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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

NAN honors women for their accomplishments

By *Lés Pierres Streater*
Sentinel-Voice

Over 200 people gathered in the Texas Station Hotel and Casino Dallas Room Saturday to celebrate the Third Annual "Ordinary Women Doing Extraordinary Things: Women Changing America Awards Banquet" sponsored by the Las Vegas chapter of the National Action Network (NAN).

The event honors women for their notable efforts in their work and business endeavors, as well as community service. The organizing committee reviewed nominations and selected women that were recognized for their extraordinary efforts. One "Woman of the Year Award" was given.

The qualifications for selection were explained by Sheila Collins, event founder and crisis management paralegal for NAN. She said the awards are not given by category, but for the recipient's full scope of work and service to the community. The

nominations were received from the public and from the event committee members. The selections were made by the committee, according to Collins.

"Individuals must possess a rare talent for touching people with warmth and grace; have the courage to pave new paths for the future generation of women; be passionate about social change and doing good work towards others; and their leadership role has contributed [to their community], and they have earned great admiration throughout the community where she resides," she said.

Stella Mason Parson, honored as the Woman of the Year, acknowledged her deep thanks for being recognized by the organization, and she commented on being a recipient:

"Well, I felt humbled because I never had any idea that people noticed what I was doing. I suppose that the main thing that they recog-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Lés Pierres Streater

Stella Parson, the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Nevada, Reno, was honored as woman of the year during the National Action Network's annual Women Changing America banquet Saturday night at Texas Station.

nize me for was going to college and being the first African-American woman to graduate from the University of Nevada (with a Bachelor's Degree in English with minors in Education and Psy-

chology). My daughters have followed in my footsteps attending the same university, and now I have granddaughters attending college. My missionary work at my church [Vegas View Church

of Good in Christ] and marriage counseling has led to keeping a lot of families together. I've just gone along and helped to do good and make a difference in my community. I am walking away with an appreciation of seeing that others do recognize the accomplishments that I was able to make and instill it in others to follow."

Las Vegas City Councilwoman Lois Tarkanian shared her thoughts on being honored by NAN. She said, "I must tell you that I have attended many awards banquets on many different levels, and this was the most sincere, heartfelt, value-ridden group that I have ever been with. I think that they are marvelous. And I think that their efforts in pursuing their goals and objectives are excellent. I mean that most sincerely."

Marjorie Field Harris, executive director of the national organization, was keynote speaker and one of the honorees recognized at the

event. She spoke on the work of the organization:

Harris said, "We're committed to economic and social justice, and we understand the importance of bringing women into the political process. With the 2006 elections coming up, we realize the importance that women can have in equal access in the representation of our congressional leaders through voter registration and education process."

Harris added, "We understand with the rising episodes of AIDS and HIV in the Black community, high unemployment and increased crime, we need to address these urban issues... Neither party has developed any plans to address and resolve the urban agenda. So, if we involve more people into the process, we can affect the outcome through our demands that the urban agenda gets a primary focus by both political parties."

In addition to Parson, Harris (See NAN, Page 6)

National organizations rallying on voting rights

By *Hazel Trice Edney*
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - African-Americans and other people of color must fight now to not only re-authorize, but strengthen the Voting Rights Act of 1965 when key anti-discriminatory sections of it comes up for a Congressional vote in 2007, say civil rights activists.

"We must have mass education and mass inspiration so our people can know to fight back. Most people do not know the Voting Rights Act is in jeopardy, and the Voting Rights Act is up for reauthorization, and the Voting Rights Act is not being fully enforced," Jesse Jackson Sr. said in an interview with the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

"It'll be time to go back to the streets and march to alert people and mobilize people before the fact, not after the fact. 2007 will be too late. We'll be too far behind the eight ball by 2007."

Jackson is leading a national march Saturday in Atlanta to commemorate the Act's 40th anniversary and to press for re-

authorization.

Ninety-five years ago, the 15th Amendment gave Black men the right to vote, but was not fully enforced until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Congress amended and strengthened the Voting Rights Act in 1982 and extended it for 25 more years — until 2007. A key section set for expiration is the pre-clearance clause of Section 5, which requires certain states with a history of discrimination to submit any changes in voting procedures to the Department of Justice for approval before they can take effect.

Those states are Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Virginia.

The state, county or local governments must prove to federal authorities that voting changes do not have racially discriminatory purposes and that they will not make racial minority voters worse off than they

(See Rally, Page 14)

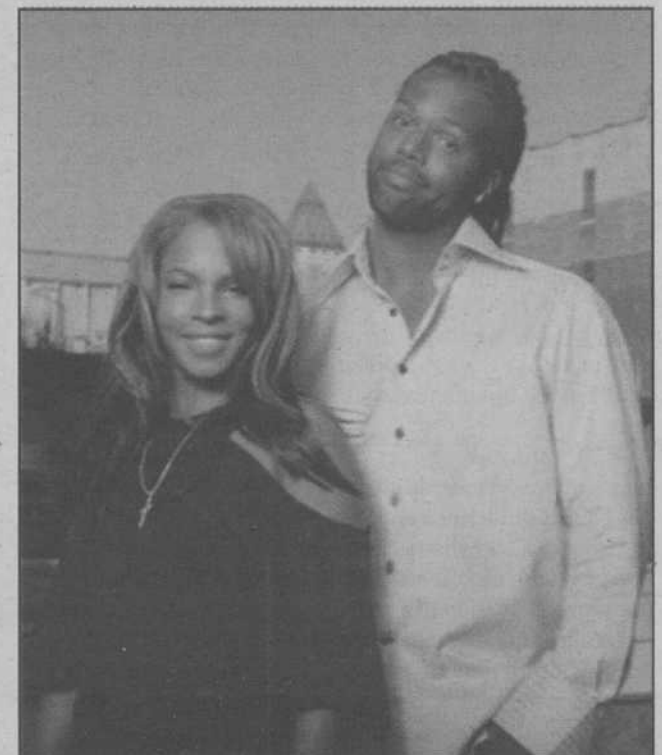
Popular hosts out at BET video program '106 & Park'

NEW YORK (AP) - The hosts of "106 & Park" are both out after five years with BET's most popular series, with one suggesting he was pushed out the door.

A.J. and Free had their last shows last week, and their exits prompted an "overwhelming" number of calls and e-mails from fans, a network spokeswoman said Monday. The popular music video and interview show, which airs weekdays for 90 minutes at 6:00 p.m. EST, is a cousin to fellow Viacom network MTV's "Total Request Live."

A.J. Calloway said he was told by BET executive Stephen Hill that the network's new head of programming, Reginald Hudlin, was looking to change the face of the network.

With his contract up, (See BET, Page 8)



Free, left, and A.J. were the hosts of BET's most popular series, "106 & Park." The duo recently taped their final show last week. The video countdown will continue. Replacement VJ's are in the works.