

Beverly Perdue Biographical Inconsistencies

“Coal Miner’s Daughter”

In 2000 Beverly Perdue claimed she grew up “real poor” as a “coal miner’s daughter.” In actuality her father was a millionaire who owned the mine.

- While running for lieutenant governor in 2000, Perdue claimed she grew up “real poor.” She also would often show her campaign video titled “Coal Miner’s Daughter.” Perdue provided a voice-over in the video and said, “We never knew we were poor.” At the time Perdue failed to mention that her father eventually owned the mining company and was a millionaire. A classmate of Perdue’s brother told *The Independent Weekly* Beverly was “was one of the privileged girls” in town.” The *News & Observer* reported another inconsistency in the video, “As [Perdue] talks on her campaign video about her family and humble childhood in Grundy, Va., the video image pulls into a close-up of a gaunt man, his face streaked with coal dust.... The man pictured is not Perdue’s father.” [*The Independent Weekly*, 3-29-00; *News & Observer*, 4-12-00]
- Perdue implicitly referred to this mishap during her campaign kickoff event for governor: “My dad started as a coal miner, he worked his way up, and he became very successful.” [Beverly Perdue, New Bern, 10-1-07]

Public School Teacher

Over the years, Beverly Perdue has made numerous claims about being a public school teacher, including that she taught in North Carolina.

- In a 1991 resume Perdue listed her “Professional Experience:”
 - “Public School Teacher, Louisville KY.”
 - “Substitute teacher 1970 Kindergarten, Winder, Ga.”
 - “1971-1972 Ninth grade Civics teacher in Jacksonville, Fla.”
 - 1978-1982 “Teacher; Kindergarten, Ninth Grade and Twelfth [sic] Grade”
- In a 1995 resume Perdue listed her “Prior Experience:”
 - “Teacher, Kindergarten, Ninth Grade and Twelfth Grade”
- In a 2007 speech to NARAL Perdue said she taught public school after earning her PhD. This claim directly contradicts her statements regarding the timeline of her teaching career. Perdue told NARAL, “[Perdue’s parents] preached education as the difference maker, and I took it to heart and made them proud when their daughter earned her PhD. *I went on to become a public school teacher, and a geriatrics director at a community hospital in Craven County.*” [Speech to NARAL, 4-17-07]
- Perdue told the NCAE in 2007 she “worked as a public school teacher in Georgia and Florida—taught K, 9th, and 12th grades.” [Beverly Perdue 2008 NCAE Gubernatorial Candidate Questionnaire]
- In early October 2007, the *News & Observer’s Under the Dome* blog reported, “In 1969, Perdue worked as a public school teacher in Louisville, Ky. In 1970, she worked as a substitute kindergarten teacher in Winder, Ga., and from 1971 to 1972 she worked as a ninth grade civics teacher in Jacksonville, Fla.” The *Under the Dome* page has now been edited

and lists Perdue's experience simply as, "In the past, Perdue worked as a public school teacher." [News & Observer's Under the Dome Blog, 10-3-07 saved version; News & Observer's Under the Dome Blog, accessed 10-8-07, http://projects.newsobserver.com/dome/profiles/beverly_perdue]

Small Business Owner

Beverly Perdue has also claimed to be a small business owner. To our knowledge, she has never identified the small business that she owns.

- In April 2007, Perdue spoke to National Federation of Independent Business members at the NFIB/North Carolina's Small-Business Day at the Capital. "**Perdue recalled her years as a small-business owner and empathized with the challenges facing small businesses today, particularly finding affordable health care.**" [Members Meet Legislators, Lt. Gov. Perdue Speaks at Small-Business Day, National Federation of Independent Business, accessed 10-8-07, http://www.nfib.com/object/IO_33284.html]
- In a January 2005 interview with UNC-TV Perdue said, "**Small business has been a huge piece of my personal and political focus the last four years. I ran a small business** and never understood why we could continue as a state to constantly focus on the big businesses and the out-of-state businesses." [UNC-TV, NC NOW, Interview with Beverly Perdue, 1-18-05]

Doctorate Degree

At different times over the years, Perdue has made conflicting claims regarding the subject of her doctorate from the University of Florida. She has said it was in education and she has said it was in health-care, specifically gerontology.

Education

- On her 2008 campaign website, Perdue claimed she "earned a **Ph.D. in Education Administration.**" [Beverly Perdue 2008 Campaign Website, "About Bev Perdue", http://www.bevperdue.com/free_details.asp?id=44, accessed 10-8-07]
- On her 2004 campaign website, Perdue claimed **she received "PhD. in administration and education** from the University of Florida." [Beverly Perdue 2004 Campaign Website, "Biography", archived 9-29-04, <http://web.archive.org/web/20041009172445/www.bevperdue.com/?y=biography>]

Health-care

- In a January 2002 interview with UNC-TV, Beverly Perdue answered a question about her first year as lieutenant governor, "It's what I've been trained in. I'm a policy planner, **it's what my Ph.D is in – aging and health-care.**" [NC-TV, NC NOW, Interview with Beverly Perdue, 1-15-02]
- In April 2007, Perdue's then Chief-of-Staff and current campaign manager Zach Ambrose e-mailed a "Perdue News" newsletter containing a profile of Perdue. Ambrose introduced the article, "I wanted to pass along to you a good profile of Lt. Governor Perdue that was published in the inaugural issue of *Women in the Triangle* published by Business Leader magazine. The article mentioned, Perdue earned "**a Ph.D. in administration with a focus on gerontology, the study of aging.**" ["Perdue News" Update, 4-20-07]

Many press accounts also describe her doctorate as either in education or health-care. There is no evidence Perdue has asked for corrections in these articles.

Education

- A 2002 *Charlotte Observer* article's entry on Perdue's education stated she received a "**doctorate in education**, University of Florida, 1976." [*Charlotte Observer*, 8-4-02]
- A 2007 *Charlotte Observer* article which described Perdue's campaign kick-off event stated she received a "**Ph.D. in education administration** from University of Florida 1976." [*Charlotte Observer*, 10-2-07]

Health-care

- A 1987 *Charlotte Observer* article stated, "**After earning a doctorate in gerontology in 1976**, she developed a career as a consultant in health care problems of the elderly, specializing in community-based programs. She has written an unpublished, 400-page novel dealing with the problems of aging." [*Charlotte Observer*, 4-5-87]
- A 1995 *Fayetteville Observer* stated "[Perdue] has a **Ph.D. in health administration** and is a geriatric care consultant and a lecturer and writer on aging and health care." [*Fayetteville Observer*, 11-26-95]
- A 2000 *Charlotte Observer* stated Perdue earned a "**doctorate in gerontology** in Florida." [*Charlotte Observer*, 10-15-00]
- A 2006 *News & Observer* stated, "'A two-term lieutenant governor, Perdue is attempting to become North Carolina's first female governor. The daughter of a Virginia coal mine owner, **she earned a doctorate in geriatric care** and battled her way up in politics starting as a state legislator from New Bern before rising to lieutenant governor.'" [*News & Observer*, 12-15-06]