THE DAILY CLIPS

March 29, 2011

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
    The New York Times
    The Wall Street Journal
    USA Today
    The Charlotte Observer
    The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
    Newsweek
    U.S. News & World Report
    Business Week
    Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@.ecu.edu Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481
Zero traffic deaths in five easy steps
BY BRUCE SICELOFF - Staff Writer
Dr. Herb Garrison, a Greenville emergency room doctor who runs the East Carolina Injury Prevention Program, has a five-point prescription for eliminating traffic deaths on North Carolina streets and highways.

Eliminating them? Like, down to zero?

That's the idea.

"In the emergency room, we see lots of hurt people from car wrecks," Garrison, 57, told the Road Worrier. "Having fatality-free highways is not an unrealistic goal, but it's one we need to keep working at every day."

It's good to know that we're less likely to die in crashes these days, even as we drive more. The credit can be shared by stronger laws and law enforcement, and by safer cars, drivers and highways.

Traffic volumes in the state have grown by 16 percent over the past decade - we drove a collective 103 billion miles on the roads in 2010 - but death counts have fallen since 2000 by the same 16 percent. North Carolina counted 1,312 deaths in crashes last year.

Sure, that's an improvement from 1,561 lost lives in 2000. But Garrison says each of these deaths could have been prevented.

In an article published in the N.C. Medical Journal, he and co-author Jennifer L. Smith say North Carolina should:

• Make 17 the minimum driving age, as New Jersey and some European countries have done. North Carolina's graduated licensing system, which gives teens more front-seat supervision before they start diving solo, is credited with reducing accidents.

But young drivers still crash more often than older ones.
"Is it just that teens aren't yet ready?" Garrison asked. "I don't think we know. But the places where they start driving older seem to have less crashes."

- Create special courts for DWI cases, to boost conviction rates. Garrison served on a task force that strengthened our drunk-driving laws. But he sees defense lawyers manipulate the system by getting cases postponed until they land in front of judges more likely to go easy.

Prosecutors across the state won convictions in only 65 percent of DWI cases during the 12 months that ended June 30, 2010, but in a Johnston County DWI court the conviction rate was 89 percent.

"Judges in DWI courts, where that's all they work on, tend to be less lenient," Garrison said.

- Outlaw phoning while driving, a notion that seems to have stronger support in the legislature this year. North Carolina forbids texting for all drivers and phones for those under 18. The new House speaker, Rep. Thom Tillis of Charlotte, has endorsed a ban on hand-held phones for all drivers.

"There are tons of people in the state, yours truly included, who talk on the cell phone and find it very convenient," Garrison said. "And yet the distractions are contributing to a lot of bad wrecks."

- Build more bike lanes and sidewalks, for safer travel on foot and on two wheels.

- Make roundabouts standard at intersections, and rumble strips standard on road shoulders and on center lines. Rumble strips make noise to warn drivers they are drifting out of their lanes and possibly headed for danger. Studies show that roundabouts eliminate most right-angle crashes at intersections.

"These may be our most important recommendations," he said. And, he acknowledges, the most expensive - in a state with thousands of intersections and thousands of miles of highways."
Cliff Braam, a traffic safety specialist for the state Department of Transportation who has worked with Garrison on safety initiatives, says Garrison's recommendations are "all good ideas."

Braam also favors stronger efforts to reduce speeding - a factor in one of every three fatal crashes - and to increase seat-belt use. Ten percent of the state's drivers and vehicle passengers fail to wear seat belts, but among those killed in crashes, the unbelted share is 43 percent.

"That 10 percent of the people is having a huge impact on society," Braam said. "If getting all those 43 percent belted would save half of those deaths, it would put a real dent in our numbers."

Garrison concedes that his recommendations may be unpopular or expensive, or both.

"I don't think I've proposed a single thing that's not provocative," he said. "That's OK. That's how you make progress, I think."

Make contact: 919-829-4527 or bruce.siceloff@newsobserver.com. On the Web at twitter.com/Road_Worrier/ and blogs.newsobserver.com/crosstown/.

**How to be fatality-free**

Dr. Herb Garrison's article, "Is Fatality-Free Travel on North Carolina's Streets and Highways Feasible?" was published in the November-December issue of the N.C. Medical Journal. It's available online at www.ncmedicaljournal.com.
Column: ECU’s Brody School of Medicine tops nation

Mike Parker
2011-03-27 17:01:45

In the early 1960’s a group of eastern North Carolina leaders weighed the availability of medical care Down East and found voids in both access and delivery. Under the leadership of the late Dr. Leo Jenkins, then chancellor of East Carolina University, the group pressed for a medical school at ECU.

In 1974, the General Assembly of North Carolina finally appropriated funding to open a medical school at ECU. Those funds, along with millions of dollars from private supporters, proved one of the most important investments ever made in eastern North Carolina.

The General Assembly set forth a three-fold mission for the ECU School of Medicine: 1) increase the supply of primary care physicians to serve the state; 2) improve health status of citizens in eastern North Carolina; and 3) enhance the access of minority and disadvantaged students to a medical education.

Twenty-eight students enrolled in the medical school’s first class in 1977. From the beginning, one chief purpose of the ECU med school was to prepare doctors for family practice, the front lines of health care service.

Just recently, the American Academy for Family Physicians (AAFP) measured the success of schools in producing family doctors between 1999 and 2009. The results show the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University was tops in the nation. Nearly 19.5 percent of its graduates go into family medicine residencies or into the additional training doctors normally receive after medical school before entering family practice. That 19.5 figure is more than double the national average of 9.6 percent, according to the AAFP, which surveyed 124 medical schools.

Not only does the Brody School of Medicine lead the nation in preparing family physicians, but it also leads the state in number of graduates who go into practice in North Carolina. Of the nearly 1,300 graduates of the ECU medical school as of 2009, 765, or 59 percent, practice in North Carolina.

According to a report by Doug Boyd of the ECU News Services, 21 percent of ECU grads practice in rural areas, 53 percent practice in areas of physician shortage, and 47 percent practice primary care – family medicine, general internal medicine, and pediatrics.
Each of those percentages tops the figures of any other medical school in the state. Primary care physicians save money, according to one AAFP official. “Countries with primary care physicians as the foundation of the health care system have better health outcomes for the population at lower cost,” Dr. Perry Pugno, AAFP director of education, wrote in a letter accompanying the report. “The United States needs, and its population deserves, a primary care physician-based health care delivery system.”

ECU is leading the way to save those health care dollars and strengthen the primary care physician-based health care delivery across North Carolina.

On a note a little closer to home, we all can be thankful for the support of the Brody family, many of whom are from Kinston. Their generosity towards the ECU Medical School is the reason the med school became the Brody School of Medicine in 1999.

The vision of the Brody family, and others like them, is one reason that the nation’s most successful preparation of primary care doctors takes place just 30 miles up NC 11 from Kinston.

Few in eastern North Carolina will ever fully understand the tremendous impact the Brody School of Medicine has had on health care access and delivery in this part of the state.

Mike Parker is a columnist for The Free Press. You can reach him at mparker16@suddenlink.net or in care of this newspaper.
Letter: Name road for Dr. Leo W. Jenkins
Tuesday, March 29, 2011

As a member of East Carolina University and the Greenville community, I would like to propose that the Stantonsburg Road in Greenville be renamed Dr. Leo W. Jenkins Boulevard.

Jenkins joined the faculty of East Carolina Teachers College in 1947, served as dean of the school until becoming its sixth president in 1960, and continued this leadership role of the university when he became the first chancellor of ECU in 1972.

Throughout his career, he worked faithfully and tirelessly in leading ECU until his retirement in 1978.

As a result of his leadership and vision, East Carolina University has been elevated and recognized as a nationally ranked institution of higher learning. Of course, Jenkins' greatest legacy is the Brody School of Medicine. Wouldn't it be a fitting tribute for the main thoroughfare of the medical school to be named in honor of the person who made it happen, Dr. Leo W. Jenkins?

LOUIS L. WARREN
Greenville
Twin sisters return home from Iraq
by Lindsey Theis
Posted: 03.28.2011 at 12:55 AM

"It was the best trip we've ever made."

That's how twin sisters Lane and Casey Higson described their return trip home to Myrtle Beach. The two both finished tours of duty in Iraq. The 28-year-old Myrtle Beach natives say they do everything together. Two years ago, they enlisted after graduating from East Carolina University under a buddy system option.

"We just wanted to be deployed together, that was our main thing, and we were," Casey says. "We'd stayed together. We were right by each other's sides."

Just after they made it through about a year of training, the girl's unit, the Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division was deployed to Iraq. They say they were happy to go through it together.

Despite the cold, damp weather, dozens of patriotic parents lined the sidewalks of the Grand Strand Senior Center to welcome the girls on Monday. They waved flags and banners, screaming in joy to thank the two for their dedicated service. The girls spoke at Monday's meeting of the Blue Star Mothers. Their mom, Ruth Higson is a member of the Myrtle Beach chapter. She says the time her daughters were gone was the worst thing she's ever been through.

"{It was} extremely scary. I probably have never cried so much in my life," Ruth says.

Casey and Lane will return to Fort Riley, Kansas next week. The two plan to get their masters degrees in psychology, and continue their military careers helping veterans with post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.
"Who knows where we'll go from here," Lane says. "Chances are we will not go together, but we enjoyed it while it lasted."

(WPDE NewsChannel 15 is the ABC affiliate serving the Myrtle Beach/Florence South Carolina market.)
ECU students fight debt with clock
GREENVILLE — Young Americans for Liberty at ECU will erect a 40-foot-long National Debt Clock Wednesday at Wright Plaza on ECU’s campus to petition Rep. G.K. Butterfield to stop the spending.

“Representative Butterfield is not taking our government’s $14 trillion debt seriously and the grave consequences it will have on my future,” said Matthew Blackmon, President of ECU’s YAL. “We will be talking to students and asking them to sign our petition to tell Representative Butterfield it is time to address the debt.”

The event is part of a nationwide campaign to “Visualize the Debt” with more than 75 Young Americans for Liberty chapters participating on their campuses during the week of March 28 – April 1.

For more information, contact Matthew Blackmon at ecuyal@gmail.com or 252.809.3183.

© Copyright 2011 Freedom Communications.
WASHINGTON — Two local celebrities were honored Sunday afternoon, not only for their athletic ability, but also for their perseverance.

The Beaufort County Pirate Club and the Beaufort County Boys and Girls Club hosted an NFL Day honoring two former East Carolina football players — C.J. Wilson, a defensive end for the Super Bowl champion Green Bay Packers and a native of Belhaven, and Terrance Copper, a wide receiver for the Kansas City Chiefs and a native of Washington.

Wilson and Copper signed autographs for fans for about an hour. Fans arrived with footballs, notebooks, photos, jerseys, hats and even paddles for the two to sign.

“This means a lot to see the support where I was born and raised,” Wilson said. “And to see the children, (I want them to know) if they work hard and put God first, they will get what they put in.”

The NFL Day meant a lot to Copper, too.

“It feels good to be back in my hometown where I grew up,” Copper said.

Following the autograph session, Wilson and Copper headed outside for a pep rally to hear the East Carolina fight song performed by the Northside High School marching band, Wilson's alma mater.

“Thank you for your support. This is a great day for Beaufort County and Pirates,” said Wali Saleem, the chair of the board of directors of the Beaufort County Boys and Girls Club. “I saw all of Terrance's home games and I was the principal at Southside (High
School) when C.J. played at Northside. He may want to sack me — we were rivals. I have followed (C.J.'s) career and always look for number 95. I have followed your careers and will continue to do so. You both represent our community well in Beaufort County, Washington and Belhaven.”

A day to honor Copper was a “long time coming,” according to Archie Jennings, the mayor of Washington.

“You are a Washingtonian, Beaufort County (native), Pam Packer and Pirate, who values our youth and is a role model to the community,” Jennings said, as he presented Copper with a city plaque honoring him for his outstanding achievements.

“This means a lot. Words can't describe the feeling I have right now,” Copper said. “Thank you all for following my career. Kids, further yourself with education. Without education, nothing is possible. Football and sports are fun, but grades must be No. 1. If you focus on your grades, the rest will fall in place.”

Mayor Adam O'Neal once again thanked Wilson, who was honored by his hometown, Belhaven, at the end of February for his commitment to the town.

“You will be special the rest of your life,” O'Neal said, as he presented Wilson the Laurel Wreath award on behalf of Gov. Bev Purdue. “The governor bestowed this to you, and I am glad I can (present it to you).”

Copper was also presented the Laurel Wreath award, an award from the governor that honors outstanding North Carolina athletes.

The Beaufort County Boys and Girls Club nominated Wilson and Copper for the award for their perseverance, according to Alice Mills-Sadler, the director of the club.

“The Boys and Girls Club has a footprint on both these fine young men. We are glad the governor heard our cry,” Mills-Sadler said, adding that the application chronologically listed both Wilson's and Copper's achievements over the years. “We used their athletic talents, but also used the perseverance aspect which got them through college to the pros.”

Both Wilson and Copper were presented a football signed by the children at the Beaufort County Boys and Girls Club by Tyquan Martin and Jasmine Hodges of the Washington unit and Shaheim Brewington and Brooklyn Brown of the Belhaven unit.

Each kid earned points through good behavior and community service at the club, which made it possible for them to present the footballs to Wilson and Copper, according to Mills-Sadler.

Although Wilson and Copper are both alumni of East Carolina, their stints did not cross paths. Wilson graduated in May 2010, while Copper graduated in May 2003.
“I have always heard about Terrance Copper. He was one of my role models,” Wilson said, smiling.

As for the 2011-12 football season, both Wilson and Copper said they hope the lockout ends soon.

“I am sure we will start on time,” Wilson said, adding that he is enjoying time with his family and relaxing, but is ready to start training again.

“I am for what it stands for, but not for it,” Copper added. “I hope (the owners and players) can come to an agreement soon.”
A pool hall bouncer on Monday testified at James Richardson's capital murder trial that he saw Richardson holding a gun a month before two men were killed downtown.

Samuel Crotts, who worked at Pastimes on South Memorial Drive in late May 2009, took the witness stand during the seventh day of testimony in Richardson's trial.

Richardson faces the death penalty if he's convicted of killing Andrew Kirby and Landon Blackley in the drive-by shooting on June 30, 2009, outside The Other Place on Fifth Street.

Crotts said he saw Richardson in Pastimes with two friends on the night and early morning of May 25-26, 2009.

“He was loud, but not aggressive, and was buying drinks for people. He probably spent about $200,” Crotts told District Attorney Clark Everett.

Crotts said he heard several shots outside the bar just after closing time, walked outside to see who was there, and saw Richardson holding a handgun and standing near a white sedan. Two other men were in the car, he said.

Defense Attorney Thomas Moore asked Crotts why he did not call the police or tell them about collecting shell casings from the parking lot before they responded to a 911 call about shots fired.

“Nobody was hurt,” Crotts answered.

When he got home, Crotts said, he put the casings in a junk drawer. He gave them to authorities only after learning Richardson was a suspect in the downtown shootings.
Crots said he remembered the casings after seeing photos of Richardson in media reports.

Also on Monday, a State Bureau of Investigation ballistics expert told jurors that bullets collected outside The Other Place were fired by the same gun.

Scott Jones, an SBI expert in firearms examination, said rifling marks also indicated they were fired from a Hi Point .45-caliber handgun.

“That finding is not conclusive, just my professional opinion,” Jones said.

Rocky Point gun distributor John Rooks later testified that he sold a Hi Point .45-caliber automatic handgun to Richardson on March 27, 2004.

Jones also testified that five bullet casings found at the scene were similar in type and caliber with a casing found in a BMW Richardson allegedly drove the night of the shootings, and with those found by Crots at Pastimes. Microscopic impact markings on the casings' primers also showed they were all fired from the same gun, Jones said.

It's impossible to match spent casings with the bullets they may have contained, however, Jones said in an answer to questions from defense attorney Moore. He also said it's impossible to match casings to a gun brand.

Jones said he did not photograph any of the casings after analyzing them or ask any other independent experts to examine the evidence.

Next, SBI crime lab expert Michael Grudziel testified to finding gunshot residue in specimens lifted from at least two locations on the white BMW found by Greenville homicide investigators at the home of Richardson's mother the morning of June 30, 2009, and submitted to him for testing.

During questioning from Moore, Grudziel said that gunshot residue possibly could have been transferred secondarily from any person to a location on the car.

Before court recessed for the day, Greenville police Det. Shawn Moore recounted for jurors the events leading up to Richardson's surrender to him on July 4, 2009, at 1905-A Kennedy Circle in Kearney Park.

Moore and Richardson grew up together and played basketball together, Moore said. Richardson called him two or three days after the killings.

“He asked if he f---ed up, or if the situation was all f---ed up, or something to that effect,” Moore said.

He said he received several calls from Richardson leading to his surrender at Kearney Park, where a black Lincoln drove up, and Richardson exited from the back seat.
“There was a big crowd of people there when I got there alone in my car,” Moore said. “I put one handcuff on his wrist, then he asked if he could have a minute to talk with his kids, so I took it off. Then I recuffed him, and he went with his mother and me to police headquarters.”

There were discrepancies raised by Defense Attorney Jeff Cutler about whether and when Moore filed reports about his conversations with Richardson and Richardson's subsequent surrender.

Those questions are expected to continue when court resumes today.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com and (252) 329-9571.
Duke receives 50 years of Goodall's chimp research

BY LYNDAMARIE TAURASI - Correspondent

DURHAM Jane Goodall says sifting through the earliest handwritten pages of her research archive brings back her 26-year-old self.

"I can actually feel what it used to feel like. If I try, I can get back to the 26-year-old mind," said the renowned primatologist, who will celebrate her 77th birthday Sunday.

Goodall's 50 years of uninterrupted chimpanzee behavior research is making its new home with Duke University. The collection that Goodall started in 1960 is being curated and digitized by Duke researchers.

The university formally announced Monday that it has established the Jane Goodall Institute Research Center at Duke, to manage the archive, and has named Anne Pusey, chairwoman of evolutionary anthropology, its director. The institute, an international wildlife and environment conservation organization, will retain ownership of archived data.
Goodall spoke to a full house in Duke's 1,200-seat Page Auditorium. She said she lacked formal training when she started studying the Kasakela chimpanzee community in Tanzania's Gombe Stream National Park. But her observations, which focused on chimp emotions and personalities often overlooked by her scientist counterparts, ultimately changed the beliefs that only humans made and used tools, and that chimpanzees were herbivores.

Her findings and methods were controversial. Goodall named the chimps instead of objectively numbering them.

To gain their trust for closer observation, she fed them bananas, a practice now discontinued.

Eventually, Goodall said, her documentation adapted with technology, turning from handwritten notes typed with carbon paper to audio transcription to video recording. All of the data, which include English and Swahili journals, photographs, audio and video recordings, and maps are being digitized in a suite of rooms at Duke.

"It's a bittersweet experience for me because I loved analyzing this data," Goodall said. "I could never have dreamed what is happening to it with the digitizing and the scanning - all these amazing things that are happening which will make it so easy to work with compared to what I had."

Pusey, who began her work at Gombe in 1970 while finishing her Ph.D., started working with the data at the University of Minnesota. By the mid-1980s, Goodall had become an author and an animal rights activist, and had begun working the lecture circuit. Concerned that the original data were left on open shelves and becoming damaged, Pusey asked Goodall to archive the collection at Minnesota under the Jane Goodall Institute's Center for Primate Studies.

A year ago, Pusey came to Duke, as did the archived data, now in 22 cabinets with five drawers each.

Maureen Smith, president of the Jane Goodall Institute in the United States, helped negotiate the move.

"One of the beauties about Duke ... is that there is so much cross-departmental and cross-school interaction and education," she said. "We just
don't do chimps. We talk about communities and conservation and climate, ... so all of these things actually touch the many different divisions of Duke."

Ian C. Gilby, senior research scientist at the Jane Goodall Institute Research Center, called the move a "tremendous opportunity for Duke" that helps set the university up to become the leading research center on primates in the world.

Today, Goodall is on the road 300 days a year, signing copies of her books, and spreading her message that to protect the chimps, humans must protect biodiversity and fight climate change.

"Even as we speak now, the chimp population are in danger," she said. "Trying to protect chimps' habitat means saving the forest."

Goodall said the biggest problem Pusey and her team will have, besides catching up on the 50-year-data, will be keeping up with new findings.

"There's new stuff coming in all the time. It's a very tough job," she said. "But it's wonderful to know that it's happening."

lmtaurasi@gmail.com

More than 77,000 fans will fill Reliant Stadium in Houston to the brim for the NCAA Tournament men’s basketball championship game next week, their Ben Franklins flying like a '90s rap video as they load up on sodas, snacks and souvenirs. As many as 50 million more fans will watch the game on television, thanks to a lucrative contract that pays the college sports governing body about $700 million for broadcast rights this year alone.

Altogether, the FBI estimates that $2.5 billion is wagered on the three weeks of basketball games otherwise known as March Madness.

There is no trickledown economics when it comes to college sports. While the money swirls all around them, the athletes at the center of the hoops spectacle are strictly out of bounds. PBS’s “Frontline” turned its dogged correspondent Lowell Bergman loose on the topic for Tuesday’s segment, “Money and March Madness,” and the result is a report that pokes gorilla-size holes in the antiquated idea of amateurism, comparing today’s college basketball players to indentured servants.
The details and arguments are not new. Generations of college athletes have generated revenue for their schools, for the NCAA and for television networks, while pocketing only a chance at a four-year education. The “Frontline” segment hinges on its voices, and that’s where the report is both lacking and illuminating.

There are any number of down-on-their-luck former college stars who could illustrate the hypocrisy of the NCAA and its refusal to financially compensate its employees — er, its student-athletes. Instead, the segment features just two athletes: Joakim Noah, a millionaire basketball player for the Chicago Bulls, and Ed O’Brien, who played 10 years of professional basketball and is now a marketing director for a car dealership in Las Vegas.

O’Brien is also the lead plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit against the NCAA.

Instead, the most compelling voice is an unwitting one: Mark Emmert, the NCAA president who has the unenviable task of defending the organization’s outdated position.

“We provide them with remarkable opportunities to get an education at the finest universities on Earth,” Emmert says in an explanation that feels stripped from a 1950s black-and-white infomercial. The wide-eyed viewer should drink a tall glass of milk and perhaps hold a balloon on a string, too.

The NCAA clings to the romantic image of students wearing letterman jackets and smiles without acknowledging that the entire landscape has changed. In the past three decades especially, college sports has become big business and its profit margins remain remarkable because it features an unpaid workforce. Emmert fails to explain why virtually the only thing unchanged is the compensation for the athletes.

“No, I don’t find that contradictory at all,” Emmert says. “Quite the contrary. I think what would be utterly unacceptable is, in fact, to convert students into employees.”

The NCAA is in the midst of a $10.8 billion TV contract. Most head coaches pull in seven-figure salaries — a topic unfortunately glossed over in the “Frontline” report. And the NCAA executives are resting their heads on
pillows of cash each night. According to reports, more than a dozen NCAA employees collectively earn more than $6 million in salary a year. Emmert wouldn’t disclose his annual salary to “Frontline,” but he walked away from $900,000 a year as president at the University of Washington. His predecessor at the NCAA earned as much as $1.7 million a year.

Essentially, everyone is getting paid handsomely except the ones doing the heavy lifting.

“I can’t say often enough, obviously, that student-athletes are students,” Emmert tells Bergman, showing signs of frustration. “They are not employees.”

And therein lies the crux of the NCAA’s position: The student-athletes are compensated with an education, the value of which pales in comparison to the dollars they bring to their universities.

An aspiring basketball player has few options other than becoming a part of the well-oiled NCAA machine whether or not he wants an education. The “Frontline” segment does a good job bringing in graduation rates. Of the 68 schools in this year’s tournament, the piece notes that 16 teams graduated fewer than half of their players. Of the Final Four teams, Connecticut graduated 31 percent of its players, Kentucky 44 percent, Virginia Commonwealth 56 percent and Butler 83 percent, according to an annual report from the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida.

The NCAA is a nonprofit organization and enjoys tax-exempt status. It could hang its hat in good conscience on the notion of amateurism 50 years ago, when the cost of an education might have matched the revenue generated by its student-athletes.

But it’s now in the business of signing billion-dollar contracts and paying everyone except the stars of the show, a point “Frontline” continually raises and Emmert willingly ignores.

maeser@washpost.com
Frontline: Money and March Madness
(one hour) airs Tuesday at 9 p.m. on MPT.
© 2011 The Washington Post Company
NEW YORK It would be hard to find two more compelling, formidable women in American public life than South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and fellow South Carolinian and philanthropist Darla Moore.

They are, as we say, good ol' girls made good. Haley, the youngest governor in the U.S. at 39, is a first-generation Indian-American - self-made through hard work and determination. Moore, born and raised in tiny Lake City (pop. 6,000-ish), went to Wall Street, made a fortune and returned to her home state to share her bounty, including more than $70 million to the University of South Carolina.

Thus, it was stunning a few weeks ago when Haley unceremoniously removed Moore from the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees, where she had served since 1999, replacing her with a local attorney and Haley campaign donor.

This jaw-dropping move has created a furor, prompting a statehouse protest and an anti-Haley campaign that has some talking about her political ruin. Others, such as former state Republican Party chair Katon Dawson, shrug and say "there's a new sheriff in town."

"I say there is a new governor in high heels doing what she told the voters she would do and willing to let the chips fall where they may," Dawson says. "Elections have consequences."

Moore, meanwhile, seems poised for sainthood. Her response to Haley's insult was to offer the university another $5 million for an aerospace research center to be named for fellow Lake City star Ronald McNair, an African-American astronaut who died in the Challenger explosion in 1986.

As stories go, this one has, dare I say, good legs. It doesn't hurt that both women are attractive - a Snow-White and Rose-Red pair of Southern sisters
who are politely engaged in a war of, well, roses. In the nicest possible way, they are at each other's throats.

The Haley-Moore imbroglio might be of little interest beyond South Carolina's border, though the Palmetto State has established itself as a reliable source of tellable tales. And there's the fact that Haley has been flagged as a rising Republican star, beloved by tea-partiers and endorsed by Sarah Palin. Haley is currently writing a memoir, which, if you're a politician, often suggests bigger ambitions.

Moore, whom Fortune once named one of the 50 most powerful women in American business, is famous for her down-home largesse. A blond beauty who speaks with a distinctly Southern accent, Moore matches Haley's toughness with a steely resolve of her own.

Speaking to about 400 students on the USC campus Thursday as she announced her latest donation, Moore began disarmingly: "While I quickly admit to enjoying the occasional opportunity to talk about the wonder of me, this is not about Darla Moore."

And then she commenced, without mentioning Haley's name, to shred the governor: "Neither you nor I need to be on the Board of Trustees to make this (improving higher education) happen. We need simply to hold our leaders accountable and tell them we understand that they may not help us, they may not be able to help us - but we demand that they not hurt us."

Ouch.

As Haley explains events, Moore lost her seat basically because she didn't express sufficient interest in keeping it. She didn't return Haley's calls, as the governor tells it, and when Haley tried to meet with Moore, there was a three-week wait.

The governor told me she couldn't wait. She has only one voting member on the board and, Haley says, "I have to pick one who will report to me and return my calls." But mightn't a governor give a little extra time to the most magnanimous, dedicated donor in South Carolina history? Apparently not.

Haley's actions may be understandable in a certain light. She has the right to shape her army as she sees fit. But her actions also might be viewed as
defiantly foolish. She has enraged establishment Republicans, a feat applauded by her tea party base. And she has placed at risk the beneficence of a proven and loyal leader when it comes to education and innovation.

Whether Haley has committed political suicide so early in her promising career - or merely tightened the bolts on her pledge to remake South Carolina as a leader in education and business - remains to be seen.

But if one were to put a name to the dual goals of educational excellence and business development, one would be hard-pressed to improve upon Darla Moore. Hence, alas, the building that bears her name: the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business.