

# CONGRESSMAN BILBRAY ASSIGNS LAS VEGAS STAFFER TO THE CAPITOL HILL OFFICE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

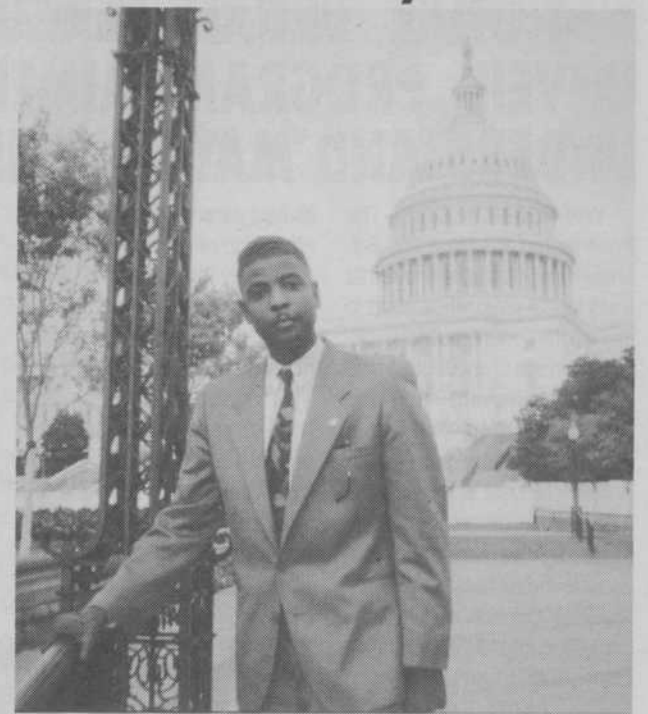
Congressman James Bilbray today announced he is assigning long-time staff member Franklin Simpson to his Washington, D.C. office for the upcoming 103rd Congress.

Congressman Bilbray has high praise for Mr. Simpson, "For years Franklin has served me well in the District Office, involving himself in the areas of Small Business and Immigration. I now feel his experience and knowledge of the Las Vegas area will best serve the citizens of Nevada from an office on Capital Hill."

Mr. Simpson has also served as a liaison for Congressman Bilbray to the West Las Vegas community. He represents the Con-

gressman on the boards of the Nevada Minority Purchasing Committee, the Multijurisdictional Community Empowerment Commission, and the Las Vegas Martin Luther King Committee. Mr. Simpson has also played an instrumental role in assisting the Congressman to establish better lines of communication between federal Small Business agencies and local minority business leaders in West Las Vegas.

Mr. Simpson has worked for Congressman Bilbray since 1987. Although he is a native of Illinois, Simpson has made his home in Nevada since 1985. He attended the Community College of



FRANKLIN SIMPSON, OF CONGRESSMAN BILBRAY'S OFFICE, WILL NOW WORK OUT OF CAPITAL HILL OFFICE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

## BENNETT SHUNS CITY LAND DEAL



Attorney Karen Bennett expresses concern at a press conference in which she feels the City of Las Vegas is trying to devalue some land owned by her father, Rev. Marion Bennett, looking on from far right. Also pictured is Ronald Current, spokesman for National Alliance against Racist and Political Repression.

Photo by Savoy/LV Sentinel-Voice

Sentinel-Voice

The Reverend Marion Bennett, who believes a piece of property he owns is worth more than the value set by an independent appraiser for the city, held a press conference Tuesday at the West Las Vegas Library to air his complaints.

Bennett, flanked by his daughter, Attorney Karen P. Bennett, and representatives from the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, said he believes the \$1.75 per square foot appraisal by the city was unacceptable, especially since the city appraisal for an adjacent parcel owned by Donald Goetting, a white man, was \$2.25 per square foot.

The land in question is three acres Bennett owns at the corner of "H" and Owens, that the City's Redevelopment Agency needs to build a 22-acre shopping center project, which was planned earlier this year. Bennett's property and two others are the remaining pieces of land needed for the 180,000 square-foot shopping center, which once completed, will house the area's only major grocery store. The city also says the multi-million dollar project

should create close to 200 new jobs.

Karen Bennett, however, stated that the city has other property in the area that is equally suitable for the project, and that they should focus more on assisting existing Black businesses.

In a letter to Rev. Bennett, sent last month by William Noonan, Executive Director of the City of Las Vegas Downtown Redevelopment Agency, the city said that the redevelopment of Bennett's land would, "help to eliminate environmental deficiencies and blight (deterioration) within the Redevelopment Area and provide for needed site improvements designed to stimulate new commercial expansion, employment and economic growth within the Rede-

velopment Area."

In response, Atty. Bennett wrote back to Noonan stating, "The question of whether Rev. Bennett's property can be deemed 'blighted' is a legal question which ultimately may have to be resolved through litigation."

In addition, Bennett's letter said, "This presumption is very much indicative of your total disregard for the rights of African-American landowners in West Las Vegas."

"This is just one of many efforts the city is making to depreciate the value of the land," added Atty. Bennett at the news conference.

Noonan stated that the initial appraisal on Bennett's land was only the first step in the negotiation process, and that the city

has offered to let Bennett pick another appraiser to judge the value of the land. In addition, Noonan said the higher appraisal for Goetting's properties could be due to the fact that the vacant lot, once a sports bar, has an active liquor and gaming license, which would add to its value.

The redevelopment project came as a direct result of the April unrest that followed the acquittals of the four white Los Angeles police officers in the Rodney King case.

Bennett has stated that he refuses to be pressured into accepting any offers that he feels are unfair.

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