

DeLores Tucker celebrated for leadership

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - If Dr. C. Delores Tucker was on earth today, she would surely be dancing. Certainly not to the hip-hop lyrics that she loathed as disrespectful — especially to Black women. But, no doubt, Tucker - a woman of great faith — would be rejoicing with a heartfelt praise for three of her biggest dreams having come true, almost simultaneously.

Tucker dreamed of tangible Black political power in Congress. She dreamed of a unified affront to lyrics of gangsta rap. And she dreamed of having a bust of heroine Sojourner Truth erected in the U.S. Capitol. They are all coming to fruition.

"We can imagine that C. Delores Tucker is looking down from heaven, still with a beaming smile in great delight about our recognizing the evolution of real Black political empowerment in the 110th Congress," said Ofield Dukes, now president of the Bethune-Dubois Institute, founded by the late Tucker in 1984.

She was also president of the National Political Congress of Black Women, succeeding former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm in 1992. There, beyond fighting for women as head of the NCBW (formerly the NPCBW), "She was a staunch, unrelenting leader and fighter for Black political empowerment at the national helm," Dukes said.



D.C. Council Chair Linda Cropp, Rep. Cynthia McKinney, D-Ga., the late Dr. C. Delores Tucker (third from left), the late Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks, and Dr. Dorothy Height shared a powerful moment at an event in 1998.

He was speaking at the 21st Annual Awards Celebration of the Bethune-DuBois Institute. The late April event was full of such accolades for Tucker, who fought for issues that were "way ahead of her time," as stated by Congresswoman Diane Watson, D-Calif.

"She was cursed and vilified, but her spirit dwindled not. She took on causes that other people shied away from."

Among the causes was the fight against sordid rap music lyrics, which angered some rappers, who then called her names and made scandalous remarks about her in songs. The heroism of her visionary battle was recently revealed with the firing of talk show host Don Imus. When he called the women of the Rutgers' bas-

ketball team, "nappy headed 'ho's," there was outrage from coast to coast and calls from Black leaders — male and female — to clean up rap music.

E. Faye Williams, who succeeded Tucker as president of the NCBW, recalled the 14-years of struggle against the lyrics, including Tucker's speaking before Congress in 1997.

"We are pleased to carry on that work today," Williams told the audience of hundreds. "When people say, 'Contact the FCC chairman,' we've already done it... When people say, 'Let's give our children options'... We've already done it. When people talk about, 'Let's contact Viacom and BET,' we've already done it. When people talk about, 'We'll go to jail if we have to,' we've already

done it."

The gala also featured Dorothy Height, who as president-emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women, is considered civil rights royalty. Acknowledging the new Black chairs of powerful Congressional committees, she declared, "There's no mistake about it. They got it the old fashioned way. They all earned it. They had been ready for those positions for some time."

Those five chairs honored during the event were: Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., Ways and Means; John Conyers, D-Mich., Judiciary; Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., Homeland Security; Stephanie Tubbs-Jones, D-Ohio, Ethics; the late Juanita Millender McDonald, who died of cancer three weeks ago was honored posthu-

mously for her role as chair of the House Administration Committee; and James E. Clyburn, D-S.C., the first Black majority whip and the highest ranking African-American in Congress.

Also honored was Lorraine Miller, the first Black woman to serve as clerk of the House of Representatives.

"There are positions and then there are those that hold power," said Height. "We have to be proud that for the first time in history, over 200 years, we have an African-American woman who will be serving as the clerk for the House of Representatives. And one of those who helped to make those steps was C. Delores Tucker."

Charles H. Epps Jr., an orthopedic surgeon, and his wife, Roselyn Payne Epps, a pediatrician, both pioneers in their fields, were also honored for their voluminous contributions to African-Americans in the field of medicine. But, given the current events, it was Tucker who received more accolades than anyone. The results of her dreams will resonate for years to come.

For more than a decade,

Tucker and other Black female leaders worked diligently for Sojourner Truth to be included in a collage of statues in the U.S. Capitol that already honors women's suffragists Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

Truth, who lived from 1797 to 1883, rose up from torturous enslavement to become a preacher of the Gospel and a dynamic leader in the slave abolitionist and women's suffrage movements. "Ain't I a Woman?" is Truth's most famous speech, made in 1854 at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.

"The last crusade my wife involved herself in was making sure that Sojourner Truth's bust would occupy a place in the nation's Capitol Building along with the other suffragist women," said Bill Tucker, who stood alongside his wife in support of all of her organizations' crusades. "Her last message on this planet was to make sure that Sojourner Truth's bust was placed in the nation's [Capitol Building]."

The legislation, sponsored by Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee, (See Tucker, Page 18)

Diddley hospitalized for stroke

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)—Bo Diddley is in intensive care after suffering a stroke in western Iowa, a publicist said Wednesday.

The 78-year-old singer-songwriter-guitarist and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer was listed in guarded condition at Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha, Neb., said Susan Clary, a publicist for the musician's management team.

Diddley, who has a history of hypertension and diabetes, was hospitalized Sunday following a concert in Council Bluffs in which he acted disoriented, she said.

Tests indicated that the



Legendary musician Bo Diddley performs at B.B. King's Blues Club in New York, in this file photo from 2006.

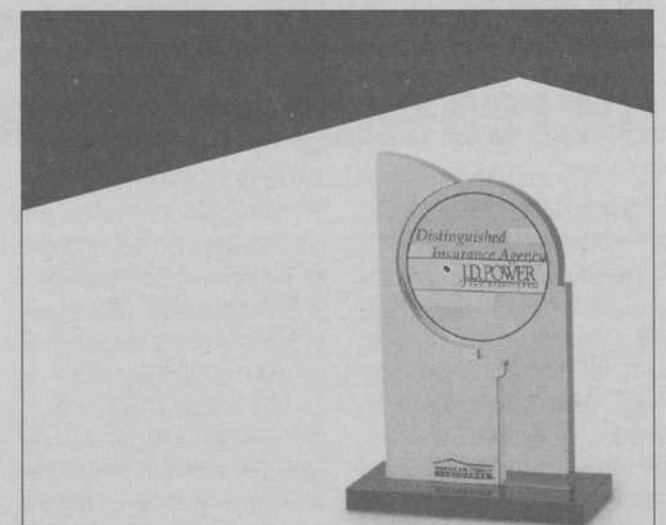
stroke affected the left side of his brain, impairing his speech and speech recognition, Clary said.

Clary said she has no other details on Diddley's condition or how long he would be in intensive care.

Diddley, with his black glasses and low-slung guitar, has been an icon in the music industry since he topped the R&B charts with "Bo Diddley" in 1955.

His other hits include "Who Do You Love," "Before You Accuse Me," "Mona" and "I'm a Man."

Diddley was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987 and was given a lifetime achievement Grammy in 1998.



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