

Clarke wins tough N.Y. congressional run

By Tanangachia Mfuni
Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK (NNPA) - When Councilwoman Yvette Clarke snagged the Democratic nomination in Brooklyn's hotly contested 11th Congressional district primary, local Black politicians breathed a sigh of relief.

Crowded with three Black and one White candidate in a district that's 60 percent Black, the race looked favorable for Councilman David Yassky, the White candidate benefiting from a split of the Black vote. However, Clarke prevailed with 31 percent of the vote, followed by Yassky's 26 percent. State Senator Carl Andrews received 23 percent of the vote, while Chris Owens, the retiring congressman's son, campaigning to replace his dad, received less than 20 percent of the vote.

"I had three candidates," said Bed-Stuy Councilman Albert Vann, who wanted to see a Black candidate get the Democratic nomination. "It was more important that one of them would win and less important who it would be," said Vann.

The veteran Brooklyn politician was among those eager for a Black candidate to fill the historic seat created by the 1968 Voting Rights Act, affectionately still referred to as "Shirley Chisholm's seat."

For Clarke, set to face Independent candidate Ollie McLean in November, the reality of winning the primary is only beginning to set in. "I was having an out-of-body experience all day yesterday," said Clarke.

Clarke — who succeeded her mother, Una Clarke, in the City Council — won the nomination despite several setbacks. Three weeks ago, the councilwoman admitted to having forgotten she never completed her undergraduate studies at Oberlin College, contrary to what she stated in official documents.

Earlier in the race, Rev. Al Sharpton had accused Clarke and her mother of not providing support when four White police officers in the Bronx in 1999 tragically killed Amadou Diallo, an unarmed West African immigrant. It's a charge Clarke refuted by providing pictures of her mother rallying with Sharpton and Diallo's mother, Kadiatou.

Despite the snafus, Clarke credits her win

to a strong relationship with the Brownsville, Crown Heights and Park Slope communities of which the congressional district is comprised.

"There was a part of me that really knew there was a base that was unmovable, a testament of my connection to the constituency," said Clarke, who represents parts of Crown Heights and Flatbush as a council member.

"I knew that nobody else in the race had established that sort of relationship with the constituency," she added, "[My] representation went beyond the legislative process; it was attending the weddings and funerals and all of the things that connect you to the community."

Clarke's Jamaican heritage helped to rally grassroots support from Brooklyn's large Caribbean population. Also, endorsements from the likes of former New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum and Brooklyn/Queens Congressman Anthony Weiner possibly boosted her over the top.

Councilman Vann further speculated Clarke's gender gave her an edge over her

three male competitors.

"There could be a correlation that Shirley Chisholm held that seat," said Vann, speaking of Chisholm, the first person elected to the District 11 seat. Chisholm went on to become a presidential candidate.

While some Black Brooklynites are breathing easier after Clarke's win, others mull over how the Black community could come so close to losing the historic seat.

McLean, Clarke's challenger in the general election, questioned the commitment of Black Democrats who ran in the primary.

The low voter turnout was possibly indicative that some were put off by what McLean, a longtime Brooklyn activist and co-founder of the United African Movement, described as "plantation politics" that don't address the needs of constituents.

"They're hearing superficial answers to everything," said McLean, speaking of voter's frustrations with elected officials. "It's like putting Band-Aids on the cancer," she said.

Tanangachia Mfuni writes for the Amsterdam News.

Publisher wins in Arizona's primary

By ArnE Williams
Special to Sentinel-Voice

PHOENIX (NNPA) - Arizona Informant newspaper publisher and NNPA board member Cloves Campbell Jr. won the Democratic primary race for Arizona House of Representatives District 16 and a spot in the November 7 general election. The primary win virtually assures Campbell as a victory in the general election.

Campbell nosed his closest competitor by 66 votes to advance to the general election. "It feels good and I'm honored," beamed Campbell. "It shows the importance of every vote."

Arizona, with 3 percent of its population Black, has 30 legislative districts. Each district has one senator and two representatives. Only one of Arizona's 90 lawmakers is African-American.

Campbell is also the first vice chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, known as NNPA and the Black Press of America. It is a 65-year-old federation of more than 200 Black community newspapers from across the United States.

Campbell said meeting continued growth is one of the most pressing issues facing citizens in the Phoenix metropolitan area. "I am dedicated to creating community involvement; harnessing business support; improving educational standards; enhancing health care; defining environmental issues; and developing cultural interaction," emphasized Campbell.

He said involving the entire community in all phases of the planning stages would ensure continued prosperity and opportunity for all of Arizona's distinct cultures.

Campbell is the son of the late Cloves Campbell Sr., Arizona's first African-American state senator and founder of the Arizona Informant. He plans to continue his father's legacy in the legislature, the community and publishing. "I grew up watching my father in his mission to improve the community in which he lived," said Campbell. "I like to think that his contributions to the city of Phoenix and state of Arizona has helped to make it one of the best places to live."

Campbell has spent his entire career with the newspaper, which is a family owned and operated publication in its 35th year of publishing. As its publisher, he ensures the paper provides an important voice for the African-American community. His personal commitment and knowledge of the community of which he is a part shines in all his work.

Study: Prisons breed extremists

WASHINGTON (AP) - Jailed Islamic extremists with violent interpretations of the Qu'ran are taking advantage of scarce religious monitoring programs to breed terrorists in U.S. prisons, a study released Tuesday shows.

State and local prison officials struggle to track radicalized behavior by inmates or religious counselors, the joint study by George Washington University and the University of Virginia found.

Many prisons can't afford preventive programs; in California, for example, officials reported "that every investigation into radical groups in their prisons uncovers new leads, but they simply do not have enough investigators to follow every case of radicalization."

"Radicalized prisoners are a potential pool of recruits by terrorist groups," concluded the study, released at a Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing on "homegrown" terrorists. "The U.S., with its large prison population, is at risk of facing the sort of homegrown terrorism currently plaguing other countries."

An estimated 2 million people are imprisoned in the United States; 6 percent of them are Muslim, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a counterterrorism consultant, told senators that "chilling" interpretations of the Qu'ran were given to prison



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—Daveed Gartenstein-Ross
counterterrorism consultant

inmates when he worked for the al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, an international charity that served as a major al Qaeda financier.

The readings urged Muslims "to wage war against non-Muslims who have not submitted to Islamic rule," Gartenstein-Ross said in prepared testimony to the Senate panel.

"I know of only a few instances in which prisons rejected the literature we attempted to distribute — and it was never because of the literature's radicalism," said Gartenstein-Ross, who has since left the charity and converted to Christianity.

Prisons have long been considered recruiting stations for gangs and, more recently, terrorists, but little has been done throughout government to combat them. The Senate hearing came as law enforcement and intelligence officials focus on finding out how and why extremist homegrown sympathizers cross a line to become operational terrorists.

The panel's chair, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, called the matter "an emerging threat to our national se-

curity." Added Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., "While homegrown Islamic terrorism might not be as much of a threat as in say, Europe or some other places, we ignore the threat that does exist at our peril."

The report cited several high-profile cases of terrorists who became radicalized while incarcerated, including British shoe bomber Richard Reid.

It also noted what authorities call a foiled plot of a potential shooting rampage against California military facilities, synagogues and the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles by followers of Kevin James, who founded the radical group Jamiyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh, or JIS, as an inmate at California State

Prison in Sacramento.

Researchers interviewed federal, state and local prison officials, religious counselors and counterterrorism authorities in four states — California, New York, South Carolina and Ohio — and the District of Columbia. They concluded that federal prison authorities have made significant strides in collecting and sharing information to help monitor whether inmates are becoming radicalized.

State and local prison officials have largely relied on contractors and volunteers to lead Islamic services because of a lack of well-trained Muslim chaplains, the report found. In New York, that led to several cases of "imams espousing violent views," it said.

The report noted a 2004 study that found that about half of 193 prisons surveyed supervised religious services or monitored them with video or audio recorders. "In the absence of monitoring by authoritative Islamic chaplains, materials that advocate violence have infiltrated the prison system undetected," it found.

Cletis Mikell aka Mike made his transition on Friday, September 15, 2006. The retired Bally's banquet supervisor of 30 years was a native of Nathiz, Miss and a long time resident of Las Vegas. Services will be held at Greater Evergreen Missionary Baptist Church on Saturday, September 23, 2006 at 11 a.m. He leaves behind his long time friend Margaret Honeycutt as well as other friends and family.

