

King couple reunited

By Dennis M. Byron Jr.
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ATLANTA (NNPA) - On November 20, Atlanta hosted yet another historical event regarding Martin Luther King Jr. and his family. Ten months after her passing, the final resting place of Coretta Scott King next to her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in a marble crypt, now big enough for both of them, was unveiled at the grounds of the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

Coretta Scott King, 78, died on Jan. 30 due to complications from a stroke and ovarian cancer. From the time of her passing, it took 10 months for Mrs. King to reach her final burial place in the crypt.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been relocated more than once since he had been assassinated in Memphis in 1968. He was first buried at the South View Cemetery in Atlanta next to the graves of his mother, father and maternal grandparents. Once the King Center was erected under the direction of Mrs. King, she placed Martin Luther King Jr.'s body in the center of the



Coretta Scott and Martin Luther King Jr. finally rest together in peace.

grounds next to the Ebenezer Baptist Church, the famous location where he preached.

Every since the 1980 legislation, there was always the plan that once Coretta Scott King had passed, she would join her husband at the site.

Mrs. King's relocation was way ahead of schedule, which would have placed her next to her husband at year's end. The overall goal was to have them united before Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday observance on January 15.

Before having a big enough space to accommo-

date them, Coretta Scott's body was resting directly in front of her husband's tomb in a marble crypt since February. The recent relocation took place privately behind a partition to block public view.

The last time the King crypt received this much attention was when President George W. Bush visited the location during Martin Luther King Jr.'s 75th birthday in 2004. Even though Bush managed to place a wreath on King's crypt, about 700 protestors jeered the president; chanted "Bush go

home!" and burned him in effigy, largely because of his relations with civil rights leaders, his role in war and lack of support for affirmative action.

Since then, calm has resided and only positive events have taken place at the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

The beautiful crypt, which is surrounded by a reflecting pool, now houses one of the most famous married couples in history that can finally rest in peace.

Dennis M. Byron Jr. writes for the Atlanta Voice.

Rally held for woman slain by police

ATLANTA (AP) - About 70 residents gathered outside the house of Kathryn Johnston Tuesday evening, some holding placards condemning police, others venting angrily about the botched narcotics raid that claimed the life of the elderly woman a week ago.

"I'm enraged," said Walterine Jones, 50. "I mean, my God, if they can do this to an elderly woman like her, what does it mean for the safety of the rest of us?"

The rally participants marched to a church for a community meeting, bringing the crowd to about 300.

Atlanta Police Chief Richard Pennington addressed the crowd, saying he became concerned after community response to the shooting.

When he learned that the information he received conflicted with what a confidential informant told the Internal Affairs Unit, he brought in the FBI to lead the investigation, he said.

"I am not new to police misconduct," he said. "I've worked in Washington, D.C., and New Orleans. I've made this move based on law enforcement and my gut feeling."

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Marchers to the church carried signs that mocked the police, passed around by rally organizers, the New Black Panther for Self-Defense.

"Warning taxpayers & Black citizens. Don't dial 911. The police will kill you," said one.

Another was a cartoon of a smiling uniformed officer holding a phone, with the caption: "They gave me administrative leave...with pay. Kill a Black citizen and get paid."

The message was a reference to Pennington's decision to place on paid leave the sergeant and seven detectives who are part of it.

Residents are angry. Even without the signs, there was plenty of anger to go around among those who gathered in front of a makeshift memorial outside the now-boarded up house where

Johnston died in a gun battle with officers.

Residents said that while crime is rampant in the area, the stretch of Neal Street where Johnson lived alone for almost two decades was home to other elderly residents.

"There's crime that needs to be tackled here, that's true. But this road right here, there's never been any drug dealing here," said Michael Jaye, 46, who has lived in the area since he was 4.

"But the police don't come here to fight crime. They come to knock heads," he added. Johnny Colbert, 27, echoed many of the attendees' suspicion that police made up the description of "Sam," who they said was the man who sold drugs to an undercover informant.

"There are a lot of 'Sams' around here. They are all make-believe by the police,"

he said.

As some of the attendees pumped fists into the air and shouted "Black Power" at the exhortation of the organizers, a handful of stoic GBI and FBI agents stood by watching.

On a nearby porch, an elderly woman leaned on the railing, straining to catch what was happening.

She would have walked down and shown her support also, she said. But she was too feeble to, she said.

The meeting, at the Lindsay Street Baptist Church on North Avenue, was organized by State Sen. Vincent Fort and Rep. "Able" Mabel Thomas, both Democrats from Atlanta.

"I just don't understand how you bust in someone's house and don't know who lives there," said Mary Thomas, an usher at the church. "My daughter and I said this could be any of us."

Joe Cobb, who works in the neighborhood, said he never believed Johnston or anyone else sold drugs at the house.

"What's unfolding just reinforces what I first thought: the police lied," he said.

Store

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to the RFP that was issued in 2005... The concept was for a supermarket and a shopping center," Blackstone said.

The sought after grocery store anchor would be part of an overall development project that already has tenants in the adjacent Enterprise Park, and it still contains some vacant land. There is land for a proposed pharmacy and coffee shop. Already built is a Metro Police substation and McDonald's restaurant that have been at the site for some time. Other tenants recently opened or coming soon are the new FBI Headquarters, Expertise Cosmetology Institute, Las Vegas Urban Chamber of Commerce, UMC Quick Care and a McDonald's corporate training center.

Arent stated: "The way it works, is that once a grocery store is recruited, DLC will calculate how much it costs to build and how much it will pay the city to buy the 10-acre site."

Blackstone gave the *Sentinel-Voice* an update on the project in a telephone interview yesterday.

"It's been an extremely challenging project in terms of getting supermarket operators interested. However, we continue to work on it. We have two that are interested, but one doesn't fully meet the terms of the RFP," said Blackstone. He explained that the aim is for a full-size, major grocer. "In terms of the size, a 40,000 square foot supermarket" is the RFP guideline he explained. There has been interest from a smaller grocer, but Blackstone said that a larger unnamed grocer that has expressed interest is due to respond within a few weeks.

"Attracting the larger supermarket operators has been a challenge," he added.

"The fortunate thing for us is that there was committed political leadership in terms of the local [Las Vegas] councilman [Weekly]. Blackstone added that it is "instrumental" to have the ability to offer prospective grocers "economic development incentives" that have been provided by the city.

In previous community meetings, Weekly and representatives of the city described those incentives as tax breaks, discounted leases, deferred payments and other financial inducements.

Councilman Lawrence Weekly of Ward 5 where the project is located, on his way to a council meeting said, "We are moving along and making progress."

The area is one of the city's oldest — the Historic Westside and surrounding communities. The area's demographics have changed over the years and now show a population growth of 5 percent per year. There are 38,000 people living within a three mile radius, yet there is no full-service grocery store within 2 1/2 miles of the site.

Other factors include vehicular traffic, measured at 33,000 east-west on Lake Mead Boulevard and 38,000 on north-south Martin Luther King Boulevard per day. The reported data on average household income within a one mile radius is \$40,000; at 3 miles, it's \$47,000; and at 5 miles, it's \$49,000.

DLC Management Corp. is one of the nation's pre-eminent acquirers, owners and operators of shopping centers. Since its formation in 1991, the firm has built a reported portfolio of over 13.5 million square feet of gross leasable area in 68 shopping centers located across 22 states in the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest and Mid-Atlantic. The company specializes in anchored neighborhood and community shopping centers in infill locations, as well as freestanding sites for value-oriented retailers such as drug stores, according to its website and Blackstone.

Established in 2003, G. L. Blackstone & Associates is a commercial real estate consulting and development company specializing in urban core markets. Prior to forming the company, Blackstone was part of the founding management of The Retail Initiative, Inc., which in 1993 became the sponsor of the first national commercial real estate equity fund to target inner-city neighborhoods — a mission subsequently adopted by other real estate investment organizations.

Blackstone said he has been a frequent visitor to Las Vegas for many years so he and the other principals of DLC UrbanCore LLC took on the project optimistically, in light of the challenges, and are working to move it forward.

Parker Philpot contributed to this story.