

Wilmington Lawyer Eyes Governorship

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Marcus Williams is used to beating the odds.

He wasn't expected to win student body president at Lumberton Senior High School, UNC-Chapel Hill or his law school, The University of Minnesota. But he did.

Now Williams is hoping his winning streak will continue as he makes his bid to for governor of North Carolina.

Williams, 38, will make his official announcement in early October.

"I will commence a formal campaign in January, once I actually file," Williams said in a phone interview Tuesday. "At that point-in-time, I will resign from my job."

Williams is currently director of Legal Services of the Lower Cape Fear, a non-

profit, federally funded program that gives assistance to the poor. He has held that position four years.

"I'm running primarily to win and because I believe there is a sense of urgency in our communities and the near state of anarchy in our communities, the devaluing of life and high unemployment," he said. "I feel we



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need to inspire people by example and show them the individual can make a difference.

I expect to have some symbolism embodied in our victory as an underdog," Williams said. "First, our campaign will be one of sub -
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Williams Has Eyes On N.C. Governor's Race In 1992

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stance, symbolism and respect. As pertaining to substance, I must necessarily articulate those issues relevant to the day to day life of the working people of North Carolina. Obviously I will be comprehensive in my scope of the issues and compelling in my presentation.

"With respect to symbolism, I want to stimulate and restore faith in the individual effort," he said.

Williams said he thinks race will not be a factor in his bid for election, even though it was a big factor in the state's last senatorial race.

"I think they have milked that tactic to its maximum extent at this point," he said.

"I will address such issues as affirmative action, but that is not really the pertinent concern. The pertinent concern is the transferring of our jobs overseas and out of this country. I will not let them define the arena of issues."

Williams said he is looking forward to debating all of the other potential candidates. He also thinks that being an underdog in this campaign will be an advantage.

"Number one, they (other candidates) won't take me seriously. Two, I will know more about their public records than they will know about mine," he said. "And name recognition will come upon the commencement of the debates."

Former SBP to run for governor in 1992

By Laura Laxton
Staff Writer

Former UNC Student Body President Marcus Williams will join the Democratic primary race for N.C. governor, emphasizing that his clean political slate and lack of special interest backing will give him the edge over his competition.

Williams, 38, must beat former Governor Jim Hunt and state Attorney General Lacy Thornburg for the Democratic nomination. Other candidates may still announce their bids for the office.

"Not being as well-known as Hunt and Thornburg may be a help instead of a problem," Williams said. "Even if I don't have a marquee name, I have a winner's heart."

Lack of bureaucratic and special interest support will allow him to be more objective and impartial, he said.

"My supporters will be grassroots advocates, progressives and those who are concerned about the future of North Carolina and the condition of its children," he said. "What's great for North Carolina is what's great for the poorest child in North Carolina."

Williams has served since 1987 as the executive director of Legal Services of Lower Cape Fear, a federally funded legal agency for low-income residents in seven counties.

Before he took that position, Williams served in the same capacity with a similar agency based in Ahsokie that served 11 counties. Although he has not held a state political office, Williams said he would implement specific policy changes if elected.

In the first 90 days of office, Williams would like to make cost assessments of each state government agency and call for the voluntary resignation of

the heads of those agencies that are not performing their jobs. Bringing in new talent is another way to enact change by example, he said.

The new talent would help put the state government more in touch with the working people, Williams said.

His dissatisfaction with the current candidates and his general desire for fresh leadership prompted his decision to run, he said, adding that his UNC connections should serve him well.

In addition to serving as UNC student body president, Williams was active in dorm government, serving as treasurer for the Moorehead Residence Council and working as a resident assistant. Williams also served on the N.C. Inmate Grievance Committee and helped implement the current student governing council during the '74-'75

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school year.

Donald Boulton, vice chancellor and dean of student affairs, knows Williams from Williams' undergraduate years and thinks the candidate's views would be helpful anywhere in state legislature.

"I have very pleasant memories of him," Boulton said. "And I am pleased to see him run."

Williams, who graduated in 1975 with a degree in political science, also wrestled for 2 1/2 years, lettering on both the junior varsity and varsity teams while at UNC. He was also active in the Order of the Old Well, the Order of the Grail-Valkyries and the Order of the Golden Fleece.

One of his most rewarding experiences was his involvement with the Big Brother Program, which allowed him to work with younger, lower-income children and serve as a positive role model for them, Williams said.

Boulton said, "One of his strongest points is his keen social sense — he knows and understands where people are and what they need."

Being black won't work for or against him in the election, Williams said.

"The novelty of minorities running for office has worn off," he said, pointing to Harvey Gant's loss to Jesse Helms in the U.S. Senate race last year.

Nowhere are these positive results more needed than in the area of education in North Carolina, Williams said. Taking into account the state's severe budget problems, Williams said he would not raise taxes but would instead eliminate agencies that duplicate each other and other government services with no specific statutory purpose.

Other ways to improve the education system include lowering the student-teacher ratio, increasing constructive parental involvement, providing reasonable raises for teachers and testing extended school hours and experimental school programs, he said.

Another plank in Williams' platform is penal reform. Although he does not support capital punishment, he does believe inmates should receive consistent punishment and serve out their full sentences.

In the long run, however, more emphasis should be placed on rehabilitation and education in prisons, he said. "Prisoners need to learn to be better citizens, not better criminals."

Williams admits his campaign cof-

fers aren't as full as those of his competitors, but he said he believed he could make up for it with his connections and a well-planned campaign.

"My main goal is to make people believe in themselves again and restore their faith in the government," he said.

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