

# A Hot Race In Gaston County

## David Beam

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
Co-Editor The Herald

Unhappy with "the way things are going in Gaston County government" put David Carlyle Beam, 47, on the campaign trail.

Beam, a Republican, challenges Incumbent Democrat Bud Black for a seat on the Gaston County Board of Commissioners in Tuesday's general election.

If elected, the senior vice president, secretary and member of the board of directors of Cherryville Savings & Loan Association for 19 years, will bring to the job a background in business management and an interest in government he began as a student at Georgetown University.

Beam said his top priority will be to push a study of law enforcement needs of the county—a study addressed to a longtime controversial but fundamental question, will the chief law enforcement officer be elected or hired? The ultimate goal to get politics out of the police department and better service in outlying areas such as his hometown of Cherryville.

Another "must," he said, are more medical personnel for the county, working in cooperation with Gaston Memorial Hospital. Cherryville, says Beam, has only one doctor and no hospital. Patients must travel to Gastonia, Kings Mountain, Shelby Lincolnton and Charlotte for treatment.

Beam envisions a new building to house all county services and a new courthouse. He sees economic development as a way to increase jobs. For the second year he has served as chairman of the City of Cherryville's Economic Development Team which will go to Raleigh to accept, on behalf of the city, the Governor's Community of Excellence Award.

David Beam expresses concerns for the mental health program in Gaston-Lincoln Counties as he stumps the county and says he is opposed to funding for the New Generation legislation. "I don't know if this piece of legislation can be repealed but I absolutely won't vote for money to refund it."

Politics hasn't always been in David Beam's blood, he says, although he always loved to talk politics with his father-in-law, Wray A. Plonk, Sr. of Kings Mountain, a staunch Democrat and a three generation family of Democrats who have always voted the straight Democratic ticket, "until this year", quips Jeanne (Plonk) Beam, whom David married in 1960.

Son of Mrs. Mable F. Beam and the late Claude C. Beam, David's ambition was to follow in his Dad's footsteps and farm all his life. He graduated from Tryon High School, attended Lenoir Rhyne College and received his B.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University where a background in government excited him and he aspired for a job in the Diplomatic Corps, majoring in International Transportation and specializing in South and Latin American countries.

Marriage and responsibility changed his goal and he and his wife spent the early years of their marriage with Burlington Industries as a traffic manager attached, first in Burlington, N.C. and later at its White Haven Plant in Memphis, Tenn. The Beams lived across the street from Grace Land, home of the late Elvis Presley, and would you believe that Mrs. Beam preferred to honeymoon on the Mississippi River rather than to watch her famous neighbor come and go?

For several years, Beam worked as a rate and billing clerk at Pilot Freight Carriers and Carolina Freight Carriers while taking continuing education courses at Gaston College and the Savings and Loan Institute of Financial Education and ASU.

Since assuming his duties in 1961 with Cherryville Savings & Loan, Beam has continued to manage his 300 acre family farm, including crops and

**Ed. Note** - One of the hottest political contests Nov. 4 to be decided in Gaston County is the board of commissioners race where four incumbents have opposition from-GOP contenders. Two of the candidates, both of Cherryville, are married to former Kings Mountain girls and were photographed and interviewed by Lib Stewart of the Herald staff in their homes and businesses. Her features are in today's edition.

Kings Mountain Herald

## SECTION B

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**BEAM FAMILY IS VERSATILE** — David and Jeanne Beam are pictured with their daughter, Shannon, and their son, David, in their home in Cherryville. The Beam family like to work together on numerous projects and are on the campaign trail in the county commissioner race in Gaston County.

woodlands, and has a Black Angus cattle partnership with his parents-in-law, Wray and Alma Plonk of Kings Mountain.

David Beam enjoys several unusual hobbies. For the past year he has grown beautiful Catalpa orchids in a solarium on his screen porch, a hobby which began by accident with the purchase of one or two plants for his living room from a friend on Moss Lake. The orchids are in shades of white to orchid, purple, green and yellow and require little attention, he says, with diffused sunlight, high humidity, temperatures of 60-100 degrees and once-a-week watering. The orchids lend a pleasant aroma at most seasons of the year. By Easter, 40 to 50 plants will be at their beautiful peak of color.

Both David and his 11-year-old son, David Marion Beam, III, are philatelists. "We started stamp collecting the day our son arrived and haven't stopped", said David, and the collection began with first day covers and includes many commemorative stamps, including the first day of issue postal card of the 1780 Battle of Kings Mountain which was issued Oct. 7th this year at Kings Mountain.

Woodcarving is another pleasant hobby and David Beam collects beautiful pieces of sourwood and poplar from his farmland and hand carves exquisite walking canes which are given as gifts to friends. "It's a real relaxing hobby," he said.

Queen Elizabeth roses are homegrown by David Beam in

the gardens of their two story brick home in Cherryville which reflects all the hobbies of a busy family. Fifteen-year-old Shannon Beam collects dolls, pandas, and plays the flute and Jeanne Beam's needlework and cross-stitch prints are prominently displayed throughout their house. The other member of the household is "Crooks", a Siamese cat.

David Beam also collects miniature elephants and this collection began before he became affiliated with the Grand Old Party. A favorite is a 148th scale model by Neal Deaton of the stuffed elephant on display at The Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. "We always know what go give Dad on Father's Day", says his daughter.

The Beam family is active in St. John's Lutheran Church of Cherryville where David serves as treasurer of the Home Mission Foundation. This program, sponsored by the N.C. Lutheran Men, makes loans to new congregations at two percent interest rates and was begun in the Kings Mountain-Cherryville area over 50 years ago. With over \$1 million in loan funds, The Foundation has made 31 loans to new churches, a program which David Beam never tires of talking about.

A versatile family, the Beams of Cherryville see a need for change in county government and David Carlyle Beam is stumping the county and shaking all the hands he can prior to election day Tuesday to woo the voters and get his views to the people.

## Bud Black

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
Co-Editor The Herald

Bud Black, 37, youngest man ever elected to the board of Gaston County Commissioners, is running on his record and he's proud of it.

Standing on his Indian Creek property which surrounds a 200 year old log cabin in which he was born, the Cherryville farmer and realtor reminisced of the heritage of the Blacks who came to Gaston County in 1760 and of his great-great uncle Ephriam Black who was a Gaston County commissioner after the Civil War Days and of John H. Roberts, a Captain in the Confederate Army, first clerk of court in Gaston County, who was also born in the log cabin which used to be a stagecoach stop between Cherryville and Morganton and is more familiarly known as the Old Post Road.

"My folks were tenant farmers to the family which owned this log cabin", recalled Black, who was the last male son in the Black generation born under the roof of the old homestead which he bought in 1969 from the heirs of John Moore. While renovating part of the construction, Bill and Anne Ware Black have maintained the grand history of the house which is surrounded by a small lake, ducks, and a pasture in which roam several ponies and goats, a family hobby.

The old log house has never been covered with siding. Behind the larger of the two-story cabins is a very low-ceilinged one-room cabin with big fireplace and heavy beams showing above. The Blacks have tried as much as possible to retain the history of the structure while restoring it for a young couple to live and care for their farming interests. Melissa and Don George tends the animals and think of the cabin as a year round vacation spot. "It's a delightful place", says Melissa, who has time to strum her guitar and work on several hobbies.

The older part of the log house, which is distinctive by its authentic chimney, was owned in the late 1700's by Col. John Moore, a Revolutionary War soldier who was in charge of the Kings troops at Rameur Mill. The troops trained just west of the house and Moore Creek runs behind the house. Many of the Black forefathers were born or grew up in the old house or immediate area.

The first pioneer family to settle in the northwest section of what is now Gaston County and Cherryville was that of Thomas Black in the late 1740's. In the land area along Indian Creek Thomas Black took ownership of 380 acres and this tract of land adjoined that of Valentine Mauney and lay on the southside of Indian Creek. It was on the Valentine Mauney property that the area's first organized church body built the present Antioch Methodist Church and cemetery in 1804.

A visit to the Indian Creek area will also take you to the home of Bud Black's aunts, who maintain a 100 year old homestead near where Bud and his family live today. They like to talk about history as much as their nephew and are among the eight living children of nine of the late Mr. and Mrs. A.M. (Bud) Black. Bryte Black, the oldest son, died at age three months of what his aunts thought was Bright's disease.

The other family members are Lula Almatta Black, Mary Florence Black, Stough Black, Dora Emma Black McSwain, Lela Black McSwain, William Howard Black, Charles Hugh Black, father of Commissioner Black, and John Lee Black, all of Cherryville. Commissioner Black's parents also live on a farm nearby.

Bud Black is proud of his mother, who went back to work in 1961 and then taught him the insurance business. Commissioner Black has also been a Cherryville realtor since 1972 and also continues his farming interests.

A former high school math teacher and coach at Cramerton



**ANCESTOR'S MONUMENT** — Bud Black points to the monument of his great-great uncle Ephriam Black who was a Gaston County Commissioner after the Civil War Days.

and Stanley, Bud Black was a National Science Foundation Scholar and one of 11 teachers chosen from the United States as a Teachers Fellow in 1970-71. He has also served as an instructor at Caldwell Community College and Sandhills Community College and has degrees from Wake Forest University, Wingate Junior College and Campbell College. He has a Ph.D. degree from Walden University.

A half mile down the road and overlooking Indian Creek are the tombstones of such pioneers as Ephriam Black who is interred in Mount Zion Baptist Church cemetery, one of the oldest graveyards in this area.

Bud continues the story: "I started thinking about going into politics as a youngster of about seven and got the 'itch' from my across-the-road neighbor, Roy E. Eaker, who served on the county commission from 1944 until his death in 1949."

The Black family, Charles Hugh and Ruby Dedmon Black and their family lived on the John T. Sellers homestead at that time and used to grow cotton. "I really looked up to Mr. Roy and he used to talk to me alot about government and the proud history of Gaston County", he recalled.

Gaston County Mental Health Association honored Black as Gaston County's 1977 Outstanding Public Servant and he serves on the Governor's Balance Growth Board and is the only Gaston Commissioner on the legislative research commission on revenue sharing for 1980. Black sees the ultimate aim to reduce property tax on the county level and said he has worked diligently to reduce taxation.

If his constituents return him to public office for another term, Bud Black will also become the third Gaston County man to

serve as president of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners of which he now serves as first vice president. Since 1908 only two Gastonians have served as state president of this prestigious group: Dr. O.G. Falls in 1915-16 and R.L. Stowe in 1934-35.

Commissioner Black is married to the former Anne Ware, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M.R. Ware of Kannapolis, formerly of Kings Mountain. They have two sons, Mel, age 16, and Wes, age 12. Mrs. Black serves as receptionist in her husband's office.

The Blacks are active in First Baptist Church of Cherryville and in numerous civic and service organizations in Gaston County.

Bud Black says he is running for re-election to continue service to the county he believes in and where his roots are. "I want to continue to provide Gaston County with efficient and responsible spending for services needed by the people and I will continue my pledge to maintain a stable tax rate in proportion to the services the people want. Our goal is to get the most from every dollar the people of Gaston County pay", said Black. Comm. Black said his record attests that he has supported and voted for Programs which show increased support for the volunteer fire departments and police departments, rescue squads, and retarded and mental health programs.

"The major issue of our times, said Black, is finding the answer to the question of spiraling inflation rates and maintaining a sensible tax rate. I believe this can be done by the efforts of our commissioners to see that every dollar is well spent. There is no room for waste in government spending for services."

Black is proud of his roots and proud of the people of Gaston

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