

Speech by Robert Morgan, Attorney General  
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The Raleigh Community Relations Community  
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It is a pleasure for me to be with you tonight and to have an opportunity to speak to a group which represents such a broad cross section of this community. You serve because you are respected by the total citizenry of Raleigh so I am particularly honored to be with you and to share some thoughts with you.

In thinking about what to say this evening, I thought it would be helpful for me to go back and review for a few minutes the history of state-wide human relation efforts in North Carolina in order to put the origin and activities of this particular group into perspective. Frankly, I was surprised when I discovered that it was no longer ago than 1963, when former Governor Terry Sanford made his announcement establishing the Good Neighbor Council and named the late David S. Coletrane Chairman and Dean James T. Taylor of North Carolina Central University as its Vice-Chairman. Both of these men have since died but there is no doubt in my mind that they will both be remembered for their tremendous contributions they made

toward good race relations in this State.

I was surprised a little to see that the original concept of the Council was so limited. According to Governor Sanford's statement, "the Council will have a two-fold mission: to encourage employment of qualified people without regard to race; and to urge youth to become better trained and qualified for employment." Even with this limited approach, the North Carolina Good Neighbor Council was then called by one national commentator, "the most creative approach in America." Surely if that commentator had known what you and I know now--the tremendous contributions which would be made by the Council beyond the limited horizons first provided for it, then his praise would have been even more generous.

Your group preceded the Governor's Good Neighbor Council. First organized in 1962 as the "Mayor's Advisory Committee," this group has been known by a number of different names, but regardless of name, has served the people of this community well over the years.

Those of you here tonight probably know better than I the many facets of human and community relations in North Carolina and it is pointless, I think, for me to

seek to list them for you. The Table of Contents of your 1970 Annual Report, I think, is a good indication of the many ways in which a community relations committee can serve the people they represent.

By creating the North Carolina Good Neighbor Council and nurturing its development, Terry Sanford acted in the great tradition of North Carolina Governors. These Governors are responsible for creating the North Carolina racial climate which is recognized as being good and envied by other states throughout the nation both north and south. It is significant that North Carolinians walked into a new day of human relations with a minimum of ill will and antagonism at a time when the citizens of some other states found it impossible to accept and put into practice the same spirit of cooperation and good will. Our people recognized early the truth in Governor Sanford's statement that "this is a time for good faith and good will and a determination that we will help all men and women achieve the best chance in life because it is the right thing to do."

This is the North Carolina story today as it was during those trying days of the early 60's. It is the North Carolina story because on through this century "the leaders and citizens of North Carolina have worked towards solutions to [the] difficult problems involving...deep-

seated passions of human beings. At the start of this century, Governor Charles B. Aycock, who turned a race campaign into a crusade for education threatened to resign as Governor of North Carolina if the General Assembly did not provide schools for the Negro children as well as the whites.

"In the early 1940's, Governor R. Gregg Cherry sent the North Carolina Highway Patrol into a community in which a race riot was threatened. In the next administration, Governor W. Kerr Scott broke color lines which had stood since Reconstruction by appointing a Negro to the State Board of Education. In the late 40's, an attempt to revive the Klu Klux Klan in North Carolina was crushed with the full weight of the state and local government and the Grand Klegle was sent to prison. Governor William B. Umstead refused to get into the massive resistance business after the Brown decision of 1954.

"North Carolina peacefully began desegregation of schools during the administration of Governor Luther Hodges." We are proud that those days in North Carolina were known for their peacefulness rather than for disorder and that desegregation began with a minimum of disruption and accompanying racial disharmony.

The record of the Sanford administration is well-known in North Carolina for during this period the problems of human relations received a great deal of attention and the Governor moved to meet them responsibly. It is noteworthy that during this period, more Negroes served by appointment on policy-making boards in this state than almost any other state in the Union. Governor Moore followed establishing a reputation for fair treatment in times of racial violence and used present Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, Charles Dunn, as a trouble shooter, traveling throughout North Carolina, representing the Governor and mediating local conflicts. Today, we find ourselves with another moderate North Carolina Governor who has refused to play upon passions.

This is the North Carolina story because North Carolina Governors throughout this century have made the same pledge concerning their offices that I made when I announced for the Office of Attorney General: "To place the law above personal opinion, to administer it objectively and fairly, and to make the Office of Attorney General into an office which actively, positively and imaginatively promotes the freedom which all Americans have inherited and by doing so merits the opportunity and confidence of the people of North Carolina.