

FOR THE LADIES

FROM THE PROJECTS TO A SEAT OF POWER: ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY

(ZPS) - As Kay Coles James sat at a table opposite the group of senators who were to vote on her confirmation as Deputy Director for State and Local Affairs, she was on familiar ground. This position at the Office of National Drug Control Strategy was not the first subcabinet post she held with responsibility to require Senate confirmation. Earlier she was the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services headed by Cabinet Secretary Dr. Louis Sullivan.

"A few of the white, male, liberal Senators questioned my qualifications for the job," relates James in *Never Forget* (Zonder-van Publishing House, 1993).

"While I agreed with them about my lack of any formal drug policy training, I reminded them

that I grew up in a neighborhood, and in a family, under the siege of drug and alcohol addiction. My insights on drug treatment, enforcement, and prevention came through firsthand experiences with my father and brother."

Life for Kay Coles James began in a two-bedroom house on a salty stretch of land in the black section of Portsmouth, Va. Her father and brothers were hunting bullfrogs in the swamp behind 84 Carver Circle on that humid June night.

"As an omen, perhaps, to the role that alcohol would play in my life," James recounts, "the only black doctor in town was too drunk to deliver me. He was a friend of the family, and I was named for his wife, Kay." Always alert for excuses to drink, Bernard A. Coles, Sr. raised his glass at the birth of his only

daughter and continued to drink for the next thirty years.

Sue Coles, the youngest of six girls, was a simple woman, who shocked and disappointed her prominent Richmond family by dropping out of college to marry Bernard.

"I will never forget the memories of my early years," James said confidently, "I am not ashamed of my abusive, alcoholic father, and I will always remember my mama's quiet dignity in the face of sadness. It is both because of them and for them that I have strived to make something of my life."

James's mother finally made the decision to leave her husband and move

with the children into Creighton Court, one of Richmond's public housing projects.

James left the cinder-block walls of Creighton Court when she was six to live with her childless Aunt Pearl and Uncle J.B. in their four-bedroom home.

"I never questioned my mother's love for me," she remembers. "I trusted her completely when she said, 'I'm still your mama, but you're going to take advantage of this opportunity.'"

James' years at Webster

Davis Elementary School, where Aunt Pearl taught fourth grade, could be characterized as nurturing, challenging, and an unparalleled learning experience. By contrast her next six years spent integrating Richmond's white schools could be described as "dehumanizing, alienating, and cruel."

"The only redeeming factor about John Marshall High School," she concedes, "was that life at home was often worse. Every day after school Pearl would begin drinking and soon become another person."

One evening, however, the TV at home was turned to a Billy Graham crusade, and his message to young people about confusion, loneliness, alienation, and fear struck a chord in James's soul.

"I told God that I would give my life to him for a year, to see what would happen," she relates. "I didn't feel any different, but I found a Bible and began reading a few chapters every night."

Kay Coles James' spiritual journey has been as multi-faceted as her career. As a spokesperson for the National Right to

Life, she has lectured and debated at Yale,

Oxford, Princeton, and many other leading universities. As parents of four, James and her husband, Charles, have sought to teach the richness of their African-American heritage to their children.

Her experiences as the Chief Operating Officer of a major foundation are an inspiration to all young black women, and especially those from James' home neighborhood, to whom she has dedicated her biography, *Never Forget*.

TINA TURNER TO RECEIVE '93 ESSENCE AWARD IN A NATIONALLY TELEVISED CEREMONY



TINA TURNER

On April 30, TINA TURNER will receive the prestigious 1993 Essence Award during a nation-

ally televised ceremony. The awards honor the outstanding achievements of African-American women.

TINA joins a stellar group of women also chosen as recipients: Rosa Parks, Lena Horne, Aretha Franklin, Gail Devers, "Sweet" Alice Harris, Corla Wilson Hawkins and Senator Carol Moseley Braun. The ceremonies, to be hosted by Patti LaBelle and Danny Glover, will be broadcast on May 29th on CBS.

1993 has already been an exciting year for TINA. In addition

to receiving the Essence Award, she was a Grammy Award nominee in the Best Female Rock Vocal Performance category for her version of "Bitch is Back" on the *Two Rooms* album tribute to Elton John and Bernie Taupin. In June, Virgin will release *Tina*, the soundtrack to the Disney feature film about TURNER's life entitled "Tina: What's Love Got To Do With It?" The album features re-recorded versions of earlier classics and several new songs, pointing the way towards TINA TURNER's musical future.

PARKER RECEIVES HHS APPOINTMENT

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala has announced the appointment of Kimberly C. Parker of Laurel, Md., as deputy assistant secretary for legislative/congressional liaison, Department of Health and Human Services.

Ms. Parker is responsible for ensuring an effective interchange of information between HHS and Congress. She assists in the development and review of legislative proposals and maintains liaison with the White House, Congress and other federal agencies on matters involving legislation.

Ms. Parker came to HHS from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee where, since January 1991, she had served as director of PACs and constituent services. In 1990, she was a vice president of Morrison Associates, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm

providing legislative and policy analysis to corporate and non-profit clients.

Between April 1986 and June 1990, Ms. Parker was Legislative consultant to the president of the American Postal Workers Union. Immediately before that, she was director of associate staff and task forces for the House Budget Committee. During 1984-1985, she was budget associate to former Congressman William H. Gray III.

From August 1980 to November 1983, Ms. Parker was legislative representative with the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO.

Ms. Parker was born in Washington, D.C. She received a bachelor's degree in English literature from Howard University, 1975.

She was affiliated with the Corporate Advisory Council of



KIMBERLY C. PARKER

the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation; Member in Government Relations and on the Board of Directors of the Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington.

WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENSE SEMINAR

A two-part seminar in women's self-defense will be presented by the Johnson Community School, 7701 Ducharme Ave. Session 1 takes place Wednesday, April 21, while session 2 follows on Wednesday, April 28. Both sessions begin at 8 p.m. Registration continues through April 16 a cost of \$5. The workshop, designed for teens and adults, is being sponsored by the City of Las Vegas. Call 229-6175.

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