

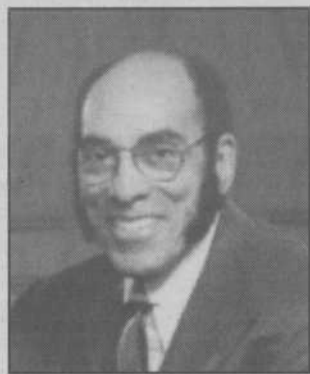
Parks' death sparks discussion on race

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The death of Rosa Parks underscores that the generation responsible for the key victories of the civil rights movement is fading into history, leaving its survivors with the challenge of keeping the movement's memory and work alive even as today's youth often seem disengaged.

"As people get older and people pass, it becomes more and more difficult to have that sort of firsthand knowledge" of the fight for integration, said U.S. Rep. John Lewis, a Georgia Democrat who first met Parks as a 17-year-old student and activist. "It becomes a little more difficult to pass it on."

Lewis, who once headed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, added that the social challenges of today — persistent racial gaps in poverty, education and wealth, among others — highlight the continued need for activists and teachers to honor Parks' spirit.



"I remember my son once said to me, 'Why did you sit in the back of the bus? Why didn't you just go up front?' I said 'I didn't want to get killed.'"
— Earl G. Graves Sr.,
Publisher of Black Enterprise Magazine

"Her life should inspire a generation yet unborn to stand up," he said.

Parks is one of a handful of civil rights figures, along with Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, whose name most young people seem to know.

But many are more familiar with "Rosa Parks," the hit song by the hip-hop group OutKast, than her full story, said Renada Johnson, a 25-year-old graduate student at Bowie State University in Maryland, who met Parks in 1997.

"Young people definitely

know who she was, but all we were taught in school was that she didn't get up because her feet were hurting," Johnson said. "They don't know her whole story."

In 1955, Parks was a seamstress and longtime secretary for the local NAACP who defied segregation laws and refused to give up her seat in a Whites-only section of a public bus in Montgomery, Ala.

Then 42, she inspired tens of thousands of working-class Blacks — led by King — to boycott the local buses for more than a year. Finally, the

Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that declared Montgomery's segregated seating laws unconstitutional. The effort highlighted persistent bias against Blacks across the nation.

After she died Monday at age 92, Parks was remembered as a quiet woman of steely resolve, whose simple act helped spark the biggest movement for social change in American history.

"But that was 50 years

ago," said Bruce Gordon, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "A lot has changed in 50 years."

Many young people either don't know civil rights history or don't know why it matters, he said. Parks, who worked to educate youth about the struggle of Black people, once chuckled that children sometimes asked her if she knew Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman,

former slaves who lived generations before her.

And now with the median age of African-Americans at 30, according to the Census Bureau, more than half of the nation's Black community was born after the end of legally sanctioned racial discrimination.

Parents who were active in the movement say they sense a disconnect when speaking with their children.

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NAACP

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we see that our children must be prepared to face a technological global workforce. In China, 1 percent of their nation's graduating high school students, almost a million students, are considered advanced and gifted students that we will have to compete against. ... We have to do better for our students. The time is now," he said.

Local branch President William Dean Ishman said, "This was awesome, just awesome. This was a change for us, something new. We're extremely happy with the results. We have an unfinished agenda, and 'The Time Is Now' for people to go from being just a spectator to being a participator in the NAACP. Membership is our drive and we want to increase our membership. There's much work to be done here in Las Vegas, and it's going to take all of us working together to bring about some positive change."

Some of the current plans and expansions underway locally include establishing a chapter at UNLV; having some of the law students assist in screening and providing legal assistance; hiring a person to work full-time in the chapter's office and solidifying an NAACP presence in area prisons, according to Ishman, who also said they are "establishing an infrastructure for the organization."



Najee performs at the NAACP's soiree.

Death warrant signed for co-founder of Crips gang

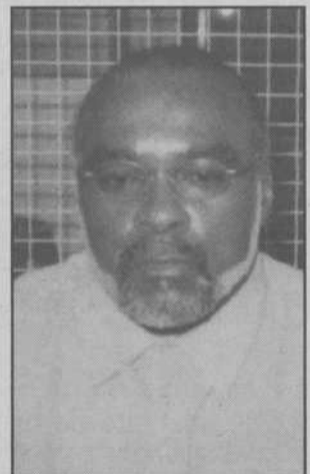
LOS ANGELES (AP)—A judge signed a death warrant Monday for Stanley "Tookie" Williams, co-founder of the notorious Crips gang, rejecting his attorneys' request for a delay in the execution date to give them more time to seek clemency from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Williams is scheduled to die Dec. 13 at San Quentin prison. He maintains he is innocent, and supporters cite his renunciation of his past and his efforts to curtail gang violence, including a series of children's books he co-wrote in prison.

His lawyers had asked that the execution date be set for Dec. 22, a nine-day delay. The Dec. 13 date means they have only until Nov. 8 to submit a clemency request to the governor. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider Williams' case earlier this month.

"This case has taken over 24 years to get to this point," Superior Court Judge William R. Pounders said. "That is a long delay in itself and I would hate to add to that delay."

Williams, 53, was sentenced to death in 1981 for fatally shooting Albert Owens, a Whittier conve-



This undated photo provided by the family of Stanley 'Tookie' Williams, shows Williams in the visiting area of San Quentin State Prison in California.

nience store worker, in 1979. He also was convicted of killing two Los Angeles motel owners and their daughter during a robbery that same year.

The U.S. Supreme Court turned aside his case earlier this month.

Williams and a high school friend started the Crips street gang in Los Angeles in 1971.

Supporters have nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize and the Nobel in literature, and a cable TV movie of his life last year starred Oscar-winner Jamie

Foxx. Dozens of death penalty opponents demonstrated outside the courtroom. Among them was actor Mike Farrell, who said the proceedings failed to consider "his value, his change, his transformation."

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