

# Brazile declines to take over Democratic post

By Jamal E. Watson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
NEW YORK (NNPA) — In the wake of the Democrats' stunning presidential election defeat, Donna Brazile has been suggested as a possible candidate to replace outgoing Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe.

But in an interview with the Amsterdam News, Brazile, a political strategist who ran Al Gore's presidential campaign in 2000, said that she doesn't want the job.

"I'm honored to be on anyone's list," said Brazile, 45. "I want to rebuild the Democratic Party, but I have no interest in the job at this time."

She said that the job might be well-suited for someone who currently resides outside

of Washington D.C. and can bring fresh perspective to the party.

Democratic Party officials have been looking for a leader to help energize the party after Senator John Kerry was unable to defeat Bush and Democrats failed in their efforts to take back the Congress from Republicans. Brazile's name quickly surfaced as a viable candidate among other high-profile names, including former Vermont Governor Howard Dean and former Clinton aide Harold Ickes.

Brazile rose to international prominence when she became the first African-American woman to lead a major presidential campaign. She is currently chair of the Democratic National Committee's Voting Rights



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Institute and teaches at Georgetown University. She started Brazile and Associates, a consulting firm whose mission is to empower grassroots advocates and train citizens to participate in the political process.

"Donna is one of the smartest, wittiest and most sensitive political operatives in the business," said Rep. Richard Gephardt, a retiring

Democratic congressman from Missouri. "She remains one of my favorite friends."

Born poor in New Orleans, Brazile became interested in politics at the age of 16, though she faced numerous incidents of racism and sexism even as she climbed the ranks of Democratic Party politics. She recounts in her best-selling memoir, "Cooking With Grease," why she

felt that African-Americans were disenfranchised in the 2000 presidential election. She said that there were widespread reports of voter intimidation and was glad that Al Gore, in the early portion of the evening, did not concede the presidency, even though major news networks had declared Bush the winner.

"For Fannie Lou Hamer; for Martin Luther King Jr.; for Emmett Till; Rosa Parks; Medgar Evers; Septima Clark; Malcolm X; and every living soul who cared about the right to vote, I thanked God for this miracle."

In her book, Brazile recounts the conversation that Gore had with Brazile upon appointing her as his campaign manager. He told her: "The reason I named you

campaign manager is because you clearly know how to organize, you know how to put together a campaign. I want to focus on getting the campaign under control, removing all the factions we had. You report to me. I didn't hire you because you're Black; I hired you because you're the best."

Now a sought-after pundit on television, Brazile says that she is focusing her energy on helping Democrats win the next election. She said that Democrats should remain true to their core values and resist attempts to move further to the right.

She said, "We cannot misread this election and believe that we must become Republican-like."

Jamal E. Watson writes for the Amsterdam News.

## Charge dismissed in Williams shooting

COMPTON, Calif. (AP) — A judge dismissed on Monday the murder case against one of two men charged in the fatal shooting of the sister of Venus and Serena Williams.

A jury deadlocked 9-3 this month in favor of acquitting Aaron Michael Hammer of murder. Hammer was accused of shooting at Yetunde Price with a .22-caliber handgun, but prosecutors said the shot that killed her wasn't from that weapon.

State law allows a murder charge for taking part in a crime in which a person is killed by someone else.

Hammer was sentenced to three years in prison Monday on a separate charge of being an ex-felon in possession of a gun.

Hammer was tried alongside Robert Edward Maxfield, 24, an alleged gang member accused of firing the gun that killed Price. A mistrial was declared two weeks ago in Maxfield's case after jurors deadlocked, with five voting to convict, six favoring acquittal and one juror unable to decide.

A judge last week refused to dismiss the case against Maxfield and ordered him back to court on Nov. 29 to determine whether he will retain his current attorney.

Price, 31, of Corona, was shot in the back of the head while riding through Compton in September 2003. A mother of three and a beauty shop owner, she was also a personal assistant to her sisters, who began their tennis careers in Compton.

## LA residents rally behind King/Drew hospital

By Kevin Herrera  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
LOS ANGELES, Calif. (NNPA) — In what many called the largest and most emotional demonstration held here since the height of the Civil Rights Movement, more than 1,000 people stood shoulder to shoulder recently to protest the proposed closure of the trauma unit at Martin Luther King Jr./Charles R. Drew Medical Center, a facility that for many symbolizes the struggle for health care equality.

For nearly five hours, the boisterous crowd comprised of area residents, nurses, doctors, paramedics and elected officials from South Los Angeles and surrounding communities occupied several blocks along Compton Avenue near 120th Street chanting "I am somebody," while holding up signs reading, "Save trauma. Save King."

"This is a movement in the making," said Alviron Hurd, a community activist who opposes the closure. "In my 40 years of public life, I don't know of a time

other than the Civil Rights Movement when people were so organized," said Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, D-Compton.

The demonstration was held just outside Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet High School where the county Board of Supervisors held a mandatory public hearing later that day to discuss the closure. The hearing, known as a Beilenson Hearing, is required by state law when a government body is considering reducing health services.

The county believes closing the trauma unit may be the only way to save the hospital after several accrediting agencies, including the federal government, warned they would pull their endorsements of King/Drew if substantial reforms were not instituted to ensure patient safety. If the hospital were to lose the support of the federal government, that would mean the loss of over \$200 million in federal funding, county health officials said.

A shortage of nurses and competent management are contributing factors to the hospital's decline, but many, including federal, state and local elected officials, believe the county has slowly reduced resources at the hospital in an effort to shut it down.

County supervisors and health department officials vehemently deny that claim.

"If we do not act now, the hospital is in jeopardy of closing and that is not acceptable," said Dr. Thomas Garthwaite, chief medical officer for the county who made the recommendation to close the trauma unit at King/Drew. "There are no intentions of closing the hospital."

Garthwaite said supervisors have made several improvements to King/Drew in the last year, including the construction of a new psychiatric ward and a woman's center, plus they formed a task force headed by former Surgeon General David Satcher that was ordered to make recommendations to turn the hospital around. The board also signed a \$13-million contract with Navigant,

a management firm that is expected to enact further reforms.

"These are not the actions of a board trying to close this hospital," Garthwaite said.

Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, whose district includes King/Drew, spoke on behalf of the board when she said: "There is a commitment to keep King/Drew open." She urged people to donate money to the King/Drew Foundation to help keep the hospital afloat.

In the hours before the hearing, Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., Mayor Jim Hahn, Jesse Jackson and actress Angela Bassett made sure the afternoon heat and the cramped conditions did not dampen the crowd's spirits, providing one emotional speech after another.

"This community has waited too long for a first-class hospital to see it taken down piece by piece," Hahn said. "There are challenges here but we can meet these challenges. The county pushed [Measure B] to save (See Rally, Page 11)

## Rapper Young Buck released from jail

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) — A rapper surrendered Friday to face charges that he stabbed a man who had punched hip-hop superstar Dr. Dre during the taping of a music awards show.

Young Buck, whose real name is David Darnell Brown, turned himself in at police headquarters and was arrested for investigation of one count of attempted murder and one count of assault with a deadly weapon.

Brown, wearing a knit cap and heavy chain necklace, was released on \$500,000 bail after being ordered to appear at a Dec. 20 arraignment, Lt. Frank Fabrega said.

Brown was identified on a videotape of the melee that erupted during the taping of the Vibe Awards on Monday in a hangar at the Santa Monica Airport. The tape appears to show Brown wielding a knife, but his attorney warned against jumping to conclusions.

"Remember one thing, pictures may be deceiving," said the attorney, Scott Leemon.

Leemon declined to discuss details of the case, but noted the rapper would perform this weekend in Virginia, North Carolina and Alabama.

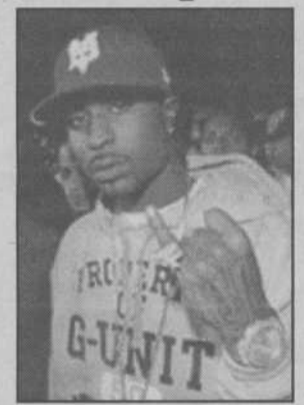
The brawl began when a man approached Dr. Dre and punched him as he was about to receive a lifetime achievement award. Police allege that Brown, 23, then stabbed that assailant.

That man was later identified as Jimmy James Johnson, 26, a parolee from Los Angeles. Johnson suffered a collapsed lung and was in stable condition Friday. Police have been unable to interview him due to his medical condition.

Investigators were also trying to identify two other men seen holding knives during the fight.

Young Buck is signed to Dr. Dre's record label, and his debut solo album, "Straight Outta Ca\$hville," debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard charts in August.

Many in the constantly feuding rap community speculated that longtime Dre nemesis Suge Knight, who attended the awards, arranged for Dre to get punched. Knight has denied any involvement.



YOUNG BUCK