

Lindsey Prather

Media Report

Draft

June 1, 2022

Part I Introduction

This report reviews electronically available news stories on Lindsey Prather, candidate for the NC House, District 115.

The Table of Contents in **Part II** of the report is a useful guide to the entire report and can be used as a stand-alone summary. In one section, it surveys the bulk of the news file, through the headlines we have assigned to each item.

Part III, the **Highlights** section identifies key points taken from available media articles.

Parts IV, **The News File**, contain edited copies of the most relevant electronically available stories.

We hope you find this useful.

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Part III Prather: Highlights from Media Coverage

Summary

We found very little media coverage regarding Prather. These are the only points that emerged.

Background

- Graduated from the University of North Carolina-Asheville with her twin sister Rachel. A brother Nick was also in the same class. (Asheville Citizen Times, 5/16/10)
- In 2019 became “Assistant Director of Transfer Admissions at UNCA.” Prather is also a UNCA alumna who transferred to the college in 2007. She now dedicates her time to assisting current and prospective transfer students. (University Wire, 9/29/19)

Politics

In early 2022, she became the sole Democratic candidate for the 115th District seat being vacated by Democrat Brian Turner. She had been a campaign worker for Turner, who praised her.

- And in District 116, educator Lindsey Prather has thrown her hat into the ring - a move endorsed by Turner, for whom she has served as a campaign worker. "I think she is uniquely positioned to talk about the kitchen table issues that the folks of 116 are really concerned about," he says. "I think she stands a good chance of running and winning." (Mountain Xpress, 1/5/22)

This is a brief summary of her platform.

- Lindsey Prather, a teacher, is a Democrat from Candler. Her main issues, according to her website (www.pratherfornc.com), are education, good government, access to health care and affordability, environment and equality. She has no primary challenger. (Tribune Papers, Buncombe County. 4/16/22)

Part IV Prather: The News File, 2010-22

2010

MAY 2010 Graduates UNC-Asheville

As if graduating from college wasn't enough of a milestone, Lindsey, Rachel and Nick Prather took commencement a step further Saturday morning when they became the first trio of siblings in UNC Asheville's history to graduate in the same class.

The twins, both sociology majors and North Carolina Teaching Fellows, and their brother, a music technology major, received their diplomas along with 433 other spring graduates. Also receiving degrees were 34 summer graduates and 207 winter graduates, whose ceremony was snowed out in December. Brevard and Warren Wilson also held commencements Saturday.

Keynote speaker for the UNCA ceremony was civil rights leader and "freedom singer" Bernice Johnson Reagon, who was awarded an honorary degree along with UNC Chapel Hill basketball coaches Dean Smith and Roy Williams.

If the Prather siblings, who are from Cary, weren't already on other career paths, they easily could get jobs as ambassadors for what is now their alma mater. The three alternately referred to the "incredible" professors, the huge variety of "niches" on campus to engage with people of widely divergent interests, and the rich connection between the campus and the city.

"I've met so many different people and had such a growing experience, intellectually and emotionally," Rachel said. "UNC Asheville fosters growth in every area."

While the twins and their brother were happy to have each other close by, they were far from a single unit during their college years.

"We all had our own things going on, our own groups of friends and different activities," Lindsey said. "It was kind of funny when we'd run into each other on the quad, like, 'Oh, I forgot you went here.'"

They got more family during sophomore year when their parents, Pam and King Prather, discovered they loved Western North Carolina and bought a second home in Old Fort.

"It's been wonderful to have a place where we can visit with the kids without them having to drive 3 1/2 hours back to Cary," Pam said. "But if none of them end up settling in the area, we're not selling the house!"

The girls will be licensed to teach high-school social studies. Nick's goal is to create music through technology and/or work in a sound studio. All three may eventually go to graduate school.

But first, the graduation gift. "We're taking the whole family on safari in Kenya this summer," Pam Prather said. "Then they can come back and start 'real' life." (Asheville Citizen Times, 5/16/10)

2017

NOV 2017 Hosts Young Democrats Panel

The Ingles Mountain View Room in the Sherrill Center stands well-lit and full of curious attendees, taking their seats and waiting for the panel to begin. The three panelists settle at the table in the front of the room, each equipped with a microphone, ready to respond thoughtfully to the hostess's questions. As the discussion unfolds, the perceived dynamic of mere panelists addressing an audience transforms into women discussing their power and impact with the female leaders of the next generation.

The panel, hosted by the Buncombe County Young Democrats, specially picked three women. OurVOICE Executive Director Angelica Wind, Chancellor Mary K. Grant and Mayor Esther Manheimer discuss strategy for women's success. Photo by Bridgette Perrot

leaders in the Asheville community to speak: city of Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer, UNC Asheville Chancellor Mary K. Grant and OurVOICE Executive Director Angelica Wind.

"We chose speakers from diverse fields to show that leadership skills can be applied to every center in our society," said Lindsey Prather, hostess of the panel. "I'm deeply grateful that I live in a city with so many strong and capable women to look up to and that these panelists were willing to give up their time to be with us tonight."

The three women were asked a series of questions, some prepared specifically for the event, others prompted by the audience at the end of the panel. These questions primarily revolved around leadership, balance and mentorship to the next generation of leaders. The common thread of this event could easily be identified as strategy and how it led these women to success.

"One of the skills I had in addition to my brand spanking new college degree was I knew how to type," Grant said in reference to her first job after college. "I knew what I needed to do was just get my foot in the door. I figured if I was there, I could then move to something else and that happened."

Wind recalled how she started as a paralegal and later changed her career path, but still utilized the skills she learned earlier in life. These skills from the past later aided Wind in her professional career, a career which she said continues to change and grow.

"Every opportunity is a learning opportunity, even if they're mistakes. Even if it is working at jobs that normally would not be ideal professional goals, they do feed in, it is just a matter of being able to look and clean those skills and being able to apply them in a different field," Wind said. "So, my field was law and it continues to be law, because I feel as human beings we are evolving and for me I've always been really cautious to think that I've arrived."

The panel did not follow the formal, hierarchical guise of the orthodox panel discussion. The mood was light-hearted, with genuine laughter and the audible signals of agreement and engagement dispersed throughout the evening. But the atmosphere did not lack seriousness at times" the struggle of being a woman in a leadership position, as the panelists discussed, remains a shared experience.

“What is a struggle for me is how to have a fulfilling professional career so that you personally feel like you are always doing something meaningful for you, because that’s what we expect in this day and time” that we will do something meaningful, hopefully,” Manheimer said. “You hope to be able to do it. Not everyone can do it, obviously, but you strive for it because then what’s life worth living then balancing that with this crazy world we live in? To me, that’s difficult.”

Manheimer noted, aside from her position as mayor, she also serves as a partner in a law firm, in addition to wearing the titles of wife and mother.

“The ‘doing it all’ part” it goes without saying” is probably the biggest challenge about keeping it relevant and fulfilling,” Manheimer said.

All three panelists agreed the role of mentors, both the mentors in their own lives and the mentors they strive to be, serve as an integral part of anyone’s success as a leader.

“If you haven’t found out already, most people are pretty generous with their time and their experience and what you have to do is ask and say, ‘Can I talk to you some more?’” Grant said. “Mentors have been really important and have come from some surprising places, too. I think it’s about being open to that.”

Grant also tackled the hesitation mentees may face regarding suggestions made by their mentors which puts them out of their comfort zone.

“When you have mentors and people that you trust, people who know you, and they tap on your shoulder and say, ‘You should think about this’ and, ‘You should consider this,’ listen to them,” Grant said. “Good mentors are not going to let you down. They are not going to steer you down a path that is not a good thing.”

Wind, a first generation Mexican-American, provided a different perspective on mentors from the other two panelists.

“There’s this notion in the United States, that if you work hard enough and if you pull yourself up by the bootstraps, anything is accomplishable and that’s not actually true,” Wind said. “Speaking as a woman of color, I know for me, the doors were a little bit harder to open. So, what I feel was key to get me where I’m at is the fact that I had mentors that were here to guide me, mentors that were able to help introduce me to folks that would help me open up these doors.”

Manheimer, who noted her career is in a male-dominated field, said mentorship can come just from observing those within one’s path.

“I’m in a fairly male-dominated field and not just in law, but in civil litigation within law is male-dominated. So, within law, my mentors have been men more often than not. Law has kind of a tradition of mentorship and so it’s already sort of built in,” Manheimer said. “For me, you may inadvertently be my mentor at any given time. I think it’s very important to watch and observe how other people do what they do.”

The evening ended after a multitude of questions from the audience, which ranged from young children to college students, all with the same level of engagement and curiosity for the panelists and their advice to potential future leaders. (U-Wire, 11/14/17)

2019

SEP 2019 Assistant Director Transfer Admissions UNCA

According to the Spring 2019 UNC Asheville enrollment census, the enrollment of transfer students has decreased 6.1 percent over the last four years. The loss may be attributed to credit requirement confusion and difficulties in finding a sense of community among already established students.

"It seems like me and every other person who has transferred to UNCA have gotten lost in some kind of shuffle," said Carrie Emerson, a senior transfer student at UNCA.

Emerson grew up in Conover and transferred to UNCA from the Oxford College of Emory University. Oxford College is a two-year, junior college located in Oxford, Georgia. The school is dedicated to preparing freshmen and sophomore students to transfer into Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

"I graduated highschool in 2014 and it is going to be 2020 by the time I graduate," she said. "It has been so confusing trying to figure out how I can stay on a fixed graduation time line at UNCA."

Gary Ettari has been an associate professor of English at UNCA for the past 15 years. Although he was not a transfer student himself, he has acted as an academic advisor for multiple transfer students.

"The enrollment of transfer students has been a pretty steady trickle," he said. "Often from community colleges around the area."

Ettari said transferring from a community college could be tricky, though.

"If you're not decided on a major you might not have as focused a plan as somebody who always knew they wanted to be an English major," he said. "You could just sort of ease into it maybe a bit more seamlessly than somebody coming in as a transfer student."

"I do think that transfer students need a bit more guidance," Ettari said. "The university works hard to make as many accommodations for students coming in as possible."

Lindsey Prather is the recently appointed Assistant Director of Transfer Admissions at UNCA. Prather is also a UNCA alumna who transferred to the college in 2007. She now dedicates her time to assisting current and prospective transfer students.

"I help connect them with other resources on campus to make their transition to our school as seamless as possible," she said. "I work with staff around the campus to uncover barriers that transfer students may face in transitioning to UNC Asheville, and to develop solutions to address those barriers."

Jonathan Carlson is a transfer student from Belmont College in Nashville, Tennessee. He shared a similar account to that of Emerson. He said he was still unsure how his credits from his previous liberal arts college have transferred. Carlson transferred to UNCA this semester and is beginning his third year of college.

"I want to finish as quickly as possible, get my degree and move on," the French major said.

Carlson said UNCA had always been his second choice, and just like Emerson, he was drawn to the campus by cheaper in-state tuition costs and a desire to re-evaluate their educational paths.

"I didn't know anyone before coming here, making friends has been easier here than my other college," Carlson said. "I've been trying to go with the flow and hang out with the people I meet in class. I have a little group now which is nice."

Emerson said her experience was a bit different.

"I had a really hard time making friends and fitting in to what I thought was a budding social scene," she said. "I didn't find my place until I got placed into a dorm with a couple of other people, and honestly if I hadn't lived on campus I wouldn't have made a single friend at UNCA."

The philosophy major said she found it difficult to relate to the traditional, four-year students during classes and school events. The campus community at her previous college had been extremely tight-knit because all of the students were required to live on campus.

"You walk down the sidewalk at Oxford and you know every single person you're walking past,"

Emerson said. "So coming to UNCA was a huge shock."

"If you're not a part of that initial freshman group that goes through orientation together then it's really hard to find a place socially on campus," she said.

For now, both students are focused on finishing college to continue their educational growth and begin their careers. Carlson said he has been working with the Study Abroad Office toward spending a semester in Germany. Emerson said she is focused on putting her head down and doing her best work for her official final year of college. (University Wire, 9/29/19)

2022

JAN 2022 Was Campaign Worker For Turner

It started on Nov. 29, when Rep. Susan Fisher announced on the floor of the N.C. House that she would step down as District 114's representative.

Just hours later, Rep. Brian Turner announced he would not seek reelection to a fifth term for House District 116.

And Dec. 3, Rep. John Ager announced that he, too, would not seek reelection in District 115, after first winning the House seat in 2015.

All three of the multi-term Democrats representing Buncombe County in the N.C. House had thus bowed out of the 2022 election cycle. Jeff Rose, chair of the Buncombe County Democratic Party, described the string of announcements in a Dec. 5 statement to fellow party members as "a tough week if you're a Buncombe Democrat."

"It's sad for us. Collectively, the folks we're losing have had many decades of experience serving in the legislature," Rose tells Xpress. At the same time, he continues, the vacancies will create opportunities for new faces within the party.

REASONS FOR LEAVIN'

The three representatives offer a range of reasons for stepping down, including a demanding legislative schedule and newly drawn district lines.

Fisher, who has served in the N.C. General Assembly since 2004, called her decision "difficult and in many ways, sad" in a Nov. 30 press release but said she planned to spend more time in Asheville and with her family who live abroad. She did not respond to multiple requests for further comment.

In a press release, Turner cited the increasing length and unpredictability of the legislative session as the primary reasons for his decision. Although the General Assembly is supposed to wrap up its main session at the end of June, coinciding with the end of the state's fiscal year, recent years have seen lawmakers work well into the fall. (The annual pay for state legislators, just under \$14,000, has not increased since 1995.)

Speaking with Xpress, Turner adds that, while the newly drawn districts appear to resemble those of maps deemed unconstitutional gerrymanders in 2011 and in 2016, the lines weren't a factor in choosing not to run.

"For the most part, the district remains pretty similar to what it was that I won 2014 through 2018," Turner says. "At the end of the day, the new map didn't really factor into my decision because it's very similar to the district I had won three times already."

Meanwhile, Rep. Ager wrote in a statement released Dec. 3 that he was ready for a new generation of lawmakers to tackle the issues facing Western North Carolina. In a Dec. 16 email to Xpress, Ager also noted that the redistricting process had played a role in his decision.

He cited an early version of the maps that would have shifted District 115 to become more competitive for Republicans, saying he would have run to keep the seat under those lines. "But I really wanted someone with fresh eyes to represent my constituents, and four terms are enough," he said.

UP NEXT

Fisher's retirement will be effective Monday, Jan. 31. Rose says local Democratic leaders are already preparing to fill the District 114 vacancy.

On Thursday, Jan. 6, the party will hold an election for the seat at its headquarters, 951 Old Fairview Road in Asheville, at 7 p.m. Roughly 80 members of the party's Executive Committee, composed of members who reside in District 114 based on the 2020 district map, may nominate a candidate and cast a ballot. The candidate who receives more than 50% of the vote will be formally appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper Tuesday, Feb. 1, and will serve out the remainder of the 2020-22 term.

So far, Rose says that only Leicester resident and former Buncombe County Board of Commissioners candidate Tylon Breeden has announced her candidacy for the seat, but he is expecting more party members to vie for the role. "There's a few other people I know who are very strongly considering it; I just don't want to get ahead of any of their announcements," he says.

In District 115, Eric Ager, a retired Navy commander and the eldest son of John Ager, announced his candidacy in a Dec. 6 press release. The junior Ager has listed mental health care, housing, cyber-security, environmental protection and public education among his priorities.

And in District 116, educator **Lindsey Prather** has thrown her hat into the ring - a move endorsed by Turner, for whom she has served as a campaign worker. "I think she is uniquely positioned to talk about the kitchen table issues that the folks of 116 are really concerned about," he says. "I think she stands a good chance of running and winning." (Mountain Xpress, 1/5/22)

APR 2022 Platform

DISTRICT 115

Lindsey Prather, a teacher, is a Democrat from Candler. Her main issues, according to her website (www.pratherfornc.com), are education, good government, access to health care and affordability, environment and equality. She has no primary challenger. (Tribune Papers, 4/16/22)

MAY 2022 No Primary Challenger In House Race

Pratik Bhakta, a hotelier in South Asheville, is leading the Republican primary for House District 115 by the slimmest of margins. Bhakta is edging out Sherry Higgins, a certified public accountant from Arden, by seven votes with all precincts reporting.

If the results hold, Bhakta will square off against Democrat Lindsey Prather in the general election. Prather, who didn't face a primary challenge, is a former Buncombe County Schools teacher who now works as a director of admission at UNCAshville.

The 115th District encompasses the southwest corner of Buncombe County, which is currently represented by Democrat Brian Turner. Turner is not seeking reelection.

North Carolina law allows candidates to request recounts in local elections if the final margin is at or less than 1%. Higgins said she intends to request a recount if she doesn't close the narrow gap through late-arriving absentee ballots. Under state election law, absentee ballots received after Election Day will be counted if they are postmarked on or before Election Day and received no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday after the election.

Bhakta said he expects the race to come down to a recount.

"As a proponent of voter integrity, I want to make sure everything's done properly," he said. "If my opponent wants a recount, I wholeheartedly welcome that." (ACT, 5/19/22)

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