

Mfume Sworn in, Vows to Reclaim NAACP's Voice



KWEISI MFUME

Special to the Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON—Kweisi Mfume, the former leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, was sworn in as president of the NAACP Tuesday, vowing to reclaim the group's voice for justice. The ceremony was held in the Great Hall of the Justice Department, the heart of a building where blacks used to be banned. Acknowledging that the nation's oldest civil rights organization has reached a crucial point in its 87-year history, the former Maryland congressman reminded those present that racism, sexism and anti-Semitism were alive and well in

America. Limited access to capital, child abuse and drug abuse, he said, are new scourges threatening equal opportunity for minorities, in particular blacks.

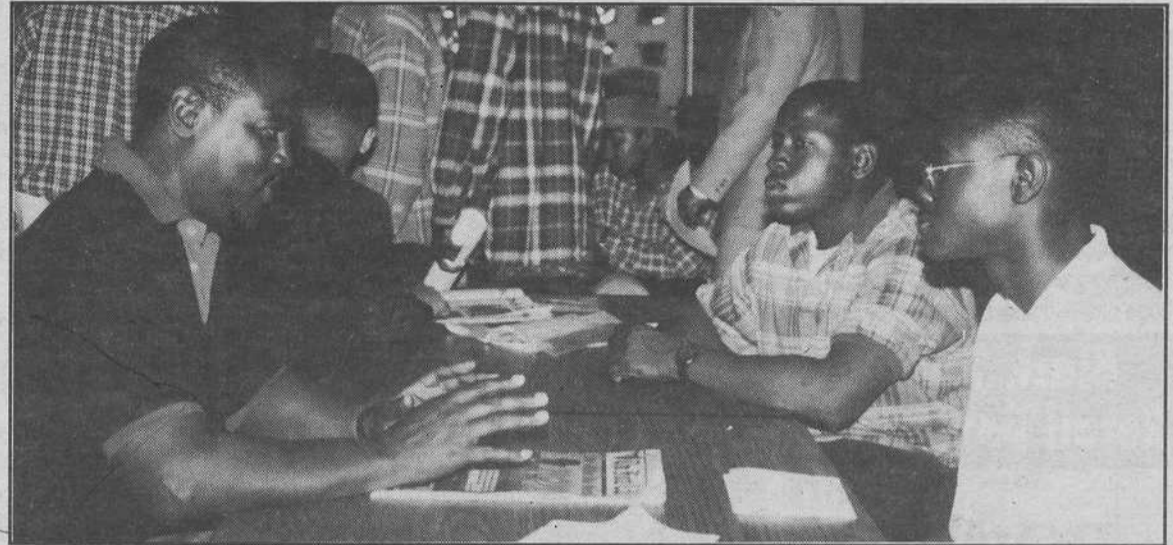
"It is in the interest of all people that we succeed in creating hope, new opportunity, new dignity, a new horizon, a new chance for each and every American," the 47-year-old Mfume said. "I ask all who care about what's fair and descent to join me under this banner to begin that journey for change."

Though faced with some opposition when he was appointed, primarily for his alliances with Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan, Mfume's surprise selection in December as president was seen by many as a breath of fresh air.

As a nine-year U.S. House of Representatives veteran and former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mfume, a Democrat, knows Capitol Hill politics.

During his five terms, he represented some of the poorest sections of his hometown, Baltimore, where he roamed the streets as a homeless youth.

The NAACP was rocked in 1994
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Businessman John Edmonds discusses job opportunities available to youths who participated in Saturday's forum sponsored by the Black Business Council and the Million Man March Committee. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

Youth, Business Leaders Meet at Economic Forum

By R.L. Gibson
Sentinel-Voice

The Las Vegas Black Business Council in conjunction with the Million Man March Committee sponsored a job fair and economic forum at the H.P. Fitzgerald Elementary School Saturday.

Drawing upon African-American business leaders, the job fair featured a variety of tables which provided local youth with information from several potential employers. An economic forum covering topics ranging from youth employment to building black infrastructure immediately followed the fair.

Steve Bowie, executive vice president of the Black Business Council

and one of the organizers of the event, said Saturday's underlying purpose was to provide local youth with employment opportunities and alternatives to other counterproductive options in the black community, such as criminal and gang activity.

Million Man March Committee member, Anthony Snowden agreed and added what they are trying to achieve differs little from what other Americans do for their youth everyday.

"Other segments of American society provide guidance for their children and I don't think African-American children necessarily have that opportunity," Snowden explained. "It's time for our black businessmen and women to come together and mentor our youth, so they will have the skills necessary for them to become productive citizens and access the job market. We can't rely on anyone else to do that for us."

Minister Duke X of Muhammad Mosque #75 and a forum speaker echoed Snowden's call for self-sufficiency, but said it has to be coupled with initiative.

"We must see the roles we can play in our own lives and act on them," said Minister Duke X. "We have a tendency to want the government to help us, but we have to realize there's a bigger part each individual must play and this job fair is one of the many steps we must take to achieve that."

Some local African-American youth, like upstart businessman Razaq Ali, a 22-year-old Las Vegas resident have assumed their own role and took part in Saturday's activities.

"I came out here to talk to some business owners about how to improve my business," he explained. Ali said some of his peers take part in criminal activity due in large part to a lack of jobs.

"Events like this give brothers an avenue to get off the streets," Ali said.

"Once they get a job, it builds their confidence and increases their self esteem. I'm sure glad I came."

Vincent Brooks, a 20-year-old product of the streets is an example of a young person on the road to recovery who made his way to the fair Saturday. According to Brooks, street life only leads to dead end.

"I just got tired of the streets," Brooks said. "I'm getting older now and I realized that it's time for black people to do for ourselves and to stop destroying ourselves in the streets."

Although there were youth present at the job fair who took advantage of the nearly three-hour event, there were far too many who did not, according to the organizers. Some attributed the lack of participation to community apathy, while others said the event should have been more widely publicized. Snowden said the reasons are more far-reaching than that.

"The lack of participation is a combination of a several things," explained Snowden. "First, our youth don't have a trust factor with the older generation. We constantly tell them what we are going to do, but we haven't delivered. Second, we as adults have to be more responsible in what we do and produce. We need do the extra planning and timing to make these types of events successful. Finally, we need to get rid of this mentality that some one else is going to do for us what we should do for ourselves — taking care of our own."

The economic forum concluded the day and focused on summer youth employment and its future demise by way of the 104th Congress as well as responsibilities of the African-American citizenry.

The Black Business Council and the Million Man March Committee have several events planned for the upcoming
(See Job Fair, Page 13)

Vote on Moulin Rouge Loan Postponed

By Nichole Davis
Sentinel-Voice

The Las Vegas City Council voted unanimously Wednesday to hold a \$3 million loan proposal for the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino in abeyance for no longer than 30 days after a public hearing on the matter.

"They didn't think they had enough information to give me a positive answer," said owner James Walker. "They probably want more in depth info about our marketing and more specific information about our management team."

Owners were concerned that the City Council tied approval of the \$3 million loan to an undisclosed financial arrangement currently in the works, but the council would not budge on this point.

"We are interested in the outcome of discussions you're having. We think it would have a direct impact on our decision today," Mayor Jan Jones said.

Although he insisted the requested information would demonstrate only the economic potential of the property, "we

will gladly provide the information per our discussions," Walker said.

Community turnout for the meeting was low. Two local residents, both Caucasian, spoke in favor of the

measure.

Supporter Joseph Maviglia, president of H & E Training Schools, said he didn't "support the games that
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From left, Moulin Rouge owners Sarann Knight-Predry; husband, Joe Predry; and son, James Walker; speak with a supporter about the results of Wednesday's City Council planning meeting. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice