

Incumbents coast to victory in NAACP elections

By Lés Pierres Streater
Sentinel-Voice

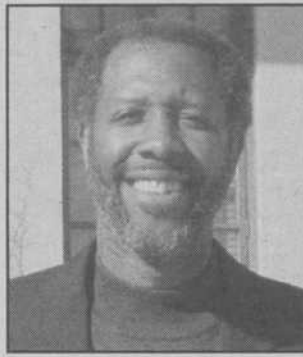
Mostly ceremonious, elections for new officers and members of the Executive Committee for the Las Vegas chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were held Saturday.

The uncontested nominees elected to office in the Nov. 20 ballot race included incumbent William D. Ishman-president, Catherine Henry-second vice president, Willie Mae Hunt-secretary, Paul Brown-assistant secretary, Debbie Conway-treasurer, and Craig Randolph-assistant treasurer. The contested race was that of first

vice president with incumbent the Rev. Anthony Hodges and Mujahid Ramadan vying for the post won by Ramadan.

Elected to the Executive Committee were Nedra Armstrong, Tony Cartwright, Annie Hodges, Stephen Horsford, Peggy Maze Johnson, Sherman Rutledge Jr., Jacqueline Sattwhite, Kevin Tate, Helen Toland, Cassandra Watkins, Reverend Ralph E. Williamson and Jeff Wilson.

The NAACP uses a nominating committee to decide what positions need filling. This year, "The nominating committee recommended up to 15 slots to be filled for the



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— Dean Ishman, president of the Las Vegas NAACP

Executive Committee but only 12 individuals signed up to run," said Paul Hunt, chair of the supervising committee sponsoring the election.

Those individuals came from members in good standing 30 days prior to the elec-

tion process with all remaining positions to be filled by appointments done by Ishman, Hunt said.

Ishman was excited about the election outcomes. "I'm excited about the number of people who stepped up to run for office and become mem-

bers of the Executive Committee. We are set to hold office for the next two years, and we are beginning to establish an infrastructure that will outlast the incoming administration and carry on the work of the NAACP," he said.

"At this present time we are all volunteers and we need to hire paid staff to extend the level of commitment that this organization has for the tremendous work that needs to be done here in Las Vegas. My immediate responsibility will be to hire at least one, if not two individuals to coordinate the activities at the local office."

Recent activities of the NAACP included providing

transportation for 112 elderly individuals to the polls during the presidential race, registering 12,000 people to vote, maintaining a liaison office of the NAACP at High Desert State Prison and coordinating efforts to establish an office at Southern Desert State Prison, along with advocating for the rights of workers involved in a work dispute with Republic Services.

The cost for individual annual membership to the NAACP is \$30. The cost for a lifetime membership is \$750 and can be paid for over the course of 10 years.

For more information about the NAACP, you may call 702-638-1300.

Mfume seeks meeting with President Bush

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — NAACP President and Chief Executive Officer Kweisi Mfume has written a letter to President Bush requesting a meeting to "put aside past differences" and to discuss issues important to African-Americans.

President Bush declined to address the NAACP's annual convention last summer for the fourth straight year

and has been a frequent target of criticism from Julian Bond, the organization's board chair.

"I would sincerely request the opportunity to sit down with you when your schedule permits to discuss what we can do to work together to address many of the more serious social problems facing communities across America," Mfume writes in the letter, a copy of which was obtained by the NNPA

News Service. "If we can find a way without rancor or recrimination to put aside past differences and look toward a future of attempting to work together, I am sure we can work toward an aggressive strategy that will reduce or eliminate many of the scourges that continue to hinder our nation."

NAACP officials say Bush has not yet replied to Mfume's overture. The two-paged letter, dated Nov. 5,

was a sharp departure from the tone of Mfume remarks in July after Bush rejected the NAACP's invitation to address delegates.

"We're not fools. If you're going to court us, court us in the daytime, but not like we're a prostitute where you run around at night or behind closed doors and want to deal with us, but not want to deal with us in the light of the day," Mfume said at the time. "Mr. Bush has now distinguished himself as the first president since Warren Harding (1920-1923) who has not met with the NAACP. So, we've got a 95-year history and a president that's prepared to take us back to the days of Jim Crow segregation and dominance, an era where dialog is required, not distance."

In the letter, Mfume stopped short of apologizing for his past remarks.

"It is clear to me, and I hope you concur, that we must first agree to open a line of much needed communication," he writes in the letter.

"That, sir, is the purpose of my effort to genuinely reach out to you. I hope that you will agree with the idea of sitting down together face to face to begin... a process that bridges the chasm that for too long has divided our organization and your administration."

The topics Mfume proposed includes the concentration of Blacks and Hispanics in low-paying jobs, the high Black unemployment rate, the lack of affordable health care, sub-standard education, mistrust of law enforcement and government.

Mfume said those issues, "at every level could potentially prove disastrous to the very fabric of our nation."

The Mfume letter comes after the Nov. 2 election in which Democrats not only failed to defeat Bush, but failed to gain control of either house of Congress. Though the pioneering civil rights organization is non-partisan, 90 percent of the Black vote went to John Kerry, the Democratic nomi-

nee. Mfume, a former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, is trying to take advantage of an opening Bush provided in his Nov. 3 victory speech.

He said at the time, "Today, I want to speak to every person who voted for my opponent: To make this nation stronger and better I will need your support, and I will work to earn it. I will do all I can do to deserve your trust. A new term is a new opportunity to reach out to the whole nation. We have one country, one Constitution and one future that bind us. And when we come together and work together, there is no limit to the greatness of America."

Mfume is trying to meet Bush midway.

He wrote, "I am convinced that if we are both determined to get beyond the past and focus on the future, that your administration and the NAACP can build a foundation of trust and mutual respect over the next four years in areas where we have common interests."

NAACP: Tabbing Condoleezza Rice 'Aunt Jemima' bad move

Associated Press

NAACP President & CEO Kweisi Mfume denounced critics of Secretary of State nominee Condoleezza Rice who have resorted to the use of racial stereotypes to describe her.

Mfume on Friday responded to Madison, Wis. radio show host John "Sly" Sylvester who recently called Rice "Aunt Jemima," apparently suggesting that the first Black woman to serve as a U.S. President's National Security counsel is a subservient player in the administration.

"Her counsel is respected and valued in her field and in the upper echelons of her political party," Mfume said in a statement obtained by BlackAmericaWeb.com.

"Moreover, "Rice, a PhD and former Stanford University provost, is an example of how far hard work, education and determination can take one to new heights."

Mfume also said that "attacks on Rice by the radio host and political cartoonists who use stereotypes and racial caricatures are just as bad as those who hide under sheets and burn crosses.

This is something the NAACP has fought against for more than 95 years and something we will continue to oppose."

Sylvester meanwhile, appeared unrepentant despite widespread criticism.

The Capital Times of Madison, Wis. reported Sunday that Sylvester said he was not apologizing for using racial insults against

Rice.

"I know some people may not like the term Aunt Jemima, but really some of my Black callers had used it long before I did, referring to her," the newspaper reported Sylvester said.

As for apologies, Sylvester told the Associated Press, "I'll apologize to Aunt Jemima."

The Capital Times also reported that the Urban League of Greater Madison said in a statement that it was "deeply disturbed" by Sylvester's remarks, and called on him to apologize "for using the basest form of racial derision to highlight a political viewpoint."

On Saturday Rice, 50, returned home after a one-night hospital stay where she was treated for non-cancerous growths in her uterus.

"She's out of the hospital and doing well," said White House spokesman Fred Jones.

Rice had uterine fibroid embolization surgery at Georgetown University Hospital on Friday.

Uterine fibroid embolization blocks blood flow to fibroids, which are benign tumors in the uterus. For some women it is an alternative to hysterectomy.

Rice could return to work as early as Monday, Jones said.

President Bush announced last week that Rice will succeed Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Her nomination must be confirmed by the Senate.

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