

Black Press to honor America's Black leaders

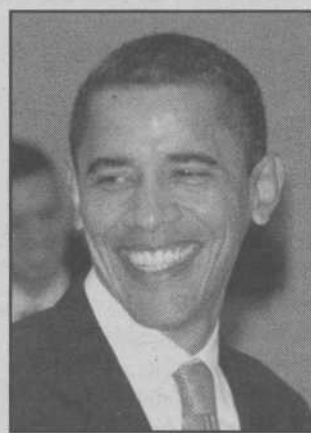
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA)-Democratic Presidential candidate, U.S. Sen. Barack Obama; U.S. Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., the dean of the Congressional Black Caucus; and talk radio mogul Tom Joyner are among the stars to be celebrated by the National Newspaper Publishers Association during Black Press Week next week.

"As we gather to give special recognition to the historic role of the Black Press in our struggle for equal rights in this country, this year has significant political implications," said Dorothy Leavell NNPA Foundation chair and publisher of the *Chicago Crusader* and *Gary Crusader* newspapers.

"From the founding of the first Black newspaper, the *Freedom's Journal* in 1827 and its fight against the dehumanization of slavery, the role of the Black Press is as urgent today as we prepare for an active and aggressive role in the Democratic process of selecting our next president."

During the annual Newsmaker of the Year



Presidential candidate, U.S. Sen. Barack Obama will be celebrated again as NNPA's Newsmaker of the Year.

Awards banquet, March 13, a staple event of the week, Obama will be celebrated as NNPA's Newsmaker of the Year. Conyers, the first African-American to serve as chairman of House Judiciary Committee, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award, and radio host Tom Joyner, president of Reach Media, will be the recipient of the Public Service Award in honor of his activism and service on behalf of African-American youth, including his campaign to free then-incarcerated Genarlow Wilson of Atlanta and send him to Morehouse College.

The annual Newsmaker gala will be held at the Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Avenue in Washington, D.C. Congressman Danny K. Davis, D-Ill., will be the master of ceremonies.

In selecting Obama as newsmaker, a precedent was set. Obama was also honored as the "news maker" in 2004 when he was headlined in Black newspapers across the country for being only the third African-American in history to the United States Senate. He has again electrified the country and, indeed, was the "newsmaker of the year" as he was most often headlined in African-American newspapers. Heretofore no one has been selected twice.

"Sen. Obama has not only been a headliner, but he has brought a renewed hope and optimism that a Black can indeed be President of the United States," Leavell said. "His intellect, his energy and hope for this nation has inspired many of our Black children as well as seniors who never thought they would see the day that a Black would be so seriously considered and have the fi-

nances to put on a first-class campaign for the office of president."

Leavell praised the selection of Conyers as lifetime achiever, saying, "He has been instrumental in so many pieces of legislation and policies that have benefited not



U.S. Rep. John Conyers, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

only his congressional constituents, but specifically Black Americans and Americans everywhere. We want to say 'thank you' to a pioneer congressman on this the 81st anniversary of the Black Press." In addition to Joyner's help for Wilson, he has been a powerful voice on behalf of other students and Historically Black Colleges

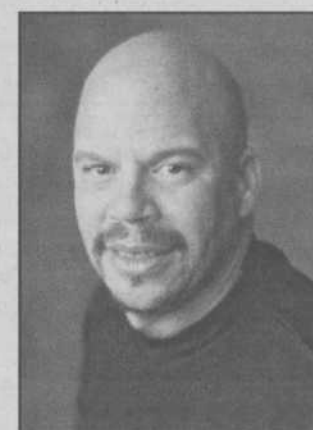
and Universities.

"We will be honoring one of our own from the 'Fourth Estate' when we honor Tom Joyner," said Leavell. "Joyner has contributed millions of dollars to help needy students attend college, as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We are indebted to him for his contributions not only to media, but also to education."

Black Press Week is highlighted by a series of other events, including a meeting of NNPA publishers on Capitol Hill with the Congressional Black Caucus and leaders of the United States Congress. On Friday, March 14, two NNPA publishers will be inducted into the Black Press Hall of Fame at a luncheon on the campus of Howard University.

Leavell added that prior to the luncheon a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at the NNPA/Howard University Converged Laboratory with representatives from the Microsoft Corporation, which recently refurbished the lab. Microsoft will also be the special honoree at the luncheon.

NNPA is the trade association for the more than 200 African-American newspapers, chaired by John B. Smith Sr., publisher of the *Atlanta Inquirer*. Member publishers of the association from across the country are expected to attend this special week for the Black Press of America. Smith said, "Black Press Week accentuates what is positive and successful among a people to not only raise the bar of excellence within our 'beloved communities,' but also lead the struggle 'to plead our own cause' with the spirit of unity, brotherhood and love."



Radio host Tom Joyner, president of Reach Media, will be the recipient of the Public Service Award.

Students sorry for video; Black journalist survives attack

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa (AP) — Two White students behind a video in which five Black university workers appear to be duped into eating food tainted with urine apologized and said they had been "crucified as racists."

Meanwhile, a magazine responded that one of its Black journalists covering the video story had been assaulted in what appeared to be a racial attack at a restaurant in Bloemfontein.

Themba Makamo, 26, had to receive stitches after been accosted at his table by a "burly White man" who later followed him to the bathroom; where he headbutted, kicked and punched the journalist in the face and used racially derogatory words, the news and entertainment magazine *Drum* said in a statement.

Bloemfontein police spokeswoman Superintendent Annelie Wensch said the complaint was being investigated.

The video, which showed four middle-aged women and one man on their knees eating the food, has been seen around the world, exposing deep racial tensions in South

Africa more than a decade after racist White rule ended.

The University of the Free State in the city of Bloemfontein, 400 miles south of Johannesburg, is regarded as a bastion for Afrikaners, descendants of Dutch settlers who are often most closely linked with apartheid rule.

The two students, Roelof Malherbe and Schalk van der Merwe, who have been banned from the university's campus, said in a statement issued by their lawyer shortly afterwards that although it appeared as if the food had been urinated on, a "harmless" liquid had been squirted from a bottle.

The two students, said they regretted making the film, which they said they meant as a "satirical slant" on the issue of racial integration at the university dormitories.

Malherbe and Van der Merwe are "not racists and, most certainly, had no intention of humiliating or degrading the employees concerned or Black people in general or of detrimentally affecting their dignity," the statement said.

However, it said the students "now regret having

participated in the making of the film" and "apologize for any embarrassment which they may, unintentionally, have caused to any person or group of persons, including their parents."

Authorities at the university have launched a criminal probe into the making of the video.

Recently, the four female university workers expressed their hurt at the video and said they had not been aware of what they were participating in, believing they were taking part in a competition.

"We feel pain," said Emma Koko, 40, who has been working for the university for 20 years and whose son attends classes there. "It's something we were not expecting. We regard them (the students) as our children."

The video depicts a mock initiation ceremony into a campus residence, with the middle-aged Black cleaners portraying students. The workers seem to know and trust the students in the video, laughing as they try to eat the food while on their knees. But according to the video footage, one of the students urinated on the food before-

hand, unknown to the cleaners. Commentary on the video in Afrikaans included sarcastic reference to the university's policy of integrating the campus dorms — being phased in only this year, 14 years after the end of apartheid.

In the statement, the two students said that the four women workers were "loyal friends" and took part voluntarily in the making of the film and "as is evident clearly enjoyed it."

The students said the workers knew the film was

Katrina

(Continued from Page 2)

the U.N. experts' statement "is vindication of what public housing advocates have been saying from day one."

"Recovery must mean the end of displacement for the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast," said Harden, who returned to New Orleans last week. "What we have instead is recovery that demolishes affordable housing."

HUD said in a statement that bringing people back to the deteriorating projects is no answer.

"We do not want to relegate thousands of minority and low-income families back into the substandard conditions of New Orleans' public housing — conditions only made worse by Hurricane Katrina," said a state-

ment issued by HUD's press offices.

HUD says its plan will create an equal amount of affordable housing as existed before Katrina hit, though critics dispute that. Much of the area's lower-income housing was destroyed by the hurricane, and recently announced federal plans to move thousands of displaced residents out of Federal Emergency Management Agency trailers by summer will only intensify the current housing crunch.

New Orleans has seen 65 percent of its total population return, according to a local demographer who uses utility hookups to offer the most detailed figures. But the Black population has not rebounded as quickly as the White population, and some Black enclaves are a fraction of what they were.