

# FOCUS ON WAKE FOREST

BY ELIZABETH ARCHER

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than gold and silver. The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all" (Proverbs 22:1-2).

"I think however difficult or painful the process has been, this is a time for healing in our country. We have to put this thing behind us. We have to go forward. I give God thanks for being able to stand here today. I give God thanks for our ability to feel safe, to feel secure, to feel loved. I give God thanks that the Senate approved me in the process."

Those are the words of Judge Clarence Thomas, as he stood with his wife in the rain the day after he was confirmed to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States. Perhaps his giving thanks to God stemmed from his having learned of Him while studying to be a priest. Thomas graduated from St. Benedict the Moor, an all-black grammar school run by white nuns, in 1962. For two years, he attended the black St. Pius X High School, part of the local diocese. Then, under pressure from his grandfather to become a priest, he transferred to a white Catholic boarding school on the outskirts of Savannah, Ga. At St. John Vianney Minor Seminary, he excelled academically. Despite that, though, Thomas experienced a lot of hate because of his color. At the place that he was forced to integrate, classmates would get up when Thomas sat down. As lights went out in the dormitory, someone would yell, "Smile, Clarence, so we can see you." Despite the traumas, Thomas continued his studies for the clergy. In 1967 he enrolled as one of only four blacks in his class at the Immaculate Conception Seminary in the cornfields of northwestern Missouri. On the night of April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn. As fellow seminarians were watching the TV coverage, Thomas heard one of them cheer, "Good, I hope the SOB dies." Thomas had been harassed before and managed to keep his equilibrium. But the hypocrisy that was dramatized by the King remark caused Thomas to rethink why he would not follow most of the 65 other young men who had departed from that so-called Christian environment. Shortly thereafter, Thomas, too, walked out, and the priesthood no longer beckoned.

After quitting the seminary, Thomas had worked for a while, then headed north and east to resume school. Prodded by others, Thomas entered Holy Cross. Arriving in 1968 at the Jesuit campus in Worcester, Mass., he met many students who had been educated by nuns. Few, though, had ever seen a black person. Eight other Savannah blacks made their way to Holy Cross during the three years he was there, and he was their mentor. Thomas thrived on his studies. While most students worked in their rooms, Thomas holed up in the library. He graduated ninth in his class, having majored in English literature. He held down jobs as a waiter and dish-washer in the cafeteria. Prior to graduation from Holy Cross in June of 1971.

When President George Bush nominated him to the U.S. Supreme

Court, Clarence Thomas stood on the Kennebunkport lawn and, with tears in his eyes, thanked the nuns who had set him on the road to success. He spoke as well of how his grandfather, Myers Anderson, had fared poorly in Pin Point, Ga., under whose stern restraint to obedience he had been raised. Even before Clarence Thomas was born, his grandparents loomed large in the life of his mother, Leola Thomas. Leola's husband, M.C. Thomas, abandoned the family when Thomas was 2, and headed north to Philadelphia. Leola was pregnant with her third child. She got by on a weekly wage of \$15 from crabbing and cleaning house for a white woman. The children lived on cornflakes, crabs and grits mixed on occasion with eggs, Carnation milk and syrup.

They wore old clothes from the local church, they passed time in the streets, they survived. The mother held the family together for five years, until the house burned down. The family moved into a small house around the corner from granddaddy Anderson and his wife in Savannah, where for a time the kids stayed while their mother worked. One day, Leola's mother told her that the children knew that she was their mother, but that she (grandmother) wanted to keep the children all of the time, and Leola could take them whenever she desired. Not having any other choice, and too, Leola had gotten married to a new husband which would suit him better anyway. Thus, as Clarence Thomas turned 7, his granddaddy, Myers Anderson, began to be the key influence on the lives of Clarence and his brother (Peanut) Myers Thomas. Forced to suffer indignities from whites who dictated menial jobs in segregated Savannah, Granddaddy Anderson wanted independence. In the early '50s, a single incident caused him to take action on his desire to go it on his own. Myers was a \$3-a-week wood hauler. When a white co-worker attacked him for wearing a nice wristwatch and forced it off his wrist, Anderson said, "Damn, I'm going into business for myself." He sawed off the top of his old Model T and made a truck. In summer, he delivered ice to the black community; in winter, coal and wood. As time went on he bought larger trucks.

Later, Anderson Fuel Oil Co. was born. With his own cement machine, Myers made enough cinderblocks to build a six-room bungalow on East 32nd Street. Tall, slender and driven, he made a flourishing living during the Eisenhower '50s, in spite of a system that conspired to keep him down. He learned to read by keeping his head in the Bible.

His home had a toilet and his grandsons, Clarence and Peanut, were compelled to stay in school. "Boy, you going to school today!" he would tell them and for \$30 a year, Anderson enrolled them in St. Benedict the Moor, an all-black school run by white nuns. Death came for Granddaddy in 1983 and eight short years later, a beloved grandson was named to the Supreme Court of the United States. Long live Justice Clarence Thomas.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).



LET THE BEAT HIT 'EM!—Representatives from Coors Brewing Company along with recording artist Lisa Lisa presented a trophy to South Carolina State's Marching 101 Band at the Atlanta Football Classic III for their outstanding performance. The Atlanta Chapter of the

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### Survey Shows Men Concerned About Nutrition

Men who traditionally have not been very concerned about their diets are now beginning to realize that what they eat can affect their long term health. In a new survey sponsored by the 61,000 member American Dietetic Association (ADA), 82 percent of the men questioned said they're concerned about nutrition. But just over half reported changing their diets within the last year as a result of this concern.

The nationally projectable study, conducted among 500 men aged 18 and older, showed 50 to 64-year-olds placing the greatest emphasis on eating right. Eighty percent of men in this age group viewed nutrition as a "top priority," compared to only 58 percent of the younger men surveyed.

The largest group of respondents (44 percent) cited health maintenance and disease prevention as the most important reasons for eating right. Twenty percent listed physical fitness as the main motivation for eating right, and 12 percent stressed weight control.

"If men tie nutrition primarily to long term health, it's not surprising that older men place greater emphasis on healthy eating habits than younger men," says Mary Abbott Hess, MS, RD (registered dietitian), president of ADA. "Our goal is to encourage more men to think about nutrition sooner, as well as later, by emphasizing that what men eat can affect their productivity, stamina, and mental and physical fitness today."

Most men still need to trim some fat from their diets, according to health authorities. Registered dietitians recommend choosing lean meat, fish, skinless poultry, low fat dairy products, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and foods that are baked,

The American Dietetic Association

**Food Strategies for Men**

broiled, steamed or roasted. Additional tips are available in a new pamphlet, "Food Strategies for Men," published by The American Dietetic Association. The pamphlet is available free to the public through a grant from the Beef Industry Council and Beef Board. For a copy of "Food Strategies for Men," send a self-addressed, business-size envelope to The American Dietetic Association, c/o Lee Enterprises, P.O. Box 1068, Department LM20, South Holland, IL 60473. For a referral to a registered dietitian in their area, men can contact their physician, local hospital, state or local dietetic association, or the National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics, the public education initiative of ADA and its Foundation, 216 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606-6995.

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