

The Acerbic Pen: Editorial Cartoons from the Collections

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Exhibit originally created by Herb Hartsook and Kate Moore, South Carolina Political Collections, 2007

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The Acerbic Pen: Editorial Cartoons from the Collections



The hood of an automobile that served as a canvas for several of the artists at the 1985 Association of American Editorial Cartoonists convention in Orlando, Florida. Participating cartoonists included Jeff MacNelly ("Diesel Easel"), Kate Salley Palmer ("Possum Roadkill"), Mike Jenkins (Batman Logo), Dave Granlund ("I'd Walk a Mile..."), and Draper Hill ("Forget, Hell"). (Hood donated by Kate Salley Palmer and now on display at SCPC)

Editorial cartoons grace the pages of most American daily newspapers and are widely popular with readers. Often providing biting commentary, they comment on issues ranging from local to international matters. These cartoons hold great value in illustrating key issues or events in our history and are among our most popular holdings.

SCPC holds the collections of two fine editorial artists, Walt Lardner and Kate Salley Palmer. Artists often give original cartoons to the subjects of their drawings and many of our other collections contain cartoons lampooning the collection's creator.

Sadly, as the newspaper business struggles to retain its readership, some are giving up their staff cartoonist, using instead a syndicated cartoonist whose work may be excellent, but will not address local issues as a local artist can. According to the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, between 1985 and 2005, the number of editorial cartoonists employed by American daily newspapers was halved.

Walt Lardner (b. 1931)



The Walt Lardner Collection consists of over four hundred original drawings, 1967-1988, made while Lardner was associated with *The State* newspaper (Columbia, SC) as a political cartoonist.

Insightful, witty, and sometimes biting, Lardner's cartoons illustrate an eventful period in South Carolina and the nation.

He sold his first cartoon in 1954 and for the next decade his free-lance

cartoons appeared in such magazines as *Argosy*, *Collier's*, *Look*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *True*. He also illustrated the "Archie" comic book series.



In 1967, Lardner moved to South Carolina, where he began a long association with South Carolina Educational Television, eventually becoming the network's chief animator. During this period, he was also a regular, free-lance contributor to *The State*.



Baseball Strike

Editorial cartoonists have a broad portfolio and tackle all sorts of issues and events in the news. This cartoon dates from the 1981 Major League baseball strike. Play halted on June 12 and did not resume until the rescheduled All-Star game, held on August 9. 713 games, or 38% of the season's schedule, were lost.



Auction

Political campaigns grow ever more expensive. This undated cartoon draws attention to this major issue.



Riley in Lion's Mouth

During his first term in office, popular governor Richard W. "Dick" Riley (b. 1933) successfully sought a constitutional revision to allow governors of South Carolina to serve a second consecutive term in office. He benefited from that change when he was elected to his second term in 1982. He was governor from 1979 to 1987, then served as President Bill Clinton's Secretary of Education, 1993-2001.

SCPC holds the Riley papers.



Guess Who & 1974 Gubernatorial Election

The 1974 gubernatorial election was one of the most hotly contested elections in South Carolina history. The Democratic primary featured a huge field of contestants. William Jennings Bryan Dorn, the popular 3rd District Congressman, was first to announce in November of 1973. Others entering the race included Charles D. "Pug" Ravenel, a South Carolina native who had made his fortune as a New York investment banker; Maurice Bessinger; Nick Zeigler; Milton Dukes; and John Bolt Culbertson. The Democratic primary eventually narrowed to three strong candidates — Dorn, Ravenel and Lt. Gov. Earle Morris. Dorn

brought to the race over twenty years of service in the House and party and a reputation as a skilled campaigner but lost in a runoff with Ravenel, who emerged as an exciting and telegenic newcomer who was drawing a new generation to political activity, much as John Kennedy had in his 1960 presidential race.



The Republican primary was less wild but the result was no less surprising. Low-country dentist James B. Edwards emerged the victor over Vietnam War hero General William Westmoreland.

Ravenel appeared headed to a ready victory over Edwards. However, a suit was brought charging that Ravenel had not met the legal residency requirements to seek office and, late in the campaign, his appeals exhausted, he was removed from the ticket. Just weeks before the November general election, the state Democratic Convention reconvened and selected Dorn as the Democratic gubernatorial nominee.

Ravenel withheld his support from the Dorn candidacy and was highly criticized for requesting his supporters to write in Dorn's name on the ballot to protest the removal of his own. Even with all the confusion and bitterness, the race was close. The final tally showed Edwards with 263,000 votes to Dorn's 248,000, or 51.47% to 48.53%. Ravenel's candidacy had been expected to energize a new generation of political activists. Instead, it proved a divisive issue for the party and resulted in the election of South Carolina's first Republican governor since reconstruction.

*SCPC holds the papers of Culbertson, [Dorn](#), [Edwards](#), [Ravenel](#), and [Zeigler](#).
The Westmoreland papers are held by the University's South Caroliniana Library.*



McNair & Moody

Robert E. McNair (b.1923) was a popular and effective governor. He commissioned the "Moody Report," officially titled Opportunity and Growth in South Carolina, 1968-1985, to analyze the status of education, transportation, health care and other areas affected by government and to make specific recommendations on how best to advance South Carolina over the coming decades. Published in 1968 and over 440 pages in length, the report provided a level of analysis and financial data never before available to the state's leaders and challenged some long-held assumptions. The report was not appreciated by some in the General Assembly, particularly long time House Speaker Sol Blatt.

SCPC holds the [Blatt](#) and [McNair](#) papers.



Campbell “Little Guys”

Carroll Campbell was a tough and effective leader and a master politician. During his two terms as governor, 1987-1995, he began the restructuring and modernization of state government that continues to this day.

SCPC holds the Campbell papers.



Defector

During most of the twentieth century, South Carolina was dominated by the Democratic Party, with the Republican Party chiefly existing to distribute patronage. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Party was transformed into a viable entity by leaders such as Gayle Averyt, Robert Chapman, Drake Edens, Roger Milliken, Arthur Ravenel, Greg Shorey, Floyd Spence, and Bill Workman. By the 1970s, the Party was able to contend in statewide elections, and James B. Edwards was elected governor in 1974. Carroll Campbell helped make the Republican Party the dominant Party in South Carolina during the 1980s and 1990s.

Many South Carolina Republicans started their political careers as Democrats, including Spence and Strom Thurmond.

SCPC holds the papers of the [South Carolina Republican Party](#) as well as Campbell, [Edens](#), Edwards, [Shorey](#), Spence and [Workman](#).



Nice Girl

The South has been actively and successfully courted by conservatives in both the Democratic and Republican parties.

SCPC holds the papers of the [South Carolina Republican Party](#) and the [South Carolina Democratic Party](#).



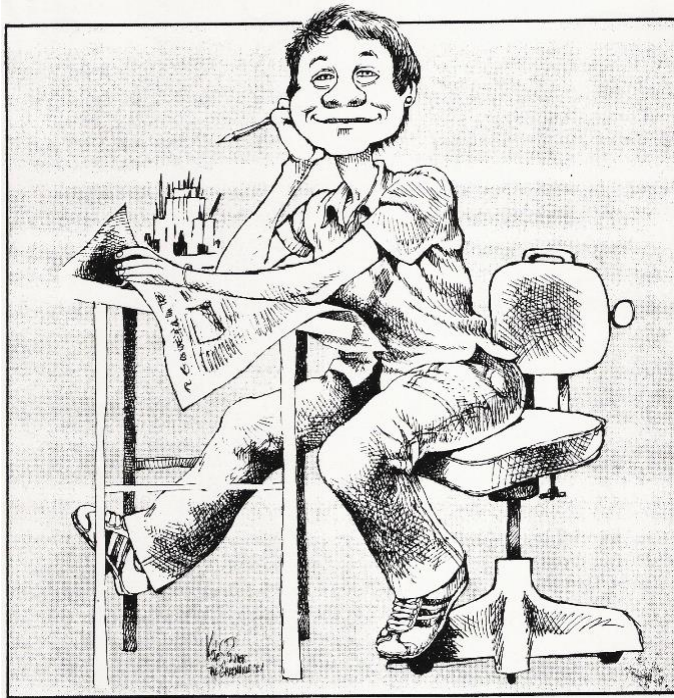
Poverty Tour

In 1968, Senator Fritz Hollings embarked on a series of “Hunger” tours which brought national attention to the issue of hunger and malnutrition and led to him writing the book, *The Case Against Hunger*, published in 1970. Shortly after taking office as governor in 1971, John West, at times accompanied by his good friend Hollings, undertook a similar series of tours of impoverished areas of South Carolina. He found horrible conditions, shanties lacking any plumbing, often situated within blocks of well-to-do neighborhoods.

In our oral history interview with Governor West he recalled, “It was an outgrowth of the campaign, and the fact that we were concentrating as much on housing as well as hunger. Of course, we created the State Housing Authority as a result of some of those tours. One of the projects that came out of those tours was the ‘Privy Project.’ A lot of the people did not have indoor plumbing. We designed an indoor facility that you could have even without running water, and we started a program to put those indoor facilities in the shacks that didn't have them. As I say, I got a lot of kidding, I called it the ‘Governor’s Privy Project’.”

SCPC holds the Hollings and [West](#) papers.

Kate Salley Palmer (b. 1946)



A native of Orangeburg, S.C., Kate Salley Palmer graduated from the University of South Carolina with a major in elementary education and got her start as an editorial cartoonist drawing a regular cartoon for the University's student newspaper, *The Gamecock*. She began freelance cartooning with the *Greenville News* in 1975 and in 1978 she became their first full-time editorial cartoonist.

Palmer was syndicated by Field (later News America Syndicate) in 1980. She left the newspaper in 1984 and moved to Associated Features in 1986.

Her syndication ended in 1989. Since then, she has devoted her efforts to writing and illustrating children's books. A collection of her political cartoons titled *Growing Up Cartoonist (In the Baby Boom South)* appeared in early 2006, published by the Clemson University Digital Press.

Palmer's work reveals a deft and cutting wit and excellent artistic skill. Her art is focused broadly on national and international affairs as well as state and even local matters.

The Kate Salley Palmer Collection includes most of her South Carolina themed cartoons as well as records of Warbranch Press, created with her husband Jim, and their other publishing ventures. The Ohio State University's Cartoon Research Library is receiving a substantial set of her national and international themed cartoons.



The Sheik

Camden native John Carl West served as State Senator, 1955-1966, Lt. Governor under Bob McNair, 1967-1971, Governor, 1971-1975, and United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, 1977-1981, under his friend, President Jimmy Carter. When asked why he accepted the Saudi post, West responded by putting both the job and the challenge in perspective – “To achieve peace in the Middle East might be one of the great accomplishments not just of the Carter Administration but of our generation and if I could be a part of it, a meaningful part, it would be of sufficient challenge to warrant me leaving the private sector that I was enjoying.”

SCPC holds the [West](#) papers.



Clinton Ex-Presidency

Many speculated on what the Clintons would do after leaving office, particularly given President Clinton’s relatively young age.



Hollings Presidential Bid

In April, 1982, Senator Ernest F. “Fritz” Hollings (b.1922), entered a crowded Democratic presidential primary field that included front-runner Vice-President Walter F. Mondale, Ohio Senator John Glenn, Colorado Senator Gary Hart, former Florida governor Reubin Askew, Senator Alan Cranston of California, former South Dakota Senator (and 1972 Democratic presidential nominee) George McGovern, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

These contenders sought to unseat the incumbent Republican president, Ronald Reagan. Although Reagan was extremely popular personally, his first term had seen unemployment, inflation, interest rates, and federal deficits reach post-World War II highs. Hollings’ concern about these economic problems, particularly the federal budget deficit, was the primary motivation behind his run for the presidency.

Hollings’ campaign focused on three major issues: reducing the deficit, improving economic competitiveness, and strengthening national defense. From January 1983 through February 1984, Fritz and Peatsy Hollings traversed the nation promoting Hollings’ prescription for a

strong, competitive, and prosperous America. Unfortunately, while his platform was credible and popular with the press (he was labeled “The Thinking Man’s Dark Horse” by columnist Bill Greider), the public did not embrace his message of tough choices and sacrifice. Mondale and Glenn, buoyed by good name recognition, emerged as the early front-runners. Hollings used his biting wit to try and cut into their leads. Referring to John Glenn’s inconsistency on the issues, he quipped that the Ohio senator and former astronaut was “orbiting the issues faster than he orbited the earth.”

After placing sixth in the New Hampshire primary, Hollings bowed out of the race with the classic line: “Well, nothing happened to me on the way to the White House...” But, all three of his major messages – balancing the budget, toughening trade policy, and beefing up conventional military forces – became central issues of the national debate. In particular, Hollings’ emphasis on balancing the budget demonstrated his remarkable foresight: though few were decrying the federal deficit at the time, in less than a decade it came to be seen as perhaps the single most important political issue in the United States.

SCPC holds the [Hollings](#) papers.



Dorn Wind-Up Doll

William Jennings Bryan Dorn (1916-2005) represented South Carolina’s Third District in the United States Congress for thirteen terms between 1948 and 1974. He campaigned unsuccessfully for governor in both 1974 and 1978. Unlike Pug Ravenel in 1974, Dorn campaigned energetically for Democratic nominee Dick Riley after losing the 1978

Democratic gubernatorial nomination and contributed to Riley’s election as Governor.

Palmer gave the original cartoon to Mr. Dorn, who liked it so much, he hung it in his bedroom, where it stayed until the moment SCPC staff took it down to become part of the Dorn Collection.

SCPC holds the papers of [Dorn](#), [Riley](#), and [Ravenel](#).



Bertram by the Birdbath

Some say service in the legislature spoils a man for anything else.



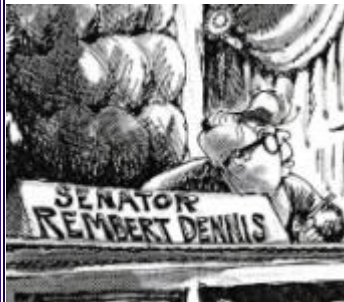
Jugglin' Jimmy

The Carter presidency was a troubled time in America, and while Jimmy Carter was widely perceived as a good man striving to deal with myriad problems facing the nation, he was not perceived as being particularly capable or decisive.



State Property Owners

Taxes are a major issue in South Carolina, particularly the property tax. Over the past twenty years, the state has struggled to find ways to fund public education without overburdening property owners.



Rembert Dennis

Rembert Dennis (1915-1992) and Marion Gressette (1902-1984) were long time members of the state Senate and, in a legislative state, wielded great influence over South Carolina. Berkeley County's Dennis served in that body from 1943 to 1988, while Orangeburg County's Gressette served from 1937 until his death in 1984.

SCPC holds the [Dennis](#) and [Gressette](#) papers.



Reagan Campaign Bus

primary victory to Reagan.

South Carolina has become a key primary election state in recent years and, in 1980, a sputtering Ronald Reagan presidential campaign was being bested by George Bush in the early going. Many South Carolinians supported Texan John Connally, but Carroll Campbell signed on to chair the Reagan campaign in the state and helped deliver a major

SCPC holds the [Campbell](#) papers.



Riley and Reapportionment

Reapportionment is defined as the redistribution of representation in a legislative body. In January of 1982, the date of this cartoon, South Carolina was wracked by turmoil over the apportionment of the state Senate. The following year, the Senate adopted a plan creating single-member districts, ensuring that blacks would be elected to the Senate in 1984 for the first time since Reconstruction.

Shown here is Governor Richard W. Riley addressing the Senate. Senators Marion Gressette and Rembert Dennis are pictured in the front row. Miss Piggy and Kermit the Frog are also seated in the Senate.

SCPC holds the [Dennis](#), [Gressette](#), and Riley papers.