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Chad Adams speaking at rally for Jon David

## David vs. Goliath by Bettie Fennell

When Jon David began campaigning last year for district attorney in Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus counties, he made it clear that he was an outsider with no connections to anyone. He didn't owe anyone any favors and they owed him none. To him that was one of his strong features in representing the



13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. But to those who wield power in the district, David probably appeared to be a major threat to their power. His election put him in a position to expose

corruption that has been whispered about for generations.

David, who ran unsuccessfully for the position in 2006, had no opposition last year in the primary. But former DA Rex Gore, a close friend of former Sen. R.C. Soles, and newcomer Harold "Butch" Pope of Whiteville faced off in the Democrat primary. Pope was the victor.

Before the general election was held, Soles tried unsuccessfully to divide the

13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, which covers Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus counties. The idea

**NC Supreme Court  
overturns NC Court of  
Appeals**

was to have one DA, i.e. Jon David, represent Brunswick County, while another DA would represent Bladen and Columbus. Some speculated **"David," con't on page 2**



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that the reason was to have Gore appointed to that district to protect his retirement benefits, but others believe there was more to Soles' effort that had to do with his retaining power and control.

Soles may be out of office; but he is not out of power.

Election results showed that David won in Brunswick and Pope won in Bladen and Columbus, but it wasn't enough to push him over the top. In less than six months after David took office, one of the first salvos was hurled at him by District Judge Jerry Jolly, a democrat. Jolly accused David of a "scheme" because he accepted a \$250 campaign donation from someone who would benefit from the non-profit StreetSafe program, which David promoted to teach safe driving to young people arrested for minor traffic offenses.

Resident Superior Court Judge Ola Lewis, a republican from Brunswick County, was also involved in the case against fellow republican Jon David. She instructed Chief Deputy Charlie Miller of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office to deliver Judge Jolly's order to David, even though Miller was investigating a traffic fatality at the time.

It has been reported that after Judge Lewis heard about Miller's affidavit regarding her involvement, she tried to have him investigated. Later, she was among the lawyers who met at the Brunswick County

courthouse to pass a resolution in support of Judge Jolly.

Lewis' involvement came as no surprise to some who noticed that she apparently supported Pope in the general election. Many people have asked the important question "why?" What did she hope to gain? Was it in hopes of getting a higher judicial appointment by the democrat governor or was it meant to shore up her power base in the district among democrats?

Were backroom deals made to ensure that Soles would continue to wield power in Columbus and surrounding counties or was the attack on David an effort to smear him to make him less effective? Again, the important question is "why?"

Some believe that if the people involved in the attack against David were school children, they would be identified as "bullies."

David announced that he has reopened the case involving Davina Buff Jones, a Bald Head Island police officer who was shot 12 years ago while on duty. Investigators and Gore, who was DA when the tragedy occurred, said the evidence indicated Officer Jones committed suicide, but the NC Industrial Commission ruled in a civil suit filed by Officer Jones' family, that the evidence indicates she was murdered. Critics blame Gore for a cover up.

As district attorney, David is in a position to look at other cases, as well, that raise red flags. One involves a child who alleges sexual abuse by a family member, but the case was not tried in criminal court but was sent to family court instead. Again, the important question is "why?"

David is also in a position to look into potential corruption in the 13<sup>th</sup> district, which may be one of the reasons behind the recent attack.

A rally was held in Whiteville on May 26 to support David. About 50 people attended, many of them from Brunswick County. The event was covered by the Wilmington *Star-News*, WECT and WWAY television, but a search of the Whiteville *News Reporter*, Columbus County's local newspaper, about the event came up empty. Again, the important question is "why?"

David petitioned the Court of Appeals to overturn Judge Jolly's order, but the court ruled against him. But he has said he plans to appeal to the State Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is made up of seven justices, 4 republicans, including Justice Mark Martin and 3 democrats.

It has been reported that Judge Lewis contacted Justice Martin about the case that will likely go before him. Because she has made contact with him, Justice Martin may be required to recuse himself, leaving 3 republicans and 3 democrats to decide the case, which could  
**"David," con't on page 3**

...“David,” continued from Page 2 end up with no decision decided along party lines. The important question to ask is “why?” Why has Judge Lewis injected herself in this controversy? Does she owe people favors? What are her motives?

Ironically, the General Assembly is considering a bill that would provide for administrative traffic court to oversee “infractions,” considered non-criminal violations, such as speeding and minor traffic offenses.

It has been reported on June 30, 2011 on WWAY TV 3 that the NC Supreme Court is allowing David to move forward with traffic court. According to TV3, “The Supreme Court amended an order between Judge Jerry Jolly and David a couple of weeks ago. Hidden in the legal jargon was the go ahead for StreetSafe. David says the Court temporarily lifted Jolly's order to end the driving improvement program. He says this decision stops the order until the Supreme Court hears his case later this year. David told WWAY he called Judge Jolly's lawyer Thursday out of courtesy to let him know David will move forward in putting the StreetSafe program back into place.

“For now, David says he does not have a timetable for when StreetSafe will be back, but he does consider the Supreme Court's decision a win.”

See, “Carroll,” continued on Page 4...



*Bettie Fennell speaks at rally to support Jon David.*

David said he has not heard back from Judge Jolly or his attorney.

“David says his brief is due back to the Supreme Court by July 15, and then Judge Jolly has 30 days to respond. The District Attorney says he is excited for the Supreme Court to hear the case and feels he has a strong argument, especially after the state legislature voted to make traffic programs like StreetSafe mandatory across the state starting October 1.

“David says he believes the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in September or October.

“Judge Jolly issued an order weeks ago stopping the program because he felt David was giving the director of StreetSafe a kick-back for donating less than \$250 to his campaign for DA. David's

system would allow the DA's office to send young drivers to StreetSafe, where they learn about how dangerous driving can be. It would also take them out of the day-to-day court system, freeing it up, David says, to deal with bigger issues besides traffic violations.

“Law enforcement in Brunswick County also agreed with the program because they felt it would allow officers to spend more time on the streets and out of the courtrooms.”

<http://www.wwaytv3.com/2011/06/30/only-3-state-supreme-court-halts-judge-jollys-order-da-david-can-proceed-traffic-court>

*Thank you to Bettie Fennell for her faithful efforts in exposing corruption and wrongdoings in our community for the last several decades. Growing up in Wilmington, I always looked forward to reading her articles. She was a wonderful role model to me. Keep digging, Bettie! —Sandy Best*

# New Republican

by Sondra North

Interview of Tommy Cotses:

Over a thousand Republican delegates attended the GOP state convention held recently in Wilmington. One guest who visited the event, however, was Tommy Cotses, a lifelong Democrat who came to hear the conservative message delivered by state Chairman Robin Hayes and other state and national leaders. As he sat in the meeting hall by John Tullous, Vice Precinct Chair for New Hanover County, he commented that he felt more like a Republican than a Democrat. John asked Tommy why he didn't become one. No sooner said than done--a voter registration form was retrieved and Tommy signed up as a new member of the Grand Old Party!

Tommy is a wonderful addition to our ranks. Born Diamantis Elias Kotsedakis on the island of Icaria in Greece in 1930, Tommy saw much tragedy and turmoil in the world before coming to the United States and enjoying success as an

entrepreneur. His father had entered this country through Ellis Island in 1909 and worked for the Santa Fe railroad and other southwestern rail lines for many years before returning to Greece to marry his mother. Tommy states with pride that his father, "never forgot the need to help others, especially those on his native island." With that ethic in mind, while again back in the United States, his father was instrumental in organizing people in this country and in Greece to provide funds for building the first and only school in his village. One of the students who attended this school became a cardiologist who later practiced medicine in a Cleveland clinic. Tommy maintains that he chooses to be no different than his father in reaching out to help others. As evidence of this attitude, he recently gave a substantial endowment to UNCW in memory of both of his parents.

During the Depression and World War II, while his father toiled on railroad lines in the

United States, surviving on the island of Icaria was difficult. He and his mother lived under the occupation of the Germans, and the memories of atrocities committed by these occupiers are vivid. Tommy remembers that "one did not have to be Jewish-only a non-sympathizer-and you were gone." Neither the young nor old were spared. Eventually, Tommy and his mother escaped from the island by boat, the passage being paid for in livestock.

Their refugee odyssey throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle East was relentless, rivaling the troubled journeys of an ancient mariner. They first landed in Turkey, but later were required to travel to Beirut, Haifa, Gaza, Moses Springs in the Sinai Peninsula, and finally, Ethiopia. In Djibouti, after the war was over, Tommy and his mother returned to Greece on board a ship captured from the Germans by the British. The country was then embroiled in a civil war, a supposed liberation, which in actuality

became a socialist takeover. Fortunately, in 1946, the family was able to leave this turmoil behind and reunite in America.

Tommy's father had already moved to Wilmington, where he had established the Mayflower Restaurant. Tommy recalls cleaning the restaurant and washing lots of dishes, but he also reminisces about attending Chestnut School, where his principal, Mrs. Snipes, suggested his new first name. Eventually, he adopted a shortened version of his last name, as well. After attending New Hanover High, he was drafted into the Army and served in the Korean War. Even then, the country was not immune to unpopular conflicts, and he remembers a less than warm reception upon returning. Nevertheless, Tommy utilized the benefits under the GI bill to attend school. He studied at Cornell University, among other schools, and became one of the most accomplished chefs in the country. He served as chef in some of the most prestigious hotels in New York, the Washington, D. C. area, and many other parts of the

country, receiving many awards and much recognition during his long career. Additionally, he opened many successful restaurants after moving back to the state of North Carolina. He takes credit for being the first person to bring pizza to the southeastern part of the state.

Why did Tommy decide to attend the GOP convention? He says that he had been reading about the direction of the country. He believes the Republican way of thinking will slow down or stop the movement in that direction. According to him, the Democratic Party is the party of blaming everything on everybody else. Asked why he became a Democrat, he recounted that Democrats were not the same kind of Democrats that they are now. He once thought that Roosevelt saved the country (during the Great Depression), but he now says it was the war. He presently asks, "What would make me a good American?"

Tommy further explains that democracy was born in Greece. "This is not

democracy--this is a republic--it came from the Romans. What I see that is good is this--the movement that we all have to wake-up. The people in power are corrupt. We got to start shaking them up." He tells the story of Pericles addressing the Athenians: 'Citizens of Athens, I believe you have reached the point that you can be free. Freedom is not a right. It is a gift of responsibility. Because I believe you are responsible, you deserve to be free. I declare the first democracy.' Tommy notes that in some ways, Pericles' speech is similar to the Gettysburg Address.

It is Tommy's contention that he has to give something back. "The best country-society-civilization did not happen by accident. We must build on their legacy. From what I have seen, it is the Republican Party doing that. I've been a Republican all my life. I just didn't know it."

*(Unedited)*