

OUR VIEW

Judging History

We may be excused today if we pull out our cadre of endless superlatives and metaphors that fit the season and this monumental occasion in our state's history. Historical firsts sometimes are intended to be earth-shattering events, causing us to shine on, sing praises and shout hallelujah while pontificating with a cornucopia of accolades.

This is one of those moments of the celestial spheres. In short, it is heavenly. Here we go with the superlatives.

Gov. Kenny Guinn had the ball in open court on a fast break to the hoop. Garnering style points along the way, Guinn drove the lane, went airborne, sailed to the basket and slammed home a tomahawk dunk.

Like thousands in crowds throughout the nation cheering college basketball tournament games in March, we applaud this history-making moment of Guinn appointing Chief Judge Michael Lawrence Douglas to the Supreme Court of Nevada. Douglas is the first African-American to fill a seat on the state's highest court in its 140-year history.

The time is right because Douglas is the right choice to fill out the unexpired term of Myron E. Leavitt, who died in January. Douglas was one of three finalists named just last week by the Nevada Commission on Judicial Selection. Guinn could have taken as long as 30 days to contemplate his decision. Las Vegas attorney Gregory Smith and Reno attorney David Hunter Hamilton were the other two finalists. A tough decision by Guinn, for sure, but a beautiful choice for the state of Nevada.

In Our View the choice of Douglas, however, was clear cut and Guinn made a decision that was speedy as it was right, naming Michael Lawrence Douglas on March 26, 2004 as a justice to the state's highest court. The quick decision means Guinn did not agonize over his choice. There was little suspense except for the process.

March 26, 2004 will become ingrained in the minds of students of history and students of the law in Nevada.

Now Douglas will be one of seven justices with oversight over decisions of the state legislature and ensuring that district court judges are consistent meeting out justice according to the Nevada State Constitution. Douglas will serve on the Supreme Court until January 2005. State voters in November will elect a new justice for Seat F and Douglas has already made his intention known that he will seek a full, six-year term. He has our support now and he will have our full endorsement in November.

Douglas's credentials are impeccable, including a long history of accomplishments, which are too many to mention here. Douglas' knowledge of the judicial process is profound. He knows what it means to render just decisions and fair treatment of minorities — everyone, really — who has come before his bench. Douglas is also a strong manager, having supervised 33 Civil, Criminal and Family Court judges as chief of the Eight Judicial District.

Douglas, 56, was born in Los Angeles, where he graduated from Dorsey High School. He earned a bachelor of arts degree from California State University, Long Beach, in 1971. He is a 1974 graduate of the University of California's Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco.

Douglas is married to Martha A. Douglas. They have a daughter, Christine Douglas-Ramirez, and two grandchildren, Tikal and Ichal Ramirez.

Gov. Guinn, you did well in naming Michael Lawrence Douglas as a justice on the Supreme Court of Nevada.

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION,
MS. RICE



You can make a brighter future

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Do you sense the presidential political season is in full bloom, months earlier than has been the case in past national election years?

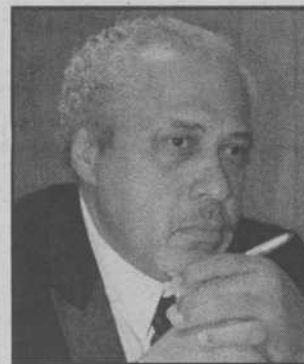
If so, the reason may lie in the fact, according to a recent national survey, 60 percent of adult-age Americans feel the country is headed in the wrong direction.

In a nation that is often evenly divided on nearly every national security, social, religious, and/or economic issue you can name, for six out of every ten Americans to say things need to change is quite revealing as to our nation's present collective mental state of being.

On the matter of national security, with each passing week, Iraq is looking more and more like Vietnam's first cousin. The premise used to invade a sovereign nation was that it possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and as such presented a clear and present danger to the United States of America.

Underpinning the notion of our nation assuming authority to invade Iraq was the hastily concocted foreign policy initiative called "pre-emptive intervention." Simply stated, it means, "if we catch you looking cross-eyed at us, then you can expect to receive a loyal butt whipping from the good old United States of America."

Given the checks and bal-



LOUIE OVERSTREET

ances that exist in America's political system, I am not too worried that the new policy of pre-emptive intervention will lead to our ultimate downfall as a nation. I am, however, very afraid that it will provide the shaky justification for other nations or regions of the world that possess nuclear capability to settle old land, religious or political scores though pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons (WMD).

The "if-it-is-good-enough-for-America, then it-is-good-enough-for-us" rationalization could come into play between China/Taiwan, North Korea/South Korea, India/Pakistan and/or in the Middle East.

On a more personal level, sexual preference and sexual abuse are now front-and-center issues in our nation that pervades social and religious venues.

Gay and lesbians activists are out in force and are openly (pun intended) equating their lifestyles to a civil-rights issue. On the other hand, reli-

gious zealots are stating such lifestyles are acts against the teachings of God. In this regard, is it just me or do you also sense that more fools populate the religious right than any other sector of our society?

I am of the opinion that the religious right should think about getting its "sexual-abuse house" in order before condemning the lifestyle of consenting adults.

On the economic front, both abroad and here at home, uncertainty abounds. Our foreign trade deficit of one half-trillion dollars (\$493,000,000,000) annually is the highest in our history as a world economic power. Given this economic reality, it's no wonder why America is losing thousands upon thousands of manufacturing jobs each and every month to a global economy. Here at home, the gap grows wider by the minute between wealthy and impoverished

Americans.

While recognizing the strength of our union of states and that its pluralistic citizenry can withstand a great deal of abuse, taking into account of what's happening on numerous fronts, one has to begin to wonder if America can remain the world's lone superpower throughout this century? After all, we represent only 4 percent of the world's population.

I will not insult your intelligence by suggesting your life will depend on how you cast your vote on what direction our country will take during the next four years come November 2004. I will, however, categorically state that the quality of your lifestyle will depend on your casting a vote more now than at anytime since the mid-1960s.

In November, by voting, you can either change the course of history or you can suffer through it.

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900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100 • Fax (702) 380-8102
Email: lvsentinelvoice@earthlink.net

Contributing Writers:
Tanya Flanagan
Tammy McMahan
Dianna Saffold
Lés Pierres Streater
John T. Stephens III
Photographer:
Patrease Ashley

Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief
Kathi Overstreet, Associate Publisher
Albert C. Jones, Copy Editor
Don Snook, Graphics
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

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