

Gregory extremely thankful to be recovering

By James Muhammad
Special to Sentinel-Voice

CHICAGO (NNPA) — He stopped by just to say hello—and thanks. Activist Dick Gregory, who has been on his back for several weeks as a result of surgery for a bleeding vessel in his nose, said the experience has given him a new appreciation for the people who devote themselves to providing medical care. He also said he felt the power of prayers offered for his healing.

"If I didn't have health insurance, I'd be dead," said Gregory during a visit to The Final Call. "As a nation that is so wealthy, if you can afford (health care) you have a right to live. If you can't afford it, you have a right to

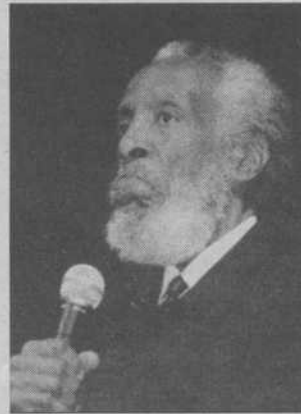
die." Gregory's nose began to bleed weeks ago after he sneezed while he was in California and it wouldn't stop. He said it took several surgeries to finally stop the bleeding, the result of an injury to the nose suffered some 50 years ago.

Now 70, Gregory said it is a disgrace that the homeless in America, 42 percent of whom are Vietnam veterans, don't have access to proper health care.

A health food guru whose nutritional products and advice have made him an international icon, the comedian/author said he thanks God for the "overworked, underpaid" people who deliver hospital medical care.

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— Dick Gregory



"Being in the hospital that long gave me a profound respect for people who are not getting the proper pay, but they're always there," he said. "I know a lot of people into organic foods and nutrition that really look down on conventional medicine. I say to

them, if we are coming from a natural food convention and we're eating some organic grapes at 9 o'clock at night and a drunk comes over the guard rail and hits us head on. The vehicle that comes to pick me up, don't take me to no health food store and don't

come with no wild yam dust. Take me to the hospital."

"There comes a time when there's no herbs in the health food store that will help you right now. I am extremely grateful there was a place I could go and have the procedures I couldn't get nowhere else," he added.

Gregory said he got support and prayers from people he didn't realize knew him.

"They would send things to the local radio shows and tell them to send it to Dick Gregory," he said, referring to stations he had been on across the country.

A somewhat more reflective and soft-spoken Gregory noted the advancements of Blacks and that more progress must come as Blacks move

from the "physical to the mental."

"Are cops more brutal now than they were 40 years ago? Then what has changed? Our attitude," he said.

A man who has been relied on by Black America to bring the "other side" of the news and a unique analysis, Gregory did not leave without making a case.

"We have to ask certain questions," he said. "How is it that malt liquor is sold in Black communities and you see that it contains magnesium, which will make you kill your momma? At some point in a racist system I can't take their explanation of what's killing me."

James Muhammad writes for the Final Call.

Texas

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what should be an orderly process."

Rep. Martin Frost (Fort Worth) took offense to the use of law enforcement officer to attempt to force the representatives back in session. "That is not in the American tradition," he said. "Who wants that? I'll tell you who—Tom Nixon DeLay. Shame on Tom DeLay.... We don't have a police state in America. Maybe Mr. DeLay wants a police state."

Gov. Rick Perry joined in among the critics. "It's unfortunate they would run and hide rather than stay and fight for their constituents," said Perry. "Every day, Texans who face difficult challenges at work keep showing up. When the going gets tough,



"Taking up redistricting is a disservice to the people of Texas. It's time the Texas House focuses on the real issues important to working Texas families."

— Garnet Coleman

Texans don't back down, they rise to the challenge. They know it's their responsibility and the right example to set for their children."

After last November's election, Republicans became the majority party of both the House and Senate for the first time in 131 years. Democrats charged that

DeLay's redistricting bill represented a greedy and unethical attempt for the GOP to grab more power.

"Their actions bring to light a political climate that has been brewing in this body since the beginning of the 78th Session which says fairness and democracy must crumble beneath numerical

strength and partisanship," said Sen. West. The Democrats that did not defect to Oklahoma still exhibited their support for the cause.

"Ultimately decided that, yes, I've got to support this," Rep. Glenn Lewis of Fort Worth told WFAA-TV. He hid out in Austin. "We did what we thought was the best interest of those we represent. Sometimes that means operating outside of the box."

Rep. Helen Giddings was

one Democrat state troopers located and escorted back to the capitol. She had earlier conducted a video-conference meeting with her Dallas constituents Monday morning at the University of North Texas Systems building in Oak Cliff.

Ironically, Giddings' special guest was house speaker Craddick himself and gave no indication of what was to transpire later.

The Democrats' action

killed the redistricting bill, but also 223 others. Both sides expressed the desire to put the matter behind them and finish the legislative session, scheduled to end June 2.

"While there will be differing positions and opinions in the future, I look forward to working with those who seek to place the interest of all Texans above politics," concluded Jones.

Gordon Jackson writes for The Dallas Weekly.

Clingman

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good will their sacrifices bring if we simply continue to be content with getting more and more Black people elected, and ignore the value of business ownership? What good will it do if we do not cause a resurgence of Black owned businesses, the way it was in 1910, according to Butler, who said, "In 1910 Black Americans were more likely to be self-employed than any group in America."

That's where we need to be. That's where we must go. That's where we must turn our attention—right now! We have squandered at least 35 years, as if we were not already far enough behind, when it comes to economic empowerment. The establishment conceded political gains to Black folks in the 1960s; the same way politics was the concession in South Africa when Mandela was released from prison.

The establishment understands where the real power is, and they know it is not in politics, especially if the group in political control has no economic base. In South

Africa we see 15 percent of the population controlling 85 percent of the economic resources, while Black folks now occupy high public offices. In this country, well, you know the deal; we still own around 1 percent of the economic resources, just like we did 125 years ago. But, we have elected more than 10,000 Black folks to political office.

What's the lesson here? While some of our leaders failed to keep us on the economic path back in 1965, and although we are even further behind, we have no choice but to follow the examples of our sister, Gwen-Day Richardson, and our brother, Fred Terrell.

Terrell says he can contribute more to the civil rights movement as a private businessman running Provender Capital.

We should adopt his words as our mantra: Let's be judged not by the color of our skin but by the content of our business plan.

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The Department of Housing & Urban Development celebrates Homeownership month every year during the month of June. This year the Las Vegas HUD Office will be attending the Juneteenth Celebration which will be held at:

Sammy Davis Jr. Plaza

Lorenzi Park

June 14th, 2003

3:00 pm to 9:00 pm

A major priority of HUD is to promote the "American Dream" which is Homeownership for everyone. The mission of HUD is creating opportunities for homeownership; provide housing assistance for low-income persons; works toward creating, rehabilitating and maintaining the nation's affordable housing. Las Vegas HUD officials will have plenty of literature to disseminate on the process of buying HUD Homes. See you there.