

Texan becomes first Black Clerk of House

By Tuala Williams

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DALLAS (NNPA) - Nancy Pelosi, the first female Speaker of the House, made another unprecedented move recently when she announced that she would appoint her senior advisor, Lorraine Caroll Miller, as the first African-American Clerk of the House of Representatives. This native of Fort Worth makes not only the third woman, but also the first Texan ever to hold the position.

In a statement, Pelosi said, "Lorraine Miller has dedicated her career to the noble calling of public service, with her vast experience in both the House of Representatives and White House preparing her for this vital role. With the management and leadership skills she has gained at the highest levels of government, Miller will ensure, as Clerk, that the House has the support necessary to effectively carry out our legislative responsibilities," Pelosi said.

"Diversity has long been one of the greatest strengths of our nation, and as the first African-American official of the House, Lorraine will bring that strength to the Office of the Clerk."

In the position, Miller will oversee several important offices for the government, including: the House Page Program, the Legislative Resource Center, the Office of Legislative Operations, the Office of History and Preservation, the Office of Public Services, the Official Reporters (which transcribe House proceedings verbatim for publication in the Congressional Record and provides stenographic support to committees for all hearings, meetings, and mark-up ses-

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sions) and the Office of House Employment Counsel (which provides advice about employment practices and acts as legal representation for all employing authorities in the House.)

The office was first established in April of 1789, when the House of Representatives held its first meeting. While some duties have been added throughout the years, many of the functions of this office have remained the same for over 200 years.

Miller, who holds an executive master's degree from the Georgetown School of Business, has a strong background in Washington politics having served in the Clinton administration as Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs for the House, the director of Government Relations for the Federal Trade Commission and as Bureau Chief for Consumer Information at the Federal Communications Commission.

"After more than a decade of serving individual members of the House, I look forward to the opportunity to work on the behalf of the entire body," Miller said.

"Having proudly served the leaders of this nation, alongside some of the brightest and hard-working staff, I am proud to undertake this new challenge to serve Con-



gress and the American people."

But Miller, a longtime

supporter of the NAACP, who has dedicated her life to service, has also demonstrated her ability to lead by serving as Washington, D.C., branch president of the organization in 2004.

House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn, also a long-standing member of the NAACP, was among the first to congratulate Miller on her appointment: "Lorraine has had a remarkable career of public service, through her many years in the House of Representatives as well as

important positions in the executive branch. This appointment is well deserved and I applaud the Speaker on this outstanding selection."

Clyburn continued, "As the first African-American Clerk of House, and only the third woman Clerk in over 200 years, this appointment is nothing short of historic. I am proud to see an unprecedented level of diversity at the highest ranks of power in the 110th Congress, and Ms. Miller's appointment is another step in the right direc-

tion. It is fitting, during Black History Month, to honor a woman who is not only helping break the marble ceiling but is also breaking racial barriers."

Clyburn, the second African-American to achieve the rank of House Majority Whip, said, "I know she will approach her new position with the skill, integrity, and grace that she has demonstrated throughout her distinguished career."

Tuala Williams writes for the Dallas Examiner.

Recall history, youth activism

By Melde Rutledge

Special to Sentinel-Voice

GREENSBORO, N.C.

(NNPA) - A few hundred people attended a Sit-In Breakfast on the campus of A&T for Black History Month to pay homage and lay eyes on Jibreel Khazan, Franklin McCain and Joseph McNeil — the three surviving members of the A&T Four.

The group grasped national and international attention on Feb. 1, 1960. As freshmen enrolled at N.C. A&T, the group peacefully demanded service at the segregated lunch counter of the F.W. Woolworth's store in downtown Greensboro.



A&T and surrounding academic institutions joined the sit-in.

The movement eventually spread across the United States with over 400 similar demonstrations taking place by the end of the year in at least 250 cities and towns. Those participating students' acts of courage during tense racial climate of that period are credited for helping rejuvenate the Civil Rights Movement.

It was influential for Blacks in civil rights struggles elsewhere, too.

Nontombi Tutu, the daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was the featured speaker for the Feb. 1

"Truly [the Civil Rights Movement] was a way that we were saying that we were here... you deal with us as noble human beings."

— Joseph McNeil
A surviving member of the A&T Four

"The struggles that happened here were part of our struggle. We kept track of what was going on and who was doing what."

— Nontombi Tutu
Daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu



spect" each other.

"Truly [the Civil Rights Movement] was a way that we were saying that we were here... you deal with us as noble human beings," McNeil said.

However, McNeil mentioned that many African-Americans nowadays are disrespecting themselves. He expressed his concern about Black comedians and rappers referring to other African-Americans using the n-word, and referring to Black women using other ill-mannered, derogatory expressions.

"All this is [done] by people like us," he said. "I think if people like Martin Luther King [Jr.] looked into what's going on now, he would roll over in his grave."

McNeil explained to the audience that the appropriate time to take action against what is deemed wrong is at this exact moment.

"All of this is happening on our watch, your watch, my watch, my generation, your generation," he said. "It's happening, and many times we're complacent about it, and we're letting it happen. If we don't do it now, when will we do it?" he said.

Tutu said that it is always important to highlight the role that young people, such as the A&T Four, have played and continue to play in the struggle for equality.

"It is something that we owe to those who have come

before us to remember what they have done," Tutu said. "But we also owe to those who are coming after us to dream a better world."

Tutu, single mother of two children currently residing in Nashville, Tenn., has made a life's work of speaking out against racial, gender and economic inequality around the world.

In addition, she has been a development consultant in West Africa, a coordinator for programs on race and gender and gender-based violence in education at the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town in South Africa and has also taught at the University of Hartford in Connecticut and Brevard College in North Carolina.

During her speech, she noted that the A&T Four and other important Blacks should be celebrated year round, and not predominately amid Black History Month.

"Our story is told as if Black history happened in a vacuum, away from the rest of what was going on," Tutu said.

"And therefore the story of the country is told as though Black people didn't exist until we started talking about it in February," she continued.

"We have to claim our legacy as being part of the whole story."

Melde Rutledge writes for the Carolina Peacemaker.

Clingman

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office to help. Maybe we should form a coalition and secede from the national organization.

You would think an organization that goes all the way to Venezuela to monitor the election of an entire nation could solve an election in which only 330 votes were cast, especially since the national office has been given unimpeachable evidence of the corruption and violations that took place during that election. I guess going to Venezuela and enjoying the amenities there far outweigh coming to Cincinnati in the wintertime.

Threats, intimidation, corruption and malfeasance—we have it all here, folks. "Gettin' down" to the music of the national NAACP, the Cincinnati chapter is doing the limbo. How low are they all willing to go?

James E. Clingman is an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati's African American Studies Department.