

Gray: Respect for diversity key to prosperity

By Lee Brown

"You have to ask yourself, 'Is the playing field level?' When I ask that question, the answer comes back no."

This is how William Gray III, and many others view the issue of diversity in America as we head into the new millennium.

Speaking before a near-capacity audience at the UNLV Performing Arts Center last week, Gray, a former Pennsylvania Congressman and head of the United Negro College Fund for the past seven years, joined journalist-author-historian David Halberstam and journalist and equal opportunity leader Linda Chavez to discuss "Diversity in the Next Millennium." The event was part of the university's Barrick Lecture Series.

Also scheduled to

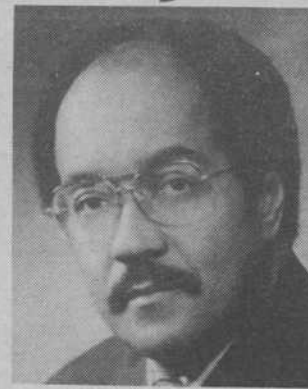
participate was Emmy Award winning ABC news correspondent Carole Simpson, who was called back to Washington to cover President Clinton's impeachment trial. Filling in for Simpson as moderator was another Emmy Award winning ABC news correspondent, Michel McQueen, known for her reports for the ongoing television news series Nightline.

"In just about a year we will enter the next century, and demographers are telling us that 85 percent of all workers that will enter America's workforce will be women or people that are today called minorities — Hispanic-Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Native-Americans, immigrants that come from the Pacific rim,

Central America, the Caribbean, or some combination thereof (Tiger Woods)," said Gray, a Baptist Minister who became a member of the 96th Congress in January 1979 where he served on the Budget Committee, the committee on the District of Columbia and the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Gray, 57, also pointed out that reports are showing that by the year 2050, one-half of this nation — 51 percent of the people that will call themselves American; "born here, raised here, bred here" — will be people who today we call minorities. "That's a revolution, my friends," he said. "I suppose we can do one of two things," Gray said in terms of how to handle diversity as we enter the new millennium.

"We can circle the wagons



WILLIAM GRAY III

and say lets go on with the way things are because we like it the way they are, and resist change. Or we can figure out ways to embrace the change and make America a greater place in the 21st Century. I suggest that despite the course that this country has had with regards to race or anything else, when you look at it, we've been able to embrace change. I think that what we have to do is recognize that the

revolution is already here. It's here in California. It's here in Nevada.

It's here in Arizona. It's here in Texas. It's here in Florida. All the way to New York City, Chicago and Detroit. And it's going to continue. We can circle the wagons and hold on to the status quo, or we can try to embrace change and make America much more inclusive."

A staunch supporter of education as a means of balancing the playing field when it comes to race in America, Gray is responsible for collecting approximately one-third of the more than \$1.2 billion raised in the College Fund's 53-year history. During his tenure, he also developed the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute to compile and analyze data on a host of

issues affecting African-American students from kindergarten through graduate school.

"The key in this revolution, more than power, will be education," said Gray. "We are now leaning toward a financial, technology and service kind of a society. And thus, anyone without an education, is going to fall further and further behind, and we're going to lock people into an underclass that will drag this society. I suggest that we're going to have to find a way, somehow, to take those who are going to be our workforce, and give them the skill sets. If we fail to do that, we will not only increase tensions in our society, but we will also suffer in the 21st Century.

"If we are to make it in the 21st Century, then we are (See Diversity, Page 8)

NNPA calls FBI to investigate shooting

Special to Sentinel-Voice

In conjunction with the NAACP press conference, Black Voice News Publisher and National Newspaper Publisher's Association first vice president Hardy Brown read a resolution released during the NNPA national convention held last month in Phoenix.

The statement said the NNPA "is outraged by the senseless shooting of 19-

year-old African-American Tyisha Miller by four police officers at two a.m. on Dec. 28, 1998 in Riverside, Ca."

"The NNPA considers the loss of Tyisha Miller as a national tragedy and illustrates the continued need of Attorney General Janet Reno and the FBI to investigate this matter and similar incidents of police brutality in other American cities."

The NNPA resolution also "calls for a nationwide alert to law enforcement that such victimization of American citizens must end with this incident."

The 60-year-old civil rights organization questioned the unwillingness of "the officers responding to the Miller family's 911 call for emergency medical assistance [who] failed to yield to the family's request

at the scene to wait just five minutes so additional keys to the vehicle could arrive," and that the "haste of the officers led to the breaking of the window and subsequent shooting of Tyisha Miller."

The resolution asked "that if initial reports are validated that the officers are responsible for this homicide, that these officers be terminated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law."



African-Americans continuously feel targeted by the law enforcement community.

Riverside NAACP defends itself, demands more answers in shooting

By Samuel Williams, Jr.

The Black Voice News

Eunice Williamson, president of the Riverside, Calif. branch of the NAACP, denied accusations that the civil rights organization hasn't pressed for more investigations into the shooting of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller by Riverside police.

"We were at the first meeting and helped organize the second meeting which raised over \$3,000 for the family," Williamson said. "This started out as a coalition effort, so why should the NAACP start waving a banner?"

Williamson said she did

not initially respond to the allegations to avoid public feuding.

She and regional director Frank L. Berry recently released a press statement declaring that "it is time to speak-out regarding the police shooting death of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller on Dec. 28, 1998."

The statement highlighted five questions: Why was the site of the shooting resurfaced so quickly?

Why was the victim's car taken into police custody resulting in the removal of the windows?

Is the FBI investigation a separate process or simply the review of the police

department's investigation? Was the unofficial statement—released by legal counsel representing the officers involved in the shooting—a ploy to sway public opinion?

Will the police ever release the results of their investigation?

The NAACP has proposed that the police and District Attorney's reports of the investigation be "provided separately under seal to the U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division" for comparison and the appropriate legal action under Civil Rights Statutes.

The group has also proposed asking the U.S. Department of Justice to conduct its own independent investigation and to impanel a "Citizen-Police Review Board" to review and respond to all charges of police abuse, misconduct and excessive force.

According to family members, Miller was killed

by 12 of 27 bullets shot into her car by police while she sat unconscious after suffering an apparent seizure.

Police said Miller had attempted to fire a gun at them, but later retracted that story.


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