

Activist fine with 'raising hell' for change

By Makebra M. Anderson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

LAS VEGAS (NNPA) — No media outlet can tell the story of Black America's plight better or more accurately than the Black press, the newly-appointed executive director of the National Society for Black Engineers told a convention of African-American publishers.

Speaking here to the mid-winter convention of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, a federation of more than 200 Black newspapers, Carl Mack said: "Our community and our people are beginning to lose their way. They want to turn to mainstream media as opposed to turning to Black media. Mainstream media wouldn't tell our story and from what we know now, even if they wanted to tell our story, they can't tell our story as good as we can tell our

story."

Mack, immediate past president of the Seattle/King County chapter of the NAACP, was the subject of many stories. He gained national attention when his chapter sparked a national campaign by demanding that the Urban Outfitters store to pull the game "Ghettoopoly," a board game similar to "Monopoly" where players play with replicas of marijuana, jail and 40-ounce beer bottles.

Although the national chain was reluctant to remove the game from its shelves, pressure became so intense that they had no choice if they wanted to maintain Black customers. The former NAACP leader said he would not have been successful without the support of the Black press.

"We raise hell because we love our people, and we make no apologies for it. We did it

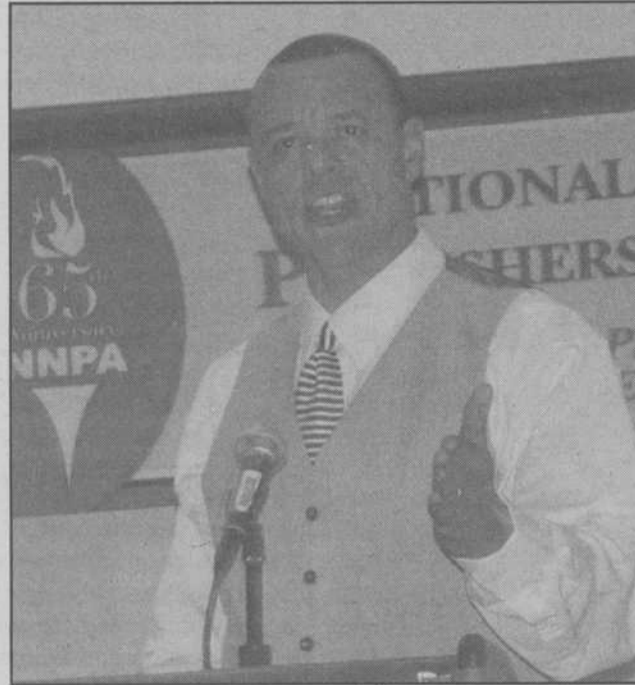


Photo by NNPA/Hazel Trice Edney

Carl Mack, executive director, National Society of Black Engineers, is a fearless agitator for equality and fairness.

because of the Black press," he told NNPA publishers celebrating their 65th anniversary. "The Black press has

the courage to do what other papers don't do. Every fight we engage in, the Black press is there."

It was clear from the outset that Mack is comfortable dealing with the Black press. Before his speech, he slipped out of suit coat, placed it on the back of his chair, and walked to the podium to give a 40-minute speech. It was immediately evident that he was at ease dealing with the Black press, and they were equally at ease with him as he recounted past battles in Seattle.

It was the Seattle/King County chapter of the NAACP that shut down traffic on a popular Seattle highway in protest of the number of Black men murdered at the hands of police. During that protest, Mack was handcuffed and sent to jail on charges of pedestrian interference, charges that were later dropped.

Under Mack's leadership, membership in the Seattle/King county chapter of the

NAACP increased from 600 to more than 2,000. The national NAACP selected Seattle as the most outstanding chapter in 2004.

The NAACP has more than 1,800 branches across the country. Although Mack is an uncompromising civil rights leader, there is also a sensitive side to him.

For a minute, he was speechless and tears welled up in his eyes as he began recounting the time he was asked to intervene in a case where a Black female student was brutalized because she was involved in an argument with a White girl at a local high school.

Security guards grabbed the African-American by her hair, slammed her face into a locker, threw her to the floor and handcuffed her while doing nothing to the White girl.

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Racially inclusive politics being revived in New York

By Eric Weltman

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK (NNPA) — As the New York City mayoral race gears up, pundits are once again asking whether a "rainbow coalition" can be formed to elect a person of color.

Three minorities — Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, Brooklyn Councilmember Charles Barron and former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer — are already mounting a campaign to unseat Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

And minority community



Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields

organizers say that that they will be actively engaged in the political process, training a spotlight on the candidates

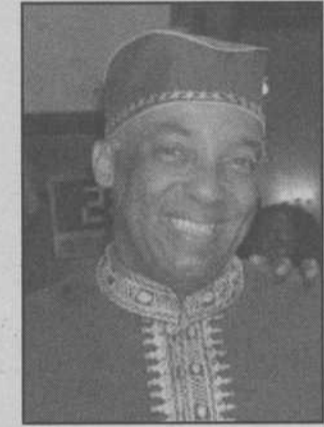
and the issues that matter most to minority residents. If a candidate emerges from the pack that responds convincingly to such an agenda, people of color could be the deciding force in the election.

The idea of forming a "rainbow coalition" comprised of Blacks, Hispanics and progressive Whites is nothing new. The concept has previously been used before in national and citywide elections.

David Dinkins—the city's first Black mayor—was elected in 1989, in part because of the support that he drew from a diverse city elec-

torate. In the 1989 primary, Dinkins received virtually unanimous support from Black voters, about half from liberal Whites, and a substantial minority of Latinos, thus winning a majority of the primary votes and defeating Mayor Ed Koch and two other White candidates.

Political scientists say that by maintaining his position with Blacks and White liberals; increasing his Latino support; and retaining a quarter of the White Catholic and Jewish Democratic vote, Dinkins was able to narrowly beat Republican Rudolph W. Giuliani, a former prosecu-



Brooklyn Councilmember Charles Barron

tor, in the general election.

Now, more than 25 years later, recent polls show weak support for Mayor Michael Bloomberg among both Blacks and Latinos, though he has gained some traction in recent weeks, in part because of an endorsement by Rev. Floyd Flake, pastor of one of the largest Black churches in New York City. Skeptics of a "rainbow

coalition" cite the divided support of civic leaders in past elections and residual bitterness from the 2001 mayor's race.

Yet, the facts on the ground—not in newspaper headlines—may tell a different story. One is demographics. The reality is that so-called "minorities"—Blacks, Latinos and Asians—are firmly in the majority in New York City. According to the 2000 Census, Latinos comprise 27 percent of the city's population; Blacks, 25 percent; and Asians, 10 percent.

A less recognized factor is what is happening at the grassroots level—in neighborhoods across the city—to organize coalitions among civic groups and advocacy organizations and to foster connections between people of color. More so than high-level endorsements, the

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Anniversary of N.C. sit-ins commemorated

By Clement Mallory
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GREENSBORO, N.C. (NNPA) — In honor of the Greensboro Four who, on Feb. 1, 1960, asked to be served at F.W. Woolworth's lunch counter, about 300 people recently walked from N.C. A&T State University's campus to the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in downtown Greensboro.

It was a cold day, but everyone seemed to warm themselves with the excitement of being in the presence of the notable Jesse Jackson, who walked arm-in-arm with three of Greensboro Four legends

—Jibreel Khazan, Joseph McNeil and Franklin McCain, Sr.

Jackson talked about the importance of the movement and added "that we as African-Americans must challenge the system." This system, which once locked Blacks out of Woolworth's but now locks Blacks in prisons, "must be broken," he said.

Some, like Chris Goins, a civic and economic teacher at Dudley High School, and Josephus of the Collective poetry group, both alumni of A&T, said they were shocked that the college did not cancel classes. "The college should have made this event mandatory," Goins said.

As Jackson led the group downtown to the unveiling of the new museum, he led the walkers in the chant, "I am somebody, respect me, protect me...I can achieve."

Although the majority of the walkers felt that there should have been more people, Khazan said, "We're here despite the number in attendance to bring back the fire."

It's people like Jeff Crosby of the community service group THEM FIVE, who understand the need to keep the torch lit.

"I represent a new generation of civil rights leaders that's not taking for granted the struggle people like the Greensboro Four went

through for us Blacks to be where we are now."

Twelve-year-old Porsche Wimbulh, a student at Imani Institute/Family Focus, said, "Because of them (Greensboro Four) we are now free to eat where we want and drink from any water fountain we chose," she said.

John Marvin, a White Greensboro resident who supported the civil rights movement said, "This march will bring about two things: one being the increase in tourism to Greensboro, and the fact that unity is occurring."

Clement Mallory writes for the Carolina Peacemaker.

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