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# Opinion

## Is Northam a racist?

After a search, it was difficult to find anything that Virginia Governor Ralph Northam has done that would arouse so much animosity towards him. So much so that his detractors called upon him to resign, literally within hours of a photo revelation allegedly to be Northam in either black face or in a Ku Klux Klan costume. However, when one remembers that we have a seriously divided and partisan electorate looking to find any way to miniaturize the competition, and with so many also eager to use the racial card to gain advantage, all begins to come into focus.

A current matter has demonstrated how ignitable the racial thing is. It came in a press conference with Gov. Ralph Northam, he providing his explanation for a photo determined to display racial overtones. He said in a prepared speech, followed by a Q and A session, that he does not believe the photograph in his 1984 medical school yearbook, depicting a person in black face alongside one in a KKK outfit, was him. "I am not either of those people in that photo" he told media at the executive mansion in Richmond last week. He views the photo as "shocking and horrific."

He did confess to having won a dance contest in San Antonio in 1984, where he was stationed in the U.S. military after completing his medical school training. On that occasion, he won a competition by dressing up to imitate Michael Jackson, using a costume and shoe polish. He said he'd made mistakes and lives up to them, having grown with age and maturity. He repeated multiple times how sorry he was to cause people upset but he won't resign.

During the last week, Northam has been repeatedly encouraged to leave his gubernatorial position,

these demands coming at him from left and right, although his Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax, while admitting he was shaken by the photo, has not abandoned Northam as also old friends and acquaintances have stood by him. Other Democrats have used proverbial jackboots to trounce him: They are suspected in part at least to be motivated by the Oval Office prize.

Those Democrats running for president were joined by a crowd of African-Americans, including the Reverend Al Sharpton. Sharpton, a man whose own critics say of him that he's to blame for the deterioration of U.S. race relations. He and others who've risen through the ranks to "stardom" have declared outrage over Northam while their statements are not always free of hypocrisy.

What bothers me about Northam is that he has been clean throughout his 59 years. I wonder how many of those "throwing stones" could make that statement and stand the test of scrutiny. Further, Northam is a family guy with a wife of 32 years and a son and daughter. He has no record of any call girl coming forward to report a payoff to keep quiet, an *Access Hollywood* tape, or committed a crime of any kind.

His apologies come across as honest and sincere. He's pained at knowing he may inadvertently have hurt people. Many people jumping all over Northam claim virtue by their Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Yet, all that holier-than-thou stuff is tossed overboard when they cannot accept a man professing his innocence and kindly asking for it to be recognized. Apparently, their ambition for power, fame and riches has blinded them.

(Gene H. McIntyre shares his opinion frequently in the *Keizertimes*.)

gene h. mcintyre

## Schrader and Alzheimer's fight

To the Editor:

The Alzheimer's Association estimates that there are more than 65,000 Oregonians living with Alzheimer's disease and more than 184,000 Alzheimer's caregivers in our state. As an Alzheimer's advocate and Alzheimer's Association staff member who interacts with these individuals on a daily basis, it is my honor to represent them.

Congress recently passed the Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act with a strong bipartisan vote and I want to thank Representative Schrader for championing this meaningful legislation.

The BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act will allow effective Al-

zheimer's public health interventions to be implemented across the country. Thanks to Rep. Schrader's support for the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act, we will now be better able to fight this devastating disease as we continue to work towards our vision of a world without Alzheimer's—and we look forward to seeing him continue to prioritize this disease as a public health crisis that must be addressed.

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States—which is why Congress must remain committed to action on this devastating disease. By applying a public health approach to reduce risk, detect early symptoms, and advance care, Rep. Schrader is helping to change the trajectory of this devastating disease.

**Alise Liepnieks**  
Alzheimer's Association  
Salem

letters

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# Web Poll Results

Who do you think will win Super Bowl 53?

LA Rams: 32%

New England Patriots: 68%

Vote in a new poll every Thursday!

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

One year:  
\$35 in Marion County,  
\$43 outside Marion County,  
\$55 outside Oregon

### PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

Publication No: USPS 679-430

### POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:  
Keizertimes Circulation  
142 Chemawa Road N.  
Keizer, OR 97303

Periodical postage paid at  
Salem, Oregon

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## Keizer's first police chief passes

**Robert J. Thomas**

July 4, 1932 - Jan. 28, 2019

Keizer's first chief of police, Robert J. Thomas, age 86, passed away peacefully at his home with his family at his side on Jan. 28, 2019.

Robert (Bob) was born in Mt. Angel, on July 4, 1932 to Lawrence and Clara (Schmitz). Thomas had four sisters and one brother. Bob and his family moved to a farm in Silverton and had several jobs while growing up. He learned to plow behind a horse, bale hay, pick hops, raise pigs, cows and chickens, and had a newspaper route all before graduating high school in 1950. Bob joined the U.S. Air Force at the beginning of the Korean War. He left home for Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) on his mother's birthday, Aug. 8, 1950. He

was stationed at Ent AFB in Colorado Springs, Colo., working as an A.P.E. (Air Police). That is where he met his future wife, Betty Lou Lang. They wed on Feb. 13, 1954, and were married for 65 years.

Bob will always be remembered as a bright, shining light in the various communities and churches he served. He was most proud of being the first police chief of the newly organized city of Keizer. Prior to that he was captain at the Marion County Sheriff's Office. He was a 4th degree member of the Knights of Columbus, Grand Knight at both the Salem 5060 Council and Keizer 10594 and 4th degree Assembly 900. Bob was a founding member of St. Edward

Catholic Church in Keizer, where he met Rev. Charles Taaffe and together they started the Father Taaffe Foundation to support unwed mothers. He became a long term member of the board while Catholic Community Services took over the program. Bob enjoyed camping, hunting, fishing and woodworking.

He was very proud of his children, Susan (Bill) Ridgway, Ron (Kim) Thomas, and Robert Jr. II (Gina) Thomas, plus seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Melvin, and by two of his own children, Robert Jr. and Brenda Lee.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019, 10:30 a.m. at St. Edward Catholic Church in Keizer with Rev. Gary Zezr officiating.

Virgil T. Golden Funeral Service assisted the family.



R. Thomas

## Shoe drive rubber hits the road



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

McNary High School students Zahvia Stokes and Joe Alvarado spoke with members of the Keizer Council Monday, Feb. 4, to remind them and the community that AVID's annual shoe drive is in full effect. AVID students are collecting athletic shoes and boots to provide for students in need. The Celtics are also battling other Salem-Keizer schools in a race to collect the most shoes, socks and shoelaces. Items can be dropped off at McNary High School in the commons between now and Feb. 26.

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