

## S.C. ranks last nationally in SAT scores

BY JUDSON DRENNAN  
THE CAROLINA REPORTER

South Carolina is still last nationally in SAT scores with little hope of change in the near future, according to Mary Anne Byrd, a spokeswoman for the S.C. Department of Education.

Byrd said although the state is implementing aggressive programs to try to increase the performance of its high school seniors, it will be years before South Carolina can hope to move from the bottom of the list.

"There's no way of knowing when scores will improve," Byrd said. "But we know that it's going to be a long time before we see any kind of results."

South Carolina's average SAT score in 1999 was 954, a three-point increase over the previous year, while the national average dropped one point to 1016.

South Carolina's increase brought the state's average score back up to its 1996 level after the scores decreased for two consecutive years. A comprehensive report on the state's 1999 SAT scores is available on the S.C. Department of Education's Web page.

While these numbers put South Carolina closer to the national average, the state might not be catching up quickly enough. In the past four years, South Carolina's average SAT score increased eight points, while the national average increased 13 points.

South Carolina is also falling behind its neighbors, North Carolina and Georgia.

In 1989, South Carolina's scores were two points ahead of North Carolina's and nine points below Georgia's. Now, South Carolina's scores lag 32 points behind North Carolina's and 15 points behind Georgia's.

Byrd said much of Georgia and North Carolina's improvements were because of programs initiated in those states targeting their low SAT scores. South Carolina had similar programs in the 1980s, but those efforts were discontinued.

She said S.C. Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum has looked at those programs and developed new ones for better preparing S.C. high school seniors for the SAT. These include an implementing an SAT question of the day, starting programs to train teachers and adding SAT coaches in every high school.

Byrd said these programs will not immediately affect South Carolina's SAT scores, but they should help increase the scores in several years.

Byrd said the best way a student can increase his SAT score is to take classes that properly prepare him for the SAT. The College Board, which administers the SAT, recommends that students take at least 20 credits in six selected areas: English, mathematics, natural sciences, foreign languages, history, and arts and music. The average SAT score for the 41 percent of S.C. students who met that recommendation was 1048.

"That is why we tell students to take these advanced courses," Byrd said. "Pre-

## 36 percent fail high school exit exams

BY CARA PELLATT  
THE CAROLINA REPORTER

The State Board of Education announced Wednesday that the percentage of 10th-graders passing the South Carolina High School Exit Examination decreased in 1999.

Of the 39,184 10th-graders who took the exam for the first time, 24,903, or 63.6 percent, passed.

In 1998, 64.9 percent of 10th-graders passed the exam.

Slight progress could be seen on sections of the exams.

The percentage of 10th-graders meeting the state standards on the reading and writing sections of the exam rose in 1999.

Tenth-graders passing the reading section increased 0.4 percent to 81.9 percent in 1999. African-American students showed the most progress, with 1.1 percent more students passing.

The percentage of Hispanic students passing decreased by 4.9 percent.

The percentage of 10th-graders passing the math section rose 1 percentage

point this year.

Black students had the highest increase of students passing the section, with 1.3 percent more meeting the standards.

The percentage of Asian and Pacific Islander students meeting the standards decreased by 3.8 percent, and the percentage of Hispanic students passing decreased by 3.5 percent.

Despite the increase in students passing the reading and math sections, slightly fewer students met the standards for the writing section of the exam.

The number decreased by 1 percent.

Rob Harper, public information associate for the Board of Education, said the exit exams scores have been stagnant over the past five or six years, but the agency is working on improving the number of students meeting state standards.

"We're putting in new curriculum requirements and strengthening the standards," Harper said.

The exit exams were put in place in the state in 1986.

In 1990, passing the exam became a requirement for high school students receiving a South Carolina High School Diploma.

Harper said the exit exam is a test to make sure students have the minimal skills they need to graduate.

"By the time students get to the 10th grade, most of them have the minimal skills," Harper said.

Harper said about 95 percent of students pass the exam by their 12th-grade year.

The exam is first given to students in the spring of their 10th-grade year. Students not passing all the sections of the exam are given several opportunities to pass those sections.

The exam allows schools to identify weaknesses and to address them before graduation.

If students don't pass the exam by the end of 12th grade, but meet the other requirements for graduation, they're given a certificate saying they took the classes.

EXAMS SEE PAGE 4

## Court blocks Hilton Head deer killing

BY GINA DEMILLO  
THE CAROLINA REPORTER

Deer on Hilton Head Island were given a temporary reprieve Friday by the South Carolina Court of Appeals.

As part of the state's first suburban deer-control project, about 200 deer would have been killed in the Gull Point and Baynard Cove areas of Sea Pines Plantation starting Wednesday, while others would have been injected with fertility-control drugs. The control project evolved from a two-year study that assessed the population of deer on the 5,200-acre residential area and determined the residents' attitudes toward the deer.

Because deer hunting isn't allowed on Hilton Head and no natural predators exist, the population has mushroomed and the deer have encroached on gardens, roadways and golf courses. In addition to damaging the landscapes, the plantation's 500 deer contribute to deer-vehicle collisions at a rate of one accident every nine days at Sea Pines, according to the Georgia study. Besides the danger to humans, the collisions are an expensive method to control the population and an inhumane way for the deer to die, according to Robert Warren, professor of wildlife management at the University of Georgia and director of the Sea Pines study. That rate is abnormally high, according to the S.C. Department of Natural Resources. Charles Ruth, Deer Project supervisor for the department, said that if the Sea Pines ratio were projected across the state, it would mean 66,500 deer-vehicle incidents per year, which is more than 10 times the current rate.

"What they have experienced and continue to experience at Sea Pines is a deer-vehicle collision rate that is greater than South Carolina in general," Ruth said. Opponents of the killing said they don't see the deer at Sea Pines as a problem.

"There's no overpopulation here to begin with," said Gordon Stamler, founder and president of the Sea Pines Association for Protection of Wildlife. More than a year ago, Stamler began battling the Department of Natural Resources, which issued a kill permit as part of the population-control project. Though Circuit Court Judge James Williams ruled in favor of the department, the wildlife protection group requested the kill permit be blocked until after the appeals process.

"If they're allowed to go out and kill deer, our appeal becomes moot," Stamler said. Opponents of the killing said encounters with deer can be controlled by non-lethal means, such as reducing speed limits, erecting better signs for motorists and educating the public. If the Court of Appeals upholds the lower court ruling, the killing would be performed by a wildlife biologist sharpshooting from a platform mounted above a bait trap, using a silenced .22-caliber rifle, Warren said.

"A rifle shot to the head is an immediate death and more humane than death from a vehicle," he said. After the sharpshooting is complete, the fertility-control process would begin, with the drugs administered by a specialized dart. A follow-up study is planned to determine whether the fertility controls are effective in keeping the population at a reduced number, compared to the area in which additional controls were not used.

## Strom Thurmond monument will make debut in December

### A long look at Strom Thurmond

The Strom Thurmond monument honors the longest-serving senator's lifetime of achievements.

- 1902: born in Edgefield County
- 1923: B.A. Degree from Clemson
- 1929: named County Superintendent
- 1930: admitted to the South Carolina Bar
- 1932: elected to South Carolina Senate
- 1938: elected a circuit judge
- 1942: Landed in Normandy on D-Day with 82nd Airborne Division
- 1947: Governor of South Carolina
- 1948: Candidate for President as a Dixiecrat
- 1954: U.S. Senator
- 1964: Switched from Democratic to Republican Party
- 1983: appointed to President's Commission on Organized Crime
- 1993: Awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom

BY RYAN MOSIER  
THE CAROLINA REPORTER

His name appears across South Carolina on everything from schools to lakes, and he's about to be honored again with a tribute on the Statehouse grounds in Columbia.

The Strom Thurmond Monument, two years and \$850,000 in the making, will be unveiled and dedicated Dec. 4, the day before the senator's 97th birthday.

"It befits the most illustrious public servant this century in South Carolina," said Sen. John Courson, R-Richland, chairman of the monument commission.

Rep. Jake Knotts, R-West Columbia, also a commission member agreed. "It will recognize the great statesman that he is," he said. "It will be a historic day not only for the Thurmond family, but for the citizens of South Carolina." Thurmond joins James Byrnes, Wade Hampton and Ben Tillman as former governors and statesmen honored with statues on the Statehouse grounds.

Designed by sculptor William Behrends of Tryon, N.C., the monument will be located between the Hampton and Gressette buildings on the south side of the Statehouse.

It depicts a middle-age Thurmond standing tall in mid-stride. The 9-foot statue, cast in bronze atop an 8-foot granite base, weighs about 32 tons. According to Courson, the monument shows the senior senator as an "athletic go-getter," a pose many in the state associate with Thurmond's lifetime of achievements.

Born in 1902, J. Strom Thurmond was graduated from Clemson University in 1923.

Admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 1930, he served as both a city and county attorney until elected to the South Carolina Senate in 1932. In 1938, Thurmond was elected a circuit judge, and with the outbreak of World War II, he served in the Army's famed 82nd Airborne Division, participating in

the invasion of Normandy.

In 1946, he was elected governor of South Carolina. He ran as a third-party "Dixiecrat" candidate for president in 1948, winning four states and 39 electoral votes.

In 1954, he was the only person ever elected to the U.S. Senate by a write-in vote.

In 1964, Thurmond switched from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, which he's been involved in ever since.

The monument commission was established in 1997 to plan the site and select a design for the monument honoring the longest-serving U.S. senator in history. It's composed of three senators, three representatives and three members appointed by the governor.

The project began in December 1997 with a fund-raising reception at the Governor's Mansion celebrating Thurmond's birthday.

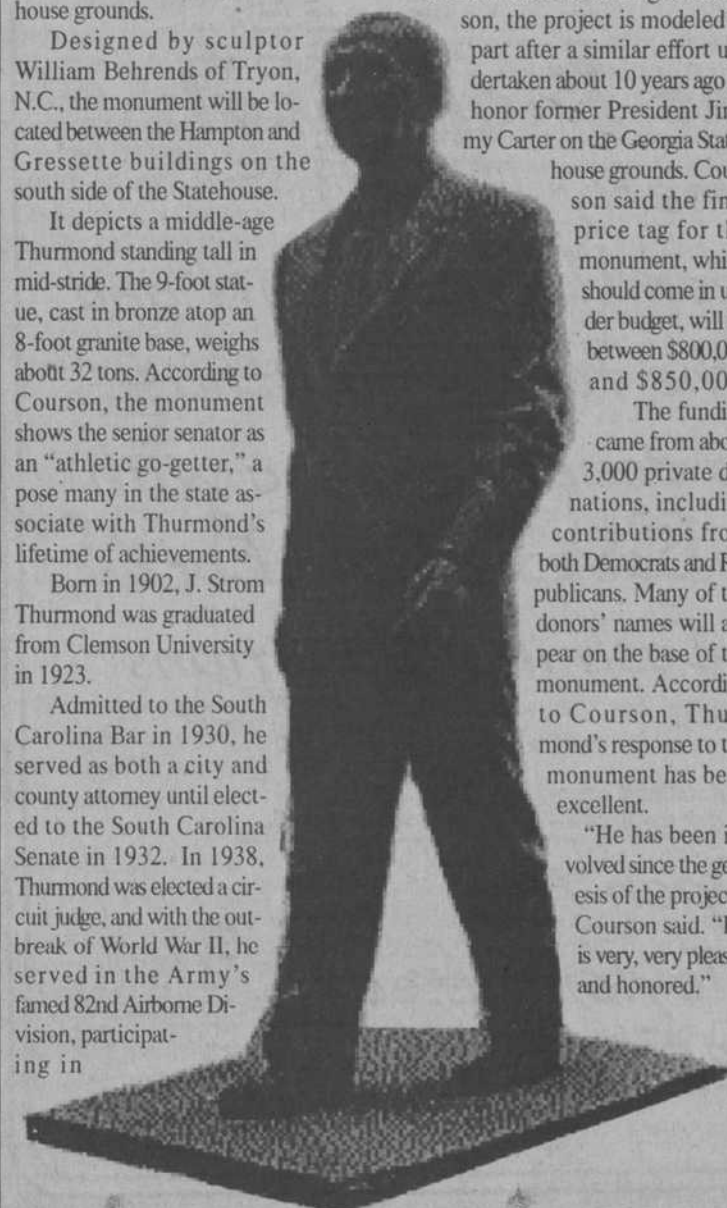
"It's only fitting that the dedication ceremony should also be a birthday celebration at the end of the century,"

Courson said. According to Courson, the project is modeled in part after a similar effort undertaken about 10 years ago to honor former President Jimmy Carter on the Georgia Statehouse grounds.

Courson said the final price tag for the monument, which should come in under budget, will be between \$800,000 and \$850,000.

The funding came from about 3,000 private donations, including contributions from both Democrats and Republicans. Many of the donors' names will appear on the base of the monument. According to Courson, Thurmond's response to the monument has been excellent.

"He has been involved since the genesis of the project," Courson said. "He is very, very pleased and honored."

**City Council**

The Columbia City Council meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month at City Hall Council Chambers, third floor, 1737 Main Street.

**County Council**

The Richland County Council meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month at the County Administration Building, 2020 Hampton Street.

**Gerontology seminar**

As part of National Assisted Living Week and National Rehabilitation Week, Kathwood Place Assisted Living and Health-South will present a seminar, "As Our Parents Age...What Are Our Options?," from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Sept. 16 at Kathwood Place, 4520 Trenholm Rd. To register or for information, call 787-1234.

**Columbia Chamber**

The Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual meeting Sept. 24 at Seawall's in Columbia. For information, call 733-1116.

**Small-business class**

Midlands Technical College will offer "Make Your Small Business Profitable," a workshop for small-business people. The workshop will be Monday at the Harbison campus. For information, call 732-9432.

**Adopt-A-Street**

Keep America Beautiful of the Midlands is spearheading a street cleaning on Elmwood Avenue and Huger Street at 9 a.m. Saturday as part of the city's new Adopt-A-Street program. Materials are provided; wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Meet at the McDonald's at 1024 Elmwood Ave. For information, call 733-1139.

**Leslie Nielsen to perform at Koger**

Actor Leslie Nielsen will perform "Clarence Darrow: A One-Man Play" on Wednesday at the Koger Center. The performance will begin at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$27 and \$30 and are available at the Carolina Coliseum box office, all Capital Tickets outlets or by calling 251-2222.

**Aeroplane Classic**

The Third Annual Palmetto Aeroplane Classic will be held Saturday at the Ker-shaw County Airport. The event will feature more than 200 antique, classic and contemporary aircraft. In addition, open cockpit rides, concessions, entertainment, aviation flea market and exhibits, paper airplane contests, aviation seminars and more will be offered. For information, call (803) 432-3095.

### The Carolina Reporter

**Publisher**  
Judy VanSlyke Turk

**Reporters**  
Shana Bowman  
David Cloninger  
Rebecca Cronican  
Gina DeMillo  
Judson Drennan  
Ashley Mathias  
Ryan Mosier  
Cara Pellatt  
Jeff Romig  
Jeff Stensland

**Managing Editor:**  
Kristin Freestate

**Editors**  
Allison Aiken  
Jessica Barfield  
Ann Kennedy  
Israel Kloss  
Todd Money  
Kate Maxwell  
Noelle Orr  
Jacquelyn Poston  
Adrienne Thompson

**Faculty Advisers**  
Scott Farrand  
Keith Kenney  
Pat McNeely  
Henry Price  
Jennifer Wood

The Carolina Reporter senior semester students provide The Gamecock with weekly Metro & State coverage. For Metro & State news tips, please call (803) 777-3307 or (803) 777-3248. To fax tips, please call (803) 777-4103. Letters to the editor regarding Metro & State coverage should be directed to The Gamecock, RH 333, or gcked@sc.edu.

The Carolina Reporter Online can be found on the World Wide Web at:  
[www.jour.sc.edu/reporter/home.html](http://www.jour.sc.edu/reporter/home.html)