

OUR VIEW

Divided Loyalty

Tuesday was a day of funerals and mourning. In Lithonia, Ga., thousands packed the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church to say goodbye to the "first lady of the Civil Rights Movement," Coretta Scott King, widow of revolutionary human rights champion Martin Luther King, Jr. She died at the age of 78.

In the crowd of 10,000 were four U.S. presidents, sitting members of Congress, dignitaries, celebrities, entertainers, admirers, all paying homage to Coretta Scott King's courage—for standing with her husband as he endured violence, character assassination and death threats in order to move the moral compass of this nation—and her vision, for expanding on her husband's dream of racial harmony and socioeconomic equality by championing the rights of women, gays and others.

"Coretta Scott King not only secured her husband's legacy, she built her own," President Bush told the throng. "Having loved a leader, she became a leader, and when she spoke, Americans listened closely."

Said President George H.W. Bush: The "world is a kinder and gentler place because of Coretta Scott King."

President Jimmy Carter admired the Kings' will to "wage a fierce struggle for freedom and justice and to do it peacefully."

In so many ways, Coretta Scott King was like many Black women, able to multitask—wife, mother, friend, confidant, bedrock, attentive ear, better half. In losing her, we as African-Americans, and we as American citizens, lost some of that matriarchal oversight, that "mother wit" we've come to rely on. Coretta Scott King commanded such an elaborate funeral (some 160,000 people waited in line to pay respects; Michael Bolton and Stevie Wonder sang; 14 U.S. Senators attended the service) because of her work in life. Hers is a story of a life liberated while liberating others, which is a narrative we should all aspire to mimic.

Tuesday also marked the funeral of Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Sgt. Henry Prendes. A married father of two, Prendes, 37, was fatally shot last Wednesday as he responded to a domestic violence call. He was first officer killed in the line of duty since 1988. (The gunman, Amir Crump, was slain in an ensuing shootout with police).

Like Coretta Scott King's death, Prendes' death generated an outpouring of emotion and support. Streets were blocked off and hundreds of citizens, supporters and law enforcement officers (some from out of state) gathered on valley streets as the funeral procession wended its way to Henderson. The Mandalay Bay marquee even paid tribute: "You have answered your call to duty and answered it well. You will always be a member of the greatest family in the world."

If you happened to witness Prendes' funeral procession, you would've noticed that most of the supporters gathered on the sidewalks were White. That's a shame. Race isn't central to this story, but it's important, nonetheless, because Prendes deserves the admiration and respect of all people—his family needs to be lifted up in prayer just as the King family.

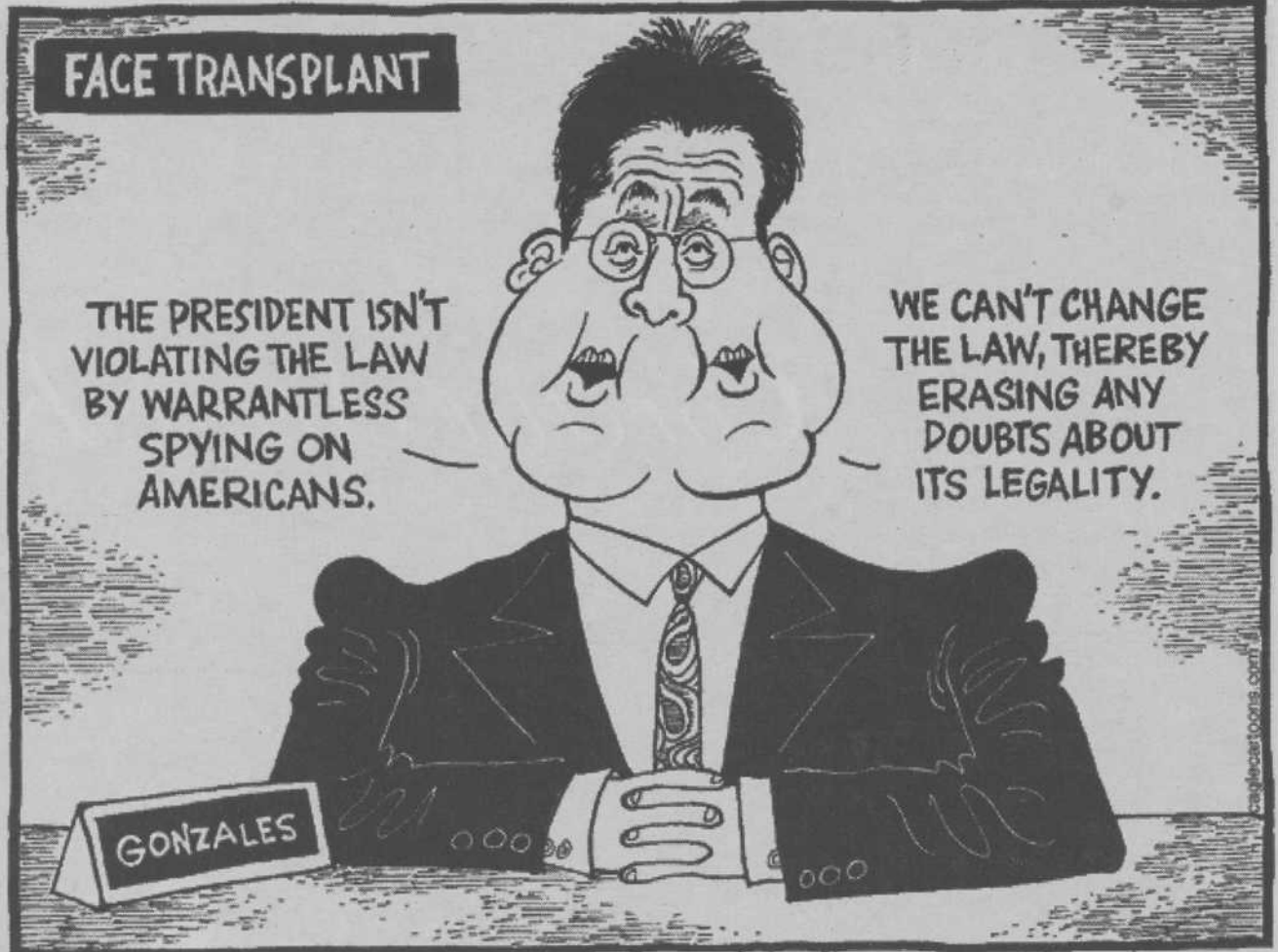
Too often has the relationship between the Black community and police been portrayed as toxic. Fact is, the Black community is as pro-cop as they come, so long as officers uphold their duty to serve and protect and don't fall into the thuggishness that proved the downfall of the Rampart division of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Officers like Prendes, who put themselves in harm's way in the name of justice, have our enduring respect and admiration. The lives of Coretta Scott King and Henry Prendes should serve as reminders of the innate good in all of us and of our ability to offer time, affection, patience, love and, if it calls for it, our lives as martyrs to accomplish greater good. So chalk up the lack of an African-American presence at Prendes' funeral not to indifference and unconcern, but to our collective mourning over the loss of a civil rights matriarch. We're sure that if Coretta Scott King and Henry Prendes met, they'd find more in common with each other than not.

FACE TRANSPLANT

THE PRESIDENT ISN'T VIOLATING THE LAW BY WARRANTLESS SPYING ON AMERICANS.

WE CAN'T CHANGE THE LAW, THEREBY ERASING ANY DOUBTS ABOUT ITS LEGALITY.



Queen claims her throne

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

On Tuesday, the matriarch of the Civil Rights Movement, Coretta Scott King, was laid to rest in a manner befitting a queen. On Monday, more than 100,000 people came to view her body as she became the first female and the only African-American to lie in state at the Georgia Capitol. Mrs. King, the wife of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., established and left her own legacy. On three occasions, I had the pleasure to meet with and learn from Coretta Scott King.

She served as an advisor to freedom and democracy movements all over the world and as a consultant to world leaders, including President Corazon Aquino of the Philippines, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Coretta was one of the world's most admired women, and she remained an outspoken champion of justice and human dignity to the end of her days.

Mrs. King served as President, Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, which opened in 1982. Tens of thousands of activists from all over the world were trained there in the philosophy and practices of nonviolence, and I was blessed to be one of those who learned there.



ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

She impressed me as a woman of dignity, class, integrity, grace, compassion and love in all my encounters with her.

My first time meeting Coretta was in 1987, years after she had commenced her successful fight to honor her slain husband with a holiday. It was established as a national holiday in 1985 in the U.S. and has become a holiday celebrated in some form in over 100 countries.

She established and chaired the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission. The federal commission was enacted to produce and distribute educational materials to schools regarding the life and works of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the nonviolent mantra that he stood for, as well as the whole concept of peace. With nonviolent social change being the focus of the instruction, they held training workshops for teachers and organizations across the states, and churches were instructed how to organize and teach. I saw her extraordinary work as a teacher.

The commission she formed was charged with, among its primary tasks, lobbying each state to create its own commission. I was able

to hear and observe her twice during 1987. Initially, she came early in the year to lobby the Nevada Legislature to establish this state's King Day holiday.

Nevada's commission was established under the leadership of Governor Richard Bryan, who ultimately signed AB116 during the '87 state legislative session making King Day a paid state holiday.

A short time after her lobbying trip here in 1987, I worked closely with Coretta when she returned to Las Vegas to sanction the local Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Committee as an organization recognized under the King Center. While here on her second visit in '87, she was helpful and supported

our local, newly founded organization's fundraiser, where she met many locals and kindly took the time to interact with everyone.

It was my privilege to be assigned as her hostess, responsible for making sure that she was accompanied throughout her weekend stay. She was traveling without her children at the time. She had an uncanny ability to make you feel like you had known her forever. She was a jewel, a sweet spirit, but still a forceful woman.

The King commission Coretta chaired also held regional conferences, and Nevada hosted the Western regional training conference at the Tropicana Hotel in 1987, which coincided with her second visit. She conducted the opening session and instructed in workshop settings.

I was in awe watching her in one of her workshops, because she was so articulate and was able to bring her les-

(See LaGrande, Page 13)

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