

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

# Blacks: Don't join commissioner's hunt for wrong reason

Given the troubles that have dogged Clark County Commission Chairwoman Yvonne Atkinson Gates in the recent months, it comes as no surprise that her travails have produced whispers of "recall, recall."

Atkinson Gates has been assailed for ethics lapses — the Ethics Commission ruled that she violated two ethics laws by inquiring about leasing space in casinos she regulates; and, she awaits a May ethics hearing on awarding airport concessions to her close friends.

And given the nature of the chairwoman's indiscretions — the latter has yet to be proven — it wasn't surprising that the whispers grew into chants.

What is surprising about the recall effort — which has now swelled and collected some grass roots support — is the make-up of the group leading the cheers to bump Atkinson Gates from office.

Not all the anti-Atkinson Gates rhetoric is coming from the usual sources — Republican voters, or casino moguls upset that she voted against measures that would benefit his resort, or fellow county commissioners rubbed raw by her leadership style, or bigots who can't stand that a black woman is Southern Nevada's most powerful politician.

On the contrary, some blacks are leading the charge to collect the 4,380 signatures needed to force a special election that would give voters the chance to overthrow Atkinson Gates before she comes up for re-election.

Let's get one thing straight: The Sentinel-Voice is not insinuating that to disagree with Atkinson Gates or even to back her ouster is heresy of some kind, but when blacks are pushing a coup attempt on a black elected official because of spite, revenge for an unfavorable ruling, or for financial gain — as some involved with the recall effort are doing — then they are doing a disservice to themselves and the black politicians they're trying to get usurped.

Provided the recall effort fails, the only result is that a tattered relationship between politician and constituent is frayed even more. If the recall is successful, who's to say the community, and blacks in particular, will be better off. We could become voiceless again.

Remember Frank Hawkins.



# Editors need to push diversity

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Martin Luther King Jr. is thirty years gone, taken by an assassin's bullet that was meant to slay the "Dream" as well as the Dreamer.

But King's presence is even more powerfully with us now — despite the efforts of tricksters to take a snippet of this speech or that sermon as support for their benighted efforts to re-assign African-Americans to second-class status in American society.

It is ever more powerfully with us because the advice and moral counsel he provided are as needed now as they were at that moment in 1963 when, in his "I Have A Dream" speech at the March on Washington, he reminded America of "the fierce urgency of Now."

"This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism," he proclaimed then. "Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy."


Martin Luther King was "an American leader of conscience and humanity," as Julian Bond, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said when he (along with the Rev. Jesse Jackson and representative J. C. Watts, (R-Okla.) appeared together April 5 on the NBC News program "Meet The Press."

King never stopped urging the country to face the fierce urgency of adhering to its democratic rhetoric and its moral obligations.

So, even as we celebrate the fact that millions of

## To Be Equal

By **Hugh B. Price**  
President  
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African-Americans have moved into the middle class and thus come into full earthly possession of their own destinies — come closer, if you will, to the Promised Land that King spoke of on the last night of his life — we know that Martin Luther King is still calling us to action.

In the second-to-last sermon of his life, "Remaining Awake Through A Great Revolution," delivered at the National Cathedral in Washington just five days before his murder, King again challenged the dependence of some on "the myth of time ... the notion that only time can solve the problem of racial injustice."

On the contrary, he declared that "time is neutral; it can be used either constructively or destructively."

It would well serve the members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors — along with all of us — to read and re-read some of King's greatest sermons, which appear in a new book just published by Warner Books, *A Knock at Midnight: Inspiration From The Great Sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.*

His words could help them through the crisis of conscience the organization is facing.

It seems that some of the organization's membership have proposed reducing its long-standing goals for increasing diversity in news rooms.

According to a report in the *New York Times*, these journalists feel the goal of having news rooms reflect the country's ethnic mix by the year 2000 is "unrealistic" and is in danger of becoming, as one of the organization's board members claimed, a "disincentive to editors and publishers" in their recruitment

and hiring practices.

Vanessa Williams, president of the National Association of Black Journalists, called the suggestion of scaling back — which, it must be said, prompted other members of the organization to begin to formulate a more ambitious set of goals — disappointing but not surprising.

"In recent years indifference, if not hostility (to diversity initiatives) has been the norm of the newspaper industry," Williams said. "They don't regard it as an opportunity to expand their readership and practice good journalism."

"Instead, they tiptoe around it, apologize for it and devote few resources to it."

The journalists who urge retreat should re-think their "diversity fatigue."

They should recognize how astonishing it is that an organization of journalists — whose business demands that they thrive on the pressure of

(See *Dream*, Page 15)

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