

CAROLINA NEWS

**McCain**

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got to start understanding this [the effects of the material] better."

McCain also said improving schools would help. "We've got to upgrade education overall," he said. McCain proposed giving teachers more disciplinary power and getting better teachers.

"The role models in my life were teachers," he said, noting that the average teacher makes \$39,000, while the average lawyer makes \$79,000. "We have to provide reward systems to them."

McCain has proposed a tax cut for teachers who rank "excellent" based on a series of criteria, including student performance and peer evaluations.

Finally, McCain proposed testing school vouchers, which would allow students to attend any school of their choice. "I think we ought to test vouchers in every school in America," he said. Then, the districts should evaluate the program's success. "If it works, do it," he added.

McCain said funds for the vouchers wouldn't come out of

education funds, but from eliminating subsidies for some crops and farm products, such as ethanol.

On higher education, McCain said Educational Savings Accounts and tax cuts would help.

McCain was also asked about the Supreme Court case *Buckle v. Valeo*, which said giving money to political causes is a form of free speech. One of McCain's key issues is banning the unlimited contributions to political parties known as "soft money." The funds are used for party-building activities, though they have also been used to help candidates.

"How can you be represented if it's all about money?" he asked.

Rick Coe, a graduate student at Emory who served in the military for six years, said he came to the event to support McCain.

"I came because, having left the service, I'm looking for a new purpose," he said, adding he believes McCain will "restore honesty and integrity to the White House."

Kurt Mueller, a freshman at Clemson, said he has been interested in McCain since the senator spoke at his school. "Since then, I've found him to be a straight shooter," he said.

"He knows his goals and I think he can execute them," he said. "I feel McCain can really bring back a vitality to policy and the party."

**HERITAGE**

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der for truth [about Southern heritage] to prevail," Eubanks said.

Eubanks quoted from Christian scripture the importance of truth, and insisted that the flag, in truth, "is not a racist symbol." Instead, Eubanks said, the Confederate battle flag is a symbol of "the South's defense against the illegal aggression of the federal government."

And, as Eubanks closed the invocation with a prayer for South Carolinians to "rise above the wave of political correctness," another woman who opposed the confederate flag flying on the Statehouse dome spoke up.

Laurie Weston walked proudly among the Confederate flag-waving crowd, wearing a half-smile on her face and a bright yellow T-shirt with "NAACP: TAKE THE FLAG DOWN" printed on it in bold lettering.

When asked if the shirt she wore was how she felt, she replied confidently, "Absolutely."

"I see the [Confederate flag supporters] as the devil against godly people," Weston said. "Black people are godly people, these people here," she said, gesturing toward the crowd, "are sick."

Weston said she believes the flag no longer represents the Confederacy, but has been "perverted" by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

"That flag wasn't put up [on the Statehouse] by the Confederates," she said. "It was put up there by a bunch of rednecks ... who think they own this state."

Sen. Arthur Ravenel (R-Charleston) introduced the president of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, June Wells, as the first guest speaker. She said the UDC is an organization that strives to preserve history and honor for the South and the Confederacy.

Wells said the UDC has, along with sister organizations north of the Mason-Dixon line, "worked toward forgiveness and peace."

Before introducing the state representatives of South Carolina, Rick Griffin gave a short speech himself.

Griffin said the boycott of South Carolina industries by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peo-

ple merely represents "scare tactics."

"We need to tell the NAACP to get packing back to Baltimore, because their tactics don't work in South Carolina," he said over the roar of the cheering crowd.

He called on the crowd of supporters, some of whom wearing stickers that said "I vote, outside aggressors don't," to urge their representatives to keep the flag flying above the Statehouse.

"Tell them [state representatives] you want to challenge the NAACP to a public referendum and let South Carolinians decide [the fate of the flag]."

Following the speeches by state lawmakers and distinguished guests, the 11th North Carolina regiment played songs from the 1860s and the crowd sang along when the band played "Dixie." After "Dixie," the Confederate re-enactors fired a volley salute in honor of the flag and what they say are the slain soldiers it represents.

A barbeque dinner at the State Fairgrounds followed the rally at the Statehouse. At the dinner, there were more speeches and music in support of the Confederate flag.

Worship services were held Sunday at the Fairgrounds, marking the end of the Southern Heritage Celebration 2000.

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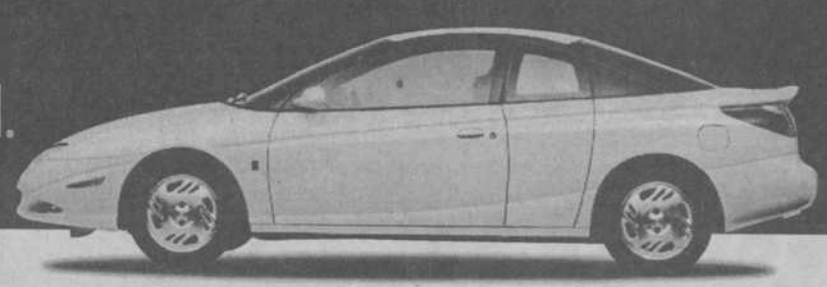
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