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Sheldon Owens
Shaw University

Ms. Carolyn Brown
St. Augustine's College

'CIAA Basketball Players of the Yr.'

Who Will Succeed Ben Hooks As NAACP Exec. Director?

BY CHESTER A. HIGGINS, SR.

Special To The CAROLINIAN
WASHINGTON, D.C.—Benjamin Lawson Hooks, for 15 turbulent years the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the oldest, largest, most enduring and most respected civil rights organization in the United States, is quitting after this year, effective April 1993.

The scramble is now on for his successor. Speculation is rife among the 400,000-member, 83-year-old organization. Some feel a seasoned person of the stature of Constance Baker Motley, the distinguished New York federal judge, an NAACP stalwart and now in semi-retirement, should be considered. Others, however, feel the organization needs a younger, more energetic hand as well as a seasoned eye with vision to steer the organization "back on track."

Consider Ernest D. Green, of the famous Little Rock Nine. He is a former assistant U.S. secretary of labor, a longtime NAACP member who has no negatives in terms of board or organizational enemies and now a senior vice president of Shearson Lehman, a national brokerage firm. Would he make an ideal NAACP executive director? Some observers feel he would, indeed. Others are not so sure.

Green, an NAACP board member, told this writer he will probably participate as a member of the search committee, "But I won't be seeking, and I don't want, the job myself. I have my hands full as a senior vice president of my firm. We are just coming out of a depressed period and I will have to spend all of



AFTER THE GROUND WAR—Sgt. Ronald Murray (l.) and Sgt. Jesse Jones (r.) pose in the Saudi Desert a year ago during the Persian Gulf War. Jones, then dressed in Arab attire for the picture, came home to Raleigh last week after

a nationwide television audience saw him homeless in Boston. Jones says he was just one of many homeless veterans that now need their country's help.

Vietnam Veteran Says U. S. Abandons Vets

BY CASH MICHAELS

Contributing Writer
"Praise the Lord!"
There isn't anyone in Raleigh who can convince Marie Jones that God doesn't answer prayer. The proof was sitting right there in her living room... her son Jesse, a former sergeant in the U.S. Army National Guard who until a few weeks ago was sleeping on the streets of Boston, Mass.

No, 41-year-old Jesse Jones, Jr. wasn't just any homeless person. He was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner for heroic actions during the Vietnam War. And he answered his country's call again in 1990 when the United States drew the line in the sand for Iraq's Saddam Hussein. So why was this highly decorated and certainly proudly dedicated soldier in Uncle Sam's army left to sleep on the cold streets by his own government?

Ms. Jones would like to have that answer, too, but right now she's just thankful to have her son home. And Jesse's glad to be back.

"It feels great," Jones told The CAROLINIAN last Thursday, a day after stepping off the Greyhound bus that brought him back home from Boston. To hear his deep, gravelly voice is a clear indication of a military man through and through. "I remember the old song 'Nothing Could Be Finer than to Be in Carolina in the Morning, and the night before last when I was sleeping on the bus, all I was thinking about was seeing the green grass of home again.'"

That vision of Carolina certainly beat the cold, snowy streets of "Beantown," where the ABC-TV program "Prime Time Live" found Jesse and put his story on nationwide television. Jones' mother knew that things had not been easy for her son after he came back from the Iraq war (Jones suffers from post-traumatic stress syndrome from the Vietnam War, but battle situations in Iraq worsened it). But she had no idea he was homeless until she saw him on television.

That was all it took for her to go to Boston, then arrange through a local Veterans of Foreign Wars post to have Jesse sent back home.

Now that he's here, Jesse Jones has a story to tell. A story about an

18-year-old student at Garner Consolidated High School who wanted to take care of his mother and make her proud. So five days after graduation in 1968, he joined the Marine Corps. Jesse would have his paychecks sent back to his mother to make sure that she was okay. It wasn't long before he was fighting in the jungles of "Nam," where, armed with nothing but a .45 and some hand grenades one day, he risked his life, killing 30 of the enemy single-handedly.

Jesse was wounded, for which he received the Purple Heart and the Congressional Medal of Honor. When he left the service during the '70s, he studied hard to achieve academic honors and develop skills in welding and auto mechanics. Jesse married, traveled, owned businesses, and stayed close to the military, despite his post-traumatic stress.

Over the years, he was in and out of veterans' hospitals, using his meager veterans' benefits to survive. His marriage no more, Jesse struggled, until, despite his disability, he was able to fight in the Persian Gulf. When he was shipped

back in April of last year, his condition had worsened, his need for medication greater. Jesse was literally shipped from VA hospital to VA hospital across the country until finally he ended up in Massachusetts. Jesse couldn't stay in the shelter in Boston, so he used his survival skills from Vietnam, and slept on the streets with other homeless veterans. That's when ABC-TV found him.

Though Jesse still loves his country, he is highly critical of how the federal government failed to take care of veterans adequately after Vietnam, and also the Persian Gulf. "They don't have the GI Bill no more that gave us the G.I. school loan. They also told us before we left Saudi Arabia that they would have a bonus for us... Where's it at? We haven't seen it."

Jesse confirms that a lot of the homeless veterans he's seen have turned to drugs and alcohol. It hurts for him to see once proud and strong people, both men and women, destroy themselves in the country they risked their lives for, right or wrong.

(See VET BACK HOME, P. 2)

Ms. Elizabeth Peebles Of City Named N. C. Mother Of The Year

BY ALLIE M. PEEBLES

Contributing Writer
Ms. Elizabeth Baxter Peebles of 3612 Greenlawn Drive was named North Carolina Mother of the Year in ceremonies held on Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley at 5 p.m. The occasion was the 50th anniversary dinner of the North Carolina State Mothers Association.

The mistress of ceremonies was the state president, Vickie Goudie. Music was furnished by Nancy Walker, soprano, the 1992 state Music Award winner. Geraldine Cate serves as chairperson of the State Music Committee, and introduced Ms. Walker.

The speaker for the occasion was Joan Burney, the 1991 North Carolina Mother of the Year.

Elizabeth Peebles was nominated by her church, Wilson Temple

United Methodist of Oberlin Road. More specifically, it was the United Methodist Women, an auxiliary of the church, that submitted her name.

Along with their nomination, the church women stated, "Elizabeth is exemplary by what we have observed over the years, to be worthy of this recognition."

They added, "Elizabeth has the characteristics, the skills to speak in public, compose essays, act in dramatic events and sing. She is a strict disciplinarian in a loving way when necessary to instill proper behavior in children. Over a period of years, the nominee worked diligently in the Oberlin Church and community."

The church cited her work in the Royalettes, a well-known civic group.

Until the last decade, Elizabeth

Local Historian Records Haley's Final Interview

She knew Alex Haley personally, and had even visited him at the legendary house in Henning, Tenn., where he heard the stories about the African named "Kinte," and "Chicken George." So when historian Linda Simmons-Henry learned Feb. 10 that this man whom she considered her mentor had died unexpectedly, it was a blow that she felt deeper than most.

It had been just five days earlier that Haley had given her what may have been his last interview. And probably Ms. Henry's most important.

In an exclusive interview with The CAROLINIAN, Ms. Henry talked about Alex Haley, what she learned from him, and what he said in that interview.

"He was scheduled to come to North Carolina on Feb. 29 for a speaking engagement in Fayetteville. And I talked with him earlier this month to confirm that. So I was shocked when I heard that he had died shortly after. But when I last

interviewed him, he told me about his life, and some of his plans for the future," she said.

One of the reasons why Ms. Henry interviewed Haley is that she was working on an oral history project, and wanted to have input from a recognized historian and genealogist. Haley became world-renowned for his 12-year search for, and research of, his African origins that became his most honored book, *Roots*, which went on to be a historic television mini-series.

Haley had become impressed with Ms. Henry several years ago when he found out about a prior project she was developing called "The Heritage of Blacks in North Carolina," which became a published work in 1991. Part of Haley's family came from Alamante County, so he felt close to the state, and wanted to give something back.

"He called me one afternoon in my office and indicated that he was real

(See LAST INTERVIEW, P. 2)

Jury Selection Underway In Rodney King Case

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. (AP)—In a courtroom parade, prospective jurors spoke in sad, hushed tones about a sight all of them had shared: the videotaped image of a black man on the ground being pummeled by white police officers.

"It seemed beyond reason," said one woman.

"I can't see any excuse for what happened," declared one man.

A male prospect wrote on a questionnaire that the four officers charged in the beating "seem to be overgrown schoolyard bullies."

They were among eight people dismissed for bias last Wednesday, the first day of jury selection in the trial of four Los Angeles police officers charged with assault in the notorious Rodney King beating.

All 31 prospective jurors quizzed

by the judge had seen the videotape and many said they had viewed it several times.

Another 46 people were summoned for the next session.

Defense attorneys appeared dejected as they concluded the first round of questioning. Attorney Michael Stone said the responses showed "the magnitude of what we're dealing with."

Only one man was excused for cause by Superior Court Judge Stanley Weisberg said he was on the side of the four officers. He said his uncle was a policeman and he tended to favor lawmen.

Others, such as prospect Pamela Friedman, expressed strong feelings against the officers from the jury box and from the question-

(See KING JURY, P. 2)

Eva Clayton First To File In First District Race

Warren County Commissioner Eva Clayton (D) filed Monday to run for the First District congressional seat, but many observers expect that before the March 2 deadline, several other African-American candidates, and at least two white challengers, will also enter the race.

The more black candidates there are spreading out the black vote, the easier it will be for one of the white challengers to win. If that happened, it would fly in the face of the original intention of the U.S. Justice Department when it ordered North Carolina to redraw voter district lines to ensure a black majority voting district.

Other African-Americans expected to enter the Democratic primary in the First District race in-

clude Willie D. Riddick, longtime aide to Rep. Walter B. Jones; Rep. Thomas Hardaway of Enfield, and Rep. Milton "Toby" Fitch of Wilson.

The two white candidates are expected to be Williamston Mayor Thomas Brandon, III, who has already filed, and state Rep. Walter B. Jones of Farmville, son of U.S. Rep. Jones, who is retiring.

Because under state law a candidate must garner more than 40 percent of the primary vote, unless one of the four black candidates in the First District race proves to be extremely popular, it is questionable whether any of them can beat one of the white candidates.

The theme for the Clayton cam-

(See CLAYTON FILES, P. 2)

NEWS BRIEFS

DURHAM POLICE CHIEF RESIGNS

Trevor Hampton, the Durham chief of police who resigned a week ago amid charges of a call girl operation in his department, told a local TV station last Monday that Durham District Attorney Ronald Stephens was to blame for all of his problems and had it in for him.

Hampton said that the state attorney general's office should investigate all of the charges made against his department by Stephens' office.

The DA disputed Hampton's claim, but said he welcomed any investigation by the state. Hampton's four-year tenure as Durham police chief was riddled with controversy, culminating in the indictment of his friend Wiley Davis, Jr. for falsifying his educational record to work at the Durham Police Department. At press time, Davis still had not turned himself in.

Meanwhile, Hampton, while still officially the chief, has turned the day-to-day operation over to 21-year veteran Lt. Col. H. Kent Fletcher.

NAACP PROTESTS CONFEDERATE FLAG

Saying that honoring the Confederate flag is like "honoring slavery," the president of the state NAACP is calling on all North Carolinians to write Gov. James Martin to protest his proclamation of March 4 as Confederate Flag Day. Kelly Alexander, Jr., head of the state NAACP, also said that during this election year, the candidates currently running in the governor's race should be

(See NEWS BRIEFS, P. 2)



MS. ELIZABETH PEEBLES

Raleigh, where she stated that it was her opportunity to help others and to listen to women who had made mistakes. Some of them just wanted to have someone who would just listen to them, stated the winner.