

EXHIBIT 16

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Roswell's Wood says 'Ossoff' has off-puttingly Muslim ring

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When my family moved to Roswell in the 1960's, muted turmoil surrounded school integration. My mother had helped with voter registration of African-Americans.

At school, I was earmarked as "liberal" about racial integration. The African-American children, myself and a bewildered boy from the North were set in two rows, slightly removed from the class, an arrangement replicated on field trips, etc.

I understood little of the undercurrents: the bravery of the black students, the ways in which many white students who used the "n" word, were merely conforming to the words they heard.

It was elementary school for heaven's sakes!

Decades have passed since those days of racial distrust. Good schools and beautiful parks now symbolize Roswell. But I was discouraged to read a recent article in the New Yorker magazine.

Mayor Jere Wood makes a wry observation about a candidate for the April special election in the 6th Congressional District, Jon Ossoff.



“This isn’t a youth vote ... here,” he told me at his office, when I asked him about the makeup of the Siixth. “This is a mature voter base,” he paused.

“If you just say ‘Ossoff,’ some folks are gonna think, ‘Is he Muslim? Is he Lebanese? Is he Indian?’ It’s an ethnic-sounding name, even though he may be a white guy, from Scotland or wherever.”

What an interesting way to characterize Roswell’s voters!

Wood remarks how Ossoff’s name has an off-puttingly Muslim ring, not quite white.

I hope immigrants, who helped build Roswell and live here, note implications of Wood’s ‘mature voter,’ as one who votes based on race, religion or ancestral origin.

Maybe those days when many white students shunned black students are not so far away.

I equally hope that ‘mature’ voters respond to candidates’ integrity and ideas. Or is it still 1966 where “white guy” is the main qualification?

– Kareen Malone, Roswell

Tags

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