

MGM-Detroit

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Wayne County Circuit Court in late October by 14 African-Americans, charges that MGM-Detroit "acted, or failed to act with malice or reckless indifference to (their) protected rights," and "tolerated a hostile environment" wherein those in authority "regularly and customarily used language and terms offensive to African-Americans."

It claims stereotypes were common, and that the behavior was extended to black patrons as well as employees, which, say the plaintiffs, "added to the hostile environment." It further complains of "unequal working conditions," and "retaliation" against those who complained.

Following the press conference, Collins hand-delivered a letter to Nevada Gaming Control Board member Bobby Siller, asking that the board investigate the charges.

"It seems that there is a pattern that is clear," said Sharpton. Asked whether he has yet spoken with MGM executives, he responded, "I have not, and we have sent a letter that requested a meeting."

"We have asked the MGM Grand officials to sit down and deal with these issues across the board," Sharpton said, "or we will have no choice but to not only support lawsuits, but engage in direct action."

Because of ongoing criticism by Collins and others that MGM Grand here in Las Vegas has not promoted diversity, Sharpton said, "We are very disturbed from a national level."

Earlier in the day, parent company MGM/Mirage issued a statement saying it was "deeply saddened" that

Collins had involved Sharpton and NAN-Nevada "in furthering allegations of racial discrimination" against the corporation.

Calling the lawsuit "very serious," the statement said MGM officials "are making a serious commitment to investigating these charges," and "has engaged an independent counsel to look into (them) and determine their merit, if any." It went on to say that MGM/Mirage is "fully prepared to support the findings of this independent investigation."

The company said it has developed "relationships" with groups capable of addressing diversity issues, "including the Urban Chamber (of Commerce) in Las Vegas and Rev. Sharpton's own National Action Network chapter in Detroit, among others."

The chapter president of NAN in Michigan wrote a letter dated Dec. 17 to Joe Davis, Managing Partner of MGM-Detroit, confirming that.

"This chapter, contrary to the letter written by Mr. Gene Collins," Rev. Horace Sheffield told Davis, "is satisfied with both the efforts and outcomes of the MGM Grand Detroit."

Only by "working with responsible parties," MGM/Mirage said in its statement, "will we achieve substantive results in providing real equal opportunity for all."

Meanwhile, Sharpton says NAN is resolving its internal difference, calling the process "good, healthy for creative dialogue."

He said "legitimate complaints ought to be dealt with," but made no comment specifically about Sheffield's remarks." He did say, however, that "Joe Davis now



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Gene Collins, right, president of the local chapter of the Al Sharpton-led National Action Network, hands Nevada Gaming Control Board member Bobby Siller evidence relating to lawsuits by black MGM Grand Detroit workers.

can prove that his confidence in MGM can be vindicated by bringing them to the table."

"I think that people here and people elsewhere will take notice," Sharpton said of MGM-Detroit.

"I think people in public regulatory positions will have to deal with those that they sanction who will not even discuss claims of discrimination from communities and from employees."

NAN indicated that its reaction to the situation in Detroit could take various forms.

"One would be to engage in lawsuits that would sup-

port this. Second would be calling for people not to engage in any way with them, by boycotting both their casinos and hotels. Third would be civil disobedience," said Sharpton.

NAN is also considering class action that could, conceivably, include MGM employees in Las Vegas.

"We're going to ask everybody who has had a complaint with MGM to get in touch with our office," Collins said. "We will be discussing that with Attorney Cochran tonight," Sharpton affirmed.

My Holiday Recipe

- Grandma's slammin' cornbread dressing
- Some old-school Christmas LP's
- Kayla and Sharise messing with their toys
- Tavis home from college
- A serious feast with holiday flavor
- The men mad into the game
- Some belt-loosening and kickin' back
- And a lot of thankfulness for another year together

Add Coke. Mix it all together. Chill. And serve.



peace



Conference

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Political Prisoners!" We will be looking for the youth and student organizers and activists to play a significant role in making this march and demonstration successful. This SOBWC helped intensify our organizing work to build and strengthen the Reparations Movement.

So much occurred at the State of the Black World Conference that it is impossible to write about all of it in the space of this brief report. However, under Dr. Ron Daniels' leadership, the SOBWC will "create an Institute of the Black World as the continuation mechanism of the State of the Black World Conference and the clearinghouse for the Black World Network and Pan African Councils as a center to engage in critical research, and provide ongoing technical assistance, leadership, and skill development training for activists and organizers."

We reminded the conference participants that at the Congress of African People meeting held in Atlanta in 1970, we declared, We are an African people! We reaffirmed that we are an African people, at the State of the Black World Conference 31 years later. We are an African people struggling and fighting for Black power. The State of the Black World Conference made this very clear once again!

Dr. Worrill is the national chairman of the National Black United Front.