

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY COLLEGE UNITED FACULTY

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THE ADVOCATE

FEBRUARY 1991

SENATOR CARL PARKER'S AWARD CEREMONY

By Alan Hall

I was thrilled to have Senator Carl Parker come to NHCC in November as the union's guest to receive an award for his contributions to higher education in Texas. As we were making arrangements with the administration for the ceremony, Dr. Airola asked the union to see if we could arrange for Senator Parker to come in early for a luncheon so that he, Dr. Kenne Turner, and Dr. Vivian Blevins of Baytown College might have an audience with the senator, who is chair of the Senate Education Committee, on a number of issues. Senator Parker accepted the invitation, and the luncheon, also attended by union officials, went quite well. In fact, Dr. Airola later told me that he was pleased and felt that he had been able to cover all the points he had intended.

The highlight of the day was the ceremony itself. I asked our guest speakers to comment on challenges that they see for higher education and/or NHCC in the future. Dr. Airola led off, noting that "challenges



Senator Parker accepts plaque from Alan Hall and PSRP President Greg Mitchell

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are opportunity for growth." He cited three primary challenges:

- 1) providing access to education for all
- 2) ensuring quality
- 3) finding the resources to do what needs to be done.

Board Member Diana Taylor emphasized the need to maximize our resources--human, physical, and financial. She is concerned that those resources be committed in ways that most benefit students.

Dr. Don Smith, President of the union's higher education affiliate, Texas United Faculty, supported Airola and Taylor and added the following:

- 1) we have to remember the difference between education and training; we are here to educate--not just to train
- 2) we have to learn to deal better with quality as well as quantity--it is to our country's advantage to have a large, educated populace
- 3) we must attract more minorities
- 4) we must balance accountability with creativity and flexibility

John Cole, President of the Texas Federation of Teachers, the union's state affiliate, introduced Senator Parker. Cole noted that Parker has consistently stood up for education, even when the governor and the rest of the Senate were not on his side.

The most stirring words came from Senator Parker himself. I thought it appropriate to quote a bit of his text:

I appreciate the recognition, the honor, the pat on the back saying you've done a good job...I truly appreciate any recognition to any contribution to higher education in this country...I truly believe that education is the most important function of state government...the key ingredient to what holds this nation together. [It is the key] to address social problems, economic development, the...military defense of the nation...The fabric of democracy and governing of ourselves depends on education...We need to do better [to inspire] in our citizens that passion for educated citizenship...That goal must be achieved if we are to survive as a nation, if we're to grow and prosper as a forward thinking, progressive state, and if we are all to continue to prosper in this land of opportunity...I couldn't be honored more with any other gift than a plaque saying that I have done something to help along the cause of education.

It was a magnificent speech which stirred the minds and hearts of the audience, especially those of union members. Our commitment to education is unflagging, and we are grateful to Senator Parker for helping us to celebrate the cause.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN--ELECTION RESULTS

With approximately 5,000 votes cast, the Board of Trustees election on January 19, 1991 generated the second highest voter turnout in the history of the college. About 6,000 people participated in the 1985 race. Regrettably, Spring and Tomball ISDs had low-interest elections this time, and New Caney ISD had no election. Only Aldine and Humble had heated

contests, which tend to boost turnout, and are probably responsible for the second highest record. Unfortunately, even the record turnout represents only 3-5 % of the eligible voters in the District.

None of the AFT-endorsed candidates were elected in this last round. Xavier Guerra was defeated by incumbent Don Stewart, and the union regrets seeing incumbent Blaine Mann unseated. Blaine was a friend of the employees and citizens of the District. We are proudest of Margaret Cox's showing. Out of a field of four, she garnered 26.6% of the vote with 47.2% going to Eugene Caldcleugh, 11.4% to Roy Cook, and 14.8% to Victor Murphy. No candidate took a majority, but NHCC, unlike the ISDs, curiously does not conduct a runoff. Margaret certainly has a lot to offer the Board, and the AFT anticipates continued interest from her.

The AFT has a track record of working well with Board members, whether we have supported them for election or not. We congratulate the newly elected members and anticipate developing a productive relationship.

HOW ABOUT JOINING AFT?

All faculty and staff can enjoy the benefits of association with other employees committed to making NHCC an excellent place to work and teach--and the benefits of strong legal and professional liability protection should you ever need them. Monthly dues rates are \$18.85 for fulltime faculty, \$11.70 for fulltime staff and adjunct faculty, and \$8.60 for part-time staff. Please discuss membership with any of the following members of the union executive committee:

Alan Hall	District President	443-5544
Greg Mitchell	District PSRP President	359-1698
Cher Brock	South Campus V-P	443-5717
Mel McFadden	South Campus PSRP V-P	443-5558
Steve Davis	Kingwood Campus V-P	359-1645
Marge Brown	Kingwood Campus V-P	359-1606
Bob Locander	Secretary	443-5592
Allen Vogt	Treasurer	443-5583