



Alice Key

"A long time ago — a million years B.C. Everything in life was absolutely free But no one appreciated a sky that was always blue And no one congratulated a moon that was always new

So it was planned that they would banish now and then And you must pay before you get them back again."

The above lines, in part, are the lyric to the verse of the song, "Pennies From Heaven," introduced by the late Bing Crosby; later, unforgettably recorded by the great blind singer, Al Hibbler. It has been more than 40 years since the tune first enjoyed its immense popularity, but in recent weeks the verse keeps running through the mind of the writer. Could it be possible that those words constitute an important message to the Blacks of this country and the operative word is "pay?"

Blacks in Las Vegas have to be among the most powerless people anywhere and it is maddeningly frustrating to know that the pitiful plight of Las Vegas Blacks stems not from oppression but from our own apathy. It is near impossible to make others understand (or even understand ourselves) that we here in Las Vegas would rather remain a people unrepresented in local government, victims of discriminatory employment practices, police harassment and arrant patronization and also to continue to exist in a community without visible signs of economic development of progress, despite the fact that our community is located in a city enjoying unprecedented growth and prosperity, rather than pay the slight cost for a chance in the status quo.

Everybody can afford the price of equality and justice. The price is con-

cern and involvement. What does it cost to take a few minutes of one's time to become a registered voter? How much effort does it require to make the decision that a united people with a united effort is the answer to problems Blacks face here and everywhere? How much loss of ego must one suffer to make a commitment to work with others toward a common goal?

What is the cost of a few minutes of one's time on election day to go to the polls and vote? How much of one's time and energy is dissipated in attending a meeting called to offer a forum to address the very real and very grave problems with which Blacks in Las Vegas are faced?

If we are truly committed to the goal of equality of opportunity and justice for all, we are going to have to contract ourselves to assume the responsibility for the cost. Nobody can do it for us — nobody is going to do it for us — and nobody should do it for us. If we are satisfied with high unemployment, if we are content to sit idly by and see people of all ethnic origins (but ours) move in on us replacing us on our jobs and double dipping in social programs, while those in authority look down on us in contemptuous indifference, then let us continue on our fragmented path with no one group willing to work with the other and with most of us, while indignant at our lot, unwilling to become involved in any civic or political endeavor designed to bring about change.

The real tragedy of the situation in Las Vegas is that the number of Blacks living in Las Vegas and in North Las Vegas is so great that with any kind of united effort and strategic planning, we could write our own ticket. Political clout is what we need for political clout is power.

REV. ABERNATHY:



'I came from the battlefield and I came here to tell the giants and the pharaohs ... let my people go!'

Rev. Dunn Speaks Out

The SENTINEL asked Rev. Dunn: "What can be done to eliminate what was experienced last time or during previous years where there were a lot of Black candidates running for city and county offices and as such diluted the number of votes needed to get someone in office?"

DUNN: "If you have voter education along with your voter registration and political education, you will then develop an intelligent constituency. They then will, in fact, elect the kind of qualified leadership that we will need. There's a simple statement we used to hear for years — 'You can't teach what you don't know.' When people have knowledge of the candidates they will then



REV. DUNN

elect the kind of leadership that can provide light, advancement and progress needed in the community. If this is done, you will get the caliber of candidate that will be needed in the community."

"Let's get the vote," shouted Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, president emeritus of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to a gathering of enthusiastic supporters and onlookers

at the opening of the voters registration drive meeting held at the Elks Lodge Hall at the Golden West Shopping Center.

"If we can get the vote... we will have economic power, we can acquire economic power because we will elect a Mayor, a City Councilman, a County Councilman," Abernathy continued. "We will elect people at the State Legislature and a Governor that is concerned about the welfare of all the people, and you will have a better home, a better job and more money."

Laying the groundwork for the registration drive, Rev. Abernathy clarified the purpose of his visit, "I have not come for a picnic and I didn't come from a

picnic. I came from the battlefield and I came here to tell the giants and the pharaohs, like Moses told them a long time ago, to let my people go. I'm depending on you to gain political power in this community," he told the crowd at the Elks Lodge Hall.

"I want us to gain political power. I want us to register every non-registered voter here in Las Vegas. And then once we get that right to vote, I want us to exercise it. Let's vote out of power old state male chauvinistic politicians who are not concerned about the rights of all the people," he explained.

"Let us share this political power with Blacks, with poor people, with minorities and, above all, with females. The women are the smartest and have the greatest lasting power. I haven't seen a man yet who could give birth to a child," Abernathy lamented.

June Whitley Seeks Election

June Whitley, an appointee to the University of Nevada Board of Regents, has announced her intention to seek election to the seat she now holds. She was appointed to the Board by Governor List in September, 1979 to serve out the term of Regent Brenda Mason. Her current term expires in November.

In announcing her candidacy, Whitley said that her service on the Board has been "a very rewarding experience and a real opportunity to be a positive force in the com-

munity. I hope to continue representing this community in the decision making process of our university system which is at such a critical stage of its development."

A resident of Las Vegas since 1959, Whitley has been employed by Centel for the past 17 years. Starting as an operator, she worked her way up to her current position as Assistant Customer Services Manager.

Married and the mother of three children and three grandchildren, Whitley has been active in

the Clark County School System as an advisor to the Human Relations Office and a past vice



WHITLEY

president of the Frank F. Garside Junior High School P.T.A. She is a

member of the American Business Women's Association, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Nevada Voters League.

Whitley attended Diablo Valley College in Concord, California, majoring in sociology with a minor in psychology. In the last several years, she has continued her education at Clark County Community College, experience which has proved invaluable in fulfilling her obligations as a regent.