

OUR VIEW

Sad Passing

Thirty-nine years after her father passed and more than a year after her mother died, the eldest of the King children has passed. The daughter of legendary civil rights leader/humanitarian Martin Luther King Jr. and his courageous and inspirational wife Coretta Scott King, Yolanda King died in Santa Monica, Calif., at age 51. Yolanda had a front-row seat to the Civil Rights Movement. As a young girl, she saw her father castigated on television and thrown in jail for his civil disobedience. She was 12 when her father was assassinated in Memphis. But she was much more than a daughter of the struggle.

"She was an actress, author, producer, advocate for peace and non-violence, who was known and loved for her motivational and inspirational contributions to society," the King family said in a statement.

According to published reports, former Mayor Andrew Young, a comrade and confidante of Martin Luther King Jr., and a close friend of the King family, said Yolanda King had just spoken at an event for the American Heart Association; part of the work she was doing to raise awareness of strokes, particularly among Blacks.

Rev. Joseph Lowery, a foot soldier with Martin Luther King Jr. in the Civil Rights Movement, had kind words for Yolanda: "Yolanda was lovely. She wore the mantle of princess, and she wore it with dignity and charm. She was a warm and gentle person and was thoroughly committed to the movement and found her own means of expressing that commitment through drama."

Added Rev. Jesse Jackson, who also marched with MLK: "She lived with a lot of the trauma of our struggle. The movement was in her DNA."

The editor-in-chief and publisher of the *Sentinel-Voice*, Ramon Savoy, also knew Yolanda King. "Yolie," as he called her, was a friendly spirit.

"She was from the South, and she could've gone to any of the schools in the South like Spelman (College in Atlanta) but she had the courage to come up North to go to school at Smith College [in Northhampton, Mass.]," Savoy said. King majored in theater and Afro-American studies and later earned a master's degree in theater from New York University. "[At the time] The college was looking to recruit more African-American female students and she stood out. I met her and through her I had one of the great experiences of my life. I got to meet her mother, Coretta Scott King. The world may not know or remember Yolie, but I remember Yolie's joy, personality, perseverance and wit. It had been a long time since we'd spoken, but I never forgot her. We've lost an under-the-radar activist who worked diligently to uplift Black people."

Yolanda King didn't have the name recognition of her father, nor was she seen as the civil rights matriarch her mother was. But in her own quiet way, she contributed to the betterment of African-Americans and all Americans. She authored books, advocated for humanitarian causes (peace and nonviolence) and carried on the family legacy of activism through memberships in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, co-founded by her father in 1957. King was also a speaker, producer, founded Higher Ground Productions and became an accomplished actress, appearing in "Ghosts of Mississippi" and playing Rosa Parks in the 1978 miniseries *King*. Her energy, generosity and loving spirit will be missed.

Malcolm X Day

Had he survived his assassination and lived to today, civil rights leader Malcolm X would've been 82 years old. Born Malcolm Little and reared in a life of mischief, crime and prison, Malcolm X would grow to become a champion of Black empowerment. He wanted Blacks to have their own land, own economy, own nation. As he matured and studied Islam more, he became a humanitarian, concerned chiefly about African-American uplift but also about the condition of all mankind. Malcolm X was assassinated on Feb. 21, 1965, at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. Many major cities celebrate Malcolm X Day. Hopefully, one day, Las Vegas will be among them.



GOP debate a Reagan séance

By James Clingman
Special to *Sentinel-Voice*

Did you see the Republican presidential candidates' debate? I found it to be even more ridiculous than the Democrat's debate, not that either of them meant anything serious when it comes to the 2008 election. While I am not on either side at this point, I thought the Repubs were simply pitiful. There are three or four other White male candidates, which seems to be the only gender and race the Repubs can find in the 21st century, who are waiting to get into the fray. I can't wait to see which Black Republican will come out publicly and endorse one of those White guys, especially one of those who participated in the "debate."

The Republican debate, or so it was deemed, was more like a séance for Ronald Reagan. They were trying to raise him from the dead! Who won the debate? It was Reagan, hands down. Held in the Reagan Library, with not a Black person in camera-shot, in none other than Simi Valley, Calif., where the cops who beat Rodney King were acquitted, the séance was an exercise in hero-worship and groveling at the feet of Nancy Reagan, whose greatest contribution to Black people was her admonishment to "Just say no."

If they wanted to remember Reagan, instead of have a real debate, maybe they



JAMES CLINGMAN

should have held the event in Philadelphia, Mississippi where Reagan kicked off his campaign for President. Oh yeah, that's also the city where Goodman, Cheney and Schwerner were murdered.

The Reagan Love Fest was something to behold, and now that the upcoming Republican campaign has been relegated to a remembrance of the "good old days" of Ronald Reagan, I can only imagine a handful of Black folks voting for a Republican candidate in 2008. For the most part,

Black people suffered under Reagan's administration; why go back and suffer again?; therefore, the next election should be even more polarizing than the previous two, because a vote for the Republican will be a vote for Reagan. I don't know about you, but I couldn't take another four years of the guy Gil Scott-Heron called, "Hollywierd."

I have thought for a while now that if Giuliani and McCain are the best the

Repubs could offer they would be in deep trouble in 2008. Now they have Mitt Romney, the one who invoked Reagan's name the most during the debate, and they are recruiting Fred Thompson who, they say, "looks and sounds" presidential, has the same characteristics as Reagan, and is a staunch Conservative that can lead the Repubs back from the abyss. Now I get it. All it takes are "looks" to be President. Andre Agassi was right: "Image is everything," especially in politics. That's why George Bush rolls up his sleeves when he visits a disaster site, as if he's really going to do some work.

Considering the Repubs' presidential candidates, if they should win again, Black folks will be the ones in deep trouble. White guys all around? Where are Michael Steele, Ken Blackwell, J.C. Watts, and the other two or three Black Republicans?

It would seem that at least one of them would be in the race — for show if for nothing else. Instead, they are recycling the likes of Newt Gingrich, who is now waiting to make his dramatic entrance into this race. But whoever is in the race, it won't matter to Black folks. We definitely will not have a dog in the Republican hunt.

You know, by now, one would think Black people understood national "politricks." After all, we have been here since the country started; we have fought and died to play in the game; and our group has suffered the most under the U.S. political system, which has been dominated by white men since its inception.

One would think that we would always be on top of our game, not allowing the crooks, liars and baby-kissers to lull us to sleep every four years with dumb an-

(See Clingman, Page 15)

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