

P O I N T O F V I E W

**OUR VIEW**

**Remembering Black Martyrs**

Jan. 15 holds a special significance for most people in America, but more especially for African-Americans.

It was on Jan. 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Ga., at Ebenezer Baptist Church, that Martin Luther King Jr. was born to Martin Luther King Sr. and Alberta (Williams) King. From such humble beginnings rose a kingly man, stately in his eloquence, fiery in his passion for God and leery of those who would deny the Negro, in fact deny any person, the constitutional right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. King's story has been told and retold over the past few generations, as it will in the ensuing days: Morehouse College man, pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., where he mobilized the Black community during a 382-day boycott of the city's bus lines. Arrested and harassed, he also had his house bombed. The tribulations paid off when the U.S. Supreme Court declared bus segregation unconstitutional.

King would go on to earn international acclaim (and notoriety) for his nonviolent resistance to injustice, enduring jailing, assaults and investigations by federal agencies, backstabbing and reprobation by fellow Black activists (who thought him too passive or righteous), and willful ignorance on the part of many African-Americans, a large contingent of whom were more concerned about the Vietnam war. He would lead a historic march on Washington, calling for U.S. leaders to allow America to live up to its constitutional creed. He would be felled by an assassin's bullet.

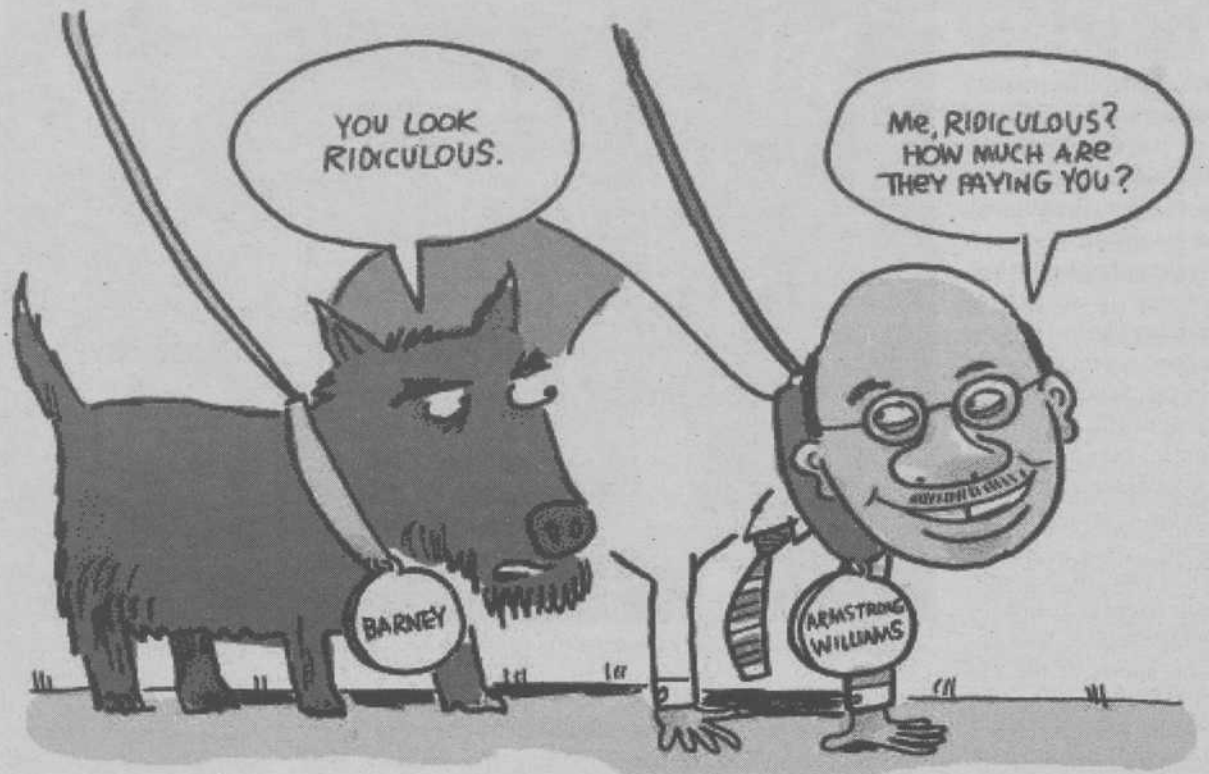
In celebrating Martin, we should also give pause to the various Black leaders whose lives were taken for the cause of civil rights. Like Malcolm X. Too often, the image portrayed of the Muslim leader is one of an anti-White antagonist. Malcolm X was so much more than the sum of his vitriolic soundbites, most of which were recorded during his early days in the Nation of Islam. Even as he condemned Whites for creating systems that ensured Blacks would be subjugated, he continually urged Blacks to reciprocate their dollars within the community. He never let us off the hook for perpetuating negative behaviors associated with some of our people.

So much of the meat of Malcolm X's story actually comes after he embraced a more traditional form of Islam that recognizes the universal brotherhood of man. How he changed the paradigm of his thinking (the White man was no longer the devil) but didn't change his target, which is Black empowerment, is a powerful testament to the transformative power of the human spirit. In his last days, the pro-race racist became a humanist. And he, too, was assassinated. Most discouraging about his death: a Black hand pulled the trigger.

Let's also not forget Medgar Evers. Evers applied for, and was denied, admission to the University of Mississippi Law School, setting the stage for a spate of attempts to integrate White universities. Attracted by his verve, the NAACP's national office appointed him Mississippi's first field secretary. Evers would go on to investigate violent crimes against Blacks and champion James Meredith's successful admission into the University of Mississippi in 1962. A year later, while returning home, he was murdered. Another hero lost.

Though Martin Luther King Jr. is the only slain civil rights leader with his own holiday, all the scholars and soldiers who lost their lives in the movement deserve to be commemorated. For it was their sacrifice that enabled us to have the freedoms we do. They risked their lives so that we wouldn't have to. In giving their lives, they gave us the opportunity to pursue lives worth living. And many of them did it knowing full well that the end for them may come violently, as it did. King knew he had enemies in the highest of places. Malcolm X carried a Qur'an. Evers received threats from angry White Mississippians.

And yet, they soldiered on so that we could, as Martin said, "get to the Promised Land."



The President's Lap Dogs.

**Pundit left no money behind**

By George E. Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

I wish I had a dollar for every time someone has asked me: "Does Armstrong [Williams] really believe that garbage, or is he doing it for the money." In view of last week's disclosure about his receiving a \$240,000 federal contract that was funneled through a Washington PR company, I believe the answer is: both.

Armstrong is a third-generation Republican, as he will often remind you, and has long been associated with prominent conservatives. Let's face it, if Armstrong were a Democrat, we'd never know he existed. However, he was astute enough to see the short line of Blacks supporting Right-wing causes and headed for the front of the line. In many ways, he has arrived.

"I first met Ronald Reagan when he was campaigning for president in 1980," Williams wrote in an admiring column last June 7. "I was the student government association president at South Carolina State University and was in attendance at a political rally organized by Reagan confidantes Lee Atwater and Senator Strom Thurmond. Both had been gracious enough to mentor me. During the campaign, they assured me that if Reagan won, I would have a government appointment waiting for me."

From a job at the Department of Agriculture at the



GEORGE CURRY

age of 21, Armstrong decided to Velcro himself to long-time segregationist Strom Thurmond, the senior senator from his native South Carolina. Armstrong became Thurmond's trusted assistant, so trusted, in fact, that the senator shared a deep secret about having fathered a Black daughter, Essie Mae Washington-Williams, now 79 years old, while stridently advocating White supremacy.

"There was a conversation that occurred at a 1966 Washington Urban League ceremony honoring myself and Senator Strom Thurmond for the growing bonds between Black and White Americans," Armstrong wrote. "Back stage, Senator Thurmond leaned over and said, 'You know, I have deep roots in the Black community...deep roots.' His voice softened to a raspy whisper, 'You've heard the rumors.'

'Are they just rumors, Senator?' I asked.

'I've had a fulfilling life,' crackled Thurmond, winking salaciously."

That was not the only time that former segregationist shared his, shall we say, dark secret.

"The subject came up again while the Senator and I were attending a SC State football game," Armstrong wrote. He said that Thurmond disclosed that he had arranged for Williams to attend South Carolina State.

"She'll never say anything," Thurmond told Armstrong. "And neither will you...not while I'm alive." And, as Thurmond predicted, neither did. Not while he was alive.

In another move that would help bolster his career, Armstrong worked for Clarence Thomas at the Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The two are said to be close friends and Armstrong is one of Thomas' staunchest defenders.

Because of his willingness to carry water for Right-wing conservatives, Armstrong has

been richly rewarded. The Graham Williams Group, formed with Steadman Graham, Oprah Winfrey's long-time beau, has had an array of well-paying corporate clients. Until now, Armstrong has been a media darling, appearing regularly on CNN and other networks that routinely ignore more thoughtful and credible African-Americans. Conservatives make sure he gets invited — and paid — to give speeches to sympathetic groups.

Now, he's taking heat for raking in a quarter of a million dollars without acknowledging that he was on the take from the Education Department. Like many Black conservatives, Armstrong is a card-carrying hypocrite. Not because he doesn't believe what he's being paid to say, but because he flails about government handouts for the poor and now we see his hands have been deep into

(See Curry, Page 11)

**NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER**  
**LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice**  
GRIT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.  
 Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.  
 900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104  
 Telephone (702) 380-8100 • Fax (702) 380-8102  
 Email: lvsentinelvoice@earthlink.net

**Contributing Writers:**  
 Mary Bleier  
 Tanya Flanagan  
 Albert C. Jones  
 Dianna Saffold  
 Lés Pierres Streater

**Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief**  
**Kathi Overstreet, Associate Publisher**  
**Parker Philpot, Assistant Copy Editor**  
**Don Snook, Graphics**  
**Ed & Betty Brown, Founders**

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association  
 and West Coast Black Publishers Association