

Parks

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"She had gone in a very quiet, peaceful way."

Parks' final arrangements were handled by the Swanson Funeral Home Inc. of Pontiac, Mich., a stipulation that Parks made in her will more than 20 years ago, said O'Neil D. Swanson, the firm's president and a long-time friend of the Parks' family.

"This is one of the greatest honors that have ever been bestowed upon me," Swanson said. "People see Mrs. Parks' celebrity status. I feel that's a gross understatement. If you want to talk about status, I think it was saintly status."

Swanson said that Parks received excellent care in her sunset years.

"I have never in my life seen anyone that has gotten the care, the love as Rosa Parks had."

The Swansons stood with awe at the Detroit Metro Airport Friday morning as the cardboard box with the handwritten name, "Rosa Parks," was loaded into the belly of the plane.

The journey of Parks' body via the chartered Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 jetliner, accompanied by her friends, relatives and members of the Institute, went from Detroit to Montgomery, to D.C. and back. The plane, donated by the airline, was flown by the nation's first Black chief pilot, Captain Lou Freeman.

Freeman, who has flown 737s for 25 years, said in an interview with the NNPA News Service that Parks' influence in his life not only opened doors for his advancement, but also inspires his courage to stand for justice.

As the plane touched down at the Montgomery Aviation field, the family smiled as the Montgomery Fire Department formed a "water arch," spraying high-powered water hoses to form a rainbow-shaped waterfall over the plane in honor of Parks. Ironically, in years past, fire hoses were often aimed at protesters, not to honor one.

During a brief color guard ceremony at the airport, Parks' mahogany casket was draped with nine dozen yellow roses presented by the Metro-Montgomery Branch of the NAACP.

Parks was secretary of the Metro-Montgomery NAACP when she was arrested on Dec. 1, 1955, and found guilty of breaking segrega-



A horse-drawn hearse carries the flag-draped coffin of U.S. civil rights activist Rosa Parks after her funeral in Detroit, Michigan on Wednesday. Thousands attended the event.

tion laws. The arrest resulted in a 381-day bus boycott which was led by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., then in his twenties.

In response to calls for a pardon for the charge, Montgomery Mayor Bobby Bright got a standing ovation at the memorial when he said, "You cannot pardon someone who hasn't done anything wrong. I ask Mrs. Rosa Parks to pardon us; to pardon our city."

Bruce Gordon, NAACP president and CEO, led the visiting delegation on the plane to the memorial service. He said, "Every African-American and every person in America owes a debt of gratitude to Rosa Parks for insisting that all people be treated with dignity and justice."

A motorcade led by police officers, the hearse carrying Parks, five white limousines and three buses, weaved about five miles through the heart of the city, past her home, past the Dexter King Memorial Baptist Church, Dr. Martin Luther King's first church; past the state capitol and past the Rosa Parks Museum before ending five blocks from St. Paul's.

There, her coffin was placed in a carriage drawn by two horses and driven the rest of the way to the church with throngs of family and people following.

Laytaeanna Smith, 8, held a sign that read: "We remember Rosa Parks."

Smith said, "She risked her life to save the country."

Youth was a passion for Parks.

In a silent, powerful tribute, on the return flight to transport Parks' body to the nation's capital for the honorary memorial before her funeral, the pilot circled Montgomery and tipped the left wing to say good-bye to Alabama's capital city, symbolic of a final salutation from Parks to the place where she was arrested for standing for freedom.

Many honored Parks for her impact on history. Others commented on Parks present and future impact.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who grew up in Birmingham, 90 miles north of Montgomery, was the first to speak at the memorial in Alabama. She credited her rise to her position, the first Black female secretary of state, to Parks. "I can honestly say that without Mrs. Parks, I probably would not be standing here today as secretary of state."

Former President Clinton, who presented Parks with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996, spoke at her funeral: "The world knows of Rosa Parks because of a single, simple act of dignity and courage that struck a lethal blow to the foundations of legal bigotry."

"The woman we honored today held no public office, she wasn't a wealthy woman, didn't appear in the society pages," said Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., at her final service. "And yet when the history of this country is written, it is this small, quiet woman whose name will be remembered long after the names of senators and presidents have been forgotten."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson called for a White House conference on civil rights, and likened Parks to an eagle.

"You allowed the rebirth of hope," he said. "You gave us confident protection. You showed us how to fly."

Parks' best friend, 94-year-old Johnnie Rebecca Carr, president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, and veteran of the bus boycott, added perspective: "A woman sat down and the world turned around," she said. Carr added, "The world has turned around, but not all the way."

After the funeral, Parks' casket was put on an antique, gold-trimmed, horse-drawn carriage for the seven-mile procession to the cemetery. Her body was to be entombed in a mausoleum along with those of her husband and her mother.

Hazel Trice Edney, NNPA Washington Correspondent, contributed to this article.

Sisters Network hosts hat, tea, fashion show fundraiser

By Lés Pierres Streater
Sentinel-Voice

The Las Vegas Chapter of Sisters Network Inc. held its third annual Hat Tea and Fashion Show fundraising event at the Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center Auditorium Saturday afternoon.

The organization provides assistance to women diagnosed with breast cancer. More than 100 people attended the event which featured an auction to raise money to help the group expand its health awareness programs.

"No one needs to suffer from this disease alone, and now is the time to 'Stop the Silence' about this disease," said Jeannie Beatty, president of the local chapter of Sisters Network.

Breast cancer is the second leading disease striking African-American women, surpassed only by lung cancer.

The support organization provides local breast cancer education, outreach, advocacy training and resources.

Beatty said, "We had a positive turnout. Donations



Sentinel-Voice photo by Lés Pierres Streater

Jeannie Beatty, president of the local chapter of the Sisters Network, addresses the crowd at a forum on breast cancer.

of over \$2,000 were made to the organization... along with models displaying fashions to the delight of the audience, and an auction that raised over \$800."

She continued, "Some of the things that we provide to our members are weekly ongoing communications to provide encouragement, a shoulder to cry on, going to

doctor appointments with them, information about receiving free mammograms, and supporting them in their time of need.

"We also provide support to the families of those individuals diagnosed with breast cancer and how they can aid their loved ones, so that they can better understand (See Sisters, Page 10)

Thank You...



The family of Joseph R. Sawyer, Sr., wishes to thank each and every one of you for the support you gave to us during our time of bereavement. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we continue to move through the grieving process we are experiencing, as a result of the loss of our father.