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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## Fallout feared from court's race ruling

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - It came as no surprise. Civil rights leaders had predicted it. Yet, they are dismayed at the U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 decision to limit the voluntary use of race in public school desegregation, undermining the spirit of Brown v. Board of Education.

"What the court did today is unfortunate. This is not a good day for our country," said Ted Shaw, director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund outside the court last Thursday.

"The court... walks away from both the spirit and the substance of Brown, and in one fell swoop is overturning

years of precedent."

Shaw sought to make it clear that the ruling was not a complete overturn of race-conscious programs to desegregate.

"The court did not, under any reading, ban all considerations of race in elementary and secondary school education... This decision today is a milepost, not an end point. This does not mean that we will be done with the issue of racial justice in this country."

Shaw paraphrased the impassioned dissent of Justice Stephen G. Breyer.

"The last half-century has witnessed great strides toward racial equality, but we have not yet realized the  
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Left to right: Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree, Congressional Black Caucus Chair Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, NAACP LDF Director-Counsel Ted Shaw, and members of the Black Leadership Forum after hearing the court's decision.

## Debate reveals stratified Black constituency

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The All-American Presidential Forum recently held at Howard University not only showcased domestic issues of interest to African-Americans, but has also revealed a Black constituency that, although it admires Sen. Barack Obama, is clearly stratified in its support for several candidates.

"My favorite candidate at this point is still John Edwards. I think that his views are most aligned with mine and he presented himself very well," said Dr. Rochelle Ford, a Howard University advertising and journalism professor, who attended the debate.

At the same time, Ford, like other members of the vastly Black audience interviewed as they pressed their way out of Howard's Crampton Auditorium, also held a special allegiance to Sen. Barack Obama.

The lone Black candidate, Obama has reached rock star fame as he runs neck and neck with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton for the Democratic nomination.

"I am an Obama supporter. I'd love to see an



Sen. Barack Obama and his wife, Michele, chat with civil rights leader Vernon Jordan at the PBS reception before the debate. Jordan has been a loyal supporter of the Clintons.

Obama-Edwards ticket," said Ford. She says she did an online test to see which candidate's views most aligned with hers. "John Edwards was number one and Obama was number two... And so, a president-vice president kind of thing, I think, would work."

The string of issues presented at energetic forum, moderated by Tavis Smiley of PBS, broadcast on June 28, was vast and refreshing to political observers who had clearly tired of debates

that almost solely featured discussions about the war in Iraq and immigration issues. The issues discussed were mostly issues from Smiley's best-selling "Covenant With Black America" and "The Covenant in Action."

The Supreme Court decision on the consideration of race in school desegregation, wage disparities, public education, racial profiling, mandatory minimum sentences, AIDS/HIV in the Black community, the death penalty, crack and powder cocaine

sentencing disparities, jobs and Hurricane Katrina relief were among the issues directly addressed or mentioned during the forum.

Obama, who has demonstrated that he may be at his best as a keynote in front of large crowds, drew screams and cheers as he stepped out onto the stage in front of the 1,500 standing room only crowd and millions watching by television in the U.S. and abroad. Earlier, he and his wife, Michele, could hardly press through the crowd of

well-wishers at a PBS reception just before the debate.

But, it was undoubtedly Clinton who drew the loudest cheers and applause when she hit home with people in the audience who have tired of national news attention to the personal lives of White starlets.

"If HIV/AIDS were the leading cause of death of White women between the ages of 25 and 34, there would be an outraged outcry in this country," Clinton said as the audience stood to their feet with applause and Black women cheered.

A Gallup Poll taken a week before the debate showed Clinton and Obama running neck and neck among prospective Black voters, both with favorable views by about 8-1 margins over the rest of the candidates. The survey was based on a telephone survey of 802 Blacks with a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percentage points.

Also, this week, the Federal Election Commission reports that Obama has surpassed Clinton's fundraising by \$10 million during the second quarter of their filing requirements, Obama with at least \$31 million and Clinton

with \$21 million for the primary.

Despite the "Run Obama Run!" fever apparently growing across the U.S., Black constituents and leaders are supporting various candidates.

"I am a national co-chair for Sen. Clinton," Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), proudly announces in an interview after the debate.

Lee says it is healthy that the Black community is stratified.

"That's excellent. America is diverse and the African-American community cannot be perceived as monolithic and it should not be taken for granted," she said. "We are fighting for every single vote that we possibly can. I happen to believe that I have a candidate of her own accord that has a deep understanding or works to have a deeper understanding about community."

Lee said Clinton "connects" with Black audiences because of her views on the issues. "She will make history, and we are proud of the other candidates who are making history as well — an African-American, talented; a Hispanic, committed and  
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