



Wangari Maathai captured a Nobel Peace Prize for her pioneering work in championing the environment.

## Kenyan ecologist wins Nobel Prize

OSLO (AFP) - Kenyan ecologist Wangari Maathai, whose campaign to save Africa's forests began with nine trees in her yard nearly three decades ago, won the Nobel Peace Prize.

She is the first African woman to take the award and never before has an environmental cause been honored by the Nobel Committee since the prize was first awarded in 1901.

Maathai, Kenya's assistant minister for the environment since 2003, is the founder of the Green Belt Movement, the largest tree planting project in Africa, which aims to promote biodiversity, job creation and to give women a stronger identity in society.

The decision reflects environmentalism's extraordinary rise from the wings to the center stage of politics, and was hailed by ecologists the world over.

Environmental movement Greenpeace welcomed the official recognition of the link between ecology and peace.

"We're clearly delighted that the influential Nobel Committee has put the green into peace," the pressure group's spokesman Michael Townsley told AFP.

Jennifer Morgan, the World Wildlife Fund's climate change director, said the Nobel decision was a "breakthrough" for recognizing that environment issues are "interwoven with security, peace, prosperity and stability".

Maathai, 64, stands at the "front of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development in Kenya and in Africa," the Nobel Committee said in its citation.

"She thinks globally and acts locally," the committee said.

In Germany, Chancellor Helmut Schroeder said Maathai "had given hope to people around the world."

In Warsaw, Lech Walesa, winner of the 1983 Nobel peace prize, welcomed the award of this year's prize to Maathai as "a good idea" in the face of the environmental problems around the world.

South African President Thabo Mbeki said, "Africans all walk tall today as we congratulate this remarkable woman."

Maathai said she was delighted at having won the prize and pledged to pursue her environmental work.

"I thank God and my ancestors for this award. This is a great honor for me and my fellow environmentalists who have suffered together over the years," she said at the foot of Mount Kenya.

Voted Time Magazine's "Hero of the Planet" in 1998 and a household name in her country, Maathai said the  
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## Black food company sprouts in LV

By Les Pierres Streater  
Sentinel-Voice

Buford International Food Company, a certified Minority Business Enterprise, announced earlier this month plans for new operations in Las Vegas. The company's arrival signals the establishment of the first minority-owned food distribution company in the country to be housed in Nevada.

BIFCO officials made the announcement Wednesday, October 6, during a press conference at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The company will provide food and non-food products to the hospital-  
(See BIFCO, Page 7)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Les Pierres Streater

(L to R) Former NFL greats Jim Brown and Jack Kemp, Nevada Minority Purchasing Council Executive Director Diane Fontes and John Chalsty congratulate Wesley Buford, founder of Buford International Food Co. on Oct. 6 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

## Bush chided on Black judge appointments

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

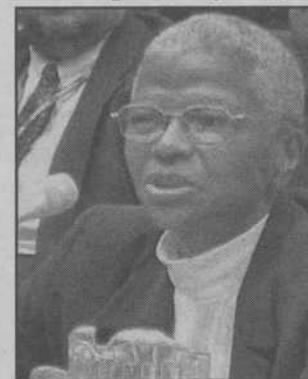
WASHINGTON (NNPA) - President Bush's attempt to elevate U.S. District Judge Charles Pickering Sr. to U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals was one of the most contentious fights in decades. As a college student, Pickering had supported the state's law prohibiting interracial marriages. As a state legislator, he had voted to fund the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a body established to secretly spy on and intimidate civil rights activists, and he co-sponsored a resolution calling for Congress to repeal part of the Voting Rights Act.

And as a federal judge, Pickering had been reversed by the conservative 5th Circuit — the very court Bush wanted to appoint him to — 15 times over a 10-year period, with most of the cases involving civil rights, constitutional, criminal procedure or labor issues.

In an effort to overcome strong opposition from dozens of civil rights groups, Pickering's son, Congressman Charles Pickering Jr. (R-Miss.), pledged that if the senior Pickering were elevated to the appeals court, an African-American would replace him on the District Court in Mississippi. On a straight party-line vote, the Pickering nomination was forced out of

the Senate Judiciary Committee. On the floor, it was filibustered by Democrats, effectively killing the nomination.

To circumvent the Senate, which has the constitutional responsibility to reject



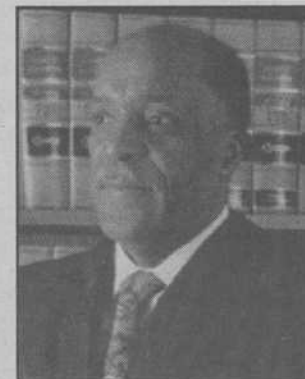
MARY FRANCES BERRY or approve all federal judicial nominations, Bush elevated Pickering in January with a recess appointment, bypassing the Senate but limiting the time that Pickering can serve in the "temporary" position until the next Congress is convened.

Rather than replace Pickering with an African-American — as his son had promised — President Bush has nominated Pike County Circuit Judge Keith Starrett, a White male. Mississippi, with a Black population of 36 percent, the largest in the nation, has had only one African-American to serve as a federal judge (Henry Wingate was appointed 20 years ago).

Selecting yet another con-

servative White male to the federal bench in the South — where 55.3 percent of all African-Americans live — is part of what civil rights groups view as a larger and more disturbing pattern.

For example, Louisiana has a Black population of 33 percent, second only to Mississippi. Of the six federal judges appointed by Bush, none were African-American. South Carolina has a Black population of 30 percent. Of the three judges appointed by Bush, none were African-Americans. Georgia, with a Black population of 29 percent, received three Bush



NATHANIEL JONES appointments — none of them Black. Alabama has a Black population of 26 percent. In that state, seven federal judges were appointed by Bush — all of them White.

While the discrepancies are glaring in the South, they are by no means limited to that region. African-Americans in Maryland, for ex-

ample, constitute 28 percent of that state's population. Yet, none of the three Bush appointees are Black.

According to Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 200 Bush appointees have been confirmed to the federal bench; only 15, (7.5 percent) of them are African-Americans. And seven of the 15 were replacing other Blacks leaving the bench. When Congress recessed Tuesday, there were 26 nominations pending, according to the Senate Judiciary Committee — none of them African-Americans.

"This, in my judgment, is the sleeper issue of the current election," says Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of more than 180 human and civil rights groups. "These judges have no contact and no appreciation for how the issues of every day life are affected by the decisions that they will render. And so it really is a real travesty."

Conservatives oppose what they call "activist" judges — a description they give to jurists who believe "legislate from the bench."

The role of judges is to interpret the U.S. Constitution and applicable laws. Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution provides for the presi-

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