

# Notes from Lillian

P.O. Box 2473 • Chapel Hill, NC 27515 • 919/967-3438 • Fall 2003

## A Special Thanks to Rep. Ruth Easterling

“If there was ever a trailblazer in the spirit of Lillian Exum Clement, it would be Ruth Easterling,” said Jan Allen, Chair of Lillian’s List, at an event on May 7 that served as a tribute to the long-serving former member of the NC House of Representatives.

More than 150 people attended the tribute at the home of Sally Wood Creech in Raleigh. Everyone was eager for the opportunity to honor Easterling, who retired in 2002 after serving 13 sessions.

In Rep. Easterling’s first campaign, she said, “I’m going to run until North Carolina ratifies the ERA or until I’m 91.” In more recent years, she added that she would run until she knew a good woman would take her place—and that woman was Rep. Becky Carney, a Lillian’s List recommended candidate.

The event was crowded with North Carolina political dignitaries, including Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue, Secretary of State Elaine Marshall, Attorney General Roy Cooper, State Treasurer Richard Moore, and Appellate Court Judges Marty Geer and Robin Hudson. In addition, almost all of the Democratic women currently serving in the House of Representatives attended, as well as many other members of the House and Senate.

Berni Gaither, candidate chair of Lillian’s List, gave the tribute and presented Easterling with a Certificate of Appreciation acknowledging Lillian’s List gift to the Ruth Moss Easterling Scholarship Fund (established by the Blumenthal Foundation to provide assistance for a female from the South interested in political science and public service) at Limestone College in Gaffney, South Carolina. Easterling was also presented a gift certificate to a bookstore, as many people know of Easterling’s love of reading. *(continued on page 4)*



*Representative Beverly Earle and former Representative Ruth Easterling, Guest of Honor, at "Trailblazers: Past, Present, Future" May event.*



*NCDP Chair Barbara Allen and Kate Coyne-McKoy, State Program Regional Director for EMILY’s List*

## Role of Freshmen Key to Legislature This Year Number of Women Legislators at an All-Time High

According to a news release from the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research, the two biggest developments in the legislature this year have been the bipartisan coalition that resulted in co-speakers and the surprising role being played by freshmen legislators. *(continued on page 4)*

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### Calendar

#### September 6, 2003

Lillian's List Reception  
Democratic Women of North  
Carolina State Convention  
Asheville

#### October 16, 2003

Lillian's List Event  
Figure 8 Island

#### October 25, 2003

Lillian's List Board Meeting,  
Burlington

#### March 4 & 5, 2004

EMILY's List Campaign Training  
for Democratic Women  
Legislators and Candidates  
for the General Assembly

Visit our website!  
[www.lillianslist.org](http://www.lillianslist.org)

# Legislator Profile: Marian McLawhorn

by Dr. Christie Knittel Mabry

Marian McLawhorn has had many roles throughout her life. Although she's perhaps best known as the woman who unseated Henry (a.k.a., "juices") Aldridge for a seat in the state House in 1998, McLawhorn is beginning to come into her own as a powerful and effective player in the state House.



Indeed, she assumed yet another role during the past legislative session as one of four Democratic House Whips.

## Path to Power

Like many other women, McLawhorn's path to power in the state House has been a long and winding one. In her case, however, it seemed inevitable. A lifelong resident of Grifton, McLawhorn was the middle girl in her family, and the daughter of the mayor. After her father died in a car crash at age 49, her uncle assumed his position as mayor. McLawhorn's husband (whose family was also politically active in the community) served on the town council in Grifton, and his uncle, Charles McLawhorn, held the same House seat that she now holds. With these deep local roots, it is really not a surprise that this lifelong Democrat and mother of four from Eastern North Carolina decided eventually to enter politics.

Her entry to politics was—like that of so many other women—somewhat serendipitous. When McLawhorn's husband became unable to run for another

term on the town council due to his job responsibilities, she became privy to the many conversations that followed in which the Democratic "power brokers" in Grifton attempted to locate a suitable alternative. When McLawhorn eventually arrived at the conclusion that they might not ever think of her as a potential candidate, she finally raised her hand and asked "what about me?" She was appointed to fill out her husband's term, and was then elected in her own right in 1992.

## Running and Winning

McLawhorn served so ably on the town council that the then mayor (who had served for the past 16 years) approached her to run for mayor in 1996 to fill the seat that he was planning to vacate. She ran and she won the race to become the first female mayor of Grifton -- by a margin of 34 votes!! When Henry Aldridge committed his very public gaffe during the next legislative cycle, she became resolute that she could do a better job than he and she set her sights on the state House of Representatives. With her track record as an effective town council member and mayor, she didn't need anyone to ask her to run – she was determined to take on Henry Aldridge in 1998. To our collective relief, she did, and she won!

## Becoming an Effective Legislator

As she reflected upon what it has been like to be a woman in politics in North Carolina, McLawhorn has several observations as well as some advice for other women who are considering following suit. Her first observation is

that women have to fit in with the "good old boys" yet be progressive (and polite) at the same time. Second, effective legislators have to be approachable as well as accessible. She has found that "you have to put yourself out there" and that, if you are thoughtful and informed, you will connect with your constituents.

In terms of negotiating the political "ropes" in the General Assembly, she cannot emphasize enough how incredibly important it is to network with other members of the House. Like every woman that we've profiled in this series, McLawhorn believes that it is imperative to do your homework (by looking at the legislative calendar in advance) and not to antagonize your colleagues by standing up and publicly railing against their legislation. If you have a question about a particular bill, you should address your concerns privately ahead of time.

She also believes that, if you do this right, you will then have the political freedom and wherewithal to run your own legislation. She firmly believes that her experience as a mayor was great preparation for how to work as a team.

## Reasons for Running

McLawhorn has several words of wisdom for other women considering running for office. First, do it for the right reasons—to make North Carolina a better place to live and to live well. Do not run to be self-serving. She believes that you must have a sincere attitude to do the right thing. When you run you are representing women, your district, and all of those who have known you.

Second, run when it feels right for you in your life. McLawhorn could not possibly have done this when her children were younger because family was her top priority at that time.

*(continued on page 4)*

**Representative McLawhorn was recommended by Lillian's List in 1998, the first year in which Lillian's List supported candidates. Representative Henry Aldridge, the incumbent Republican whom she defeated, had stated during a discussion in a House committee meeting that "women who are raped cannot get pregnant because the juices don't flow". In 2000 and 2002, as one of the incum-**

**ber Democratic women targeted by Republicans, she received additional contributions from Lillian's List. This article is the fourth in a series of interviews of new legislators recommended by Lillian's List being conducted by Dr. Christie Knittel Mabry, a Lillian's List Board Member. Dr. Mabry is currently Director of Admissions/Adjunct Professor of Human Resources at Peace College in Raleigh.**

# 2003 Long Session Wrap-Up: Choke Measures Attacked

By Paige Johnson, Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina

Much has been written about the unprecedented nature of the General Assembly's 2003 legislative session. While most coverage has focused on the workings of North Carolina's first ever co-speakers of the House, little attention has been paid to the unparalleled attacks on reproductive rights. In the 2003 legislative session, 14 anti-choice bills were filed, ranging from parental consent for minors seeking birth control and treatment for sexually transmitted infections to a fetal homicide bill that would criminalize all induced abortions. In addition to these bills, special provisions were added to the House's initial budget that

who states that she wants to schedule an abortion. North Carolina already requires that the name of the attending physician and her or his hospital admitting privileges be provided to a woman before she consents to the procedure. Providing the physician's name to anyone who calls to schedule an abortion would simply make law-abiding physicians more vulnerable to threats and intimidation tactics. Doctors who provide abortion services are the very same doctors who provide family planning and prenatal services to thousands of women daily. Due to increased harassment, including death threats and two actual assassinations of doctors

**Sponsors of anti-choice legislation focused their efforts more on denying women access to abortion and family planning services than imposing an outright ban.**

**"The Women's Right to Know" bill offers a perfect example of how anti-choice hardliners craft legislation that purports to be in the interest of the woman, but in reality undermines our rights.**

would have prohibited the state from spending any money on abortion or abortion-related services. This provision would have effectively imposed a "gag order" on state institutions that provide comprehensive services, including options counseling for pregnant women.

With the exception of the fetal homicide bill, which was blatantly unconstitutional, sponsors of anti-choice legislation focused their efforts more on denying women access to abortion and family planning services than imposing an outright ban. In reality, of course, there is no choice without access. Take, for instance, the "Woman's Right to Know" bill that was introduced in both chambers. The purported rationale behind this bill was to provide women with more information and a 24-hour mandatory delay period that gives women more time to consider their options. In practice, however, the bill would have made it cost prohibitive for many providers of abortion services to continue providing this critical care. The bill would have required that doctors provide state-mandated consultations without a fee to every woman that calls to schedule an abortion: a transparent invitation to anti-choice extremists to inundate abortion providers with calls in order to drive up their operational cost. The net result would be an increase in the fee for abortions, which would effectively deny reproductive choice to low-income women.

Moreover, the "Women's Right to Know" bill would require that health care centers reveal the name of the physician who is going to perform the procedure to any caller

who perform abortions, the number of physicians willing to provide abortions has markedly decreased over the last two decades. The Alan Guttmacher Institute's (AGI) most recent statistics show that 78 percent of North Carolina's counties are without an abortion provider.

With these facts in mind, the purported rationale behind the "Woman's Right to Know" bill is all the more suspect. Abortion is unlike any other medical procedure where the opinions of doctors or other experts may understandably weigh more heavily in the final decision. Women take abortion seriously. Most women seek counseling from their family members, friends or clergy, days if not weeks before deciding to have an abortion. Asking a woman to wait an additional 24 hours is simply to impose another state-mandated hoop through which she must jump in order to exercise her constitutionally recognized right to make private reproductive decisions.

"The Women's Right to Know" bill offers a perfect example of how anti-choice hardliners craft legislation that purports to be in the interest of women but in reality undermines our rights. Even the name is purposefully misleading, which resulted in a number of legislators mistakenly signing on to the bill before they realized its full impact. If not for the outstanding work of key pro-choice legislators in the 2003 session, including many supported by Lillian's List, the right of a woman in North Carolina to make personal childbearing decisions would now be in peril. We owe these legislators a tremendous debt of gratitude.

## A Special Thanks to Rep. Ruth Easterling

(continued from page 1)

“Ruth Easterling has been totally committed to issues affecting women and courageous enough to stand up, speak up and vote for our rights as pro-choice, Democratic women. We pray for that same commitment and courage from our present and future pro-choice leaders in the North Carolina legislature.” said Gaither.

Other dignitaries who spoke included Rep. Beverly Earle, who spoke on behalf of the Mecklenburg County Democratic Women. Rep. Easterling was one of the founders of the Charlotte Women’s Political Caucus in 1971.

Please join Lillian’s List for our next event on October 16 at Figure Eight Island, where we will officially kick off our new Trailblazers program in the spirit of women like Lillian Exum Clement and Ruth Easterling. Watch for more details in the mail or visit us at <[www.lillianslist.org](http://www.lillianslist.org)>.



*Lillian’s List 2002 Recommended Candidate Lucy Allen and Representative Joe Hackney, House Democratic Leader*

## Rep. Marian McLawhorn

(continued from page 2)

Third, women have far more “resources” at their disposal than most give themselves credit for having. She believes that women tend to develop substantial networks. McLawhorn’s networks were comprised of teachers, fellow library workers, people with whom she had served on various boards—networks that can be very effective when running for office.

She asserts that “you know more people than you think.” And, although women are not typically used to writing big checks to candidates, they do vote and will work to get other women to vote. Her 34 vote winning margin for mayor illustrates that these votes are critical.

Women are used to juggling many things and flying by the seat of their pants—something that we have heard from the other legislators whom we profiled. They make decisions every day in their families, in their jobs, and in their communities—all of which is terrific training for running and serving ably in public office.

## Role of Freshmen Key to Legislature this Year (continued from page 1)

Over the last 20 years, the Center’s guide to the legislature says turnover has averaged about a fourth of the House and a fifth of the Senate in each two-year election cycle. This year, however, 30 percent, or 51 of the 170 legislators, are new and did not serve in the previous legislative session. “Usually, freshmen legislators are told it’s best to be seen but not heard,” says Ran Coble, the Center’s director. “But this year, the sheer size of the freshman class gives them extra clout, and the division within the Republican caucus is negating the normal command and control that party caucuses exercise over first-termers.”

Coble attributed the unusual influence of this year’s class to three factors—the size of the class, the fact that many have experience governing at the local level, and lack of an iron-clad contract or party platform that binds all to one set of issues and positions. Among those with previous local experience are Lillian’s List winners Representative Becky Carney, Senator Katie Dorsett, Representative Alice Bordsen, and Representative Becky Carney.

In other trends, the Center notes that “the number of women in the General Assembly this year (35) is an all-time high, eclipsing the old mark of 32 set in the 2001-2002 session.”

Lillian’s List has been a major influence not only in electing the extremely well qualified freshmen but particularly in bringing the total number of women to this record high. The freshmen Democrats, especially in the House, include a significant number of progressive legislators. In 2002, of the 16

new Democratic members of the House, 7 were women. All but 1 were Lillian’s List recommendations: Reps. Lucy Allen, Alice Bordsen, Becky Carney, Margaret Dickson, Jean Farmer-Butterfield, and Deborah Ross. The seventh, Rep. Earline Parmon, did not accept PAC money.

In 1998, the organization’s first election, Lillian’s List winners helped Democrats take back the House: three new Lillian’s List recommended Democratic women won. In 2000, a year when the number of women in other state legislatures declined, the number of women legislators in North Carolina actually increased with the help of Lillian’s List; again 3 new Lillian’s List recommended Democratic women legislators won, bringing the total number of women to a record number of 32. And, in 2002, seven of the eight recommended by Lillian’s List won, and 14 of the 16 incumbent Democratic women won.

In three elections, the percent of women in the legislature has increased from 17 percent to 21 percent, and the number of Democratic women has increased from 14 to 22. With redistricting occurring yet again, the 2004 elections may hold more opportunities for women. The Board of Directors of Lillian’s List is already making plans—with the help of the members, Lillian’s List will continue blazing the trail begun by Lillian Exum Clement.

*Information reprinted with permission from The Center for Public Policy Research.*

# From the Chair

When Lillian's List began in September of 1997, we knew, in the words of Secretary of State Elaine Marshall at the event, that we were making history. Looking back from the perspective of the 2002 elections, the timing of this beginning was especially fortuitous. With the successes of the elections in 1998 and 2000, Lillian's List became a recognized political force in North Carolina. And with redistricting in 2002, Lillian's List was well positioned to achieve historic results.

We couldn't have picked a better time to support so many well qualified candidates. The Center for Public Policy Research press release points out the very important role of the freshman class of the legislature and the record number of women. **Lillian's List has made, thanks to our members, a truly extraordinary impact.**

Lillian's List is now at a critical juncture. As the Center points out, the number of women in the General Assembly is at an all-time high. But women are still only 21% of the legislature. And while two thirds of those women are pro-choice Democrats, they represent only 13% of the entire legislature.

We are excited about the opportunities ahead, and optimistic that our plans will meet those challenges. Sharon Worthington, our first full-time Administrator, is very well qualified to take a leadership role in carrying them out.

A major donor program will begin next year. Board members this year have met informally with some of the incumbent women during the recent legislative session—we will schedule these get-togethers again during next year's short session. We will begin an email notification and alert system in the coming months. We are planning an aggressive new member campaign. And redistricting occurring yet again has the potential to offer several more well qualified candidates.

Thanks to you, our members, Lillian's List has indeed made history. **But now we must protect our historic gains and add to these gains. 21% is a significant start, but it is just the beginning.** We know we can count on you to help Lillian's List build on our impressive victories. The 2004 elections are upon us—let's get started.

*Jan Allen, Chair*

## New Administrator for Lillian's List

Lillian's List has hired Sharon Worthington as the organization's first full-time Administrator. One of the founding members of Lillian's List, her political background includes service as 3rd Vice Chair of the North Carolina Democratic Party, Orange County Democratic Party Chair, and Young Democrats of North Carolina National Committeewoman as well as campaign manager for several municipal candidates in Carrboro. She was also a Delegate to two Democratic National Conventions. Her professional background includes eight years as a paralegal in both corporate and private practice and hospitality sales and management and marketing/public relations.

At the recent Young Democrats of America National Convention, Worthington was awarded the 2003 National Democrat of the Year (see sidebar article on page 5). She has also been recognized for outstanding leadership and service by the Young Democrats of North Carolina, the Orange County Democratic Party, the Women's Forum of North Carolina, the Raleigh Jaycees and the Rotary International Foundation.

As Administrator, Worthington will continue to develop a database of donors, assist in event planning, and work with media to gain greater exposure for Lillian's List and assist with the recruitment of female democratic pro-choice candidates.

## Recognition for current and former Lillian's List Board Members

At the recent Young Democrats of America National Convention, Lillian's List new Administrator **Sharon Worthington** was awarded the James Earl Carter Award for a former Young Democrat of distinction. Secretary of State Elaine Marshall was the 2001 recipient of the YDA's Carter Award.

**Christy Agner**, a former founding Board Member and Chair of the Candidate Committee, as well as former DNC woman and secretary of YDA, was awarded the Frances Perkins Award for Outstanding Young Democrat Woman.



*Christy Agner and Sharon Worthington with their YDA awards*

**Betty Ann Knudsen**, former founding Board Member, was recently honored by the Wake County Young Democrats with the 2003 P.R. Latta Volunteer of the Year Award.

**Paula Wolf**, Board Member and Senior Fellow with the Child Advocacy Institute, was ranked 12th in the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research's "48 Most Influential Lobbyists in the NC General Assembly" for the 2001 Legislative Session, moving up from the 18th spot in 1999. In 1999, she was the highest-ranking newcomer to the list and the highest-ranking non-profit lobbyist on the list.

**Leanne Winner**, former founding Board Member and lobbyist for the NC School Boards Association, was one of two women who are newcomers to the rankings.

# Yes, I Want to Elect Pro-Choice Democratic Women

I want to help **Lillian's List**, the powerful political network that elects pro-choice Democratic women in North Carolina by raising campaign contributions and building winning campaigns.

I am joining **Lillian's List** with my membership contribution of:  I'm already a **Lillian's List** member and am contributing:

\$1000  \$500  \$250  \$100  \$50

\$1000  \$500  \$250  \$100  \$50

I want to be a monthly contributor of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ /month (credit cards only, minimum \$25/month).

Please charge to my credit card VISA/Mastercard, American Express, Discover (circle one).

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I am also prepared to consider making contributions of at least \$50 to two or more Democratic women legislative candidates recommended by **Lillian's List** during election years. Contributions of \$50 or more to **Lillian's List** include membership in **Lillian's List**.

Contributions to **Lillian's List** are not tax deductible for federal tax purposes. Corporate checks cannot be accepted. NC law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, job title or profession and name of employer or employer's specific field for each individual whose contributions aggregate is in excess of \$100.00 in an election cycle. While the General Assembly is in session, no individual registered as a lobbyist under Article 9A of Charter 120 of the General Statutes may make a contribution to **Lillian's List**.

Please return this form and your personal check payable to **Lillian's List**, PO Box 2473, Chapel Hill, NC 27515. For information call 919/967-3438.

**"I want to blaze a trail for other women. I know that years from now there will be many other women in politics, but you have to start a thing."  
Lillian Exum Clement, first woman elected to the General Assembly of North Carolina, 1920.**

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