THE DAILY CLIPS

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Gail Lee Jordan

Mrs. Gail Lee Jordan, 57, died Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008.

The funeral service will be held Friday at 2 p.m. in Trinity Free Will Baptist Church. Burial will follow in Pinewood Memorial Park.

Mrs. Jordan, a native of Newton Grove, was born August 5, 1951, and was the daughter of Russell and Mary Lee. Gail was a graduate of Hobbton High School and at the age of 19 married Thomas Leon Jordan. She began her career with the Department of Revenue and Museum of History and lastly but most affectionately with East Carolina University. Gail considered her love of God and family her most prized possession and began serving her Lord at Oak Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Newton Grove and later transferred her membership to Trinity Free Will Baptist Church, where she had been a member for more than 30 years. The greatest joys in her life were her children and grandchildren.

Gail is survived by her husband of 38 years, Tommy Jordan; children, Thomas Kevin Jordan and wife, Meghan, of Hampstead, and Clarence Lee Jordan and wife, Miranda, of Greenville; grandchildren, Nathan Thomas Jordan of Hampstead, Leigh-Anna Jordan, Emily Paige Jordan and Carter Lee Jordan of Greenville; and brothers, Russell M. Lee Jr. and Barry N. Lee and wife, Sandy, of Simpsonville, S.C.

The family will receive friends tonight from 6-8 at Wilkerson Funeral Home and other times at the home.

Flowers are welcome or memorial contributions may be made to Trinity Free Will Baptist Church, 3111 Golden Road, Greenville NC 27858, or to University Health System Inpatient Hospice, C/O PCMH Foundation, P.O. Box 8489, Greenville, NC 27835-8489.

Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneral-home.com
Expert: Economic crisis is a chance to change fiscal policies

BY GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Reflector

The president-elect can capitalize on the current economic crisis to find ways to solve the United States' growing deficit, said the former U.S. Comptroller General.

David Walker, who oversaw the nation's General Accounting Office and audited the nation's spending, spoke Wednesday at the Cunanan Leadership Speaker Series sponsored by East Carolina University's College of Business.

The campaigns of president-elect Barack Obama and his Republican opponent John McCain didn't have substantive plans for reducing the nation's deficit, Walker said.

"Their proposals, if implemented, would have made our nation's deficit and debt levels worse as compared to current law," he said.

Walker said he doesn't see the nation's deficit shrinking in the near future as the new president and Congress work to turn the economy around and regain public confidence.

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DEFICIT

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"The deficit and debt levels will get worse before they can get better," he said.
"I think President-elect Obama is going to have to re-consider all his promises," Walker said.

He said Obama can capitalize on this moment of economic uncertainty to show Americans that the nation's fiscal policies need change.

"Hopefully what the new president will do is to take steps to not only turn around the current economic crisis ... but go to the American people and tell them the truth about the need to make tough choices about budget controls, tax policy entitlement reform and health care reform that have existed for some time but Washington has just been kicking the can down the road," he said.

Walker said between 75 percent to 80 percent of the nation's debt is owned by foreign entities. Paying that debt off means the nation's money is being sent overseas and not being spent in our borders, he said. The nation has less influence on the policies of countries we borrow from and it could compromise our national security.

Walker left his position in early 2008 to become president and CEO of the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, an organization working to address challenges facing the nation's economy and financial future. Peterson is the co-founder of The Blackstone Group, a company that provides private equity, financial advisory, and investment management services.

More than 400 people, including ECU students, faculty and community members attended the event.

"It's part of the vision of the speakership to bring to Greenville people in the areas of business, government and public affairs who will open our minds to different things," said Rick Niswander, dean of the College of Business.

"One thing education does is open the mind to things students didn't know. I'm sure three-fourths of the things (Walker) spoke about today are things people haven't thought about."

Walker said the nation's current deficit of $10 trillion isn't as worrisome as the commitments the government has made to Social Security, Medicare and other programs which will raise the nation's total deficit to between $54-$55 trillion in the next 30 years.

Those figures don't include the $800 billion bailout Congress approved last month or the predicted $1 trillion of debt expected to be incurred during the 2009 fiscal year which started Oct. 1, he said.

"For the first time in the history of the United States this baby boom generation is in a position it may not leave the country better off financially, environmentally, in so many ways for the next generations," he said.

Deficit spending isn't inherently bad, Walker said. When a nation is at war or facing a national disaster on the scope of Hurricane Katrina, debt is needed to take care of immediate needs.

But when Congress establishes expensive reoccurring projects such as Medicare Part D without identifying a revenue stream, the accumulating debt becomes burdensome to future generations.

There have been successful attempts to reduce the nation's debt burden and implement responsible spending, Walker said.

He pointed to the presidencies of George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Bush took a risk in raising taxes and imposing budget controls, which Clinton continued, eventually leading to surpluses and a pay down of the deficit.

Walker said Bush paid a political price, losing re-election because voters thought he broke their promise to them. Walker said partisan politics have to be abandoned in these times so elected leaders can do what is right, but possibly painful, for the country without fear of backlash.

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ECU professor: GOP will bounce back

The Daily Reflector

The outcome of many contested general election races remained uncertain until late Tuesday because of vote counting in Pitt County.

Elections Director Dave Davis said officials were busy opening and counting more than 2,300 mail-in absentee ballots from 2-10:30 p.m.

The process delayed putting those votes and about 50,000 One-Stop early voting ballot records into the computer system included Tuesday’s votes.

“We had all three (elections) board members, two full-time staff and two part-time staff opening up envelopes and straightening (the ballots) out,” Davis said.

Because the ballots are folded to mail, some had to be inserted into scanners numerous times.

Nearly 67 percent of Pitt County’s registered voters, or 51,032 people, voted absentee or cast ballots during the three-week One Stop early voting period, according to preliminary data. Just under 30 percent of the votes were cast on Tuesday.

Races for Pitt County Board of Commissioners and state House and Senate remained uncertain until those totals were entered at about 11 p.m.

The Pitt County Board of Elections has a practice of counting the mail-in absentee ballots before entering those totals and the One Stop records into the state system, Davis said. He said officials were caught off guard Tuesday by the large number of paper ballots. They have been able to count them quickly in the past. No discussion had taken place about altering the practice of counting them before loading the computerized One Stop records, Davis said.

Compared to the 2004 presidential election — when long lines delayed results until nearly 3 a.m. — Tuesday’s count went smoothly, Davis said.

“For a presidential election, for us to be done before 11 p.m., I think we have performed admirably, the board and the staff,” he said.

GOP will bounce back, expert says

The Republican Party will bounce back from its significant losses in last night’s election, an East Carolina University political expert says.

Jody Baumgartner, assistant professor of political science at ECU, said gloom surrounding the GOP is understandable, but common among parties losing a presidential election.

“You are going to get that after every presidential loss,” Baumgartner said. “Some of it makes sense, but some of it is just
overreaction. We heard the same thing from the Democratic Party in 2004, and look at how things have changed.”

Baumgartner said he believes the unprecedented success of Barack Obama’s campaign, and the inability of Republican nominee John McCain to excite people, played a large role in Obama’s ascent to the White House.

The presidential election, Baumgartner says, highlighted an uneasy alliance that exists between fiscal conservatives, social conservatives and foreign policy hawks.

“Those groups are sort of the three components of the Republican Party, and this election highlighted the fact that there was no consensus candidate among them,” Baumgartner said.

Baumgartner said he believes Democrats were able to broaden their control of Congress during this year’s election due to the effects of an unpopular Republican president and an unpopular war.

Democrats are guaranteed at least a 56-44 majority in the Senate and a 252-172 majority in the House. Some races remained undecided.

“I have trouble with pinning too much significance on one thing,” Baumgartner said. “What we know about American politics is the more things seem to change, the more they actually look the same that they always have. Every time a party loses an election, they cannibalize each other for a little while, but then they bounce right back. It is a two-party system, and one of them has not died.”

Local results boost Democrats

General election races in Pitt County on Tuesday mirrored statewide results with Democrats winning most of the county’s votes.

Among the top tier of federal and state races, incumbent U.S. Rep. Walter Jones was the only Republican returned to office by Pitt County voters.

Locally, Democrat Ephraigm Smith defeated incumbent Tom Coulson for the Pitt County Board of Commissioners’ District B seat.

The voting followed regional and statewide trends, where returns garnered Democratic victories for Beverly Perdue for governor, Kay Hagan for U.S. Senate and Don Davis for state Senate. President-elect Barack Obama also holds a lead in North Carolina but the race remains too close to call.

Election officials will spend the next week preparing for the final voter canvass on Nov. 14, said Dave Davis, county elections director. From that, staff will collect demographic data on Tuesday’s vote.

A preliminary look at the numbers shows 74,130 Pitt County residents voted. Out of those ballots, 49,486 were cast during the three-week Early Voting period and 2,335 were absentee mail-in votes, according to the state Board of Elections’ data on Pitt County’s presidential vote. About 22,000 people voted on Tuesday.
Racist graffiti in tunnel at NCSU follows election

Obama was named, but student groups post signs opposing the graffiti

BY JOSH SHAFFER
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — Students and staff members at N.C. State University found racist graffiti spray-painted throughout the campus' Free Expression Tunnel on Wednesday, apparently a reaction to President-elect Barack Obama's victory.

By 10 a.m., the tunnel had been painted white from end to end, and student groups hung signs to promote unity and condemn hate speech.

Chancellor James Obinger said any presidential election is bound to bring out strong emotions.

"However," he wrote in a statement posted on the NCSU Web site, "the strength and positive force of spirited debate is sapped when we resort to name-calling and negativity. Worse, when we lower ourselves to engaging in racist characterizations and inappropriate statements of anger and hate, we make a mockery of our right to free speech."

NCSU spokesman Keith Nichols said that Obama was named, and that about a month ago, a 'cryptic' message about a Klan meeting had been chalked on the campus Brickyard.

The Free Expression Tunnel dates to the 1960s and is open to anyone with an ID and a can of paint — NCSU's concession to graffiti artists.

By mid-afternoon, the words "Don't Hate" were painted over the fresh coat, and freshman Robert McDonald added "Ashamed to be white" on a wall just outside the tunnel.

He said the message was intended to have a double meaning — shame from a white student's point of view, and the imagined shame that a free-for-all tunnel might feel having been covered with white paint.

"It really did make me ashamed that people from my race would come out and do that," he said. "On this historic day, we've come so far from segregation in the '60s, and people would come out and reverse that."

Obinger's statement said the graffiti was discovered early Wednesday morning. Nichols said officials assume it happened overnight after Tuesday's election. Campus police are investigating, he said, and there are cameras in the tunnel area.

Throughout Tuesday, students stopped to read the signs posted on behalf of several dozen student associations. "Hate speech," one read, "while still protected in some circumstances as free speech under the United States Constitution, must not go unchallenged. In order for our campus to thrive, we all must work toward a positive atmosphere."

Matt Woodward, a freshman who represents the campus' gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender center, said the message had been in the works for some time.

"To me, it shows that all these student groups are coming together," he said. "Look at how many people are stopping and reading this. This message is getting out there. We're N.C. State. Hate isn't going to be tolerated."

Still, some students described a nervous atmosphere after Tuesday night's election and the graffiti.

"You can even feel like a tension on campus," said freshman Shekiah Jones. "Me and my friend were talking about it, and one guy actually told us to shut up. It's getting crazy. If they would actually research Obama, they would see the benefits of him."

But others said political leanings shouldn't figure into a discussion of race. Students who weren't Obama backers were just as repelled by Wednesday's news.

"I'm not racist," said junior Griffin Hatchell. "I don't approve of Obama, but I'm not going to do a hate crime."

A year ago, campus police discovered a noose made of toilet paper hanging from a restroom stall door inside the Sullivan Shops building. At the time, black students on campus complained that the reaction to the incident was muted.

In his statement, Obinger issued a warning to those making hateful statements designed to incite violence: Cease and desist.

josh.shaffer@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4818
Economy, new residents put N. Carolina in play this election

Jim Morrill  - Charlotte Observer

At this point four years ago, President Bush was so far ahead in the polls he pulled most of his campaign staff out of North Carolina.

John McCain and Barack Obama return this weekend to a state with a much different political landscape.

Polls show the race in North Carolina virtually tied less than three weeks before the election. McCain’s rally in Concord Saturday morning was his second visit to the state this week. Sunday, Obama makes his fourth trip to North Carolina since late September with an appearance in Fayetteville.

Both campaigns are blitzing the airwaves with ads. Thousands of Republican mailers and phone calls try to link Obama with an “extreme leftist agenda.” Obama’s ads cast him more as a friend of the middle class. All the activity underscores the fact that North Carolina, reliably red for 32 years, has become a true battleground.

The economy is a big reason the race is tight. An Elon University poll this month found that twice as many North Carolinians blamed Republicans as Democrats for the sour economy.

"Republicans are basically sailing against a headwind with the economic situation, and the incumbent party is getting blamed for it," says Ferrell Blount, a former state GOP chairman. "Hopefully by election time, voters will see around that."

But another reason has to do with demographics.

The state grew by more than 800,000 between 2000 and 2006, and has since added thousands more from all over the country.

"It's pure mathematics," says Paul Shumaker, a consultant to U.S. Sen. Richard Burr and other Republicans. "Those people who have lived in North Carolina all their lives tend to be self-described conservatives. People moving into North Carolina (are) more moderate ... and they tend to be ticket-splitters."

Population growth and aggressive registration drives have added more than 700,000 new voters this year alone. While both parties increased their numbers, the percentage of
registered Republicans fell slightly relative to that of Democrats.

Carmine Scavo, a political scientist at East Carolina University, has seen newcomers drawn to Greenville for medical and other jobs. They're not like the region's more conservative Democrats who voted for Republicans such as the late Sen. Jesse Helms.

"Those people coming in (are) not the same type of 'Jesse-crat'," he says. "They're coming in with very different concerns about health policy, the deficit, the war in Iraq ... Their positions tend to line up with that more middle-of-the-road mainstream, a little right-to-center type of Democrats."

Tom Jensen of Raleigh-based Public Policy Polling, a Democratic-leaning firm, traces part of Obama's showing to success attracting small-town voters. In 2004, he says, Bush won 57 percent of those voters. Polls among them now show Obama with a slight edge.

According to Jensen, 7 percent of N.C. voters who supported Bush in 2004 are backing Obama, largely because of economic concerns.

Shumaker, the GOP consultant, says Republicans often don't address "kitchen table issues."

"We still have folks who approach our campaigns like it's still the 1980s, and it's not," he says. "We ran ideological campaigns. ... (Democrats) are talking about solving people's problems and making a difference. ... They've had a message that appeals beyond their party that allows them to steal away Republican votes as well."

Obama also has an aggressive turnout effort.

Officials say Democrats made up 64 percent of the nearly 114,000 people who cast a ballot on the first day of early voting Thursday. And African Americans, who comprise about 22 percent of the state's population, accounted for about 36 percent.

Obama has heavily outspent McCain in North Carolina.

In the first week of October, he spent $1.2 million on TV ads compared to McCain's $148,000, according to the Wisconsin Advertising Project.

Still, Republicans are optimistic.

"I'm not terribly worried," says Blount. "I have a lot of faith in voters, and my guess is that when they make a final selection, they'll see somebody in Barack Obama who's going to raise their taxes. And that's absolutely the wrong thing to do in tough economic times."