

Community room at the Pembroke Public Library named in honor of Judge Dexter Brooks



By Bruce Barton

PEMBROKE-The Community Room at the Pembroke Public Library was dedicated as *the Honorable Judge Dexter Brooks Memorial Room* on November 29 at 6 p.m. Some 100 friends, admirers and family members turned out to honor the late Judge Brooks who was the senior resident superior court judge for Robeson County when he died from cancer in 2002. The Pembroke Public

Library is located at 413 Blaine Street. Judge Brooks is also the older brother of Pembroke town Councilman Larry T. Brooks.

Bruce Barton, former editor of the Carolina Indian Voice Newspaper, and a lifelong friend of Judge Brooks, made the motion to honor Brooks at a recent meeting of the Robeson County Public Library where he is presently serving as a member of the board of trustees.

Robeson County Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Dexter Brooks was born May 15, 1943, and died on March 5, 2002. Brooks was North Carolina's first Indian Superior Court judge. He was appointed to that position in 1989 by then Governor Jim Martin following the tragic death of Julian Pierce who was at the time running for superior court judge against sitting judge Joe Freeman Britt. Prior to this appointment, he had worked for the Pembroke law firm of Locklear, Brooks, Jacobs and Sutton, beginning work with them immediately after his 1976 graduation from the University of North Carolina School of Law.

Brooks was a distinguished scholar who in his early studies at North Carolina State initially considered a career as a mathematics professor. His life's work also included service in the Vietnamese Conflict. Judge Brooks also worked tirelessly to improve the plight of his Lumbee people and other people of color including his involvement in the Save Old Main movement, bringing an end to double voting, and merging the Robeson County school systems.

Pembroke Mayor Milton R. Hunt, Rev. Bob Mangum, Attorney Arnold Locklear, and senior resident superior court judge for Robeson County Robert F. Floyd, Jr., resident superior court judge Gary L. Locklear, Larry T. Brooks, representing the family, and others, took turns sharing reminiscences about Judge Brooks.

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By WandaLocklear

Making A Difference

Pembroke-At six-feet tall, the first thing one noticed was Garry L. Barton's size. But the real measure of his worth was not his size, but the stature of his convictions and his work as an advocate and activist on behalf of Lumbee people.

A natural historian Garry wrote 3 books: *The Life and Times of Henry Berry Lowrie*, *Elias Rogers: A Life of Discrimination*, and *The Lost and Found*. *Henry Berry Lowrie* documents the life and times of the legendary Lumbee hero. *Elias Rogers* depicts Rogers' impact on local Indian politics, especially his work at Lumber River Electric Membership Corporation. Records about the Lost Colony, Henry Berry Lowrie and the Indians of Scuffletown are reflected in his final work, *The Lost and Found*.

Diagnosed with prostate and bone cancer several years ago, Garry refused to slow down, he even penned his final book during this time. Then in 2005, Garry's health deteriorated to the extent it was necessary to move near his sister, Connie Brayboy, who became his care-giver.

When Garry was deemed disabled, he applied to the Tribe's Housing Program

for emergency assistance. The Emergency Housing Repair Program met Garry's needs by providing roof repairs, plumbing and electrical repairs, as well as; making his home more accessible by meeting his special needs.

Bosco Locklear, Housing Rehabilitation Manager, stated, "we understood the severity of his health condition and housing needs, we wanted to do our very best. Garry's case illustrates the true intent of the Lumbee Housing Program, and that is to help tribal members who truly need helping troublesome times."

Garry passed away on December 30, 2005, while living only 7 months in his refurbished home he built a cache of great memories. His house was the scene of many gatherings with family and friends, especially on Monday nights when the Barton's all came together to play their music and sing songs or just to enjoy the moment. Family and friends will sorely miss Garry Lewis Barton.

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