

Former president lauds SCLC's 50th birthday

ATLANTA (AP) - Joined by a host of civil rights leaders, lawmakers and clergy, former President Clinton on Monday lauded the opening of the new headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as a tool to continue the organization's work.

The group is celebrating its 50th anniversary and hosted its annual conference in Atlanta, which ended yesterday. The new headquarters — a \$3 million building the SCLC will move into debt-free later this month — is located on historic Auburn Avenue, where the SCLC's most famous co-founder, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was born and is buried.

Clinton called for the SCLC and everyday Americans to fight against poverty, war and racism.

"America needs the SCLC as much today as it did 50 years ago," Clinton said. "The agenda for the next 50 years is to marry civil rights with a campaign against poverty and for peace."

The former president spoke briefly to the audience — many of whom waited in near-record heat for hours. He also kept the stump speech on behalf of his wife, Democratic presidential can-



Southern Christian Leadership Conference President Charles Steele Jr. and former U.S. President William Clinton talk after the ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday in Atlanta.

didate Sen. Hillary Clinton, short.

"I'd hate to cost my wife any votes because I talked too long anywhere," he quipped.

Clinton said that although he likes all the Democratic candidates, those outside of government can do more to address the social injustices King denounced.

"Should we elect a president who will lead us? Absolutely," he said. "Should we wait until that person is elected before we do something? No. That's what the

SCLC is for and why I'm here to dedicate the next 50 years."

Specifically, Clinton said issues like economic disparities in banking and housing, as well as reintegrating former felons into society, should be priorities for groups like the SCLC.

"Almost all Americans say they believe in the God of second chances, and almost all of us need one," he said.

"If Martin Luther King were here today, he'd say, 'When I died 40 years ago, I

was right then, and I'm right now."

King's sister, Christine King Farris, attended the ceremony, as did civil rights icons Rep. John Lewis, former SCLC President the Rev. Joseph Lowery, and King lieutenant Bernard Lafayette, who co-founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The Rev. Raphael G. Warnock, current pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church — where King preached from 1960 until his death in 1968 — also attended, along with At-

lanta Mayor Shirley Franklin.

Recalling SCLC's humble beginnings in the wake of the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott movement, Lowery, who turns 86 this year, told the audience that the SCLC's work was not over.

"It was our feeling that segregation and discrimination were corruptors of the soul of America," he said. "I come to pledge all the resources at my command — to strengthen, to inspire, to support and encourage the

SCLC." Lewis noted that the building opening coincided with the 42nd anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — legislation the SCLC and other civil rights groups were instrumental in creating.

"The SCLC has been a blessing and a shepherd that has led the way and continues to lead the way," Lewis said. "I'm so proud you never gave up, you never gave in, you kept the faith, and you kept your eyes on the prize."

Sharpton snipes brass in La. case

JENA, La. (AP) - Rev. Al Sharpton criticized officials in this racially tense Louisiana town on Sunday, saying the attempted murder charges leveled against six Black teens show "one rule for White kids and one for Black kids."

Sharpton and an entourage of three dozen religious and civil rights leaders met and prayed privately with one of the teens, 17-year-old Mychal Bell, for about 15 minutes at the LaSalle Parish courthouse.

Bell faces up to 22 years in prison after being convicted of aggravated second-degree battery and conspiracy to commit aggravated second-degree battery.

He had initially faced attempted murder charges. Four 18-year-olds and a juvenile — who round out the group dubbed Jena 6 — are awaiting trial on attempted murder and conspiracy charges.

"I did not come to Jena to start trouble," Sharpton said while preaching at a local church service after the meeting. "I came to Jena to stop trouble."

Bell and five other teens were charged in the December 2006 beating of a White schoolmate, 18-year-old Justin Barker. Barker was treated for a swollen and cut face and released the same day, but said he took pain medication for a week.

Black community leaders across the country were outraged, protesting that the attempted murder charges were too harsh and that trial irregularities existed.

In comments directed at District Attorney Reed Walters, who is prosecuting the Jena 6, Sharpton said, "You can't sit in the courthouse and have one rule for White kids and one for Black kids."

Walters did not return a call for comment left on an answering machine at his residential number.

Jena, a town of 3,000, is mostly White with about 350 (See Sharpton, Page 4)

Handyman cops to Bailey's murder

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) - A 19-year-old handyman for a Black Muslim splinter group who police said admitted to gunning down an Oakland journalist investigating the group, was expected to be charged this week with his murder. Devaughndre Broussard, one of seven people arrested in Friday raids on Your Black Muslim Bakery, has confessed to fatally shooting Oakland Post editor Chauncey Bailey, 57, near the newspaper's offices a day earlier, Assistant Chief Howard Jordan told the San Francisco Chronicle.

Police continued to investigate whether other group members were connected to Bailey's slaying and two other murders.

"There's still a lot left to do in terms of developing leads," Jordan said. The raids on the bakery organization, founded nearly 40 years ago with a mission to empower Oakland's poor, capped off a yearlong investigation into an alleged series of violent crimes police said were connected to the group.



Chauncey Bailey

Police had gathered enough evidence to seek charges in a May double kidnapping for ransom, Jordan said. The group's chief executive officer, Yusuf Bey IV, the 21-year-old son of the bakery's founder, was arrested in the raids on an outstanding assault warrant issued for an April 2006 incident in which he allegedly struck a bouncer with his BMW after being thrown out of a San Francisco strip club.

Bey pleaded not guilty last year to charges that he was the ringleader of a Black Muslim group caught by sur-

veillance cameras in November 2005 smashing up two Oakland liquor stores for selling alcohol to the Black community.

Bailey was a longtime reporter for the Oakland Tribune before becoming editor of the Post, a weekly newspaper geared toward the Bay

Area Black community, earlier this year.

Over the weekend, community leaders gathered to mourn Bailey and to call for an end to violence in the city. More than seven homicides were reported in Oakland since Bailey's killing last week.



A memorial is set up Friday on the Oakland, Calif., sidewalk where journalist Chauncey Bailey was slain Thursday.

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