

Mfume graceful in defeat

By Ernest Alexander
and Zenitha Prince

Special to Sentinel-Voice

BALTIMORE (NNPA) - On the night of Sept. 12, the Hippodrome was in a frenzy as media, supporters, family and friends gathered to find out if Kweisi Mfume would represent the Democratic Party in the race for U.S. Senate in November.

Despite a major lead by Ben Cardin, spirits were high and many supporters waved "Mfume for Senate" signs and cheered every time they saw their candidate's face on television. Mfume, too, remained positive.

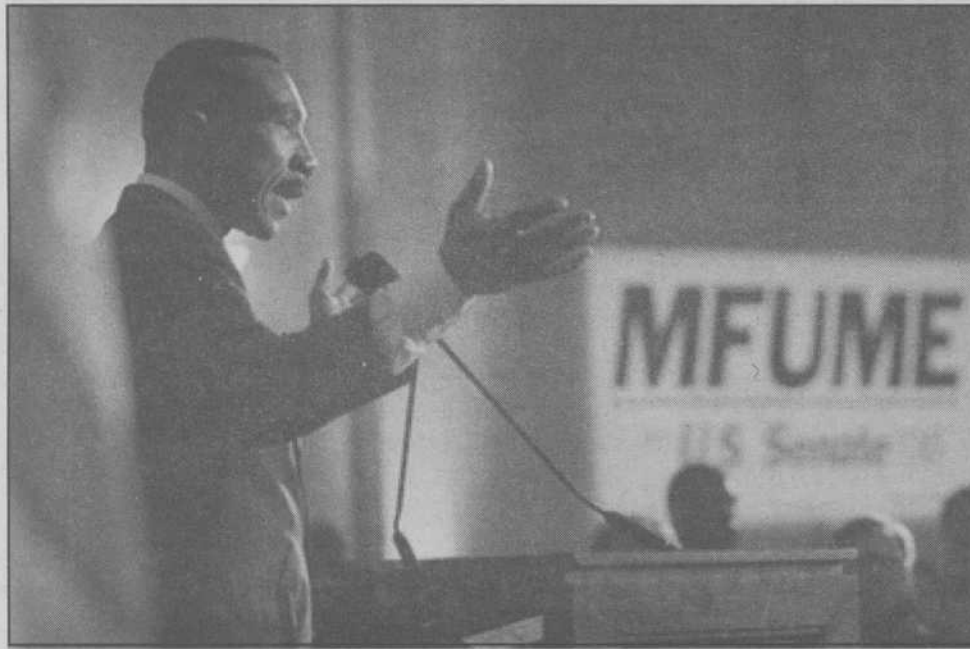
"As Mark Twain once said 'reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated,'" said Mfume in an address to the audience.

Because of the statewide voting problems, Baltimore's polls didn't close until 9 p.m., pushing the results back further and further.

Not giving up hope, many watched the giant projection screen as the polls continued to come in, while supporters celebrated all their hard work over the past 18 months.

In the wee hours of the morning, though, the Mfume camp had to concede defeat. And, yet, he did so without allowing a negative word past his lips.

"If we don't find that guy running around with those 29,000 votes in his pocket soon, then, although I wanted to be Ben's senator, he might just have to be mine. And if he is, he'll be a damn good senator," said Mfume about his opponent and friend for



Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate in Maryland, Kweisi Mfume, gestures to his supporters as he speaks on Wednesday in Baltimore. Mfume lost his race for the Senate.

this primary election.

Mfume said some tried to drive a wedge between the two candidates, but it did not work. "There may be difference, and there may not be difference, but we're friends nonetheless. We started that way, and we are going to end that way, and we'll be that way until they decide to bury both of us."

Despite Mfume's loss, to many, he has come off as a victor because of his gracious attitude, as well as his demonstrated concern for the community.

Kenneth Johnson, one of the last Mfume supporters to leave that morning, said, "His campaign was a very good campaign, it was honest, it was clean, and it was basically to the point on his issues. Everything that he mentioned tonight, he stuck by, and he... tried to get an-

swers for [those things he] wanted to solve. You can only solve those issues if you are in power... Anybody that is into politics knows that Kweisi Mfume cares about Black folks — especially here in Baltimore city."

That Mfume was able to garner such a significant number of votes, losing to Cardin by less than 10 percentage points on a shoe-string budget, seems like a miracle.

"The campaign was hard because we didn't have the funds, Kweisi was the underdog [and] we couldn't get on TV," said Mfume's campaign manager, Mark Clack, in a tired voice.

"Much credit has to go to Kweisi Mfume for strapping this campaign on his back. A lot of people underestimated his tenacity... he did not stop fighting."

Clack went on to say that this campaign has cemented Mfume's position as a leader and will open doors for him to continue serving in that capacity as an elected official or otherwise.

"People are going to be calling asking him how he did it," Clack said. "This was Mfume's divining moment not only as a political heavyweight but also as a major Black leader in Maryland. His legacy is well intact."

William Gross, an Mfume supporter said, "His track record speaks for him. I think that if this doesn't work out, he'll be back doing something else, and I'll be there to support him — just like I did for this campaign."

Ernest Alexander and Zenitha Prince write for Afro Newspapers.

Dems must eye security issues

INDIANOLA, Iowa (AP) - Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.), warned Democratic activists Sunday that the party must take a tougher stance on national security if it wants to succeed in the November elections.

"What Democrats have to do is to close the deal," said Obama, the keynote speaker at Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin's 29th annual steak fry. "We have got to show we have a serious agenda for change."

Obama's appearance in Iowa, where precinct caucuses launch the presidential season, has raised a number of eyebrows about his intentions for a presidential run in 2008. Though only a first-term

senator, Obama has burst onto the national scene.

But he wouldn't say Sunday whether he was considering a run at the White House.

"My only intentions right now are focused on '06," said Obama. "Whoever is looking toward 2008 without focusing on 2006 makes a mistake."

Former Virginia Gov. Mark Warner also spent Sunday afternoon at the steak fry, and left little doubt that he is looking ahead to 2008.

"You know and I know that it all starts in Iowa," Warner told the audience. "Do your part. We're going to take back the Congress this year, and then

(See Obama, Page 11)

Mayor's residence needs costly fixes

DETROIT (AP) - Approximately \$200,000 of a \$22 million bond issue for capital improvements is being spent to fix the swimming pool and make other repairs at the mayor's mansion. The money will be used to repair damaged pool tiles, cracked pavement walkways, a front porch and outside lighting and to replace dead plants at the Manoojian Mansion. Construction is expected to begin soon.

The repairs are necessary to prevent accidents, said Matt Allen, a spokesperson for Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick.

"It is a public building, and the city of Detroit owns that, and we need to do repairs to that property," Allen told WJBK-TV on Monday.

Voters approved the \$22 million bond issue, which also helped fund improvements at several city parks, including installing a remote-control car racetrack, climbing wall and disc golf course. The bond costs \$8.22 a year in taxes for a person with a home worth \$100,000.

Sheriff

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the key issues is the coroner's inquest process. I would ask if they are pleased with the system or if it should be changed."

Cordell Stokes, spokesperson and founding member of CAAN, says that CAAN is a non-partisan political action organization. He further explained the caucus and its advocacy mission.

"[CAAN] was created in 2004 to allow for a political organization to be developed. Think of the NAACP, the Urban League, 100 Black Men and 100 Black Women — all non-profit with a valuable purpose. I envisioned and secured, with assistance of other founding members — Dr. Robert E. Fowler Sr. (pastor), Senator Steve Horsford [D-Nev.], Louis Overstreet, Duana Heard... — the formation of this caucus... This is one organization that the president from many organizations can participate in the political process through endorsing candidates, financial allocation to support their candidacy

and other things you cannot do under a non-profit umbrella."

Stokes further explained, "With a political caucus, you work with the leadership of the community and have the ability to have those presidents to go back to their members to express what activities they participated in within the political framework. This work is strictly voluntary."

The caucus consists of founders, executive board, staff, standing committee chairs and the regular membership body of about 200, according to Stokes.

The Plaza Hotel and Casino was specially selected, according to McKinney James, because one of CAAN's executives is affiliated, adding, "We want as much of our membership as possible to be able to attend at a central location."

Reservations are not required for admission. For more information, contact CAAN at 349-0969 or online at www.nevadablackcaucus.com.

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