

Leavall blasts prominent ad agency over slur

By Askia Muhammad
Special to NNPA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Despite an apology from the head of a prominent advertising agency to Black-owned radio stations for a memo that described their listeners as "suspects, not prospects," the president of the trade association representing Black-owned newspapers said the memo is further proof "that racism has permeated this country."

A memo circulated in 1997 at Amcast, a division of Katz Media Group, argued that advertisers should not advertise on Black radio stations because "advertisers should want prospects not suspects." Amcast was selling ads for New York stations WPLJ and WABC.

"We share your outrage and embarrassment about the memo that was a draft document and was never intended to be released," Stuart Olds, president of Katz Media told Tom Joyner, host

of the "Tom Joyner Morning Show," syndicated on more than 95 Black radio stations nationwide. "I also want to stress the fact that we are committed deeply to Hispanic and Black radio."

Olds noted that Katz has divisions in both "urban" and Hispanic radio, and that Katz is owned by a corporation that has Black-oriented radio stations in Philadelphia, Detroit and Chicago.

"If I haven't done it so far, I want to sincerely apologize for the language and tone that was in that memo," Olds said.

"What he was foolish enough to put on paper at Katz, you can transfer it to any of the advertising agencies, and that's the attitude and the reason why we don't receive advertising to speak to our community," said Dorothy Leavell, president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

"Everywhere I go, the attitude is: 'We've

done all we're going to do for you'," Leavell said. "It's not about doing business with our community. It's about giving us something, as though they are doing us a favor."

"This is just another one of the kinds of discrimination that takes place. I'm not surprised, but I'm disappointed that those who received such a memo have not taken steps to cut out the attitude that all African-Americans are criminals."

Said Olds: "I want your listeners to know that it was totally unacceptable and not reflective of the way we strive to do business inside of our organization. And the people involved in this know this more clearly than you can possibly imagine, and you would not have wanted to be one of those people when I addressed this issue head on."

He said the people responsible for the memo will be reprimanded, if they can be individually identified.

"Frankly, it serves a good purpose for alerting us that racism is alive, very much alive," Leavell said, pointing out that Black newspapers have an even tougher fight to win advertising in some cases than Black radio stations. "We can see that racism has permeated this country and I'm not sure if just talking about it, which the President has done, is going to make a big difference."

Joyner expects advertising agencies to follow in the footsteps of Texaco and Denny's. Embarrassed by disclosures of racism in employment practices or treatment of customers, both companies pledged to hire and promote more minorities, implement sensitivity training and increase franchising opportunities.

"And we expect the advertising agencies to step it up too," Joyner said.

"We want results now. It's time to right the wrongs that produced this."

Whites, Blacks remember Oklahoma race riots

Special to Sentinel-Voice

TULSA, Okla. — "God bless you wonderful people," said Mabel Little, as the crowd, assembled on the 77th anniversary of one of the nation's worst race riots, looked on.

Little lost her church, her business and 35 blocks of her community when white mobs torched it in two days of rioting on June 1, 1921.

Hundreds — both black and white — attended an emotional "assembly of repentance"

on Monday in a bare lot where Tulsa's thriving black business district once proudly stood.

White ministers led whites in seeking forgiveness for the actions of their forefathers; black ministers led a smaller crowd of blacks in pardoning them.

At first, the crowd sat languidly in the evening heat. But as the ministers' fervor grew in pleas for repentance and forgiveness, whites and blacks jumped to their feet, crying "Hallelujah!"

and "Amen!"

An elderly white man rushed to offer his lawn chair to an elderly black woman.

A black woman and a white woman embraced. Robert Calvert, a black man, raised a communion cup to the lips of a white man who said, "I love you" and sobbed.

For Little, a 101-year-old survivor of the riots, seeing the races shoulder to shoulder was a blessing. "I'm the happiest person in the

world, today!" she said.

The riot broke out May 31, 1921, when mobs called for the lynching of a black man accused of attacking a white elevator operator. When the smoke lifted the next day, the Greenwood district lay in ruins and dozens lay dead. The death toll was put as high as 300.

"Our ancestors can now rest," said Willette DeShields, whose grandfather was a successful businessman until the race riot.

African children's choir to give free concert Sunday

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The African Children's Choir will give a free concert Sunday, June 7, at the West Las Vegas Library Theater 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd.

Co-sponsored by the library, KCEP Rhythm Radio FM 88.1 and First A.M.E. Church, the 6 p.m. concert will give audiences a chance to see the choir, nominated for a 1993 Gospel Grammy.

Composed of children 5 to 12, some of them orphans, the

choir has appeared on numerous television shows and has performed at the United Nations, Germany's Berlin Stadium in Germany and London's Royal Albert Hall.

Programming for the Sunday evening concert features children's songs, gospel tunes, traditional spirituals and some contemporary music.

The choir is sponsored by Friends in the West, an interdenominational Christian

charity that will be accepting tax-deductible donations and offerings. The goal of the choir's tour is to raise awareness about the needs of destitute and orphaned African children, and to collect funds to support the choir and its associated educational institution, the African Outreach Academy, also sponsored by Friends in the West.

The Outreach Academy is (See Choir, Page 3)

KUNV

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Special programs will air at 5 p.m. weekdays: "Billy Taylor Jazz at Kennedy Center" on Mondays; "Piano Jazz" with Marion McPartland on Tuesdays; "Jazz Profiles" with Nancy Wilson on Wednesdays; "Jazz Set" with Bradford Marsalis on Thursdays; and "Making the Music" with Wynton Marsalis on Fridays.

"Everyone's been real supportive about it," said Kim Lindsey, KUNV's jazz music director. "The community is glad we made the move. Our numbers, through the ratings, show that jazz is strong enough to support a 24-hour station."

Besides the increase in jazz programming, KUNV's management hopes to become more involved in promoting and sponsoring jazz concerts, something they say they haven't been able to do with

the part-time format.


"That's a goal we are looking forward to reaching — being more involved in the promoting of concerts and also in the community," Lindsey said. "We are involved in some things, but, being that now we are going to be the focus of jazz, I think we can be an asset to the community."

"It's going to take us a while to see where we are," she said of KUNV's bright future, "but

I'm sure there will be some big things coming."

But will KUNV's switch to jazz satisfy the most important equation: the jazz listener?

"I really feel that it will," Lindsey said. "It's definitely a step in that direction. Of course, a lot of our listeners want it seven days a week, and unfortunately we can't do that right now. But, again, it's a big step. So, I think a lot of our listeners, will be very pleased."

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