

Alabama ex-sheriff, civil rights foe, passes

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) - Former Dallas County Sheriff Jim Clark, whose violent confrontations with voting rights marchers in Selma shocked the nation in 1965 and gave momentum to the Civil Rights Movement, has died.

Clark, who wore a "Never" button on his sheriff's uniform to show his opposition to Black voter registration, died at an Elba nursing home late Monday after years of declining health due to a stroke and heart surgery, Hayes Funeral Home officials said.

Clark was voted out of

office in 1966, in large measure because of opposition from newly registered Black voters, but through his life he maintained he had done the right thing in 1965.

He and his deputies joined state troopers in attacking marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in March of that year, an event that became known as "Bloody Sunday." It prompted the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to lead a voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery and got Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act.

"He was a very, very mean man. His meanness re-

ally served simply to express the subtle evil of the system of segregation," said Andrew Young, the former Atlanta mayor and United Nations ambassador who organized voter registration efforts in Selma in 1965.

The Voting Rights Act opened Southern polling places to Blacks and dramatically changed the political landscape of the South, including Selma. Some 9,000 Blacks registered to vote in Dallas County, where only 350 had been registered even though Blacks made up a majority of the population.

Clark lost the Democratic

primary in 1966 to J. Wilson Baker, a former Selma director of public safety who supported civil rights activists' right to demonstrate peacefully. Clark then waged a write-in campaign but lost to Baker again that November, garnering about 6,740 votes to Baker's 7,250.

"He was the perfect opposition for the movement in Selma because Dr. King and the other leaders knew he would overreact," said Sam Walker, consultant for the National Voting Rights Museum in Selma, where Clark's "Never" button is now displayed.

Baker got a large Black vote as well as support from some Whites upset about Clark's actions and their impact on Selma.

In a 2006 interview with the Montgomery Advertiser, Clark said, "Basically, I'd do the same thing today if I had to do it all over again. I did what I thought was right to uphold the law."

He also claimed that marchers weren't beaten on Bloody Sunday. "They fell down all at once in one big swoop," he said. Then-Gov. James E. "Big Jim" Folsom had appointed Clark sheriff in 1955 following the death

of the incumbent.

After he lost his re-election bid, Clark sold mobile homes, largely staying out of the spotlight until 1978, when he went to federal prison for conspiring to import marijuana. He served about nine months.

Young says he has met with many old adversaries from the Civil Rights Movement over the years and they were "able to laugh and joke about those times." But that never happened with Clark.

"I hope God will show mercy to him even though he showed no mercy to us," Young said.

Fathers

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not understand how to be a man. And when that man is absent, it falls to the uncles, the church, to the community and to the village."

Often the village means the drug dealers, the gang

leaders, domineering friends or whatever figures of authority come into the life of a child. More often than not, that translates into a life of crime leading to prison or death that could have been prevented.

"The power of the Black father could be a revolutionizing force. Provided that more Black fathers would adhere to the tradition of what fatherhood is all about instead of being one who plants the seed and does not

fulfill his obligation in terms of what family really means," said John Smith, chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the official press for the conference.

Some men view manhood as a learned behavior. Whether a child grows up to become a street thug or a decent, hard-working man, can depend upon the examples in his life.

"The father brings the kind of modeling that a young man needs to see. Sometimes they will watch

and learn more from watching than from hearing what you're saying," said Earl Wheatfall, a member of the 100's executive committee. "I always watched my father. Even though I did respect his words, I learned more by seeing him."

Albert E. Dotson Jr., chairman of the board of the 100, says he's experiencing that right now.

"I have really come to understand the influence a man can have over his home," said Dotson, the fa-

ther of Ashley, 11, and Albert, 9. "I watch my son watch me; how I stand, how I hold my legs, how I hold my head, how I walk, the little things. He learns so many things by just watching," said Dotson.

He concludes, "A real father has to always understand that children are always watching. He always has to be able to teach. He always has to be able to show what nurturing love is all about, how to be a strong man and how to respect women."

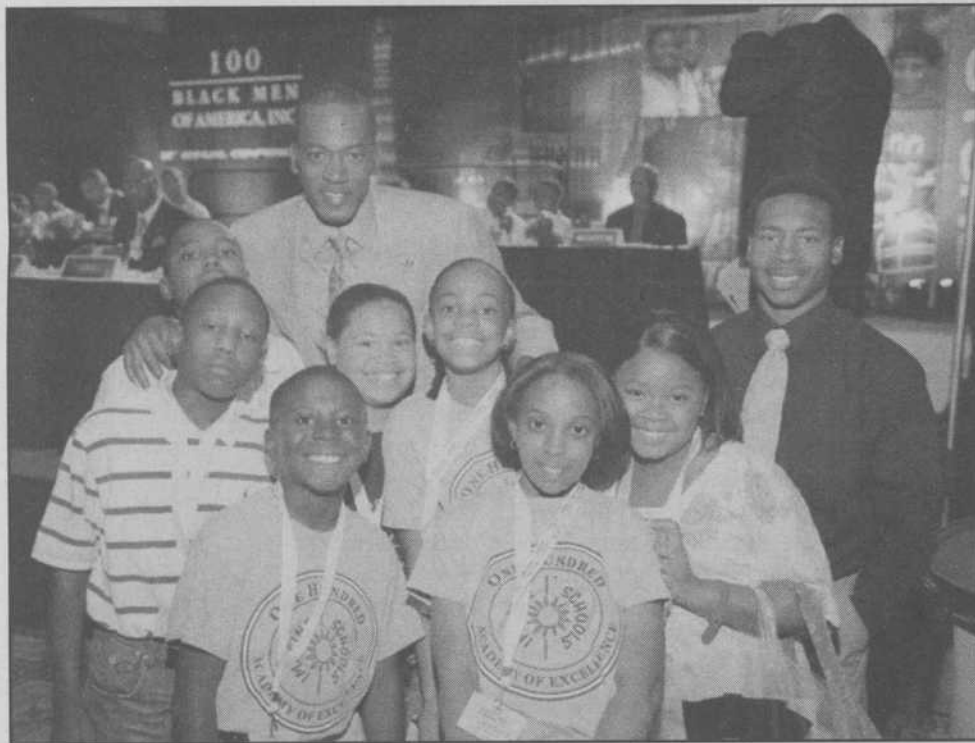


Photo special to the Sentinel-Voice by Marty Frierson

Clark County Commissioner Lawrence Weekly (behind the children on the left) and Detrick Sanford (far right) encourage students from the 100 Academy of Excellence during the 100 Black Men of America national conference at Bally's.

Morial

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250,000, and 27 percent for those over 100,000 but under 250,000.

When the National Urban League released our Sunday Morning Apartheid report in 2005, we encouraged cable and network outlets to take positive and productive steps to provide their viewers a broader perspective of public policy issues.

Since then, not a lot has been done — until after Imus. NBC News, which carried Imus on MSNBC, took three bold steps toward diversifying its ranks in the weeks following the controversy. The news organization hired former *Newsweek* editor Mark Whitaker to be second in command, appointed weekend "Today Show" host Lester Holt to serve as weekend anchor of NBC Nightly News, and promoted weekend "Today Show" Executive Producer Lyne Pitts to be vice president of NBC News and the division's point person

on diversity issues.

I must give NBC News some props here but it shouldn't take an unfortunate controversy, such as the one surrounding Imus' insensitive remarks, for news executives to understand the importance of diversity to the journalism process for the constituents it serves. At the National Urban League, we're not just advocating media diversity for the sake of diversity but for the substantial benefits delivered to the public at large.

Broadening the pool of guests and anchors and reporters improves the tenor and quality of the debate, offers a richer and more varied array of information to viewers and helps fulfill the responsibility of news outlets to educate the American public to make them better equipped to make informed political and policy choices.

Marc Morial is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Jefferson

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a doctorate in higher education and that three of his daughters have degrees from Harvard College and Harvard Law School, one from Boston University and Emerson and one, who is in medical school at Tulane University, from Brown University and Georgetown University.

Several times during his remarks, Jefferson spoke of his family's fervent belief in God, noting his membership and service at Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church in New Orleans and their belief that God will see them through this trial because "we have the advantage ...of having right and truth on our side."

"Incredibly, we are the same family that the Department of Justice and FBI would have you believe is a family made up of bribers, racketeers and conspirators against the laws of our country," he said.

"Further, according to them it is I, someone who has never even had a bar or ethics complaint lodged against me in over 35 years of legal practice and public life and

hardly had to answer for a speeding ticket, who is the leader and architect of this family band of supposed racketeers and lawbreakers."

He attacked the Justice Department and the media for smearing his reputation and trying him in the press and he pledged, along with his family and his "friends and allies," to fight to restore "his good name and that of my family."

"Make no mistake, in this fight, we are at a great disadvantage," he said. "The government has unlimited resources to attempt to break one both psychologically and financially. We are all too aware that this Justice Department can engineer circumstances, leak information and even violate the Constitution in pursuit of its goals."

Jefferson did not take questions from reporters.

Earlier Friday, Jefferson appeared before Judge T.S. Ellis III in federal court and pleaded not guilty to 16 counts of fraud, soliciting bribes, obstructing justice and money laundering.

The trial could have begun as early as August, but Jefferson waived his right to

a speedy trial, and because of the extensive amount of paperwork involved in the case through his lawyer, Robert Trout, asked that the trial begin Jan. 16.

The judge agreed to the Jan. 16 trial date and set a \$100,000 personal recognizance bond. Jefferson does not have to post that money but would have to pay it if he violates his travel restrictions.

Jefferson can move freely in the D.C. area and in Louisiana, but he must give prior notice if he wants to go elsewhere. The judge said he would approve international travel on a case-by-case basis.

The judge asked Jefferson to turn over his passport to his lawyer.

Because of a law barring anyone who is indicted from possessing a firearm, the judge also asked Trout to restrict Jefferson's ready access to the shotguns and rifles the lawmaker said were stored in a locked cabinet in his New Orleans home.

"I've been a hunter since I was 10," Jefferson said after telling his judge about the guns.