

Anniversary

Address

WASHINGTON (NNPA) -- Describing the Black Press as "the work horse of the civil rights movement and the most respected and dependable tool in our fight for freedom and justice," William O. Walker, editor-publisher of the Cleveland Call and Post, brought the National Press Club capacity luncheon crowd to its feet here last week.

"The Black Press is alive and crusading today, although in its 151 years, it has died a thousands times," added the 81-year-old journalist who began his newspaper career as a stenographer for the Pittsburgh Courier 59 years ago.

"The Black Press has been the incubator of black writing talent and the spawning ground for distinguished public careers, and in our fight for freedom, it is always at the cutting edge," Walker continued.

His Black Press Week address enshrining five great 19th century journalists climaxed two days of activities by members of the National Newspaper Publishers Association who were here at the invitation of Vice President Mondale to confer with government heads.

These included Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance, Assistant Secretary of Labor Ernest G. Green, Civil Rights Commission Chairman Arthur S. Flemming, Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Administrator Barbara Blum, and White House assistant Martha "Bunny" Mitchell and 30 other top black government officials.

During the enshrinement ceremony at the National Press Club, laminated plaques of portraits and front pages of the honorees and their newspapers were presented to Dr. Michael R. Winston, director of the Moorland-Springarn Research Center at Howard University by Carlton B. Goodlett, NNPA president and Jerrel W. Jones, NNPA 1st vice president, for the Black Press Archives and Gallery.

Those enshrined were:

Mrs. Ida B. Wells Barnett of the Memphis Free Speech who barely escaped with her life in 1892 when her printing plant was burned by a mob because she protested the lynching of four black businessmen in her city. She made her way to New York and joined T. Thomas Fortune and his New York Age and spent the rest of her life fighting lynching and injustice.

Timothy Thomas Fortune, the ablest black journalist of the last quarter of the 19th century, who wrote for both black and white newspapers and who made the New York Age into a national journal.

John Mitchell, Jr., editor-publisher of the Richmond Planet from 1883 until 1938, and the leading black political figure of Virginia who ran for governor in 1921.

John H. Murphy, Sr., who founded the Baltimore Afro-American in 1892 and developed it into the largest black newspaper east of the Appalachian Mountains with 138 employees at the time of his death in 1922.

Christopher J. Perry, Sr., founder of the Philadelphia Tribune, oldest commercial black newspaper in America. It is in its 95th year.

In 1977 the first year of the gallery, the following were enshrined: the Rev. Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russwurm, founders of Freedom's Journal, the first black newspaper; Philip A. Bell, founder of the New York Colored American and the San Francisco Elevator; Dr. Martin T. Delany, founder of the Pittsburgh Mystery and co-editor of the North Star; and Fredrick Douglass, founder of the North Star, America's greatest black abolitionist journal.

Walker, who was introduced by Frank Aukofer of the Milwaukee Journal, president of the National Press Club, reviewed in his address the contributions of the Black Press

all the way back to Freedom's Journal and the North Star. He listed not only the fight against slavery and brutality of the Reconstruction era, but also the desegregation of the White House Easter Egg Roll, Washington Union Station restaurant, Major League Baseball and professional football as well as the military.

However, Walker warned that we have to run "like hell just to stand still," pointing out that we elected 22 blacks to Congress between 1870 and 1898, and since that time, have elected only 23 to Congress. And so the fight is not over, he declared.

Publishers and other representatives of NNPA member newspapers in attendance were Robert W. Bogle, Philadelphia Tribune; Ms. Precola DeVore, Columbus, Ga., Times; William R. Hales, Hartford Inquirer; Thomas

C. Jervay, Wilmington Journal; Ms. Melody McDowell, Chicago Daily Defender; Mrs. Ophelia DeVore Mitchell, Columbus, Ga., Times; Howard H. Murphy and John H. Murphy, III, Afro-American Newspapers;

John L. Procope, New York Amsterdam News; Garth C. Reeves, Sr., Miami Times; Dr. Milton A. Reid, Norfolk Journal & Guide; Mrs. Jeanne S. Rodes, Philadelphia Tribune; Calvin W. Rolark, Washington Informer and Black Media; C. A. Scott, Atlanta Daily World; John B. Smith, Atlanta Inquirer; Kenneth T. Stanley, Louisville Defender; and Kenneth Wilson, Afro-American Newspapers; and Mrs. Mildred Brown, Omaha Star; O.L. Tandy, Indianapolis Herald, and Arthur M. Carter Washington Afro-American.



BLACK PRESS WEEK OBSERVANCE in Washington during March was highlighted by the enshrinement of five 19th century journalists in the Black Press Archives and Gallery at Howard University and by the National Newspaper Publishers Association, and a series of important conferences of NNPA members with government officials. Top left, are plaques of the five who were enshrined: Mrs. Ida B. Wells, Memphis Free Speech; T. Thomas Fortune, New York Age; Christopher J. Perry, Sr., Philadelphia Tribune; John Mitchell, Jr., Richmond Planet; and John H. Murphy, Sr., Baltimore Afro-American. Standing behind the plaques, left to right: Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, NNPA president; Jerrel W. Jones, NNPA 1st vice president; William O. Walker, enshrinement speaker and NNPA Archives Committee chairman; Mrs. Jeanne S. Rodes, vice president of the Philadelphia Tribune who received a replica of the Perry plaque for the newspaper; Dr. Michael R. Winston, director, Moorland-Springarn Research Center at Howard; and John H. Murphy, III, chairman of the board of the Afro-American who received a replica of the Murphy plaque for the paper. Middle left, Walker receives a certificate and tie from Frank Aukofer, president of the National Press Club. Bottom left, Publishers meet with Assistant Secretary of Labor Ernest G. Green, center. Left to right: C. A. Scott, Atlanta

Daily World; Dr. Goodlett; Assistant Secretary Green; John H. Murphy; Walker; and Dr. Lucien Gatewood, special assistant to Green. Top center, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance chats with Robert W. Bogle, Philadelphia Tribune; Dr. Milton A. Reid, Norfolk Journal & Guide; and his special assistant Daniel Spiegel during State Department reception for publishers. Center, Secretary Vance has the attention of Mrs. Marjorie B. Parham, Cincinnati Herald, NNPA treasurer; and Kenneth T. Stanley, Louisville Defender, scholarship chairman. Bottom center, Secretary Vance shares a joke with Eddie N. Williams president, Joint Center for Political Studies; Gordon Hill, coordinator of the Secretary's public programs; and Garth C. Reeves, Sr. Top right, Dr. Goodlett, right, discusses Environmental Protection activities with Deputy Administrator Barbara Blum and David Andrews, her special assistant. Middle right, Congressman Louis Stokes of Ohio greets Mrs. Ophelia DeVore Mitchell, Columbus, Ga., Times, NNPA secretary; and Walker. Bottom right, Mrs. Martha "Bunny" Mitchell, special assistant to President Carter, acquaints publishers with 30 top government officials during a luncheon at the Capital Hilton Hotel. At table with her are Dr. Goodlett and Gordon Hill of State Department.

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