

D.C. searching for Barry successor

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON—Voters in the nation's capital will take the first step next month to choose a new mayor as the long and turbulent tenure of Marion Barry nears an end.

But they still don't know whether that new mayor will be a figurehead or if Congress might restore the powers it stripped from the office three years ago when Washington was teetering on the brink of bankruptcy after years of mismanagement.

Barry had mounted a personal comeback in 1994 that returned him to the office he had lost because of his 1990 conviction and subsequent six-month jail term for cocaine possession.

The district's voters now seem ready for a change not just in personnel but in outlook.

"The next mayor will have to be in tune with Congress, somebody who's willing to work with them. In the past it hasn't been that way," said Michael White, a 36-year-old

Washingtonian.

The presidentially appointed District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Authority, which Congress created in 1995, still holds virtually all control over local law enforcement, public education and other municipal functions. And the White House and Congress pushed through a bailout last summer that shifted most costs for prisons, Medicaid and pensions to the federal government. Since then, the city's economic fortunes have rebounded.

There was little outcry from local residents about the transfer of power from the mayor to the appointed board.

Indeed, the apparent front-runner in the crowded Sept. 15 Democratic primary is Anthony Williams, the former city finance chief appointed by the financial control board, who carried out many of the economic moves.

The 47-year-old graduate of Yale and Harvard Law School helped slash the

municipal workforce by one-third. He left the financial post to enter the mayor's race just days after Barry announced in May that he would not seek a fifth term.

Also seeking the Democratic nomination, which is usually tantamount to election in this heavily Democratic city of 550,000, are three veteran city council members — Kevin Chavous, 42; Harold Brazil, 49; and Jack Evans, 44 — and restaurateur Jeffrey Gildenhorn, 55. Republican Councilwoman Carol Schwartz, 54, is making her third run for mayor against token GOP primary opposition.

Williams' stiffest competition may come from Chavous, considered by many the heir-apparent to Barry's bloc of elderly and low-income supporters.

"We still have 535 members of Congress playing the role of a super city council, and that is totally anti-American," Chavous complained.

The issues are education,

economic development, city services and the reassertion of home rule. Even Barry admits his departure might clear the way for better relations with Congress.

Barry, 62, who has not yet endorsed any of the candidates, said, "The race is between Chavous and Williams at this point, that's how I see it."

Some longtime Barry supporters, including boxing promoter Rock Newman and the Rev. Willie Wilson, the mayor's politically influential pastor, are supporting Williams.

Washington's status as the nation's capital presents unique fiscal challenges.

Federal installations within its roughly 70 square miles pay no property taxes. Nonprofit groups and trade associations, which are major employers, also are tax-exempt.

Meantime, much of the region's business growth has taken place in suburban Maryland and Virginia.

(See *Successor*, Page 5)

Life sentence given for Cosby killing

Special to Sentinel-Voice

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Mikail Markhasev, the 19-year-old convicted of killing Bill Cosby's son, was sentenced to life in prison without parole Tuesday after the judge rejected claims of misconduct by prosecutors and the jury.

Cosby wasn't present, but his three daughters and other relatives attended the sentencing.

Markhasev was convicted July 7 of murdering 27-year-old Ennis Cosby during a holdup along a dark highway as Cosby changed a flat tire last year. The verdict carried an automatic life sentence with no possibility of parole.

Ennis Cosby's uncle, Eric Hanks, gave a slide presentation that showed the victim as a child, high school student and graduating college student. Hanks also displayed photographs of Markhasev grinning during the trial and another of him in his jail cell.

"He's been smiling throughout the trial," Hanks said. "When he's not smiling he's wearing a proud and defiant smirk on his face. All of this shows he's boasting of what he's done."

Markhasev sat expressionless during the sentencing and declined the judge's offer to make a statement. His mother and grandmother left without comment.

In court papers, the defense claimed prosecutors repeatedly referred to Markhasev's alleged gang connections despite a court order against it. The defense also argued that a juror indicated she had reached her decision before final arguments ended.

"Another expressed the opinion that they should 'hang' Mr. Markhasev before the exhibits were even submitted to the jury," defense attorney Henry Hall wrote.

The judge rejected the claims.

The judge added 10 consecutive years to the sentence for use of a firearm plus three years to run concurrently for robbery.

Doolittle



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Happy seniors marched Mardi Gras style on Monday to inspect the new senior center.

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programming. Once a regular at the center, Catherine Spann promised to make use of the new facility. "It's beautiful, and I'm happy," she said.

Baker, director of the center's seniors' programs for six years, expects clientele to swell past the 50 or so seniors who used to crowd into the one room each day and often inconvenienced each other. A cloth partition separated activities.

Alice Wilson, chairwoman of the West Las Vegas Neighborhood Executive Board, danced from the opening ceremony in Doolittle's gym to the center's entrance where a free buffet lunch was served. The board arranged funding for a weekday senior nutrition program. Doolittle seniors get lunch everyday at 11:30 a.m.

and on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Other centers also run the senior nutrition program which offers lunches for a \$1.75 donation. Those who can't afford to pay eat free.

Seniors will help define what programs they want. Among the classes offered this fall are AARP 55 Alive, tap dancing, cooking, flower arranging, sewing, computing and chair exercise for people in wheelchairs.

"The senior population is the fastest growing population in the Las Vegas Valley," said Las Vegas City Councilman Gary Reese, whose Ward 3 district includes the center.

He credited Jones and fellow Las Vegas City Councilman Michael McDonald with making the project possible. The center lie in McDonald's district before the county restructured districts several years ago. McDonald created the idea and gathered

funding. He also sponsored the ordinance creating the Neighborhood Services department in March 1996.

"We seniors are very proud" (See *Doolittle*, Page 5)

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