

# It's difficult to win after beating party establishment

Is Donald Trump really a unique political candidate? Did North Carolina ever have anybody in politics who compares with him? When I asked that question in a column last year, I suggested U.S. Senator Robert Reynolds "out-Trumped" Trump and was so full of bunkum that it was part of his nickname, "Buncombe Bob." Reynolds served in the Senate for 12 years beginning in 1933. He kept people all over the country entertained and shocked by planting a big kiss on Jean Harlow, the famous movie star, right on the Capitol steps; getting married five times; snubbing the King and Queen of Great Britain; and appearing in Lucky Strike cigarette advertising for a thousand-dollar payment. At 57, he married a wealthy 20-year-old Washington socialite who often wore the famous "Hope" diamond, owned by her mother.

All this and more of Reynolds's Trump-like life and political career is set out in "Buncombe Bob: The Life and Times of Robert Rice Reynolds," by Julian Pleasants (UNC Press 2000).

While Reynolds's populist rhetoric and his outrageous conduct and comments still remind me of Trump, another North Carolina political figure might be a better comparison.

In 1978, John Ingram, like Trump this year, challenged his party's establishment and convincingly beat a series of respected and well-funded party insiders in the primaries, only to have his supporters collapse into an insignificant minority in the general election.

Unlike Trump, Ingram was a Democrat and an experienced politician, then serving as North Carolina's insurance commissioner. But, like Trump, he challenged the inside politicians and regular party establishment as he developed a reputation as champion of the little man. As insurance commissioner he confronted the big insurance companies and consistently rejected their requests for rate increases. The insurance companies persuaded appellate courts to overturn many of his rulings. In 1977, the Democratic controlled legislature took away his power to limit rate increases.

In 1978, first-term U.S. Senator Jesse Helms was running for re-election, unopposed in the Republican primary. Democrats, still smarting from Helms's 1972

COLUMNIST



D.G. MARTIN

victory in a Republican landslide year, were hungry for a rematch. Three strong party insiders lined up in the primaries to compete for the chance to run against Helms.

McNeill Smith and Lawrence Davis were respected lawyers with experience as state legislators. Luther Hodges, Jr., had been a powerful banker and was the son of a popular governor. Insider Democrats were confident that any one of these, or almost any regular Democrat, could beat Helms in the general election.

They did not give the populist outsider Ingram a chance. But in the first primary, Ingram, with 25 percent of the vote, came in a strong second to Hodges, who was first with 40 percent.

Because of his vast advantage in campaign funding and strong support from party insiders, Hodges was the overwhelming favorite to beat Ingram in the primary run-off.

But Ingram rallied his populist, anti-party-establishment supporters to beat Hodges convincingly by nine-percentage

points in the run-off.

Having run against the party establishment in the primaries, Ingram, like Trump today, faced a challenge in bringing the party establishment to his cause, even to defeat an opponent they despised: Helms in Ingram's case; Hillary Clinton in Trump's. Without enthusiastic support from Democratic Party leadership in the general election, Ingram lost to Helms by nine-percentage points, losing the Democrats' best chance to derail the Helms revolution.

If Hodges had beat Ingram and Helms and won a Senate seat, would he have been able to survive the Republican surge in North Carolina to win re-election? Would the Helms wing of the Republican Party have survived without his presence in the Senate?

Will Republicans do better with an outsider leading the ticket than North Carolina Democrats did in 1978?

I don't know.

Ironically, what we do know is Democratic insider favorites of 1978, Luther Hodges, Jr., and Lawrence Davis, are registered Republicans today.

D.G. Martin hosts "North Carolina Bookwatch," which airs Sundays at noon and Thursdays at 5 p.m. on UNC-TV.

## Letters to the Editor

### Letters filled with bigotry, xenophobia

Dear Editor,  
Two letters in the Aug. 9 edition which were full of anti-immigrant, bigotry and xenophobia observations, required that I break my long silence.

One writer listed people as 'foreign-born' and others as 'American-born'. However, missing from his list was Melania Trump. Not only is she foreign born, her legal status in the United States is now in question. Poetic justice would be; Donald Trump being married to an illegal immigrant.

President Obama was not 'anointed' as our leader. As much as it troubles some people to accept it, he was unquestionably elected by a majority of America citizens to that office, twice.

A mother who finds her child dead with a needle sticking out of his arm is a very disheartening scene. The writer uses that scenario in another failed attempt at embarrassing President Obama and falsely defines selling

drugs as a 'violent crime.' Selling drugs is a despicable act. However, according to U.S. Code 16, it is not a crime of violence. Therefore, President Obama was correct in defining such prisoners, as 'non-violent' offenders.

The writer referred to Harvey Milk as a homosexual predator. I feel 2016, that crosses the line of decency. The writer's information came from an article by Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council. The respected Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors hate groups wrote, "the FRC's real specialty is defaming gays and lesbians." The FRC often makes false claims about the LGBT community based on discredited, research and junk science. Harvey Milk came from a middle class Jewish family in New York City and was a visionary civil and human rights leader who became one of the first openly gay elected officials. He was assassinated

in November 1978. The writer failed to mention that Harvey Milk enlisted in the Navy, and was discharged with the rank of Lt. j. g. There are several public schools named after Harvey Milk in New York City. School boards do not name schools after homosexual predators. In San Francisco, there is a federal building named after Harvey Milk. His honors are too many to list for this letter.

President Obama explained the circumstances surrounding the transfer of funds to Iran. However, the writer believes it was ransom because he heard it from an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Commander, who he obviously believes to be a very creditable source.

I ask, who is the fool now?

Joseph W. Hoffler  
Hertford  
Lt. Col. USAF-Retired

### Washington was a president to admire

Dear Editor,  
What would happen if Donald Trump decided to go into sports? Let's say for the sake of argument, contact sports, boxing. He would defend himself against his opponent the best he could. Where he found an opening to throw a punch, he would take it. Even though he was losing, wouldn't we expect him to keep on fighting until the match was over?

What if he decided to go into a non-contact sport, like running? Wouldn't we expect him to finish the race even though into three-quarters of the race he was last?

What would happen if he decided to go into education as a teacher? Would it be wrong for him to spend more time with those students who needed him than those who were gifted?

What would happen if he decided to go into the military or the police or the fire department or any services that may require that in order for you to do your duty you may be asked to make the supreme sacrifice? Would he be criticized for that?

Last, but certainly not least, what would happen if he decided to go into a religious life where he put God above all else, including family and country?

There was a president of the United States who was born very strong, good looking they say, very bright, very wealthy. When the time came, he sacrificed everything for what he believed to be the right thing. He killed, but never murdered. He made decisions knowing that other people would die. But he knew he had to win. He knew that losing was not an option. After he succeeded and won the American Revolutionary War where he showed skills and courage, Congress and then a grateful nation elected him our first president, George Washington.

Joe Campbell  
Hertford

### America needs Donald Trump now

Dear Editor,  
Most people have forgotten the major brouhaha raised by the passage of the \$1.1 trillion Omnibus bill back in December 2015—a discretionary spending bill sold as a catch-all clean up bill to take the government through to the next fiscal year. You may have noticed the \$1.1 trillion figure but perhaps not the sneaky little discretionary spending phrase part of the some 2200 page bill accompanied by 1,000 pages of explanations that nobody even considered reading.

In congressional terms it means anybody can, without oversight, casually tack on their pet projects to any bill like senator Richard Shelby did when he de-

fied a ban to buy Russian-made rockets for launching Pentagon payloads into orbit. It's called 'bringing home the bacon down' in Alabama and every body does it. The act was so egregious that even the little weasel John McCain was incensed.

Now you know why the entire congress turned on Donald Trump, the only candidate in either party who proposes trade restrictions to strengthen America's position in the world. It's so much clearer what this election is all about when you realize that their personal agendas take president over national interests. They will kill if necessary to keep Trump from becoming president and orchestrating his vision

of border security, immigration control, tighter scrutiny of Muslim immigrants, national security, job growth, slowing foreign investment, repatriating former American industry, health care reform, strong police and veterans support and America first. All of the above is the farthest thing from their minds.

Trump, the greatest candidate in my lifetime is seen as the greatest threat to the most corrupt government we've ever had—from the POTUS on down and the Clintons are even worse. America needs Donald Trump at this vital juncture in time. Vote Trump!

Calvin Lacy  
Hertford

### Dems about high taxes, more spending

Dear Editor,  
In her August 10th letter Nancy Theodore wrote that she is going with the Democratic Party because it is the party that supports love, mercy, and justice for all. What nonsense. Is it love for a party to support the killing of innocent babies in the womb, even late-term abortions? Is it mercy to open prison cells and let drugs dealers loose on our streets to resume poisoning our children? Is it justice to apply different standards to Hillary Clinton than the ones the rest of us have to live by?

We all know about FBI Director Comey making a solid case for indicting Hillary and then not making a criminal referral for political reasons; we have all seen Hillary perjure herself repeatedly before House committees without being held accountable; we have all heard Hillary lie about the famous video, a lie she shamelessly repeated to the parents of the Benghazi victims as their caskets were rolling by. And now we learn that the Justice Department, no doubt at Obama's direction, will not pursue the seamy connections between Hillary's State Department and the Clinton Foundation, in spite of recommendations from FBI investigators to do so. This is justice?

The Clintons have been managing a Pay-to-Play racketeering enterprise right out in the open, but they have no fear of being prosecuted because they are protected by a Democrat administration that is as corrupt as they are.

You may choose to vote for Democrats, Ms. Theodore, because you support the party's platform of high taxes, increased spending, job-killing regulations, and crushing debt. But don't tell us that the Democrats are the party of love, mercy, and justice.

Claude Milot  
Hertford



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