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Pumpkins and Clarence Thomas: It's that time of year

**By Thomas L. Jipping
and Phyllis Berry Myers**

What event in October each year brings evil, mean-spirited people out of the woodwork to vilify and oppress the object of their hatred? If you guessed Halloween, you were close. The real event is the anniversary of the installation of Clarence Thomas as the 106th Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Those who could not block his appointment in 1991 through lies and deceit continue trying to tarnish his appointment through the same tactic.

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Justice Thomas, you see, remains a both a symbol and a threat. He is a symbol of the emerging new black conservative movement, of diversity and independence of thought. As

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such, he is a threat to the political establishment that relies for its power on compliance and obedience. It cannot afford to have blacks think and do for themselves. It cannot forgive Clarence Thomas.

So each October the fangs come out and the stories are told all over again. This year's season-of-the-long-knives is especially vicious for

two reasons. First, the court is addressing some issues at the core of the liberal establishment's agenda. Voting rights and minority set-asides top that list. They are afraid of what the Court's black justice might say on those issues. Second, just as the fringe women's groups used Anita Hill and sexual harassment as a rallying cry for the 1992 elections, those groups want once again to incite women to storm the voting booth Nov. 8.

But sexual harassment is really not the agenda. If it were, the fringe women's groups would not have assaulted Clarence Thomas who, after all, helped engineer new sexual harassment guidelines when he was chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Those groups would be supporting Paula Corbin Jones in her sexual harassment lawsuit against Bill Clinton. Those groups would not have let Sen. Bob Packwood off the hook. Oh, that's

right, Bill Clinton and Bob Packwood do the bidding of the fringe women's groups on other issues like (say it with a whisper) abortion.

While Anita Hill was used as the vanguard of the 1991 assault on Justice Thomas, the latest round once again features Angela Wright, the so-called "second woman" allegedly harassed by Thomas. The Washington Post ran a huge piece Oct. 9 that told the same discredited story. Next week ABC will air a one-sided interview with Ms. Wright. And, three years after the fact, a new book will try to resurrect the allegations and recast the reputation of Thomas antagonists including Ms. Wright.

The 1994 spin would suggest that Ms. Wright was prevented from testifying in 1991 and that, if she had, the outcome would have been different. That political outcome, you must remember, is all the left cares about; the truth really doesn't mat-

ter. But Ms. Wright herself chose not to testify. In fact, as anti-Thomas journalist and author Timothy Phelps wrote in his 1992 book "Capitol Games," Anita Hill's camp opposed Wright's appearance. Democratic Senators got cold feet as well. Judge Thomas's supporters, on the other hand, especially the panel of women who testified in the wee hours of the morning on his behalf, relished the thought of Ms. Wright's testimony and hoped that she would personally take the witness chair. As one of those women put it, "We would have skinned her alive." It is only because she chose not to testify that she is currently available as a weapon against Justice Thomas.

Who is the real Angela Wright? She was fired from Rep. Charlie Rose's staff for incompetence and intemperate behavior. She was dismissed by the Agency for International Development under the same cloud and accused her AID

superior of racism and attempted to retaliate for the firing. She was fired by Clarence Thomas from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, again because she was incompetent and untrustworthy. This time she said that Thomas "had better watch his back." Though she insisted in 1991 that she was not accusing Thomas of sexual harassment, the claims she eventually was unwilling to state publicly have indeed been used as a sword in Justice Thomas's back.

The October ritual is under way. Justice Thomas's opponents would have us believe that the timing of the ritual is purely a coincidence. A tough election year for Democrats, they say, has no bearing on any of this. The anniversary of the confirmation of one of America's greatest justices has nothing to do with it, either. Right. If you believe that, expect to see the Great Pumpkin rise Monday night.

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