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Are schools forcing Ms. Barber out?

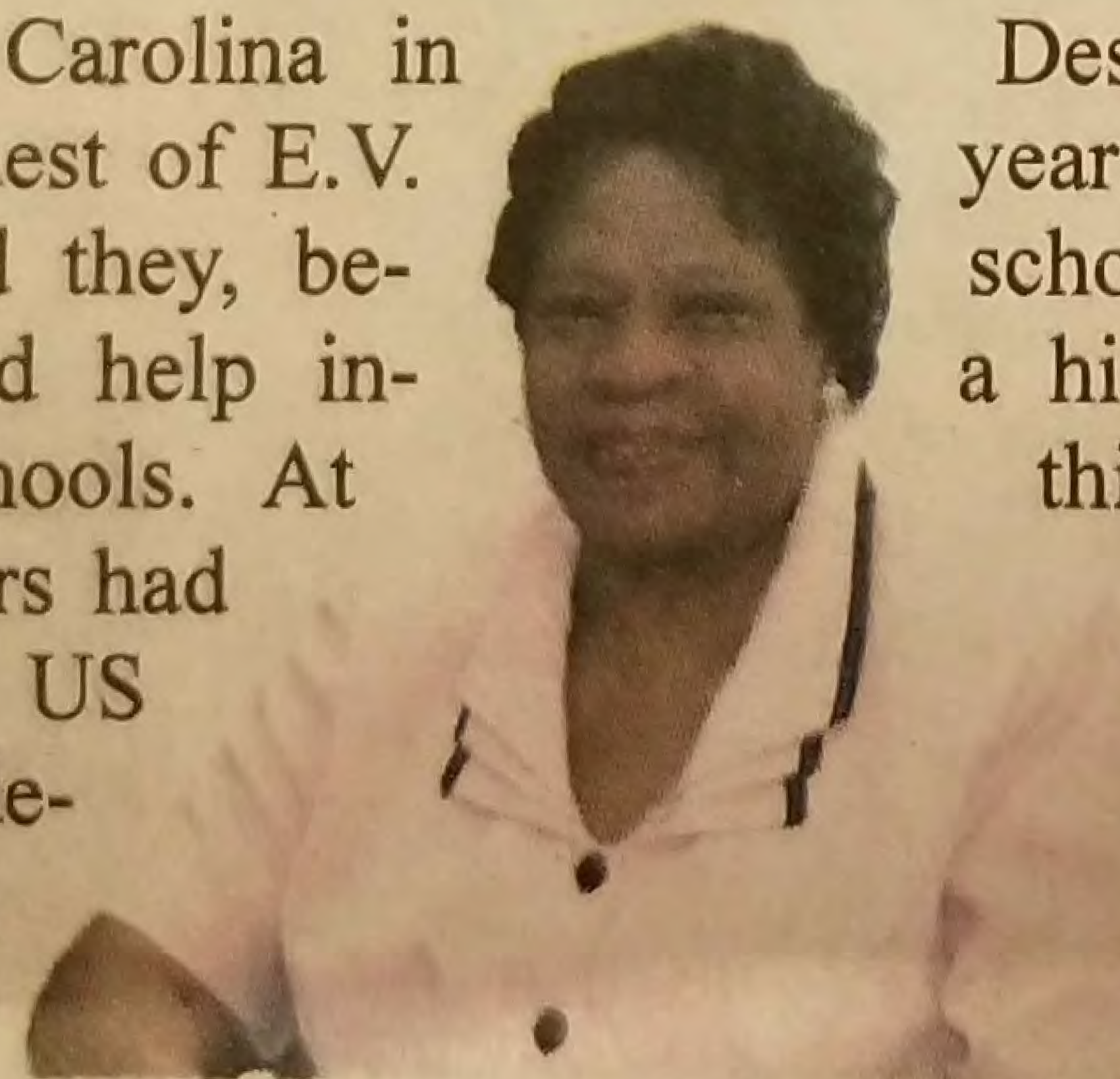
By MARY WAYT
Editor and Publisher

Eleanor Barber is an overcomer, a treasure that her son, Reverend Dr. William J. Barber Jr. believes should be used to inspire Washington County High School students today.

Instead, he contends she is facing isolation, harassment and bullying, pushing her out of a job that she has held since before schools here were integrated.

Ms. Barber and her husband

came to North Carolina in 1966, at the request of E.V. Wilkins. He, and they, believed they could help integrate local schools. At that time, 12 years had passed since the US Supreme Court declared that state laws segregating public schools was unconstitutional. However, schools in Washington County were still fully segregated.



Despite more than 50 years working in the school system, despite a history of service to this county and nation, "some of you want her to leave," Rev. Barber told the board during a meeting Thursday evening, November 8.

"Some of you want her to leave," he said, "not because she

is not proficient or unprofessional, but because she is old."

Rev. Barber is known nationally and internationally for his calls for a "moral revival," fighting for causes he believes are necessary, "to save the heart and soul of our democracy."

This time, his crusade is more personal. "There is no way I will not stand up for my own mother," he said.

"We, her family, cannot stand by and see her dishonored, es-

pecially by people of color who should know better."

"All these years, she has never been placed in isolation," Rev. Barber told the board, "even when she served racist white folk" in the late 1960s. Imagine, a trained office manager who now "doesn't even have a decent phone to use."

School officials have known about problems since at least July 10, Rev. Barber said, and issues See 'TREASURE,' back page

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