

OPINION

Thomasville Times

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor

I would like to share some facts with you about a man, an honest man, running for reelection to the N.C. House of Representatives, District 80. His name is Jerry Dockham, and I have known him quite well for more than 55 years. I grew up with him, went to school with him, and for a short time was his seventh-grade sweetheart. During all those formidable years there was always a constant. I admired him, respected him and knew he was a person meant to help with change, the right kind of change!

As is so often the case, if a child is raised with morals and character, those qualities remain, and this is the case with my candidate for N.C. House. Jerry's actions are preceded with concern for the personal and individual rights of others, trying never to overstep his authority but always willing to listen and act only when change is best. Changes which are right for his constituents and citizens — this sometimes means reexamining his position when the majority feels differently. This comes with listening and receiving ideas from his district's population. Ideas become bills and bills become laws, such as the ones that have benefited Davidson County introduced by N.C. House Rep. Jerry Dockham. Lexington's Bar-B-Q Festival, named The Food Festival of the Triad, was no easy task for him. The folks in the eastern part of our state like theirs as much as we do — even though I can't imagine why! The funds, a few years ago, that were obtained for the City of Thomasville to promote tourism (to excite people as to what is here) and for the Town of Denton as well. These are just a few examples of the people's ideas that Rep. Dockham worked to make happen. I would be remiss if I did not include his undying support for Davidson County Community College. He has served there as a most loyal trustee for the past 25 years.

Folks, you need to know that in Raleigh, one must communicate with both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, to pass legislation. This he does and does with integrity and honesty, important qualities you had better look into deeply when you make your choice in the Republican primary for N.C. House of Representatives District 80 on May 4. Your choice will be your representative! I say this with complete and total conviction.

I believe your vote must be for Jerry Dockham, my husband of 38 faithful years.

This from the heart of a born and bred lifelong Republican.

Louise Dockham
 Denton

To the Editor

There will be a third candidate for Davidson County Sheriff on the ballot in November. My name is Don Swink. I am an Unaffiliated candidate for Sheriff of Davidson County. To avoid any confusion, I want to let the voters know that I will not be on the Primary ballot on May 4, but I will definitely be on the ballot in November. As an Unaffiliated candidate, I am required to get signatures of 4 percent of the registered voters in the county by June 25th. to put my name on the November ballot. As of the writing of this letter I have attained that goal, having over 4,021 signatures in hand.

However, the Board of Elections also told me that I would need about 10 percent more than that to make up for the ones they will throw out for various reasons, so therefore we will be working some of the polls on Primary day to get the remaining few hundred signatures needed to ensure that we have enough. So be looking for us at some of the polls on Election Day May 5th. and sign the petitions.

If you would like to volunteer to work a poll, give me a call at 561-1760. Thank you, and God bless.

Don Swink
 Unaffiliated Candidate

To the Editor

As Early Childhood Educators, there are many things that we know. Research tells us that the first five years of life lay the foundation for all future learning. Also, more than 40 years of early education research shows that high quality early education experiences positively impact young children. Research tells us that those participating in high quality care are far more likely to graduate from high school, commit fewer crimes, be homeowners and have higher earnings. More importantly, they will provide communities with a higher skilled workforce that will be required as technology continues to expand.

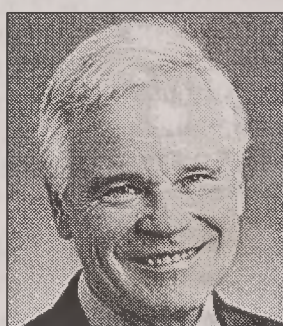
This past week Gov. Bev Perdue released her proposed state budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year. This budget makes critical investments in four key areas, education being one of them. I would like to recognize and thank our governor today for holding the line on investments in young children. Smart Start initiatives across the state were held as equals to the K-12 and community college systems. This is an important step in our state's future success.

Linda Leonard
 Executive Director
 Smart Start of
 Davidson County



Lumbees, Lewin and Lowery

VIEWPOINT



D.G. MARTIN
 N.C. Columnist

Are you trying to make sense out of the latest news from the Lumbee Tribe?

According to news reports, the Lumbee Tribal Council has approved a contract with a Nevada-based lobbying firm that will attempt to persuade Congress to grant the tribe full recognition without any restrictions on gambling ventures.

A bill granting recognition but restricting gambling has passed the House of Representatives and has been waiting on action by the Senate.

The shocker in the new contract with Lewin International is a provision that would require the Lumbees to pay Lewin \$35 million if Congress grants recognition and permits gambling, unless the tribe votes to set up a gambling operation run by Lewin.

The contract with Lewin has some of the 50,000 or more Lumbees who live in and around Robeson County worried and angry. Just when a compromise recognition bill was finally about to become law, they say that the tribal leadership changed directions, put the recognition effort in jeopardy, and risks the loss of \$35 million, a substantial part of the tribe's assets.

Just when we are trying to make sense of the Lumbee actions and as people start asking questions about the

tribe's history, a new book comes to the rescue. The book is *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, and the Making of a Nation*. Its author, a Lumbee Indian, is UNC-Chapel Hill Assistant Professor of History Malinda Maynor Lowery.

Although the Lumbees are the largest Native American tribe east of the Mississippi River, they have had to struggle for appropriate recognition and acceptance. Some North Carolinians question whether or not they are "real Indians." So have agencies of the federal and state government.

But, although there may be disagreements about issues that affect them, the Lumbees have no doubt that they, their families, and the groups of their neighbors and kinsfolk who have lived for hundreds of years in and around the swampy lands that border the Lumbee River are Indian people.

Professor Lowery supports their claim. Her new book lays out in detail how these people have worked, plotted, fought, and compromised in order to preserve and enhance their Indian heritage.

To accommodate the white establishment's notions of Indian governance, the Lumbees tried a series of tribal names — Croatan, Siouan, Cherokee and Tuscarora. To gain and retain recognition and support from the state, they accommodated themselves to the Jim Crow racial culture of the South. They submitted to studies that evaluated their "Indianness" based on dubious scientific measurements of physical features that supposedly defined race. And in 1956, they had to accept a form of Federal recognition that denied them every benefit given to other Native Americans.

Lowery believes that the identity of the Lumbee is defined primarily, not by the

percentage of Indian blood, but by kinship, mutual recognition, and strong and long-standing connections to the land. With this background, she says, lack of government recognition "did not prevent the Indians in Robeson County from becoming a nation."

She quotes Lumbee Attorney Arlinda Locklear, the first Native American lawyer to appear before the U.S. Supreme Court, "We have always been independent and self-determining communities ... [Sovereignty is] not bestowed by government ..."

Nevertheless, the goal of full Federal recognition is one of those things that holds Lumbees together.

But, decisions about the strategy and tactics of securing recognition can divide them.

According to Lowery, Arlinda Locklear has been working on behalf of the Lumbee Tribe since 1983 in the effort to secure Congressional action to recognize the tribe. Reportedly, she worked mostly for free.

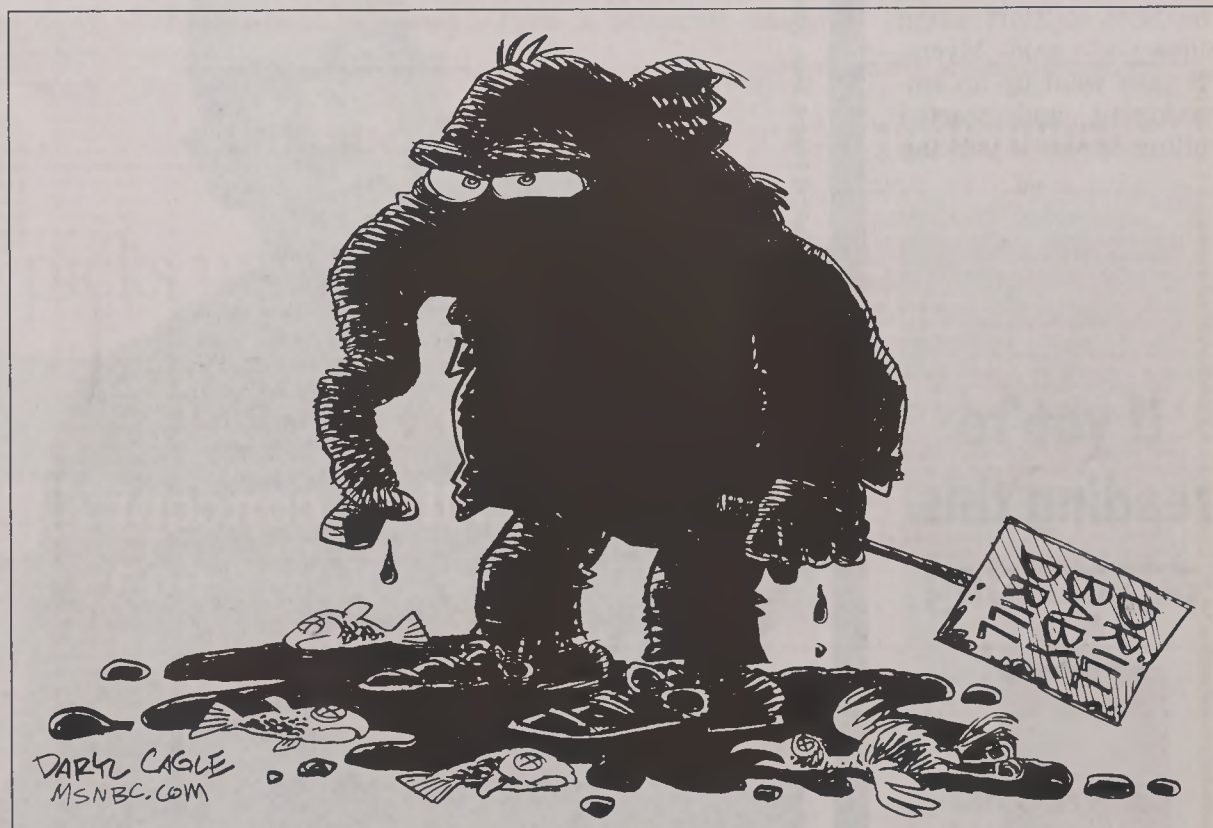
Ironically, the Tribal Council's new contract replaces Locklear with Lewin International.

It is a result that not even Lowery's wonderful book can make me understand.

Note: Listen to D.G. Martin's radio interview with Malinda Lowery at www.1360wchl.com/listenwide.html?showname=dgpodcast

D.G. Martin is host of UNC-TV's North Carolina Bookwatch, which airs Sundays at 5 p.m. For more information or to view prior programs visit the webpage at www.unctv.org/ncbookwatch/.

This Sunday's (May 9) guest is Elizabeth Edwards, author of "Resilience," a moving memoir of facing tragedy in her life.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

All letters should include name, address and daytime phone number. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Letters should be no more than 400 words, unless otherwise approved by editor. Limited to one letter every 30 days. All letters are subject to editing.

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EDITORIALS

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