

Kennedy family backs Obama

By Joseph Young
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - More than 5,000 filled an auditorium at American University on Monday to watch members of the politically famous Kennedy family endorse Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama from Illinois.

"Every time I've been asked over the past year who I would support in the Democratic Primary, my answer has always been the same: 'I'll support the candidate who inspires me, who inspires all of us, who can lift our vision and summon our hopes, and renew our belief that our country's best days are still to come.' I've found that candidate. And it looks to me like you have, too," Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, son of the late President John F. Kennedy, told the jubilant crowd of mostly White students.

"Let there be no doubt: We are all committed to seeing a Democratic President in 2008. But I believe there is one candidate who has extraordinary gifts of leadership and character, matched to the extraordinary demands of this moment in history. He understands what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called the 'fierce urgency of now.'"

Ed Kennedy, flanked by other family members, including his son Rep. Patrick Kennedy and his niece Caroline Kennedy, daughter of the late President John F. Kennedy, praised Obama's messages of hope and change.

"He will be a president who refuses to be trapped in the patterns of the past. He is a leader who sees the world clearly without being cynical," Kennedy said. "He is a fighter who cares passionately about the causes he believes in, without demonizing those who hold a different view. He is tough-minded, but he also has an uncommon capacity to appeal to 'the better angels of our nature.'"

Several District officials and longtime political strat-



Sen. Barack Obama receives endorsements by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Caroline Kennedy and Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy at American University in Washington, D.C., on Monday.

egists, including Mayor Adrian Fenty, Council Representative Murial Bowser, and Arrington Dixon, a former council member, attended the rally, marked by the students' loud expressions.

Obama publicly thanked Fenty for his endorsement last year, and he thanked the Kennedys.

"I will do my part to write the next chapter," Obama said, noting that he is continuing a progressive agenda began by the Kennedy family. Obama was born the year John F. Kennedy became president.

Obama drew other connections, as well. He told the

crowd that after his father died and he returned to Kenya to live with grandparents, he asked his grandmother for any items his father left behind. Those items included 30 letters his father had written seeking entry into the U.S. to study. One of the letters described financial funding his father received from a Kennedy grant-making organization, funding that allowed Obama's father to enroll in a university.

American University students and District residents were jubilant as they took it all in. They had lined up a couple hours before the rally began, forming a line that stretched off campus onto

Massachusetts Avenue. Inside they were greeted by Obama campaign workers who distributed "Obama for Change" placards, and signs that read "AU for Obama."

They also received "Change We Can Believe In" buttons. They jammed to music by Aretha Franklin and James Brown as they awaited Obama's arrival, who arrived 40 minutes later.

Brown's "I Feel Good," charged the atmosphere; and Curtis Mayfield's "Moving On Up," pumped the crowd as well. It was electrifying.

Students chanted, "Obama, O-ba-ma, and 'Yes We Can!'"

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Supporters of Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick march outside the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in Detroit on Wednesday. Some want the mayor to resign.

Mayor Kilpatrick: no plan to resign

DETROIT - Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, appearing with his wife, Carlita, apologized to residents, supporters and his family in an address from his church, Greater Emmanuel Institutional Church of God in Christ. Kilpatrick also said he is not resigning.

"I would never quit on you, never," he said. "We got a lot of work to do, and, with your help, I am going to continue to lead this city in getting the work done."

The mayor, who appeared humble, said legal issues prevent him from speaking in specifics. Kilpatrick's speech is his first since reports surfaced about thousands of text messages showing the mayor and former Chief of Staff Christine Beatty had a long-denied affair and discussed firing Detroit cops who were probing reported bad behavior by the mayor and his staff.

The texts appear to contradict Kilpatrick and Beatty's testimony in a whistle-blower trial that cost the city more than \$9 million in damages and legal fees.

Inside city hall, the text message scandal got only got a brief mention at a council committee meeting this morning. The full council would have to approve a closed session, and it's not clear how soon they could vote on the issue. President Pro Tem Monica Conyers requested council members meet soon in a closed session to discuss two pending lawsuits.

The first is a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought by the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News* to compel the city to produce any potential secret settlement agreement in the whistleblower legal action. The other is a pending federal lawsuit filed in 2005 by the family of Tamara "Strawberry" Greene, the slain exotic dancer death whose has been linked to a rumored but unsubstantiated party at the mayor's Manoogian Mansion.

With his wife sitting at his side, Kilpatrick, wearing a dark suit and yellow tie, apologized for putting their marriage under public scrutiny.

"I want to make a public apology to my wife Carlita," he said while looking at her. "This dynamic, strong, caring woman has been forced to go through this most difficult experience because of me. I truly apologize to you."

Carlita Kilpatrick said their marriage is not perfect but that they are committed to each other.

"Yes, I am angry," she said. "I am hurt and I am disappointed. But there is no question I love my husband."

Kilpatrick rattled off ways he has improved the city since taking office in 2002. He mentioned paving streets, new developments and attracting business.

"We are not stopping now," he said. "Detroit, please continue to pray for our family. I'll see you at work tomorrow," after asking that his family not be targeted by media or upset constituents.

Some patrons at a nearby business were not impressed with the mayor's speech.

"I think he was just trying to score votes," James Waterman, a 39-year-old Detroit, said. "He says this is personal but, as a public figure, he made it a public issue. He has a lot to prove and a lot to pay back."

Others thought the mayor should be forgiven.

"I'm looking at it from an economic standpoint," 28-

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Coors

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Coors was applauded as an example of a corporation that realizes Black buying power while some corporate giants discriminate or fail to support Black causes or organizations significantly.

Other major corporate sponsors of the winter conference — chaired by *Michigan Chronicle* publisher and NNPA First Vice Chair Karen Love — were Ford, Home Depot, Smithfield, Delta, Majestic Star and Fitzgeralds.

"The signing of the new covenant illustrates a renewed commitment on behalf of Coors Brewing Company and the African-American community to continue a mutually beneficial partnership," said Washington.

According to a Coors statement, the corporation has contributed nearly \$4 million to Black, non-profit organizations and, during last year alone, approximately \$165 million for various goods and services.

"Coors Beer has a real corporate heart. They say what they mean and mean what they

say," said NNPA Foundation Chair Dorothy Leavell, who runs NNPA Media Services. "For the last six or seven months, we have been placing the ads for Coors Beer through NNPA Media services. It has been a pleasure. It has been a promise, one that was kept, and we are very pleased."

Smith awarded Moses Brewer, Coors' corporate relations manager, the NNPA Distinguished Service award for his dedicated relationship with NNPA. Brewer regularly attends NNPA conferences and events. Preparing to sign the recommitment, Kiely says it just makes good civic and business sense.

"This is not a relationship based on convenience," says Kiely.

"It is based on mutual respect, sound economic decisions and the determination to work hard to achieve common goals. And that has always been the spirit of our relationship. The goal of the NBEDC is to have African-American businesses participating in our business on a greater level. It is the right thing to do."

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