

Black Publishers Elect First Woman President, Urged to Counter Racism & Attacks Against Black Officials

By Larry A. Still
NNPA News Service

(WASHINGTON, DC-NNPA) — The nation's expanding Black-owned newspaper publishers were urged to demonstrate greater influence and power in serving their communities as they elected new officers at their exciting 47th annual convention in Detroit recently. Over 200 participants attended the four days of sessions of the National Newspaper Publishers Association hosted by the Michigan Chronicle and Michigan Citizen weekly newspapers at the Westin Hotel.

Top speakers included Mayor Coleman Young, columnist Carl Rowan, "motivator" Les Brown and Federal Judge Alcee Hastings. They joined major corporate spokespersons and advertising representatives in supporting "Black Press" efforts to focus on key economic, educational, health and political issues in their areas.

Patricia Thomas, publisher of the Milwaukee Community Journal, was overwhelmingly elected as the first woman president of the NNPA to succeed Christopher H. Bennett, publisher of the Seattle Medium and Tacoma Citizen.

Other elected officials among three slates of candidates were NNPA publishers Levi Henry, Fort Lauderdale (Fla) Westside Gazette, first vice-president; Thomas H. Watkins, Daily Challenge (Brooklyn), second vice-president; Jane Woods, St. Louis Sentinel, secretary (re-elected), and Waverly Easley, president, Philadelphia Tribune, NNPA secretary.

Publishers elected board members including John Holoman, Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch; Ibn Sharrieff, Tri-City Journal (Chicago); William Garth, Chicago Citizen newspapers (re-elected); Garth Reeves, Miami Times (re-elected); and Bennett. Continuing board members are Claretta Blackmon, Mobile Beacon; Lenora Carter, Houston Forward Times; Dr. Carlton Goodlett, San Francisco Sun Reporter newspapers; Ernest Pitt, Winston-Salem Chronicle; and John Smith, Atlanta Inquirer.

Mayor Young said black owned publications are still needed to counter racism in the white-owned, metropolitan daily newspapers. Many NNPA members pledged support to Project Excellence started by Rowan and other black journalists to provide \$4,000 scholarships to aspiring black college students. "But, we're taking money from the white press, too," he added. The NNPA later announced establishment of a non-profit foundation for fund-raising projects.

Judge Hastings urged the publishers to eliminate the "illusion of inclusion" in a racist society which does not focus on the positive achievement of Blacks. Although he was acquitted of bribery charges in a Florida court in 1983, Judge Hastings outlined a continuing campaign to impeach him in the U.S. Congress on the basis of alleged charges and "misconduct" accounts leaked to the media. Many black officials are facing similar campaigns because they are outspoken and use their power for the benefit of

the people they serve, Hastings declared.

Emphasizing that he does not consider himself a victim of a "media conspiracy", Hastings said he is being victimized by traditional racism of white officials and judges who do not wish to concede power to Blacks. However, the impeachment charges are pending before the subcommittee on criminal justice of the House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary.

Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich) is subcommittee chairman and Judge Hastings urged publishers and readers of the Black Press to demand public hearings to provide exposure of the "false charges", which included reported endorsement of a Democratic Party presidential candidate at a church service. NNPA publishers were urged to publicize the controversy and support a Hastings Defense Fund. Supporters are urged to write their members of Congress.

A record number of NNPA members participated in the convention, including many publishers of new community publications, said Steve Davis, association executive director. Applications from several newly established newspapers have been received, indicating the continuing growth of black-owned media, he added. There were representatives of 70 NNPA publications, as well as Black Media, Inc., and Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., present.

Charles Morrison, vice-president of Coca-Cola for Black and Hispanic Consumer Marketing said he ordered his agents to place advertising in NNPA

publications only because of their integrity and service. Henry Brown, Anheuser-Busch, Inc., vice-president, said corporations placing beverage and tobacco advertising in black owned media should not be criticized for supporting the community when many major advertisers give nothing back to Blacks.

Various receptions and dinners were sponsored by Anheuser-Busch; Miller Brewing Co; General Foods Corp.; Coca-Cola; Adolph Coors; RJR Nabisco; Brown and Williamson Tobacco Co.; Moet-Hennessy; and General

Motors. Rowan's appearance was sponsored by the K-Mart Corporation, "which has never attempted to censor my remarks or tell me what to say anytime," he emphasized in urging the Black Press to maintain the credibility and loyalty of their readers.

In addition to the advertising workshops and editorial discussion, sessions were also conducted on Tax Reform and Desk-Top-Computer publishing by the Apple-McIntosh Computer Co.

The Pittsburgh Courier

Newspaper was selected as the John P. Russwurm Award winner for general all-around excellence for the past year. The award is named for the first publisher of a black-owned newspaper in the U.S. in 1827. The NNPA was invited to hold its 1988 convention in St. Louis by the St. Louis Sentinel, St. Louis American, St. Louis Argus and the E. St. Louis Crusader. The Mid-Winter meeting slated for Miami in January is being reconsidered because of Florida's announced plans for an advertising tax.

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automobile insurance on themselves rather than on their vehicles and cannot have their policies canceled or not renewed or increased if they make a claim on accidents for which they were not at fault; in contested divorces where children are involved, parents who do not have custody will pay child support based on a set formula; married men who commit spousal rape (use force or threat of force to sexually assault their wives)

can be convicted of rape; grandparents have the right to ask the courts to grant them visitation rights to see their grandchildren if one of the parents has died or the parents of minor children have divorced or separated; the Nevada state minimum wage of \$2.85 has been increased to the federal level of \$3.35 for employees 18 years of age or older and the minimum wage for workers under the age of 18 is now \$2.85.

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