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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, S.C.

STILL DECIDING: Board members press Palms for answers on whether he'll run for U.S. Senate, leave USC

Palms to pay for part of trip

■ He met in D.C. with Democrats on USC-related trip

BY BRANDON LARRABEE
THE GAMECOCK

USC President John Palms, who's considering running for Strom Thurmond's seat in the U.S. Senate, got his first taste of politics Wednesday when word of his inclination to run got out before he notified trustees.

He got his second on Friday, when a university spokesman said Palms would pay 40 percent of a \$2,000 university-related plane trip to Washington during which he met with national Democratic leaders about the possible bid.

Palms also took the trip to "see several members of Congress on funding issues," university spokesman Russ McKinney said.

McKinney told *The State* on Friday that Palms would reimburse the university for \$800 of the trip's cost. The plane, a seven-passenger, twin-engine King Air, is operated by USC Development Corp., McKinney said.

In Washington, Palms met with Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota and staffers of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Wednesday, as well as visiting Sen. Fritz Hollings, D-S.C., Thurmond, R-S.C., and U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., who is also a potential candidate for Thurmond's seat.

State Rep. Rita Allison, R-Spartanburg, has sent the university a Freedom of Information Act request to get the details of Palms' trip.

"We need to have all the facts before we jump to conclusions," Allison said. "The facts may actually clear Palms of wrongdoing."

Some trustees, including board chairman Mack Whittle, had raised questions about the trip.

Whittle said it would have been "a mistake" if the trip were only for political purposes.

Meanwhile, state Democratic Party Chairman Dick Harpootlian said he hadn't yet met with Palms to discuss the possible bid.

"I'm in no way offended. I'm mildly pleased," Harpootlian said. "I think John Palms is sort of a refreshing potential candidate."

Democrats have already said Thurmond's open seat would be a priority because the U.S. Senate is split. There are 50 Republicans and 50 Democrats.

Other possible Democratic candidates include former U.S. ambassador to Great Britain Phil Lader, state Sen. Tom Moore of Aiken, Public Safety Department Director Boykin Rose and Greenville businessman Hayne Hipp.

Whoever wins the Democratic nomination will likely face U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham, who has the blessings of the GOP's establishment and is so far running unopposed.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Write the university desk at gamecockdesk@hotmail.com

Trustees question Palms' plans



Special to The Gamecock

USC President John Palms is taking criticism from trustees for his potential U.S. Senate run. Many think Palms should decide immediately whether he'll run.

BY BRANDON LARRABEE
THE GAMECOCK

USC President John Palms' possible bid for a U.S. Senate seat has surprised and incensed some university trustees.

Trustees continued late last week to question Palms' now very public consideration of the issue. Most of them also said Palms should resign the moment he decides whether he will run for Senate.

"The day he is going to run is the day he ought to step down," said trustee Edward Floyd, a contributor to the U.S. Senate campaign of U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.

"The timing is absolutely awful," Floyd said. "We've got to deal with budget cuts. We have a lot of unfilled posts. We need to be involved with the state to see if we can get more funding. All of that affects the university, and we are uncertain about our leader."

Palms has said he would decide to run by May 1, but trustees want his decision at an April 12 meeting where the issue will be discussed. That meeting had been scheduled for other business.

Chairman of the board Mack Whittle, also a Graham contributor, was also critical of Palms' move.

"We don't need to mix politics with running and directing the university," Whittle said. "And I don't want John Palms to do that, either."

Trustee Darla Moore, who has been mentioned as a candidate for the U.S. Senate, said the board was surprised by the announcement. Palms notified the board Wednesday in a faxed letter saying he was "inclined to run" for Thurmond's seat.

"This came out of the blue to everyone on the board," Moore said. "There's no one who wasn't shocked by it."

"It's a critical, critical race, but people have to make personal decisions," Moore said.

While Moore said Palms' announcement "will have some effect" on the university, she added, "Hopefully, we can turn it into an opportunity for the university."

Higher Education Commission Chairman Dalton Floyd also said the announcement came at a bad time.

"The timing of this has not been good at all," Floyd said. "We've had some tough times in this budget cut."

PALMS SEE PAGE 3

The road to D.C.

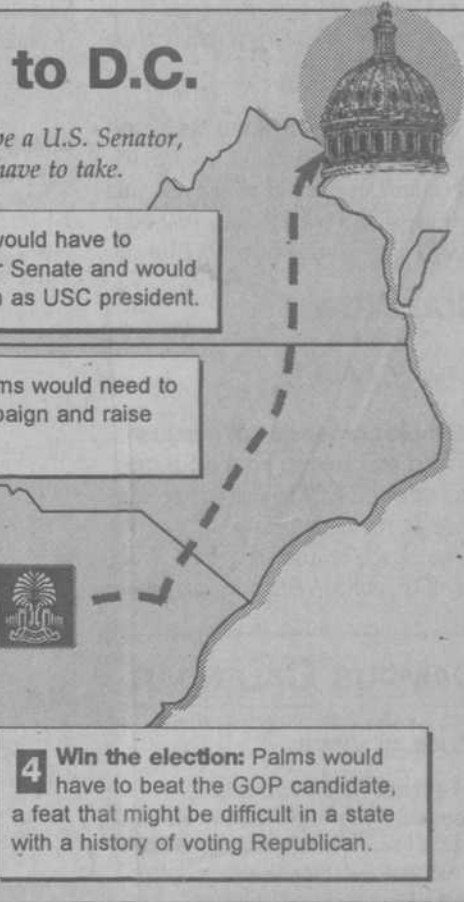
If John Palms wants to be a U.S. Senator, these are the steps he'll have to take.

1 Announce: Palms would have to announce his run for Senate and would likely be forced to resign as USC president.

2 Get organized: Palms would need to build a political campaign and raise enough money to it.

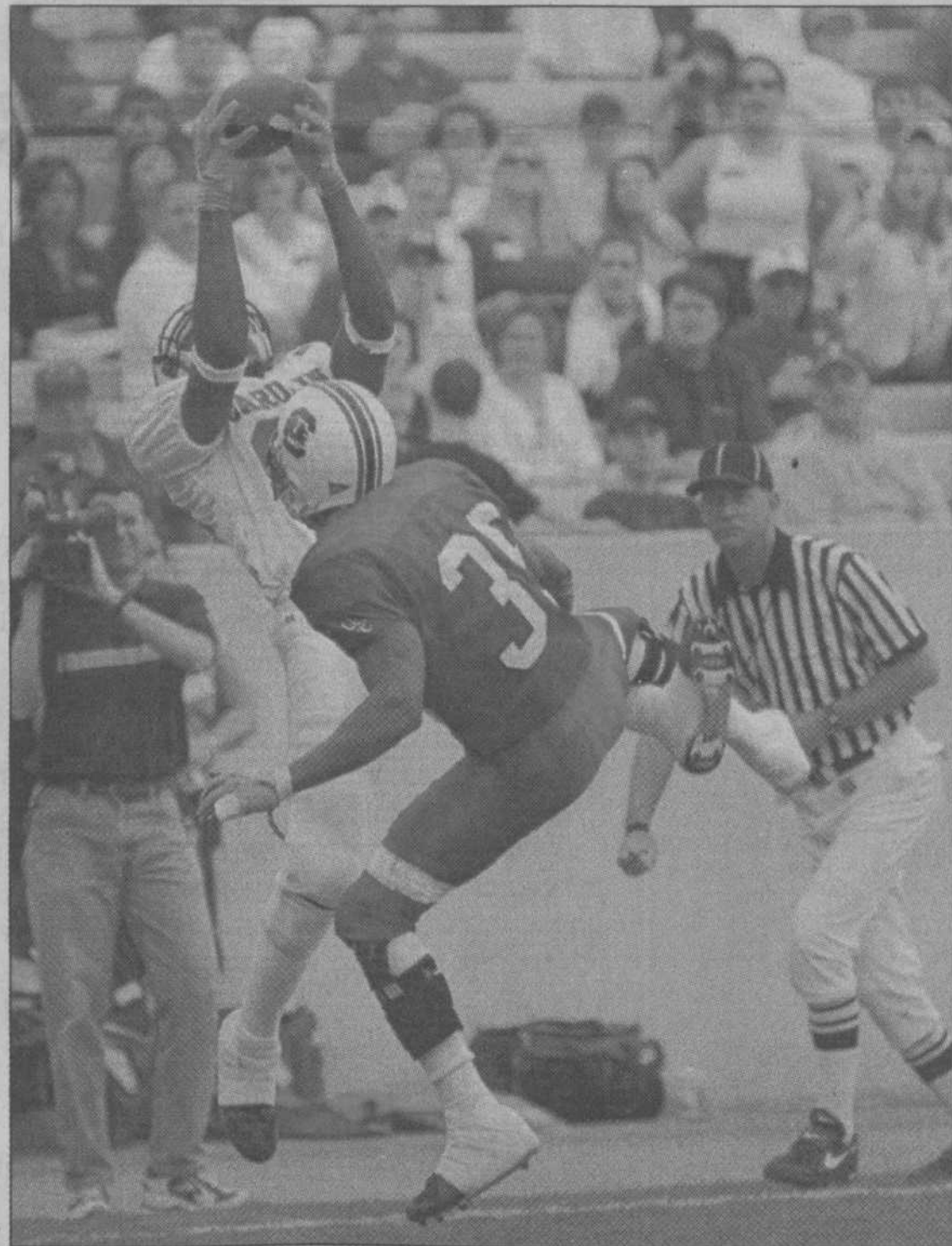
3 Win the nomination: Before he would be able to square off with likely GOP nominee U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham, Palms would have to beat any other Democrats seeking their party's nod.

4 Win the election: Palms would have to beat the GOP candidate, a feat that might be difficult in a state with a history of voting Republican.



Brad Walters/The Gamecock

SPRING GAME: Players show potential at scrimmage



Sean Rayford/The Gamecock

Brian Scott reaches for a touchdown pass in front of cornerback Andre Goodman (foreground) at the spring game on Saturday. The public scrimmage gave fans their first chance to see the Gamecocks in action. SEE STORY, PAGE 8.

Condon rethinks 'open season' call

■ Decision affects those who defend themselves against home invaders

BY CHARLES PRASHAW
THE GAMECOCK

State Attorney General Charlie Condon, who earlier in the year called for an "open season" on home invaders after a string of home robberies across the state, said he will consult local police before dropping charges against people who defend themselves against home invaders.

"I am not going to be dismissing cases without talking to law enforcement," Condon said Friday after receiving criticism

for dismissing charges against a Walterboro woman who was accused of fatally stabbing a man.

According to police, Lisa Gant, 36, fatally stabbed 39-year-old William Brock Jr. after Brock smashed through her front door. Gant was released Feb. 26 under Condon's policy that people defending their homes should not be prosecuted if they kill or injure an intruder.

Walterboro Police Chief Mike Devin disagreed with Condon's decision not to prosecute Gant.

"I didn't consider this a home invasion. To me, this is a clear-cut domestic violence case. I never agreed on this. I was not given

CONDON SEE PAGE 3

New information technology institute might open by fall

BY JARVIS HOLLIDAY
THE GAMECOCK

A technology institute created by a multimillion-dollar state grant could be in full operation by this fall at USC, according to the institute's director.

The newly formed S.C. Information Technology Institute, which will be housed in the College of Engineering and Information Technology, is being funded by a \$4 million grant from the S.C. Commission on Higher Education and will involve USC, Clemson, the Medical University of South Carolina, the College of Charleston and the state's technical colleges, led by Midlands Tech.

The grant, which was approved Feb. 1, will be divided among the institutions:

\$1 million will go to the technical colleges, \$250,000 will go to the College of Charleston and the remaining \$2.75 million will be divided among the three research universities. Some of the money will be used to make improvements to infrastructures, which director Duncan Buell hopes will allow them to create video links among the schools.

"By creating seamless video links among all the institutions, we will be able to best utilize our resources and reach a maximum number of students and workers," said Buell, director of the institute and chairman of the department of computer science and engineering.

TECHNOLOGY SEE PAGE 2

WEATHER

TODAY
68
51
TUESDAY
70
57

COMING UP



The Gamecock interviews Heath Ledger of 'A Knight's Tale'

WEDNESDAY

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards."

— Kierkegaard

ONLINE POLL



Which player was most impressive at the spring football game?

Vote at www.dailygamecock.com. Results will be published Friday.