

Point of View

The views on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one depicted as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication

TO BE EQUAL

ADMINISTRATION AT CIVIL RIGHTS CROSSROADS

By John E. Jacob

The Clinton Administration did a good job in stocking its Cabinet with individuals who look like America," and that sensitivity to reaching out to minorities and women led to high expectations for vigorous civil rights policies.

Those expectations were heightened by the nomination of a brilliant civil rights lawyer, Lani Guinier, to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

Then they were exploded when the President withdrew the nomination under political pressure from the right.

Ms. Guinier's theoretical writings were combed over by the media and by right wing politi-

cians who distorted them, focusing on a handful of controversial speculations.

Ironically, as a former Republican Cabinet member, William T. Coleman, Jr. pointed out, some of Ms. Guinier's most controversial writings on voting rights actually were adopted by the Reagan-Bush Justice department.

Even if one disagrees with some of Ms. Guinier's writings, they are irrelevant to the job she was nominated for — enforcing existing laws. And her policy recommendation would have been subject to approval by the White House and the Attorney General.

The resulting attacks made

her bitter confirmation hearings a certainty and a favorable Senate vote a long shot. With the White House under heavy attack on a range of issues and with the polls showing the President's popularity waning, it soon became apparent that political expediency would mean sacrificing Ms. Guinier.

The outrage in the black community goes beyond the indignities visited upon Ms. Guinier, although denying her the opportunity to defend her record in confirmation hearings, and to rebut the opposition's attempt to demonize her were important factors.

I believe much of the outrage reflects shaken confidence in the

Administration's willingness to aggressively combat discrimination.

Just as the Guinier appointment signaled an activist role for the Justice Department's civil rights division, withdrawal of the appointment signals the right wing that they can pressure the Administration to go slow on civil rights.

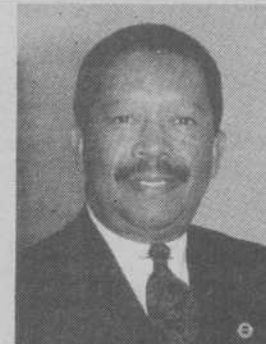
The President must move swiftly to counter that perception. He must demonstrate his belief in racial justice and his political courage by nominating for this critical civil rights post a person who is experienced in the struggle for civil rights and has an activist determination to enforce the laws strictly.

For the African American community, this is a defining moment of the Clinton presidency.

It's credibility depends on defying those who prefer to let civil rights enforcement die a lingering death and supporting those who want to restore the Civil Rights Division to its rightful place as a shield against discriminatory practices.

Since 1981, the Justice Department has gone to court to fight against civil rights laws instead of going to court to defend and enforce those laws.

Reality effectively counters the myth that discrimination in American life is an insignificant factor. Study after study demonstrates rampant discrimination in housing, in bank mortgage

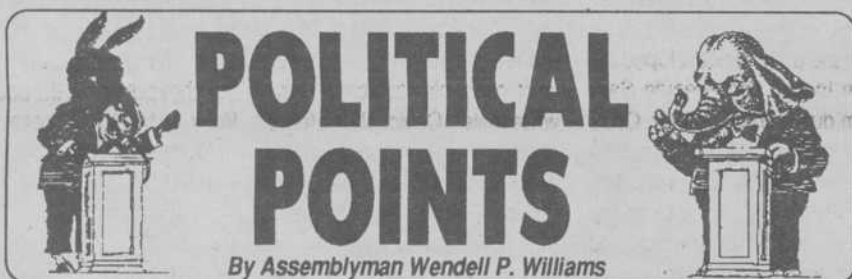


JOHN E. JACOB

lending, in credit availability for small businesses, in hiring and promotion practices, and in many other important aspects of life.

The Clinton Justice Department must become a vehicle for correcting those abuses.

And the President should stand tall against those who would weaken civil rights by appointing people, both for the Justice Department and for the Supreme Court and lower courts, who are wholeheartedly committed to advancing the protection of the civil rights laws.



GET REAL PRINCESS DIANA

Just like the fabled princess who couldn't sleep when a pea was hidden beneath her pile of mattresses, Las Vegas-Clark County Library Board president Diana Wilson will soon realize that her dream world is fiction and not fact.

And regardless of how many frogs are kissed, no one including his majesty King Charles can turn back an up-and-coming dose of reality. And it will come from a source that they think is a puppet.

On last Thursday night as the fairy slept through still another Library Board meeting as residents spoke logic that fell on illogical ears, taxpayers got shafted again because of simple disregard, disrespect and disqualifying of community residents concerns.

Case in point; at last week's board meeting, the trustees unanimously agreed to increase the stage area of the West Las Vegas auditorium

to 2,000 square feet. This is an issue that residents have been trying to convince the board to address for over a year.

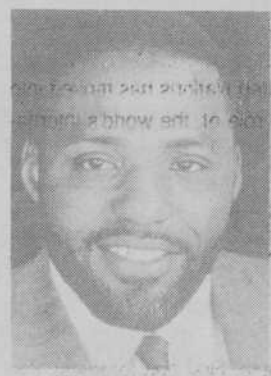
But each request was ignored. Waiting this long is criminal because now it will cost tax payers almost one million dollars to correct a stage that they knew was too damn small in the first place. This change will require tearing down some of the work that has already been completed. Had the high princess not been so high on her horse, it wouldn't of cost a dime more than projected. But sleeping beauty missed another chance to leave wonderland.

At that meeting board trustee Preston Hubbs proclaimed, "changes this late was a waste of taxpayer money." Obviously Mr. Hubbs has been stranded on Gilligan's Island and missed the meetings for the last two years. Mr. Hubbs should be informed that I currently have in my possession a request for this feature from late 1990, signed by over 200 residents.

Also, I'll gladly give him a copy of a letter written to King Charles Hunsburger on January 10, 1991, requesting the same. It should also be noted that last summer I met with Doug Johnson (the designer of the project), the library districts architect and the princess herself. At that meeting, Johnson confirmed how the district had abandoned the approved plans.

At that time he informed the princess that the needed changes could still be made if the board would act on the matter then to prevent additional cost to taxpayers. Needless to say, to no avail.

City Councilman Frank Hawkins, who attended last week's meeting, asked the question, "how many tax dollars would it right in the first place? Councilman, I have news for you, they simply don't give a damn. Let me remind Mr. Hubbs that on November 18, 1992, on the steps of City Hall, residents gathered at a press conference and asked



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

the board to conduct an "emergency review" of the worksite at the West Las Vegas project to see if the specifications were being adhered to.

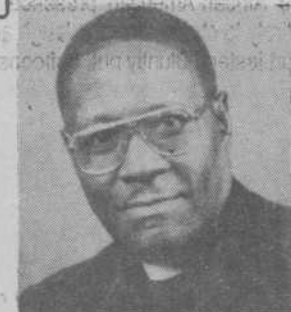
Again the only action was no action. At two other separate board meetings I presented the issue again. These meetings brought no answers either. In fact on my last attempt to get an answer, the princess ignored me as she looked into space putting on more lipstick as if she expected a frog to jump on the table and turn into a prince and take her away from the lowly peasants.

Get a grip Princess Diana, Councilman Hawkins was right when he said that "dissatisfaction with the project will not go away until you remedy it." Tell your court and merry men that the subjects are not taking your crumbs anymore and nobody lives happily ever after until you get real.

THE NAACP AND YOU



Rev. Jesse D. Scott
President
Las Vegas, NAACP



YOU STILL NEED THE NAACP

There are times in our lives as people of color when we would like to believe that we have arrived at a position in our social, political and economic lives where we don't need the NAACP anymore. Stop dreaming brothers and sisters and face 'Real Life' — that dream that you are

having is an illusion. The reality is that racism is real. Just to name a few incidents that have taken place in the Southern Nevada Community in recent times:

The passing of the 80 million dollar library bond and the prom- (See NAACP and You, Page 4)

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