

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 9

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

June 30, 2005

"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Ethnic contractors Vegas bound

By Parker Philpot
Sentinel-Voice

Excitement and expectations are built high for today's opening of the 36th Annual NAMC Conference of the National Association of Minority Contractors which runs through July 1 at the MGM Conference Center.

We are "very excited with it being here," said NAMC National President Al Barber, a local resident, who also presides over the state chapter. The NAMC Nevada Chapter, established in 1997, is based in Las Vegas.

"We meet every June... but this is the first time in Las Vegas," Barber said. "Representatives from more than 400 member organizations will attend the convention."



"We provide training for at-risk youth and young adults to get them ready to pass the apprenticeship tests to work in the trade of their choice."

— Al Barber
NAMC National President

He added, "This is a networking opportunity... to stay aware of any contracts available."

Barber stated the 36-year-old national organization's purpose is "to advocate for minorities and women in the construction business." Minorities served by NAMC includes companies owned

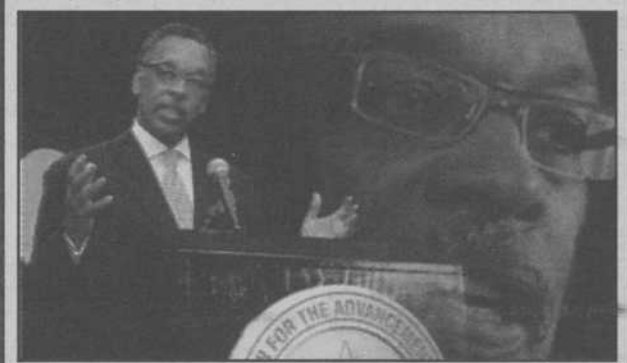
by African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans and women.

"There are chapters representing all the major cities in the United States," Barber said. "The organization consists of more than 40 chapters globally."

Of those attending, Barber said that nearly half of them

are identifiable as African-American businesses. Most are directly involved in construction covering all phases from special trades to general contractors; however, many are in the support services, like insurance, bonding, staffing, site clean-up and other service or supply providers.

Historically, the organization, founded in Oakland, Calif., has always had a very high percentage of Black-owned businesses and members, according to Barber. The growth of NAMC brought in many companies from eastern and southern states where there are, per capita, a higher percentage of Black-owned construction firms than are found in the (See Contractors, Page 2)



Bruce Gordon speaks during a news conference Saturday in Atlanta after the board of directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People selected him as its next president and CEO.

Gordon tabbed as NAACP chief

Leadership skills praised

ATLANTA (AP) — Turning to a businessman to lead one of the nation's seminal civil rights groups, the NAACP's board of directors announced Saturday that Bruce S. Gordon, a retired Verizon executive, will be its next president.

"Civil rights leaders throughout this country did what they did and died, so my generation has full responsibility to walk in the doors those brave people opened," Gordon said after the board voted. "It's fabulous, exciting, humbling."

Gordon was selected by a large majority of the board to succeed Kweisi Mfume, former U.S. representative and a candidate for Senate in Maryland who resigned abruptly in December. Several months later, a report surfaced that his personal relationships with NAACP staffers had contributed to widespread mismanagement at national headquarters in Baltimore. One staff member threatened to sue.

Described as a top-notch leader and consensus-builder, Gordon, 59, began his career in 1968 as a management trainee at Bell of Pennsylvania. For 35 years, amid massive upheaval in the telecommunications industry, he helped the company navigate the string of mergers that led it to become Verizon Communications Inc. When he retired in December 2003, he was chief of Verizon's biggest division — retail markets.

Gordon's corporate background "means that he is accustomed to working within a system in which merit and achievement count the most," Julian Bond, chairman of the group's board of directors, said in an interview. "That was attractive to us. Not to say that the NAACP didn't have that. But with every step we've taken... we wanted to move up. And we think he's going to bring us a quantitative move up."

Gordon said his first priorities will be to improve the organization's finances — its expenses have exceeded its income for the last two years, tax documents show — by working to build an endowment, increasing membership and pushing for more efficiency in operations.

His civil rights goals include working toward greater economic equality, he said.

"People of color need to change and balance the trade deficit that exists between people of color and the rest of society," Gordon said.

He also said he was looking forward to building a strong (See Gordon, Page 3)

John Smith to head Black press group

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

CHICAGO (NNPA) - The members of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, in its 65th year, have elected veteran *Atlanta Inquirer* Publisher John B. Smith Sr. as their new NNPA chairman.

Smith, in the business for 45 years, takes the helm of a federation of 200 Black newspapers at a time when such publications are being challenged by both technology and White-owned media giants such as *The New York Times*, which plans to publish a "Black" paper in Gainesville, Fla.

Profit-driven White-owned newspaper chains will not be welcomed by African-Americans, Smith says.

"Black people are more astute than the White media gives them credit for," Smith says. "It's been tried across the country and it's going to fail." Those predictions have not deterred White-owned companies from trying.

In January, *Essence* Communications was bought by Time, Inc., the publishing division of Time Warner. Five years ago, Black Entertainment Television was bought by Viacom, one of the

largest global media empires. Since then, BET has eliminated virtually all of its public affairs programs.

Smith is digging in for a fight.

"I will get the voices of ministers all over America to address this and to let their congregations know. As a result, I feel that once we let the community know, it's left

up to them to speak," Smith says.

A Georgia native, Smith, who succeeds *Houston Defender* Publisher Sonny Messiah Jiles, is a staple in the Black Press. He started as a marketing representative at the *Atlanta Inquirer* in 1960 and has been involved in NNPA since 1962. Known as a solid business man with principles and a down-home, salt-of-the-earth personality, Smith, has earned the respect of his fellow publishers after serving the organization in several different capacities, including chairman of the Black Press Archives, membership chairman and first vice president under Jiles, who did not seek re-election.

"It has been a nice ride. It's been fun. It's had its highs and lows, curves, dips, you name it," says Jiles as she congratulated Smith. "But when you're serving people or anything you care about, it's all a part of growing."

Other newly-elected NNPA officers are First Vice President Cloves Campbell of the *Arizona Informant*; 2nd Vice President Christ Bennett of the *Seattle Medium*; Treasurer Lenora "Doll" Carter of the *Houston* (See Smith, Page 12)



WHAT A KNIGHT

Gladys Knight performs after accepting the BET Lifetime Achievement Award during the 5th annual BET Awards on Tuesday in Los Angeles. (See story, pictures page 8)