

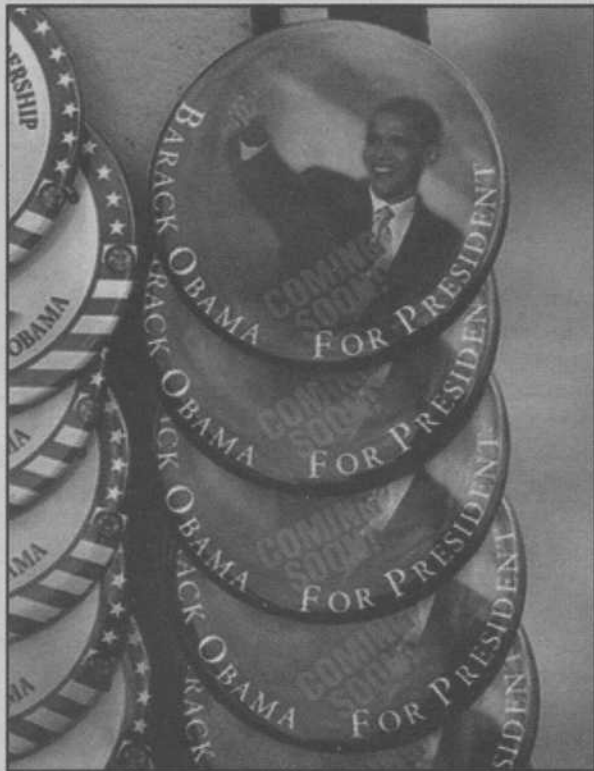
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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"



This December 2006 file photo shows political buttons supporting Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., in Manchester, New Hampshire, during a rally by Democrats to celebrate victories in the 2006 mid-term elections.

Stage set for Obama's run

WASHINGTON (AP) - Sen. Barack Obama launched a historic campaign Tuesday to become the first Black president of the United States and immediately tried to turn his political inexperience into an asset with voters seeking change.

The freshman Illinois senator — and top contender for the Democratic nomination — said the past six years have left the country in a precarious place and he promoted himself as the standard-bearer for a new kind of politics.

"Our leaders in Washington seem incapable of working together in a practical, commonsense way," Obama said in a video posted on his website. "Politics has become so bitter and partisan, so gummed up by money and influence, that we can't tackle the big problems that demand solutions. And that's what we have to change first."

Obama filed paperwork forming a presidential exploratory committee that allows him to raise money and put together a campaign structure. He is expected to announce a full-fledged candidacy on Feb. 10 in Springfield, Ill., where he can tap into the legacy of hometown hero Abraham Lincoln.

Obama's soft-spoken appeal on the stump, his unique background, his opposition to the Iraq war and his fresh face set him apart in a competitive race that also is expected to include front-runner Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York.

Obama has uncommon political talents, drawing adoring crowds even among the studious voters in New Hampshire during a much-hyped visit there last month. His star has risen on the force of his personality and message of hope — helped along by celebrity endorse-

(See Obama, Page 4)

Gates calls it a career

By Frank Armand Albano
Sentinel-Voice

On Tuesday, during the regular Clark County Commission meeting, District D Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates announced that effective March 2 she is resigning the seat she's held for 14 years.

She named three main reasons: to spend more time with her family, finish her doctorate in Public Administration at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and to devote more time to develop her construction business, Built By Yvonne.

Reading from a prepared statement from her seat, she said, "It's time for me to move on."

After her statement and the commissioners accepted her resignation, it was business as usual for the remainder of the meeting.

In an exclusive interview with the Sentinel-Voice, Atkinson Gates elaborated on her main themes — fam-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Former Nevada Gaming Control Board Member Bobby Siller consoles Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson-Gates at the county government center after she announced her retirement from the commission on Tuesday.

ily, education and business. "As you know, I have a teenage daughter. And I need to spend more time with her. I need to get busy on my doctorate in Public Policy, which is due by December. And my business has just blossomed that I started 13 years ago.

And since my average day is from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m., I can't do it all and still remain a commissioner."

She was first elected to the commission in 1992, and from 1985 to 1992, she was a Clark County School Board Trustee.

"I've spent 22 years in public service," she said. "I want to make the very best of my life while I'm still a relatively young woman. Retiring from the county commission was a very difficult decision to make at this point but a necessary one."

Atkinson Gates is a native Las Vegan. She attended Clark High School, graduated from UNLV with a B.A. in Political Science in 1978 and was awarded a master's in Public Administration in 1982. She said she will now complete her dissertation.

"I have chosen to devote my life to these priorities — this is not an impetuous decision. For more than a year I have pondered and anticipated this — I firmly believe that my decision to retire is the right one," she said.

A cancer survivor and one of handful of female licensed contractors, Atkinson Gates said, "My doctorate program, today, is a turning point."

(See Retirement, Page 2)

State Dems plan for caucus

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Nevada Democrats and national labor leaders agreed Saturday on a Feb. 21 kickoff for a series of candidate forums and debates leading to the state's early presidential caucus a year from now.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and other party leaders are billing the caucus as the key test in the West for Democratic White House hopefuls.

Democrats plan to hold two forums and three debates in the state, starting with a forum in Carson City sponsored by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The final debate in Las Vegas is scheduled for Jan. 15, the day after the Iowa caucus, and will be sponsored by the Caucus of African American Nevadans and an arm of the Latin Chamber of Commerce.

"If we're going to win the

presidency in two years we have to do well in the West," Reid told a group of about

150 party faithful gathered to promote his home state's Jan. 19 caucus, the second in the

nation after Iowa.

Whether Nevada's caucus (See Debate, Page 2)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

VIGILANT VIGIL

Habebah Shafeeq, right, shares her candlelight with twins Jewel, left, and Jani Jeppe during the Dr. King Candlelight Vigil at the Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Plaza on his birthday Monday. Close to 100 people participated in the greeting, prayer and reading of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech before lighting the candles.