

Rev. Allen grants Sentinel-Voice exclusive interview

Comments draw ire from number of community leaders

NAACP PRESIDENT TENDERS RESIGNATION OFFICIALLY - THEN SEES MOVE PLACED ON HOLD

by Ed Brown

Rev. James E. Allen, president of the Las Vegas Chapter, NAACP, called this writer Tuesday morning and set up an exclusive interview detailing his accounts on the turmoil and unrest presently existing within the organization. He "laid the cards on the table" and placed the blame for the failures on the shoulders of some members of the board and others, including some staff members. He was very vocal and explicit on why the chapter will continue to have these problems. The Sentinel-Voice is reporting the comments as developed. Many of the accused were later contacted by this writer and their comments and reactions are also reported.

REV. ALLEN: "The inner conflicts that has started within the Branch in the last two weeks, or three weeks at the most, started over the fact that I was accused of misappropriation and mis-abuse of funds...also the telephone bill...the moving down here (new location as of several weeks ago, 1500A North Main Street) to the new office. I was also accused of running up a \$600.00 telephone bill. The telephone bill was in the amount of \$688.93 but as you can well see I have two telephones, a 384-1129 and a 648-2880. There was a previous bill of 209.00. The previous bill \$309.00 added to the original bill of \$287.00 brought the bill up to \$688.93."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "How did it arrive at \$309.35?"

REV. ALLEN: "It arrived at \$309.35 because of the calls relative to the boycott contacts, the \$309.35 was all those calls as you can well see."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "During the month of May?"

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James has been a resident of Las Vegas for several years and a real estate licensee since 1978. His expertise lies in residential property. James has been associated with Toler Realty for over two years and has served his clients with professionalism. James, his wife Claudette and their two children are active within our community. His hobbies are quite varied.

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REV. ALLEN: "During the month of May and June. Now the \$287.10 was the installation charge and putting in the new equipment, new service. As you can also see, it was not all my fault. On the telephone calls, when I left town to operate and solicited help for the boycott, I called Chicago, Reno, Brooklyn, N.Y., the national office, I also called Van Nuys (Calif.), Cheyenne, Wyoming to solicit help, San Diego - to the different branches - Davenport, Iowa; St. Louis, Missouri; Atlanta, Georgia; Oxnard, Calif.; Hollywood, Calif.; Santa Monica, Oceanside and places like that plus calling back to check on the office, talking to the news media and everything. It was all done in the line of business. Mr. Brown, I have not, since I have been in this office, as God is being my helper, done anything illegal or anything to bring shame on this office."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "No calls relating to the Ministers Alliance or your church on the telephone bill?"



Rev. James Allen

REV. ALLEN: "No nothing at all. There was a saying the letter that went into National (office) had 100 signatures. The letter that went in had 23 signatures on it."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "What letter are you referring to?"

REV. ALLEN: "There was a letter written to the National office requesting my removal by Mr. Chaney, Mr. Bennett, Dr. McMillan, Mrs. Lubertha Johnson, Sammie Childs, Joyce Chaney, Laverne Williams, Lula Williams, Ruby Amie, Ruby Duncan, Woodrow Wilson, Cranford Crawford, Verna Davis, Trudy Rainey, Gwen Amie and about 5 or 6 other people for a total of 23 names. I sent in a petition counter-acting that with 50 names on my petition. If you want it, I can give you a copy of my petition sent in. I also sent a letter to National letting them know my stance I have taken in this organization and the reason why I have taken the stance. If this community does not, and I repeat, if this community does not have a fighting NAACP branch on a positive and meaningful basis we might as well forget about it because we have no recourse of ever being able to rise above a hamlet. Now, they tried to defame my character this past week."

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SENTINEL-VOICE: "The petitioners?"

REV. ALLEN: "The petitioners Mr. Bennett, Mr. McMillan, and Mrs. Lubertha Johnson went on Channel 8 television they called me an animal and called me a bigot on TV. Now, there are a lot of things I can say about each one of them because I have records to prove it but I am not going out to muddy their name and character. I'm leaving it directly up to the community. As of the 15th day of July I will no longer be the president of the NAACP."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Why?"

REV. ALLEN: "I am resigning this office because I am being transferred to New Mexico by my Bishop. He was here Sunday to make the transfer. My life has been threatened, my family has been threatened and that's the reason why I am going to be leaving. I regret it."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "What is that date again?"

REV. ALLEN: "The 15th day of July."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Have you sent in a formal letter to the Board?"

REV. ALLEN: "I sent in a formal letter to the National office this morning."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Is that the proper procedure?"

REV. ALLEN: "That's the proper procedure, a direct letter to the National office."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Will copies go to the local Board?"

REV. ALLEN: "Yes."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "When will they be presented formally to the local Board?"

REV. ALLEN: "They will be presented formally to the local Board on July 8. The NAACP (resignation of) presidency will be effective as of July 15."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "You are setting a press conference tomorrow afternoon (Wednesday)."

REV. ALLEN: "It will be held tomorrow at 3 o'clock, July 29."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "In essence, what does that letter (letter sent to National by Rev. Allen) say?"

REV. ALLEN: "In essence that letter states that because my character has been attacked by certain individuals throughout this community I have chosen to resign my office because there is nothing that I would ever do that would hurt this organization. The letter states this: "When one has tried to help his people and stands for that which is right and if his own people turn against him then it is time for that person to shake off the dust and leave. When I set out for the president position I did not run with a blindfold over my eyes. I defeated two of this city's so-called black leaders and the devil set out to get me by trying to destroy my reputation and my church. Therefore, I am going to resign from the position of president and give it to those who have kept it down for the last 25 years, Marion Bennett, James McMillan, Lonnie Chaney, Lubertha Johnson, Ruby Duncan, Joe Neal-all of these snakes have defamed this branch and people are leaving the branch. I have not and will not fight my own people and these white racists groups at the same time. You can save the National by pulling the charter from the Las Vegas

branch and I am trying to save the National because this Branch will be used for political vendetta and not for the community as a whole. Mr. Chaney wants this office and he and Mr. Marion Bennett to get back at this community and the people who pulled the cover off them. As of July 15, 1983 I will no longer be with the Las Vegas Chapter and if you wish to contact me you can call me at Owens Chapel AME Church, Alamogordo, New Mexico. I feel so sorry for these people because they have fought off one of the things God has tried to raise this community with. May God forever bless you. Rev. James E. Allen, President. That's the status of the letter."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "That's the letter you sent to National this morning...to William H. Penn. What is his position?"

REV. ALLEN: "He is Director of Branches and Field Services for the NAACP. I am also sending a letter to Mrs. Verna Cason stating the same thing. She is the Regional Director located in San Francisco."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Will you be relocating your family?"

REV. ALLEN: "Yes, me and my entire family will be departing on July 15."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "As of this moment, does anyone know of your resignation?"

REV. ALLEN: "No. You are the first to know. I also want to state that I leave Las Vegas with a total endeavor in mind to speak that which is right and to help that which I believe in for the benefit of my people wherever I go. If this community don't move Joe Neal and Lonnie Chaney and stop Bennett, this community will forever be sold for the price of a dollar and every soul in this community are being sold by these people. Now, the white man would rather give to them 500, 600 maybe a thousand dollars in their pocket and to wine and dine them in order to keep this community down. They would much rather spend \$500,000 to keep the community down then to pay \$500 million to lift this community. Chaney, Bennett, Mrs. Johnson all have done it. If they would look back in their closets, Rev. Bennett called me a bigot but he don't ask the question why did his wife leave him. That's what he ought to be trying to answer. Mr. Chaney ought to be trying to deal with PSC (Public Service Commission) and this voters fraud that he done, you see, instead going around trying to kill the NAACP. Mrs. Johnson's background is not so clean as she would have it to be. If you would really check out her background you would find her background is not where it ought to be either. If he called me a bigot, why don't he prove that I am a bigot. These white people have paid Bennett and Chaney and them to get me out of this town. That is what has transpired. I know what is going on."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "If a suit is filed against you for these statements that you have made, very bold statements that you have made against individuals, how do you respond to that?"

REV. ALLEN: "I will respond to that by proving it, it's a fact, I think there are plenty of people in the community who will come forward. Now, if Mr. Chaney wants to file suit because I said voters fraud, let him file a suit against the Review-Journal. They are the ones who put it out in the paper. If Mr. Bennett wants to come forward and file a lawsuit because of what I said that then he will get a counteract of a lawsuit for getting on a nationwide television station, Channel 8, and calling me a bigot because he will have to prove

that- that's slander. Mrs. Johnson, she will have to to the same thing because I have had many people come into this office who are willing to go forward right now Mr. Brown, you see, and testify of their actions. People like Mrs. Ruby Duncan, who goes down and tells those she can get the black vote if they give her 6 or \$700. I have white people who are willing to come forward and make those statements. I could go to court today and win that fight but I don't want to fight them because I am not going to defame my character and go to their level of animals like they are to try to prove a point over a voluntary position. Now if this position was not so important they would not be fighting for it. I have done nothing wrong. I went out and spent my money because this Branch did not have any...spent my money and bought my tickets flying around to these three major cities, Atlanta, Chicago and New York City...On my Executive Board, in this NAACP organization, there are some snakes and what I mean by that is whatever we say here before we get through here the whites know what we have done and the community ought to know it." Bob Palm of the Las Vegas Sun put in one of the biggest lies you have ever seen in your life and I will show it to you."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Have you had any trouble with any of your staff members in the same light expressed here?"

REV. ALLEN: "Not in this light or this order but I have had some problems with Mrs. Virginia Fontaine and Mr. Pete Peterson. They brought charges against me."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Mrs. Fontaine is the treasurer and Pete Peterson the Chief of Staff?"

REV. ALLEN: "That is correct."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Any trouble out of James Veal?"

REV. ALLEN: "Veal was part of the five who called the Executive Board meeting."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "What meeting are you referring to?"

REV. ALLEN: "They had a meeting last Wednesday."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Were you present?"

REV. ALLEN: "I came, opened the meeting and left because I went to my church (1st AME Church) and taught a bible class - because I did not want to be here."

SENTINEL-VOICE: "Were you invited to the meeting?"

REV. ALLEN: "I was invited to the meeting. I chose, on my own, not to stay because my lawyer was present and if they needed to ask any questions they could ask my attorney. He is on the board of directors...Bennett and Chaney have been

in office for years. Nothing of a positive nature has been done...Mrs. Ruby Duncan has been under investigation and probably still under investigation with Operation Life. It has been said to me on two or three occasions that she said to people if you will pay me I will get you a raise, who work for her. Black people in this community are being treated like dogs. I have tried to step out to speak out for what I believe."

EDITORS NOTE: Rev. Allen continued with the interview giving information on the number of new members he brought into the chapter. He also elaborated on the critical condition of the treasury. He estimated that the present balance hovers somewhere between \$1.00 and \$50.00. Rent is soon due and no funds in sight to cover it. On the telephone bill, it appears to be no return. All employees at the office are paid by CETA.

This writer, following the interview with Rev. Allen, proceeded to contact some of the individuals mentioned. Lubertha Johnson, Ruby Duncan, Dr. James B. McMillan Assemblyman Lonnie Chaney, State Senator Joe Neal and Rev. Marion Bennett were reached and these were their reactions to statements made in the interview:

LUBERTHA JOHNSON: "I don't think it is worth responding to - it's so ridiculous. I cannot imagine why he would make such a statement. I have not
See ALLEN, Page 13



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