

OUR VIEW

Similarity can be beneficial

Among the most prudent moves Gov. Kenny Guinn has made are the appointments of qualified minorities to high-level political posts. In March, he tapped Michael Douglas to replace the late Justice Myron Leavitt, making Douglas the first Black to serve on the Nevada Supreme Court. During the investiture, Guinn, who praised Douglas as eminently qualified, said, "Today is one of those days we will always remember." (Also in March, Guinn appointed City Councilwoman Lynette Boggs McDonald to replace Mark James on the Clark County Commission, telling a local newspaper, "This commission is far too important to appoint a caretaker. Having an experienced person who intends to run for the post in the fall election was also very important in my decision.")

Douglas is currently in a tight race with Independent American Party candidate Joel Hansen in the race for Supreme Court Seat F. Take away the major league endorsements Douglas has received from heavy hitters like Guinn, Democratic Nevada Sen. Harry Reid, Rep. Shelley Berkley, D-Nev., former U.S. Sen. Richard Bryan, former Democratic governor Bob Miller and public relations guru Sig Rogich, and what have you left? The most qualified candidate for the job. His resume is enviable: two years as staff attorney and directing attorney for Nevada Legal Services; Clark County deputy district attorney for 11 years (1984 to 1995); Clark County District Judge for nine years (1995 to 2004). During this time, Douglas won several awards, including the National Federation of Black Public Administrators Mark of Excellence Award in 1996; the Black Law Students Association's Western Region Community Service Award in 1998 and the Distinguished Men in Southern Nevada Award 1998-2004.

His opponent, who runs a local law firm, has so few grounds to criticize Douglas on that he's using the justice's initial silence on the controversial \$833 million tax bill passed in the last biennium to frame Douglas as a left-wing liberal. To his credit, Douglas, citing the law, chose to get clarification on the prudence of a sitting judge commenting on a legal matter that he may have to adjudicate. That reasoned, follow-the-letter-of-the-law response is exactly why Douglas deserves to remain in Carson City.

Also deserving of staying in office is Karen Bennett, who became the first Black woman to serve as a judge in the state's justice system after the County Commission appointed her in May 2002 to replace Jennifer Togliatti. The former legal counsel for the Las Vegas Housing Authority has encountered some turbulence (criticized for being in a meeting in which city officials were deciding the fate of an house owned by her father and setting what some considered low bail amounts in two murder cases). But this shouldn't overshadow Bennett's diligence as Las Vegas Justice of the Peace, where's she exhibited an ability to apply the law fairly and judiciously. Bennett has grown into the role of an effective adjudicator, experience that can't be bought.

On the subject of job experience, few have as much experience in political field of endeavor as Clark County School Board Trustee Shirley; the former teacher and principal has more than 30 years experience in public education, including the last seven years as a trustee. Barber's tenure has been marked by courageous stands (fighting — albeit unsuccessfully — to limit the superintendent's powers, criticizing the school district's fiscal policies and often being the most vocal — if not the only — proponent of empowering at-risk schools). That she survived a crowded primary and spent nearly 20 times less on campaigning than their general election opponent shows the community supports her. If only that community supported her outside election season by showing up at board meetings, Barber would have a stronger voice and be more empowered to fight for a high school in West Las Vegas and funding for needy schools.

POINT OF VIEW



Choice of destinies come Nov. 2

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

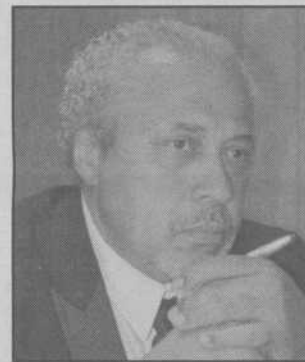
The election next Tuesday, depending on the media source you derive information from, is being described as the most important in two generations.

The importance being attached to the November 2, 2004, election is that it will determine the paths our nation will take here at home and abroad concerning the two issues of our economic vitality and physical security.

Unfortunately, there has been very little truth in advertising, in spite of the fact several billion dollars have been spent with the media nationwide on local, county, state and national campaigns.

The only purpose all this political campaign spending has done is to divide a formerly great nation right down the middle. Much of the blame for our becoming a divided nation is due to political pandering to our base biases and irrational fears.

Over the past four years, traveling the path of economic vitality has been a relative smooth ride for Americans with comfortable six-figure incomes or who are living off inherited wealth. However, for millions of Americans who have fallen below the poverty line during the last four years, even with a road map, they have no hope of traveling the path of economic vitality under the policies of the current



LOUIE OVERSTREET

administration. Poor folks will continue to experience a bumpy ride due to the current administration's support for outsourcing jobs to foreign nations.

Ironically, if international opinion surveys are to be believed, many of these countries who are benefiting from American jobs being outsourced to their countries no longer admire America, primarily based on the fact we invaded Iraq.

The current economic situation in America, I fear, will only serve to validate my long held belief that an economic day of reckoning is coming and regrettably will lead to civil unrest in this country based on the economic class system we have allowed to occur.

The major contributor to this flaw in our democratic and capitalistic system is that people do not take the time to analyze situations, thus they fail to vote their economic interest.

Case in point, by outsourcing we are inadvert-

ently or otherwise creating conditions that will stress our present economy and weaken our ability to respond to world crises as they most assuredly will arise in the future.

With millions of manufacturing jobs being outsourced to other countries, we are creating a situation in our nation where Americans between the ages of 35 and 60 will be structurally unemployed or underemployed for the rest of their productive years. This condition will cause for the first time in our nation's history a condition where too many adults will have no chance of providing a better life for their offspring. Also, they will be unable to meet the basic health care needs of a growing and aging family.

The defeat of this group of Americans' self-esteem, which comes from not having any hope for being gain-

fully employed in the future, is beginning to show itself in the breakdown of the family unit, increased number of homeless and the random manner in which violence is expanding in our society. This sad state of affairs should give all of us cause to ponder what the future of our society is going to be if we do not bridge the economic divide between the "have and the have-nots?"

Further, in a time of crisis, where it would be necessary to retool factories in order for our nation to produce the armament and related goods needed to defend our country there will exist no such factories or skilled workers to staff these now non-existent plants.

Now, what about the path we are traveling when it comes to foreign affairs? The present administration has been able to capitalize on our
(See Overstreet, Page 16)



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