

## POINT OF VIEW

## Our View

## Washington deserves job as city fire chief

There are a myriad of reasons why David Washington should be the next Las Vegas Fire Department chief, the least of which has to do with his color. Let's disregard the warm fuzzies many of us would feel by having the veteran fire official in the top post. Instead, let's focus on Washington's track record.

Washington, who is presently deputy fire chief and figures to be on any list of candidates that could replace present chief Mario Trevino, worked as a firefighter from 1974 to 1978. He spent the next four years as community relations specialist for the City of Las Vegas where he administered and supervised the fire education division, made fire safety presentations for the public and handled other duties.

Washington ascended the administrative ladder from 1982 to 1994, becoming a fire administration officer, fire training officer, acting training chief, training chief and Support Services battalion chief in 1994. In his present role, he manages, supervises and coordinates projects and personnel within the Support Services department. His duties also include interacting with other departments and divisions, preparing and monitoring budget expenditures and being responsible for facility and equipment upkeep in the department.

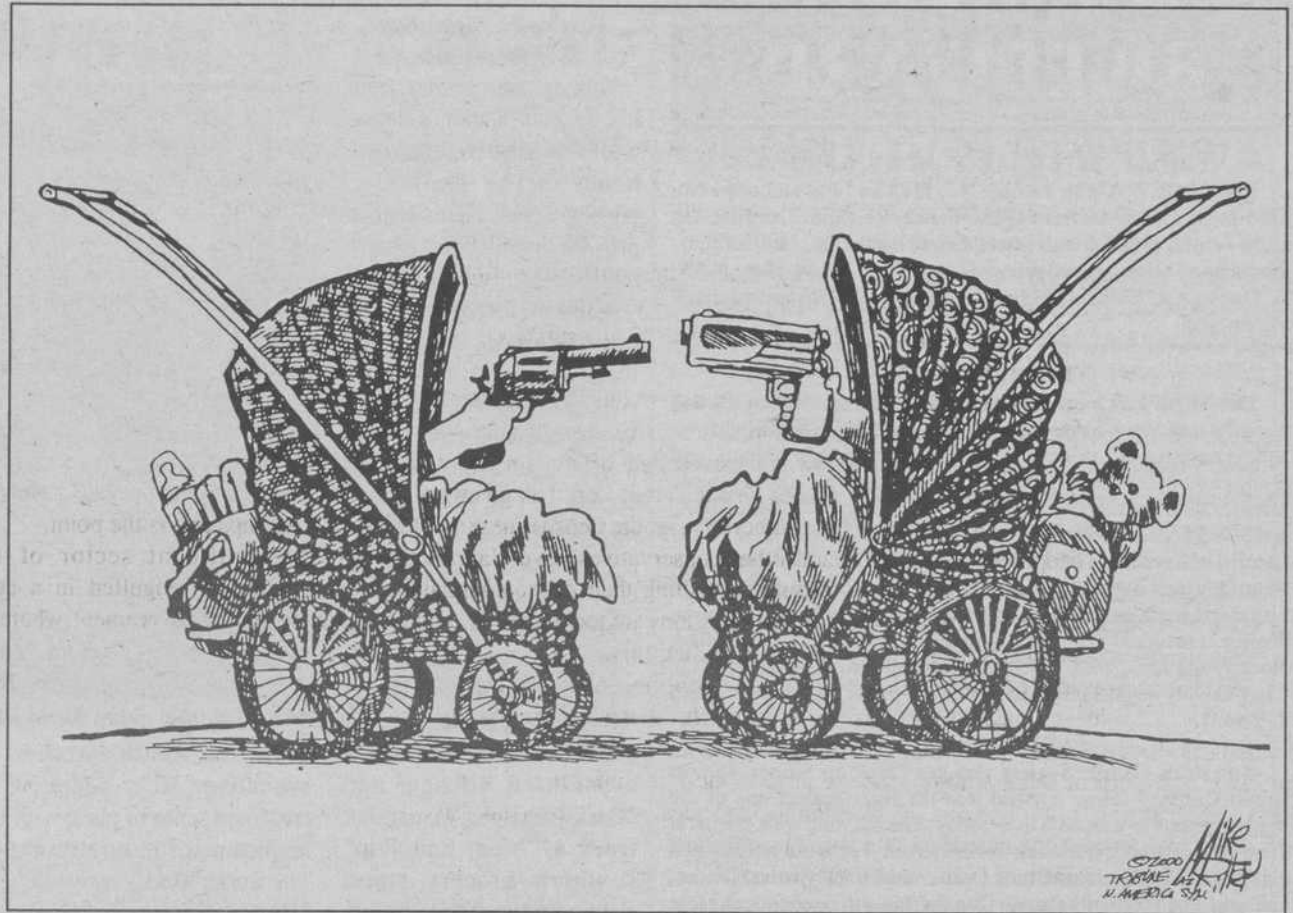
Washington has taken continued courses in fire services technology and fire science management and attended workshops and seminars on fire investigation, fire apparatus and equipment, fire administration, principle of management, personnel supervision, incident command system and human relations in fire service. He is also a graduate of the executive development program for fire service professionals at Dillard University in New Orleans.

He holds memberships in the International Association of Firefighters, United Firefighters of Southern Nevada, Nevada Fire Chief Association, Black Chief Officers Committee and is a founding member of the Professional Black Firefighters of Las Vegas. Non-fire affiliated memberships include being a board member for the United Way, Enterprise Community Federal Credit Union and Community Peace, Inc., chairman of the Anytown U.S. Steering Committee and director of New Ventures CDC.

Then there are the awards: a 1982 Appreciation award from the Professional Black Firefighters; a 1990 award from the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters and a 1991 Commitment to Service Lifeline award from the Professional Black Firefighters.

The civic honors are more impressive. He's been honored by the Professional Black Women's Alliance, the Las Vegas Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, Outstanding Young Men of America, Inc., United Way of Southern Nevada, KLAS TV Channel 8, the National Conference for Community Justice and others. Washington has amassed a stellar reputation among fellow firefighters and among fellow Las Vegans. He's achieved via skill and hard work, not handouts. Making him our next fire chief is the proper thing to do.

For a moment, forget about the residual effects of having a black face in a position of power. Think instead about the fabled pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps-and-push-yourself-to-succeed rugged American individualism popularized by Theodore Roosevelt. Think about how David Washington exemplifies that. Then think about him as our next fire chief.



## Penalties, not protests, needed to end profiling

Linn Washington, Jr.  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Police in southern New Jersey busted a million-dollar drug ring last year that specialized in selling marijuana and psychedelic mushrooms to youths in upscale suburban communities.

The remarkable thing about this drug bust is that the media in Philadelphia that covers these suburban communities totally missed the most remarkable aspect about these traffickers who used cars and trucks to transport drugs into South Jersey.

The story of this drug ring run by white drug dealers principally servicing white drug users provided a clear and convincing example of the blatant racism behind the police practice of racial profiling on highways.

This drug bust occurred at the height of the racial profiling controversy last year involving the New Jersey State Police.

However, the media failed to show how this South Jersey drug bust showed the racist stupidity shining through profiling nationwide.

This March 1999 drug bust occurred two short weeks after the firing of Carl Williams, the then NJ State Police Superintendent. Williams sparked his own ouster by imprudently proclaiming that his troopers targeted minority drivers on the NJ turnpike because minorities' are the people

"most likely" dealing marijuana, cocaine, heroin and stuff like that."

Because Superintendent Williams' troopers were busily searching law abiding minority motorists, white drug dealers cruised along NJ highways - unmolested - in vehicles filled with marijuana.

Because of racist assumptions that minorities are the majority among drug dealers/drug users, NJ state troopers inadvertently aided a white South Jersey gang ring up \$1.2-million in profits pedaling powerful intoxicants to teens.

Because bigoted beliefs infest both law enforcement officials and their political patrons, too many white drug dealer/users regularly escape the Drug War dragnet that bashes blacks on a daily basis.

For example, federal statistics consistently document that whites are two-thirds of America's crack cocaine users yet over two-thirds of those receiving lengthy sentences in federal prison for crack cocaine violations are non-whites, primarily blacks.

Federal Drug Enforcement Administration reports document that crack cocaine sales take place inside "suburban dwellings" as well as on inner-city street corners from New Jersey to the Pacific Northwest.

Yet, blacks accounted for 50 of the 53 federal crack cocaine prosecutions in New Jersey from 1993-1995. Only

one of these federal crack cocaine defendants was white.

What causes the blithe dismissal of police racism by top law enforcers and elected officials?

The blinding impact of bigotry!

NJ officials defiantly denied racial profiling for over a decade despite damning statistical evidence dating from the late 80's documenting racially disproportionate enforcement practices by state troopers.

N.J. officials denied profiling when attorneys in 1990 demanded to know why 80 percent of the N.J. Turnpike drug arrests in 1988 involved black motorists driving out-of-state vehicles.

Officials claimed the arrest figure reflected blacks being the majority of speeders on the Turnpike.

Attorneys then produced a separate federal study documenting that 75 percent of the vehicles on the

Turnpike exceeded the speed limit and only 2 percent of those speeding vehicles contained blacks.

Gov. Christie Whitman vigorously fought a 1996 court ruling that declared racial profiling existed and persisted because of "institutional discrimination by the State Police hierarchy."

Whitman did not acknowledge profiling until after the faux pas by her top cop Williams when a study grudgingly conducted by Whitman's Administration confirmed evidence critics produced during the past decade.

New Jersey is not the only place where police profile and top officials ignore this racist practice.

A federal judge fined the Arkansas State Police in 1988 for failing to comply with a court agreement to stop profiling Hispanic drivers.

President Clinton, Arkansas' governor during the 1980s, did not forcefully

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