



# National 1997 NAACP Convention Moves Out of Vegas

By Nichole Davis  
Sentinel-Voice

The 1997 NAACP National Convention will not be held in Las Vegas as announced in February, a high level NAACP official said Wednesday while not elaborating why.

"The board voted to move the convention out of Las Vegas in October," said Anna Aponte, director of the National Conference Department.

Local officials, who had heard rumors to that effect, had not been formally notified of the change at press time.

"There was no doubt about it, we did have the convention," said the Rev. James Rogers Jr., president of the local branch. "Later, there were concerns about it being hosted here; however, I

have received no documentation to that effect."

Aponte said, "a board meeting was held in October to countermand that decision... He is going to get a letter this week; it is in the mail."

Local branch officials weren't the only ones watching the national office this week.

Roosevelt Toston, a sales executive at the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority had worked 15 years to bring NAACP to Las Vegas. Although news leaked months ago that national officials were unhappy with the distance of the host hotel from the Las Vegas Convention Center, he also had not received formal notification of a pending change.

"The organization requires 3000 rooms within walking distance from the Convention Center," said Toston. "It's their policy that all host hotels be within walking distance of the convention."

"They wanted the Las Vegas Hilton, but the Hilton does not have the desired dates (July 12-17, 1997) available. The 19th-26th, I believe, is available," he said.

But Toston felt the "overriding reason" for the move was internal politics.

"The over-riding and the predominant reason are the internal politics involved in the national organization," he said. "Some of the more influential members involved with the board are from back East, and they

intend to favor their region to host conventions."

"They just don't come out West that often. They were in LA in 1989 or 90. I believe it was 10 years before that they were in Houston," he said.

Toston wrote local hotels less than two weeks ago to see if the later dates were open, but he wasn't sure then if it would make a difference in the final outcome.

"They tend not to want to meet that late in the month," he said. "Some of their members belong to the National Urban League and that would be a one week separation between two, big national conventions."

Toston said when he first heard rumors about a proposed move he

talked with people on the national site selection board who said the final decision would be reached at an executive board meeting in February.

"We were lead to believe that even though the vote was taken, it wasn't a dead issue, if the Hilton had come through with the rooms and the dates. The Hilton did come through but with later dates," Toston said.

(See NAACP, Page 2)



Former U.S. Rep. Jordan

## Barbara Jordan Dies

AUSTIN, Texas — Former U.S. Representative and the first African American elected to Congress from the South since Reconstruction, Barbara Jordan, died Wednesday at the age of 59. She had been ill for several years, suffering from multiple sclerosis and leukemia.

The daughter of a Baptist minister, Jordan was born in Houston in 1936. She graduated with honors from Texas Southern University and later studied law at Boston University. She went on to practice law in Houston.

In 1966, she became a Texas state senator; the first black, male or female, to serve there. She was elected to Congress six years later.

Best known for her oratory, and her eloquence, power and passion for the U.S. Constitution, Jordan was at one time considered a possible vice presidential candidate, however left politics after three terms in the House, choosing to teach instead. At the University of Texas, she devoted her energies to her students, who affectionately referred to her as "B.J."

Jordan's reputation soared nationally during the Judiciary Committee's 1974 hearings on whether to impeach then President Nixon. In (See JORDAN, Page 2)

# 1,200 Attend King Banquet

By Nichole Davis  
Sentinel-Voice

More than 1,200 people attended the 15th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet Saturday at the Mirage, organizers said.

The event was highlighted by the spirited speech of author Jawanza Kunjufu who focused his "17-minute" speech on leadership, churches and economic empowerment.

His remarks about mainstream society's playing of dangerous games came after the performances of 10 different singing and dancing troupes and the presentation of 20 awards.

The non-black community, he said, has created a "Choose Your Leader" charade for the black community to play.

"Choose between Booker T. (Washington) and (W.E. B.) Dubois, between Dubois and (Marcus) Garvey, between King and Malcolm (X).

Now, they're playing it again with Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan," said Kunjufu.

"Once they know who your leader is, they know if they kill your leader they kill your (movement)."

The higher visibility of black leadership, compared to white leadership, makes them more vulnerable, said Kunjufu.

"Who's the leader of white America right now? Don't embarrass yourself and say Bill Clinton, because this leadership is invisible. It's collective. It's diversified," he said. "Our leadership is the exactly the opposite, very visible, individualistic, and comes from the church."

Black churches have been the



From left, Rep. John Ensign, R-Nev., Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., Demetrius X and MLK President Lawrence Weekly come together for Saturday's King Banquet invocation. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

traditional breeding ground of the black leaders, Kunjufu said, but changing times are changing even the church.

Said Kunjufu, "In most black churches 75 percent of the congregations are made up of females. Where are the black men?"

"What produced Dr. King? A liberation church. The black church produced Dr. King," Kunjufu said.

"Dr. King was a strong mentor and you can see that by his mentees... They made Dr. King a dreamer, but King was far more than a dreamer. He was a preacher, an organizer and a scholar.

"In 1968, they thought if they killed the messenger they would kill the message. They know something about us. They know most of us follow the messenger rather than the message. They know if they killed the messenger, they'd kill the message," he said.

Economic development has to begin with our purchases, Kunjufu said.

"You know, Nike, LA Gear and Reebok make those tennis shoes in Korea for \$2.38, then turn around and sell them to our children for \$119.95," Kunjufu said. "We have to deal with economic development.

He talked about one newly formed group called the Revelation Corporation, which will provide financial assistance to blacks wishing to purchase their own homes.

"Dr. King believed in economic empowerment. Think about it. Last year, we earned \$248 billion," Kunjufu said.

Entertainment and award presentation filled the rest of the program.

The Codamay Dancers, Paiute Indian Dancers, Phillipine Dance (See BANQUET, Page 2)