

NEWS CLIPS

SCLC RETURNS TO ATLANTA FOR HISTORIC 40TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

After a nine year absence, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) returned to Atlanta for its 40th annual convention this week at the Grand Hyatt Regency Hotel. Participants from around the nation converged on Atlanta for the convention. Highlights of the convention included tributes to retiring SCLC national president Dr. Joseph Lowery and his wife, Evelyn G. Lowery, who founded the SCLC/W.O.M.E.N. in 1979. A town hall meeting entitled, "Where Do We Go From Here?" focused on the future of the organization and the political struggle. Additional forums tackled the proposed policies to reform the welfare system and educational issues - tracking, miseducation, standardized testing and efforts to close predominantly black colleges. Hundreds of SCLC youth held a concurrent convention at the American Best Western Hotel featuring a "rites of passage" ceremony, a forum on rap music and a step show.

GROUP SAYS SCHOOL CHOICE NEXT MAJOR CIVIL RIGHTS HURDLE

The Center for New Black Leadership (CNBL) has joined other advocacy organizations to launch an intensive effort to win low-income parents in Washington, D.C. the right to choose what school their children attend. "This is a civil rights issue," CNBL President Gerald Reynolds said. "When a public school fails to provide a quality education and safe learning environment, middle-class parents protect their children's future by placing them in a private school. It is only children of low-income parents who are used as cannon fodder in our battle to reform the crumbling public school system," he said. "Nothing is more fundamental to that power than to be able to choose which school your child attends." The Center for New Black Leadership is a Washington, D.C.-based research and advocacy institute whose mandate is to develop and promote a market-oriented, community-based vision of public leadership for black communities.



BUS CRASH KILLS 1, INJURES 34 ON CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR

STONY CREEK, VA. - A charter bus taking children on a black history tour careened off I-95 and plunged into the Nottoway River Wednesday morning, killing one person and injuring 34. The bus, part of a Pathways to Freedom tour co-sponsored by the Rosa Park's civil rights foundation, carried 29 children and five chaperones. According to an aerial examination of the vehicle's tracks, the bus - went off the road and straight into the river. The accident scene is 20 miles south of Petersburg. A 25 year-old man chaperoning the group of kids, most between the ages of 10 and 12 years-old, died in the accident. Others were taken to area hospitals shortly after the 7:15 a.m. accident. Four were seriously injured, including the bus driver and a 16-year-old girl who broke both ankles. A spokesperson for Southside Regional Medical Center, where 10 of the injured passengers were taken, say most injuries are minor and almost all the patients had been released by noon or would be soon.

NNPA CORRESPONDENT DIES

Dennis Schatzman, a correspondent for the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) who covered the O.J Simpson trial for the Association's more than 200 member papers has died. He was 47. Schatzman, who lost a lung after a shooting years ago, died Wednesday, July 16, at an Upland hospital following a severe asthma attack, family friend Vickie Carter said.

CORRECTIONS

Lisa Marie Lyons, the first black woman to graduate from the University of Nevada, Reno's School of Medicine, earned a doctor of medicine of degree from the university. Her credentials were misidentified in the July 17 issue of the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice.

The address for the retirement party of gospel radio disc jockey Sam Roberson was misstated in the July 24 issue. The correct address is Zion-Methodist Church, 2108 N. Revere.

Mississippi elects first black mayor

By Reginold Bundy

Special to Sentinel-Voice

For the first time in Mississippi history, voters in the state's capital city elected a black man as its political leader.

Harvey Johnson recently became Jackson, Miss. first African-American mayor.

"I can't forget from whence we've come because if we forget that then we stand a chance of repeating history," Johnson said during his inaugural speech. "We're not going to repeat that history in Jackson."

More than 1,000 people crowded the magnolia-lined lawn of City Hall for the nearly two-hour ceremony that included gospel music and a symphony performance.

Speaking from the steps of the plantation-style public building, constructed more than a century ago, Johnson said, "I

can remember in the mid-60s when we were forbidden to stand here, couldn't go into the building. Now, the deep South has finally acquiesced to needed change."

Johnson, a 50-year-old government planner and former member of the state Tax Commission, pledged to crack down on crime with better pay for law enforcement officers and to improve education in schools and communication.

Former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson said Johnson may face some of the same struggles he had as the Georgia city's first Black mayor. "Do not expect him to change things overnight," Jackson said.

Johnson gave the crowd the thumbs-up sign and appeared near tears during his 20-minute speech. White and black supporters were among the well-wishers. There was at

least one detractor.

White supremacist Richard Barrett stood on the City Hall sidewalk with a sign that read, "No Good Ever Came From Slaves Taking Over the Plantation."

Participants said the change was inevitable. But it's the irony that seemed to move many of Johnson's supporters.

Said Bill Griffin: "It's significant that slaves, Johnson's ancestors, built this building," he said. "He is moving into it...late, but he's moving into it."

One Washington political pundit warned that blacks should not set too high their expectations for social and economic parity for blacks.

"The mistake that African-American voters continually make is that they actually believe that social and economic parity can come with



HARVEY JOHNSON

the wave of a wand," Ronald Williams said.

"That's not only an impossible chore for men like Johnson, but it's also impractical. Johnson's responsibility must be to the entire populous of Jackson, not simply to its African-American population."

Blacks increase support of vouchers

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Increasingly, blacks are supporting the voucher concept - aimed at helping finance private school education for the urban poor.

Nonpartisan polls indicate a nearly 10 percent increase in support in the last 18 months.

Black parents from Cleveland and Milwaukee testified Tuesday before a Senate subcommittee in support of vouchers. The subcommittee's chairman, Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., called the hearing to shed light on the situation.

A longtime supporter of vouchers, Coats is pushing bills to create a program of federally

supported vouchers in the District of Columbia to help poor families at unsafe schools.

Rep. Floyd Flake, D-N.Y., pastors a Queens church that runs a school - he said the school will not benefit from voucher legislation. A member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Flake has been an outspoken supporter of vouchers. The 30-member caucus debated vouchers last week.

Teachers' unions, the Clinton administration and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) oppose the voucher legislation.

At its annual convention last

month, the NAACP voted against vouchers, only after deleting language that would have condemned charter schools - public schools run by parents, teachers or private organizations.

Dissatisfaction in public education is growing, according to the Joint Center for Political Studies, which emphasizes studies affecting black Americans.

Polls conducted last March show voucher support among blacks has outgrown support among whites. Whites were evenly divided at 47 percent, but 57.3 percent of blacks favored vouchers, a nine percent increase since January

of last year. Support was greatest among the young and the poor.

The share of blacks rating their schools as poor rose from 17 percent to 23 percent. For the general population, the rating jumped from 7.4 percent to 13.3 percent.

Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said voucher advocates are perpetuating a "cruel hoax" that ultimately will destroy public education. Parents must do what is best for their children, she said.

Feldman cited as problems limited amounts of vouchers and schools and inept or crooked schools.

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