



New Faces in Those Rated Most Influential Lobbyists

by Jack Betts

Planning for a lucrative career as a lobbyist? No problem—just be born male, get a law degree, get elected to the N.C. General Assembly, and—if you can swing it—become Governor of North Carolina. That will almost guarantee you a lofty place in the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research's rankings of the most influential lobbyists.

Lawyers and former legislators continue to rank at or near the top in the Center's fourth biennial lobbyist effectiveness rankings, but public-interest lobbyists are moving up on the list as well. So are women, according to the Center's latest rankings.

Ran Coble, the Center's executive director, and himself a former legislative staff member and former legislative liaison for the N.C. Department of Human Resources, says, "Historically, lobbyists for businesses, state agencies, and associations have done well, but what's new in these rankings is that public interest lobbyists and women lobbyists are making their first real appearances near the top."

The Center's rankings are based on surveys of all 170 legislators, registered lobbyists in the 1987 session, and capital news correspondents. This year's rankings show that the top four lobbyists are both former legislators *and* lawyers, and that 11 of the top 25 lobbyists are former legislators or legislative officers. (One of the 11 is former Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., who as Lieutenant Governor was President of the Senate from 1973-1977.) And 13 of the

top 25 lobbyists are lawyers.

Some familiar names head the list of top lobbyists. Former state Sen. Zebulon V. Alley, a close ally of House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey, moved into the top spot this year, up from fourth in 1986. Alley displaced former top lobbyist Samuel H. Johnson, who ranks second this year and has ranked first or second every year the rankings have been published. In third place is J. Allen Adams, a former five-term House member who also placed third in 1986. Fourth was John R. Jordan Jr., another former legislator, who placed second in 1986 and first in 1982 and 1984.

Center Staffer Lori Ann Harris, who did the research on which the rankings are based, says, "It's no coincidence that lawyers and legislators make good lobbyists. It helps to be a lawyer, because a lawyer is more likely to understand how to draft a bill and what its implications will be. Former legislators naturally have more experience in the legislative process, and current legislators are more apt to trust a former member's judgment." As Sen. Don Kincaid (R-Caldwell) puts it, "If they've been in the trenches with you two or three times, there's got to be a camaraderie there."

The developing strength of public interest lobbyists* is exemplified by William E. Holman, an

*The Center defines a public interest lobby as one which seeks a collective good, the achievement of which will not selectively and materially benefit the membership of the organization. This definition excludes groups which engage in some public interest lobbying but have as their primary purpose the benefit and protection of their membership.

environmental lobbyist, who moved from 10th in 1984 to sixth in 1986 to fifth this year; Margot Roten, a lawyer and lobbyist for the N.C. Legal Services Resource Center, representing the poor, who ranked 17th; and Roslyn S. Savitt, lobbyist for the State Council for Social Legislation, who ranked 19th.

Roten and Savitt were joined by three other women in the rankings—Patricia J. Shore (25th) who represents R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company; Fran Preston (27th) of the N.C. Retail Merchants Association; and Jo Ann Norris (31st) of the Public School Forum of N.C. This is the first appearance in the rankings for Roten, Savitt, Shore, and Preston, and the first time more than one woman has been ranked.

Legislative experience and legal expertise are not the only requirements. “Hard work, determina-

tion and perseverance can pay off, too,” adds Coble. “For instance, Bill Holman was just out of college when he began lobbying the legislature. Over the years, he has moved up steadily so that legislators now seek him out because he does his homework and represents a growing citizen concern about protecting North Carolina’s environment. Now he ranks fifth among all lobbyists.”

Holman says he relies on citizens and environmental groups at the local level to help make him more effective. “You could call it the heat and light theory. I try to provide the light, and the local conservation groups provide the heat,” he says.

The lobbyist who moved up the most in the rankings is C. Ronald Aycock, lobbyist for the N.C. Association of County Commissioners. Aycock was 17th in 1986; this year he placed ninth. Also

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Rankings of the Most Influential Lobbyists in the 1987 General Assembly

Previous Ranking
(Where Applicable)

1987-88 Ranking	1985-86	1983-84	1981-82	Lobbyist	Former Legislator	Law- yer
1	4	3	5	Zebulon D. Alley of the Raleigh office of the Waynesville law firm of Alley, Killian, & Kersten, representing 25 clients with business/industry, health care, and utility interests, including Burlington Industries, the Microelectronics Center of N.C., N.C. Vending Association, Kaiser Health Foundation Plan of N.C., and Texasgulf Chemicals Company.	yes	yes
2	1	2	2	Samuel H. Johnson of the Raleigh law firm of Johnson, Gamble, Hearn, & Vinegar, representing 23 clients with business/industry interests, including N.C. Associated Industries, N.C. Automobile Dealers Association, N.C. Association of Certified Public Accountants, and the Soap and Detergent Association.	yes	yes
3	3			J. Allen Adams of the Raleigh law firm of Adams, McCullough, & Beard, representing 16 clients with business/industry, arts and health care interests, including Arts Advocates of N.C., N.C. Cemetery Association, N.C. Association of Electric Cooperatives, and GSX Chemical Services.	yes	yes

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Rankings of the Most Influential Lobbyists in the 1987 General Assembly *continued*

1987-88 Ranking	Previous Ranking (Where Applicable)			Lobbyist	Former Legislator	Law- yer
	1985-86	1983-84	1981-82			
4	2	1	1	John R. Jordan Jr. of the Raleigh law firm of Jordan, Price, Wall, Gray, & Jones, representing 17 clients with business/industry and health care interests, including the N.C. Bankers Association, N.C. Association of Life Insurance Companies, N.C. Day Care Association, American Express Company, and the N.C. Association of ABC Boards.	yes	yes
5	6	10		William E. Holman , representing the N.C. Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Conservation Council of N.C., the N.C. Chapter of the American Planning Association, and the N.C. Chapter of the Wildlife Federation.	no	no
6	8			William C. Rustin Jr. of the N.C. Retail Merchants Association.	no	no
7				W. Paul Pulley Jr. of the Durham law firm of Pulley, Watson, King, & Hofler, representing business/industry, government, and health care interests, including Allstate Insurance Company, Consolidated Coin Caterers Corporation, N.C. Aquarium Society, High Point Enterprise, and Wake County, N.C.	yes	yes
8	5	4	4	J. Ruffin Bailey of the Raleigh law firm of Bailey & Dixon, representing the N.C. Credit Union League, N.C. Bus Association, N.C. Beer Wholesalers Association, and the American Insurance Association.	yes	yes
9	17	15		C. Ronald Aycock of the N.C. Association of County Commissioners.	no	yes
10				Jay M. Robinson , representing the University of North Carolina System.	no	no
11				David M. Blackwell , then with the N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers, and now publisher of the <i>North Carolina Lawyers Weekly</i> .	yes	yes
12				James B. Hunt Jr. , former governor and now attorney in the Raleigh law firm of Poyner & Spruill, representing nine clients with business/industry interests including R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, U.S. Sprint Communications Company, Electricities of N.C., and the National Multi-Housing Council.	no*	yes

*Hunt was a N.C. Senate officer when he was Lt. Governor.

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Rankings of the Most Influential Lobbyists in the 1987 General Assembly *continued*

Previous Ranking
(Where Applicable)

1987-88				Former	Law-
Ranking	1985-86	1983-84	1981-82	Legislator	yer
13				no	yes
14				yes	no
15	7	5		yes	no
16	15	14		no	no
17				no	yes
18				no	yes
19				no	no
20				no	no
21	10			yes	no
22				no	no
23 (tie)	12			no	yes
23 (tie)				no	no
25				no	no
26				no	no

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Rankings of the Most Influential Lobbyists in the 1987 General Assembly *continued*

Previous Ranking (Where Applicable)			Lobbyist	Former Legislator	Law- yer
1987-88 Ranking	1985-86	1983-84 1981-82			
27			Fran Preston of the N.C. Retail Merchants Association.	no	no
28	9	8	Alan D. Briggs , Deputy Attorney General for Policy and Planning in the N.C. Department of Justice.	no	yes
29	16	7	Virgil McBride , representing the N.C. Pharmaceutical Association, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, National Automobile Transporters Association, N.C. Telephone Association, and the N.C. Trucking Association.	no	no
30			William A. Pully of the North Carolina Hospital Association.	no	yes
31	18		Jo Ann Norris of the Public School Forum of North Carolina.	no	no
32			Samuel L. Whitehurst of the N.C. Soft Drink Association.	yes	no

moving up were Alley, Holman, and William C. Rustin Jr., president of the N.C. Retail Merchants Association.

Among the other newcomers to this list who Coble characterizes as likely to be perennial heavy-hitters as lobbyists are former Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. of Raleigh and Wilson, whose corporate law clients include Pepsico, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, and Electricities of North Carolina, and who ranks 12th in this survey; former state Rep. W. Paul Pulley of Durham, whose clients include Burlington Industries and Allstate Insurance and who ranks seventh in his first stab at lobbying; Durwood F. "Butch" Gunnells of the N.C. State Employees Association, who ranks 13th; and former state Rep. Roger W. Bone of Rocky Mount, representing several clients including the Automobile Dealers Association of N.C. and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of N.C., who ranks 14th.

Coble also points out that the rankings indicate

a changing of the guard for several organizations that traditionally have lobbyists ranked among the most influential. UNC System President William C. Friday, who ranked 13th in 1986, has retired, but UNC Vice President Jay Robinson, who has assumed most of Friday's lobbying chores, ranks 10th in the current survey. Similarly, Alan D. Briggs was ranked ninth in 1986 when he lobbied for the N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers, but Briggs since has gone to work for the N.C. Attorney General. Briggs' replacement, former legislator David Blackwell, is ranked 11th in the 1988 rankings—but now Blackwell has left that job to be publisher of the *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly*. And in 1986, Jo Ann Norris placed 18th in the rankings for her work as the lobbyist for the N.C. Association of Educators. Norris has left the NCAE for the Public School Forum of North Carolina, and her replacement, Patric Mullen, ranks 26th in the 1988 rankings.

During the 1987 session, there were 412 lobbyists registered with the Secretary of State's office. They represented 395 different companies or organizations. There were also 258 legislative liaisons representing 63 different agencies in the executive branch of state government. By the end of the 1988 short session, there were 688 registered lobbyists. Unlike figures compiled by the Secretary of State's office, these calculations count each lobbyist only once. They do not reflect multiple listings when a lobbyist represents more than one client. These rankings were based on lobbyists' performance during the 1987 long session.

The lobbyist rankings are available for \$4.15 from the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602. They are a companion piece to *Article II: A Guide to the 1987-88 N.C. Legislature* and the 1988 rankings of legislators' effectiveness, which are available for \$16.80 plus \$1.50 postage from the Center. Both prices include postage and handling. The *Guide* is a directory of legislators serving in the 1987-88 sessions that includes each legislator's education, occupation, list of bills introduced, voting record, and effectiveness rankings before 1988.



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floor. That should give bills a thorough airing and allow more legislators to bone up on the issues.

Hardison, who chaired the Senate Commerce Committee for the past two sessions, says his experience proves that. The committee was formed out of the three old committees on Banking, Public Utilities, and Small Business. Rather than have their issues lost in the shuffle, Hardison said, these industries found a more efficient and coordinated Senate system under the merged committee.


Of course, the General Assembly uses subcommittees now to resolve tough issues, although they are not standing subcommittees, as is common in the U.S. Congress. And critics of a smaller committee system with regular subcommittees point out that the need for a large number of subcommittees will merely duplicate what the legislature now has—a large number of committees, regardless of whether they are called committees or subcommittees.

Other arguments also enter the debate. Supporters of the current system, for example, note that the large number of committees provides a good training ground for new legislators. Freshman Democratic senators, and House members in only their third term, often can get minor committee chairmanships. There they learn how to handle a committee and prepare themselves for the days when they might be Appropriations, Finance, or Judiciary Committee chairmen.

Also, Mavretic argues that committee chairmen must learn the rules well. With so many members holding a chairmanship of one kind or another, a greater number of members develop a good understanding of the chamber rules.

One final argument is mentioned by both sides. With a great many committees, almost every Democratic legislator gets to be a chairman, and that is good for legislative egos. It also may look good to the homefolks. "Everyone wants to be a hero, and the way to make them a hero is to make them a committee chairman," says Hipps.

That's not the point, Mavretic replies. "If you think the public out there in Tarboro gives one whit that I'm the chairman of a committee, you're nuts," notes Mavretic.

Still, most legislators would much prefer to be a committee chairman than just another member—and it takes a lot of committee chairmanships to feed the needs of 170 legislators. 

FOOTNOTES

¹*The Book of the States 1986-87*, Council of State Governments, Lexington, Ky., p. 123.

²Gerry Hancock, unpublished paper in support of the Citizen Legislature Act (SB 5406), 1983 General Assembly. The bill was approved by the Senate 35-12, but failed in the House when the Rule Committee declined to act on the bill.

³For a closer look at the development of the legislative staff and its expertise, see Ran Coble, "Three Key Trends Shaping the General Assembly Since 1971," *North Carolina Insight*, Vol. 9, No. 4, June 1987, p. 35.