

H. Parks Helms

January 14, 2010

Ms. Jennifer Roberts
Chairperson
Mecklenburg Board of
County Commissioners

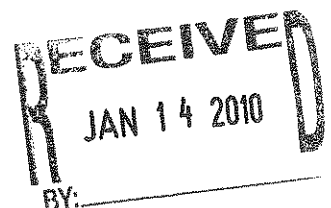
Dear Jennifer:

Please accept my resignation as chairman of the Mecklenburg County ABC Board effective upon receipt of this letter. I had hoped to tender my resignation yesterday after a meeting with the Chairman of the State ABC Commission in Raleigh. Enclosed is a copy of a statement (prepared by his office) which he was to have made at a joint news conference. Unfortunately, the Chairman chose to make remarks at the Commission meeting yesterday morning in which he portrayed me as an example of a "culture of entitlement." As you will note, this is inconsistent with the enclosed statement.

I take issue with his use of my name as a scapegoat for the troubled North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control system which those in power have condoned for generations. I was particularly troubled by Governor Perdue authorizing the Chairman to trample on my name and my reputation for political gain. I will measure my ethical standards and character against the State Chairman and the Governor's other appointees to the State ABC Commission at any time. The calls for my resignation by fellow local ABC Board members to shift blame to me for years of negligent oversight is disappointing. The dissection and distortion by the tabloid media of every statement I have made about the November 18th dinner have been painful.

I have given the most productive years of my life to the people of North Carolina and Mecklenburg County. I have never felt "entitled" to anything. On the contrary, the cost to my personal life in terms of earnings, lost time with Eleanor, my children and grand-children have been enormous. The impact of this media frenzy has so damaged my image that I have felt compelled to resign from the Board of Directors of Florence Crittenton Services and the Advisory Board of Child Care Resources.

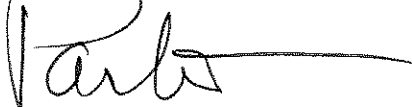
I have reached a time in my life where all I have is a reputation. My net worth does not consist of money or "things of value" ... it is in family and true friends who have stood by me in difficult times. I am deeply saddened by the events of recent days. Although I have been advised by the preeminent Alcoholic Beverage Control lawyer in North Carolina at the UNC



School of Government that I have violated no rule, no regulation, no law, I regret that my action has resulted in my decision to resign.

Finally this - as I try to recover from this experience, I am going to follow the advice that I have given to my children and grandchildren for many years – Remember Who You Are.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Parks Helms", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

H. Parks Helms

cc: Harry Jones

Calvin McDougal

I want to thank Parks Helms for coming here today to meet with me and to discuss the difficult circumstances we both are facing.

Since July, Parks has chaired the board of the largest ABC system in our state. It is an intricate system with many moving parts. It is a system with complexities that are difficult to appreciate from the outside. Even with decades of leadership experience in other areas of government in North Carolina, taking the leadership of this board is not something to be considered lightly, and I don't believe he has done that.

At the ABC Commission we understand that Chairman Helms did not know in advance of the vendor sponsorship of the dinner for Mecklenburg ABC employees, and he has acknowledged that when he learned of the arrangement he did not fully grasp the ramifications of that sponsorship and its effect on public confidence in the ABC system.

I appreciate his strong support for strict standards to govern interactions between vendors and the members and employees of local ABC boards. We agree that clear rules are best so there will be no ambiguity in the ethical practices expected of ABC boards and their employees. We agree that boards need to make sure that they are seeking direction from their attorneys about complying with the spirit and the letter of the laws. We agree that guidelines need to (deleted) ensure that local ABC boards are properly carrying out their fiduciary responsibility as stewards of public funds.

Parks Helms made a serious error in judgment, but it would be a mistake to lay all the blame on him. Chairman Helms did not organize the extravagant events sponsored by vendors. He received inappropriate direction from those long in place in the Mecklenburg system who have operated within a culture of entitlement. It is that culture, which exists at far too many of the local ABC systems in the state, that we at the ABC Commission need to address.

At the State ABC Commission we are continuing to examine what happened at the dinner in Mecklenburg County.

We understand that Parks Helms has verbally notified the local ABC board and the county commissioners of his decision to resign, and on their behalf, I accept the resignation of Parks Helms as chair of the Mecklenburg board. His resignation concludes any Commission consideration of his role in this matter, except that he has pledged to work with us to understand what occurred, why it happened, and how it can be prevented in Mecklenburg County and elsewhere in the state. We appreciate his willingness to assist the Commission.