

# Ben's eatery lauded as district historic monument

By Valencia Mohammad  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

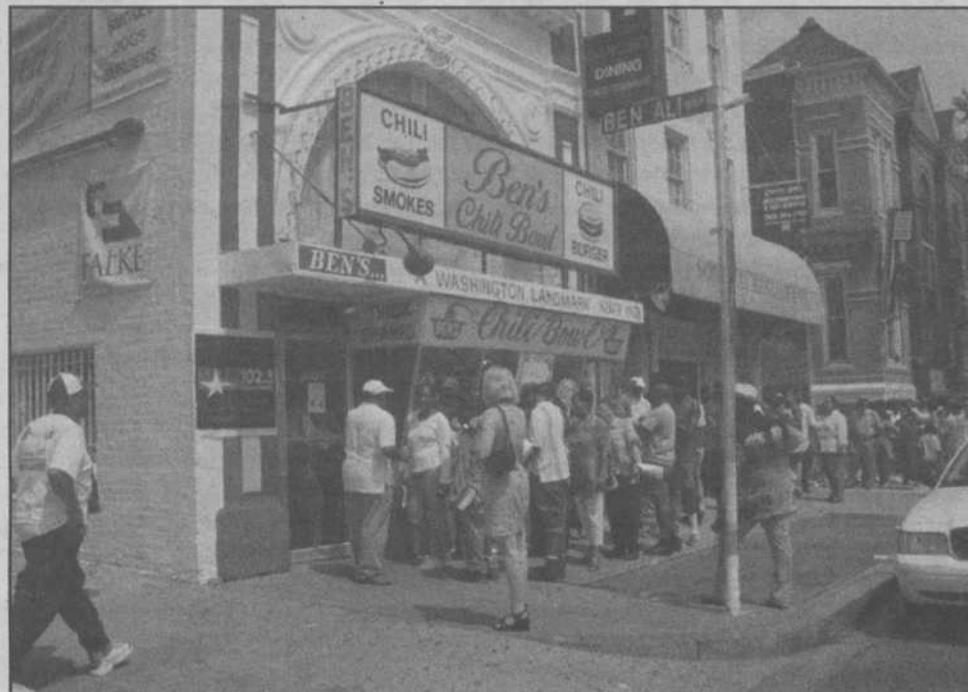
WASHINGTON (NNPA)—About 400 people showed up recently at Ben's Chili Bowl in northwest Washington recently to celebrate its 45th anniversary as a minority-owned business in the District.

Customers from around the metropolitan area waited in the sweltering heat to wish the owners and workers many more years of success.

"Now we know that you do not have to be the Lincoln Memorial in order to be a historical monument in the nation's capital," said U.S. Del. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-D.C.). "Isn't it wonderful that Ben's has survived when so many other businesses on U Street have long gone."

To dispel the rumor about changing the name of U Street, Norton added, "You've got a fight on your hands. Ben's Chili Bowl and the name 'U' Street shall remain here."

Other dignitaries were on hand, including



Packing Them In: Ben's Chili Bowl recently celebrated its 45th year of business in Washington D.C. Celebrities, politicians and dignitaries are among its loyal customers.

Mayor Anthony Williams, who presented a proclamation, as well as former Mayor Marion Barry and several city council members.

Bill Cosby and Jesse Jackson showed up to eat from the menu and to help celebrate the momentous occasion. Cosby broke from his traditional three half-smokes and took six home with him.

"Most of the time when Cosby is in the city and gets a taste of the half smokes, he calls back to have some more shipped to him," said Nizam Ali, restaurant manager.

Jackson said a few words and later, with a group of colleagues, ordered turkey burgers.

Ben's serves turkey hot dogs, turkey and veggie burgers and veggie chili. Selections from Ben's menu can be ordered on line at [www.benschilibowl.com](http://www.benschilibowl.com).

Ben's also has late hours to serve the rapidly growing population of overnight shift workers and late-night hungry people in the city.

Valencia Mohammad writes for the Afro American Newspapers.

## Teenage entrepreneur embodies spirit of Wells, Bethune

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Young, gifted and Black, vivacious, a smile that can light up a stadium, determined, tenacious, intelligent, and she's an entrepreneur, too! This young lady has achieved far beyond her 14 years, having already made an enduring impression on adults and other young people, and she continues in the tradition of Madam C.J. Walker, Mary McLeod Bethune, Maria Stewart and Ida B. Wells, just to name a few.

She understands and readily acknowledges her debt to her ancestors and her elders, those who paved the way for her and those who taught and continue to teach her. She deeply loves and respects her great-grandfather and gives all due credit to her mother for home-schooling her and allowing her the leeway to explore the possibilities.

Who is this amazing

young lady? It's Miss Kenya Jordana James, Teenpreneur of the Year for "Black Enterprise Magazine," the 14-year-old phenom seen on Oprah and across the country at various venues, speaking at conferences and conventions, and doing her entrepreneurial thing in her home base of Atlanta. Kenya will quickly tell you that she is from the Big Apple, New York City, and she has the spunk and grit to prove it. I have never seen a more determined and dedicated young person in all my years.

I asked Kenya to come to Cincinnati to speak to the students at our entrepreneurship high school. She graciously accepted our invitation, despite having to be in San Francisco the next day to speak at the annual meeting of the California Black Chamber of Commerce. Brother Aubry Stone and his excellent staff at the Chamber worked out the transportation arrangements and we were in busi-

ness.

Not only did Kenya spend several hours with the students doing two presentations, answering their questions and taking photographs with them, she also spent an hour on a local radio talk show, "Sister Speak." She was absolutely great in both instances. She took calls and inquiries from listeners and responded with the aplomb of a seasoned adult. What can I say? Kenya James is fantastic!

Let me not forget about Kenya's inspiration, her mentor, teacher, guidance counselor, and mother, Karen Mason, also an entrepreneur. President of the Destiny Agency, a marketing and events planning firm in Atlanta, Karen is a fine example of what a caring and concerned mother does for and with her child. Of course, the two of them travel together, and hearing the interplay between them, as I drove them from Dayton, Ohio, to Cin-

cinnati, was inspiring and refreshing. They really love and respect one another.

Kenya takes college courses at two Atlanta universities, reads constantly, discusses various authors and their writings, and even recommended several books for my 10-year-old daughter to read. She and her mother have read many of the same books, which gives them an even greater opportunity to engage in conversation.

Kenya founded, owns and publishes "Black Girl Magazine," but got started in business by baking and selling cakes. She has since graduated not only to publishing but also to owning a line of clothing called Modest Apparel, which she started because her mother would not allow her to wear certain things. She has a couple of other business ventures going as well, and on top of all of that, she plans to become a doctor. Talk about a full plate. We adults should never com-

plain again about being too busy.

I leave you with two thoughts. First, we must support this young lady and her business endeavors. Subscribe to "Black Girl Magazine" ([www.Blackgirlmagazine.com](http://www.Blackgirlmagazine.com) or call 404-762-0282) and, for you business owners out there, purchase advertisements in the publication.

There certainly are more than enough business owners who will read this article who should run their ads in "Black Girl." It is a family oriented publication, with a very positive message. Please subscribe and advertise—now!

Second, let's not succumb to the temptation of raising the bar even higher for Kenya James simply because she is doing such great things now. We must not put that responsibility on her shoulders. She is only 14 years old and, in her own words, "I'm still a child; I like to do crazy things

every now and then. I like to hang out with my friends sometimes." In other words, admiring adults like me must be careful not to elevate Kenya to a level where she constantly feels obligated to be the "perfect child," irrespective of our high praise for her. True, she is operating well above average and truly deserves our accolades, but let's always give her the space and time she needs just to be a kid.

I hope and pray that by writing this article I did not go against my own advice, but I am sure Kenya and her mother will understand and appreciate my enthusiasm for exactly what it is: Nothing but love for both of them.

Thanks, Kenya. You are definitely young, gifted and Black, and I am so very proud of you.

James E. Clingman, an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati's African-American Studies department.

## Pacts

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invest in people," Hasan said.

"So goes minority- and women-owned business, so goes the region. We must continue to re-commit ourselves to inclusion and diversity because these are the sources of our strength as a city and region."

Hasan said the commitment is larger than just Metro's agreement.

"It is a commitment from major stock holders in our region to help grow minority and female businesses and their capacity," he said.

Earlier this summer, MOKAN and the concerned Citizens Coalition called on Metro to halt the award of a contract for the lack of minority participation on the Cross County MetroLink expansion. On two occasions individuals were arrested for blocking rails.

Protestors, including presidential candidate Al Sharpton, briefly interrupted MetroLink's 10th birthday celebration recently.

Alvin A. Reid writes for the St Louis American.

## Crime Rate

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released FBI Uniform Crime Reports, which also showed an overall drop in crime in 2002, is based on crimes reported to state and local police nationwide.

Some highlights from the new Justice Department report:  
-From 2001 to 2002, the number of robberies fell by a remarkable 19 percent, from 630,690 to 512,490, and is down 63 percent from 1993 to 2002.

-Households with an annual income of \$50,000 or more saw larger drops in property crimes than those with lower incomes from 1993 to 2002. Property crimes have dropped 52 percent over that span in rural and suburban areas and 48 percent in cities.

-Households with annual incomes of \$7,500 or less were far more likely to be involved in both violent and property crimes in 2002. For instance, there were about 52 burglaries per 1,000 households at that income level, compared with 32 per 1,000 for those earning between \$7,500 and \$14,999.

-Men are more likely to be crime victims than women, Blacks more likely than whites or Hispanics and people below age 24 more than those who are older.

-Urban residents were victims of violent crime more often

in 2002, at 33 crimes for every 1,000 residents. That compares with 20 crimes per 1,000 residents in the suburbs and 17 crimes per 1,000 people in rural areas.

-Women and girls were most often victimized in 2002 by someone they knew, while men and boys had a greater chance of being victimized by a stranger. Of the female victims, 40 percent of offenders were described friends or acquaintances, 20 percent as intimate partners and seven percent as another relative.

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