing through almost like a death sentence. This old nation, with ancient culture, heritage, (is) now dying," he said.

The exiled 73-year-old leader said talks with China had dragged

on too long without success. He said a meeting that Tibetan exiles would hold in India later this month would be a turning point in determining how Tibetans should press for greater self-rule.

"My trust in the Chinese government (is) now thinner, thinner, thinner," he said. "Things are not going well. I cannot pretend that something (is) OK. No, I have to accept failure."

Political discussions among the estimated 120,000 Tibetans living in exile, largely in India and Nepal, have grown heated since protests erupted in Tibet last March and spilled into other regions of China.

#### 2004 Ohio votes still under review

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MCT) — A Republican computer consultant denied under oath Monday that he knew of any GOP effort to steal the 2004 election for President Bush by rigging Ohio's vote totals, an attorney who questioned him said.

A federal judge on Friday ordered Michael Connell, whose firm had consulting contracts with Bush's campaign and with the Ohio secretary of state's office in 2004, to submit to a limited, closed-door deposition in a suit alleging schemes to fix the vote.

Oddities in Ohio's 2004 presidential election continue to surface, including evidence of document shredding.

#### Illegal West Bank outposts cut off

JERUSALEM (MCT) — Responding to a surge in violence by militant Jewish settlers, the Israeli government has announced that it will halt direct and indirect state funding of unauthorized settlements in the West Bank.

The move, decided on at a Cabinet meeting Sunday, indicated that government money still was being directed to the unauthorized outposts, some of which have roads, electricity, water and public buildings that have been paid for by the state, contrary to government policy.

Under the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan, Israel is supposed to remove at least two dozen of them immediately.

## Wolfenden challenges incumbent

BY MCKAY GLASGOW  
STAFF WRITER

Betsy Wolfenden met Michael Fullwood, a death row inmate at the time, while working in local prisons.

Now married, they founded Restitution Inc., which helps criminals make amends for their actions.

Wolfenden said she is opposed to the death penalty but not soft on crimes.

"I'm not opposed to long prison sentences," she said. "I live with one everyday."

Fullwood is now off death row and serving a life sentence.

Wolfenden describes herself as a "late bloomer" when it came to deciding on a career.

But since graduating from UNC School of Law in 2000, she has worked as an attorney to change the judicial system in District 15B, which includes Orange and Chatham Counties.

Wolfenden, 53, announced her candidacy for the race just before the deadline in early March.

She said she chose to run because if incumbent Alonzo Coleman is re-elected he would only be able to serve

six months of his term before he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 72. When his term ends, the governor will appoint a replacement to fill the seat.

"There's been a backlash against my campaign because local attorneys want the opportunity to nominate the new district judge after Judge Coleman retires at 72," she said.

Wolfenden said she thinks the position should be elected by Orange and Chatham County citizens.

"I still view the court as a consumer and as a consumer, I don't like what I see," Wolfenden said. "Until we start voting out this 'good ol' boy network,' we aren't going to make any changes."

Wolfenden said she is not taking any money from local attorneys for her judicial campaign.

"You will be inclined to rule for the party that supported you," she said. "Attorneys wouldn't give judges money unless they thought that somewhere down the line they will benefit."

As an attorney, Wolfenden spearheaded the Professionalism Support Initiative in District 15B, which holds attorneys accountable



Attorney Betsy Wolfenden, who is married to a death row inmate, says she favors tough sentences.

for unprofessional actions.

She also won the Power of Justice Pro Bono Award for civil service in the Triangle area this year.

Veehoor Zacharias, a client and supporter of Wolfenden, said she is not trying to make friends with local attorneys in the courtroom.

"When she hears an attorney say something that's not honest, Betsy isn't afraid to say it's not true," he said.

Wolfenden said she hopes to implement a family court system and make the law process faster and more accessible for citizens.

"I'm running for the people, for those who aren't being treated fairly in the courtroom," she said. "I'll fight and fight for what is right."

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

## Judge to run for shortened term

BY MCKAY GLASGOW  
STAFF WRITER

District Court Judge Alonzo Coleman said supporters urged him to run in this year's district court race even though he can only serve six months of his four-year term if re-elected.

"For one thing I want to serve out every day I can," Coleman said. "The other attorneys and judges also wanted me to run."

Coleman is coming to the end of

a long career as a judge and attorney in District 15B, which covers Orange and Chatham Counties. On June 30, he will turn 72, at which age the N.C. General Assembly requires district court judges to retire.

Coleman said if he is re-elected, local judges and attorneys will nominate three candidates to fill his position in June. He said the governor will then appoint the new district court judge.

Former Gov. Jim Hunt appointed Coleman a judge of District 15B in 1995. Coleman said this process is a better way of selecting judges because the general public tends to know little about judicial candidates.

"In all my years living in Orange County my neighbors have constantly come up to me and asked who they should vote for in judicial races," Coleman said. "Among attorneys these candidates are well-known, but judicial races are under the radar for most voters."

Coleman has lived in Orange County since he was five years old. In college he studied engineering, but by his senior year he had discovered a new passion—law.

"It agreed with me and I agreed with it," he said. "Law is a wonderful thing if it is done honestly and it's a terrible system if it's not."

Upon graduation from UNC School of Law in 1964, Coleman served 30 years as a trial lawyer in Orange County.



District Court Judge Alonzo Coleman will turn 72 six months into his term if re-elected.

Susan Lewis, an Orange County attorney and supporter of Coleman, said she tried her first case as an attorney against Coleman and has tried cases under him since he was appointed judge.

"He's smart as a whip," she said. "He is extremely fair and has a lot of wisdom that comes from many years of practicing trial law and being on the bench."

Steve Bernholz, another Orange County attorney and Coleman supporter, said there is no reason to replace him.

"He's very knowledgeable about the law, very moderate in temperament and very respectful of all parties involved in a case," he said.

Coleman said regardless of what happens in the election, he will continue to practice law past the age of 72.

"The chief judge is urging me to continue as an appointed judge," he said. "I know some day I'll get dotty and not be able to do it, but I can't think of anything I'd like more than being a judge or a lawyer."

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

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