

Former labor secretary celebrates with Deltas

By Hellen Walker
Sentinel-Voice

Alexis Herman, the former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is a strong supporter of Delta Sigma Theta's mission to carry out community service. This makes Herman true to the red and white cause.

Herman professes that a good Delta believes in and practices "community service, political action, stresses education and emphasizes health, especially in African-American women".

Herman also knows what it takes to be a valuable Delta.

"First of all, you have to believe in sisterhood," she said. "You have to be willing to support one another. You have to want to be able to make a difference. And you have to be willing to give of your time. It's important that you take time out for community service."

Herman, who served as Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, was in Las Vegas last week attending the Deltas 47th National Convention. She was the first African-American named to head the Labor Department.

The native of Mobile, Ala. has a background in federal service. At age 29, Herman became the youngest person to hold the position of director of the Women's Bureau, leading the way for major corporations like Delta Airlines and Coca-Cola U.S.A. to hire more women professionals. Her resume is filled with involvement in labor issues. She has served as an advisor to local and state gov-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Former U.S. Labor Secretary Alexis Herman, right, welcomes Gwendolyn Boyd, president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and sorors to Las Vegas last week.

ernments on the impact of good bipartisan effort."

"It troubles me greatly to see the large numbers who are unemployed," Herman said. "Even with the jobs we are creating, the jobs are at 65 percent of the wages that people are used to. It's not just about creating jobs. It's about the quality of jobs with benefits."

Despite having been away from the national scene, Herman still keeps abreast of national issues. Last week, the 9/11 commission released its report and Herman was ready with a response.

"I believe that the 9/11 Report that came out today (Thursday, July 22) lays out for us the clear recommendation that we must follow-up on in order to not have a further intelligence breakdown in our country," Herman said. "The commission gave a

Herman has been a Delta since her college days at Xavier University in New Orleans. She offers advice freely to young women interested in becoming Sorors in Delta Sigma Theta.

"Something that my grandmother and mother said to me, 'Bloom where you are planted,'" Herman said "That means do a good job wherever you are."

Herman is still trying to make a difference in the Democratic Party. She is working to help get John Kerry elected as President.

More than 22,000 Deltas attended the seven-day convention. The Deltas were the beneficiaries of goodwill from their convention host hotel, the MGM Grand, which presented them with a check for \$10,000 toward their scholarship fund.

Delta

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said. "If the shoe fits, wear it."

As the children of Israel wandered in a circuitous route in the wilderness for 40 years before finally turning in the right direction, McKenzie mined her text for all it was worth. Her purpose was to get listeners to see the importance of changing directions to avoid the trap of repeating the same mistakes.

Some women, McKenzie pointed out, choose the wrong man twice, get pregnant twice, work the wrong job twice, make the wrong career decisions twice, choose the wrong friends twice, put their foots in their mouths twice, blame the wrong one twice and have a check bounce twice. The latter brought laughter from the 18,000-plus inside the Grand Garden Arena.

She asked, "Have you ever been the same fool twice?" This description McKenzie listed as "the same fool twice syndrome."

"Moses repeats the law in Deuteronomy because the originals had died," McKenzie said. "He was dealing with a new crowd that needed to know history. It's dangerous not to know your history. It traps you into immaturity. Every time there is someone new, you have to go back and review history. Without

history, there is no legacy. Without a past, there is no legacy.

"Without understanding history, you don't know what became before you. It's dangerous not to know your own history."

She said the children of Israel would not have wandered 40 year in the wilderness if they had been obedient to God.

"Old behavior does not produce new things," McKenzie said, offering bromides for "busting loose." "Busting loose is not a question of destination. It's a question of direction. It's not about destination for the children of Israel. They knew where they were going. Discipline is required to arrive at the destination.

"Maybe your direction in life needs to be adjusted. If things are not working out in your life, then you need to change and go in another direction."

McKenzie has had a change in direction herself. Her first four years McKenzie served as the presiding prelate of the 18th Episcopal District that is comprised of Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland in the South of Africa.

Her Episcopal District now includes Kentucky and Tennessee.

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