

# Aide: Obama won't forget Blacks

# Mos Def sought over camera tiff

By George E Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

(NNPA) — Many African-Americans are asking: Now that Barack Obama has won the White House, will he be so eager to govern from the center that he will forget about his obligations to Blacks?

Valerie Jarrett, a long-time friend and one of his closest advisers, gave an emphatic reply to that question on Sunday — no.

In a private meeting with the Trotter Group, an organization of African-American columnists, Jarrett fielded numerous questions about Obama's commitment to Blacks. And, in each instance, she left no doubt that the president-elect, who has a straight-A Senate rating from the NAACP, will remain true to his past.

Jarrett, one of three chairs of Obama's transition team, was asked why so few African-Americans are being mentioned in speculation about future cabinet posts. She replied, "There isn't a single name on that list that you've heard from President-elect Obama. There's not a single name on that list that you've heard from me, or from John Podesta or from Peter Rouse," she said, referring to the three co-chairs of Obama's transition team.

"Or, now from Rahm Emanuel. So the five people who actually do know the names on the list, you haven't spoken to them. So what I think you see in the newspaper is what everybody speculates. I haven't seen the list but my guess is they're speculating on the



Valerie Jarrett has known President-elect Barack Obama for much of his political career. She's based in Chicago.

people who are most commonly thought of."

Some of that speculation has centered on Jarrett, a Chicago real estate executive. Some have suggested that she might become Secretary of Housing and Urban Development or head the Commerce Department. But there are news reports out of Chicago that she is the front-runner to replace Obama in the U.S. Senate. In her meeting with journalists, Jarrett said she would be willing to serve in any capacity that Obama sees fit.

On the question of Obama's commitment to diversity, Jarrett was unequivocal.

"President-elect Obama, as should be no surprise to anyone in this room, would

like his cabinet to be diverse — both in terms of race, in terms of perspectives, in terms of party, in terms of geography," she said. "So he is looking to have a cross-section of America. Spending the amount of time with him as I do, I can assure you this is something front and center of his mind. Not because it's the politically expedient thing to do, but because he would make better decisions by having diversity. He really believes in that."

Asked the most surprising thing about Obama, she replied: "I'm not sure people understand how pragmatic he is. ...He really wants to get things done."

Jarrett recalled staff meetings where the tone was set by Obama.

"In that room, there's a certain element of pragmatism: Let's make sure what we are trying to accomplish is doable and is actually going to change the lives of the

American people. Let's not just be idealists, but let's be realists. I think that's the part of him that will make him an extraordinary president."

In the don't get mad, get even world of politics, Obama is an anomaly, according to Jarrett.

"I can remember after the primaries, some people had been very strong Clinton supporters — including some members of my own family — said to me, 'How's Sen. Obama going to respond to me? I wasn't with him.' I said, 'You all don't get this. He is as inclusive as he could be. He does not hold grudges.'"

Jarrett is close to both Barack and Michelle Obama. In fact, she met the president-elect through Michelle, when the couple was engaged. She had hired Michelle for a job in City Hall. The three went out to dinner and a strong bond developed between Jarrett and the couple. Obama said he speaks with Jarrett every day about a variety of issues.

According to Jarrett, Michelle is focusing her attention on Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7, preparing them for the upcoming move to Washington, D.C. and finding the right schools for them. Michelle revels in her role as mom-in-chief and has no interest in serving as her husband's co-president.

That does not mean that, like every first lady, she will not have her pet projects.

The first lady-in-waiting has spent a lot of time with military spouses who try to balance a career with motherhood while their husbands serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has also been part of the volunteer movement and has a deep interest in education.

But the question upper-

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Mos Def was being sought by police on an arrest warrant stemming from a scuffle with a photographer at a fashion trade show last August, authorities and the alleged victim said recently.

"I had no idea who the man was," said Volker Corell, 60, a Los Angeles-based photographer who said the 35-year-old rapper and actor, whose real name is Dante Terrell Smith, ripped his camera from around his neck Aug. 26.

Corell said he was credentialed to represent a trade publication, and was taking photos at the Men's Apparel and Garment Industry Convention in Las Vegas when he was allegedly attacked. He said the last four photos before his camera was broken clearly show Smith reaching toward him.

"The last shot was his hands in front of the lens," Corell said.

Investigators expected Smith would turn himself by the end of the week to face a warrant charge of felony robbery and misdemeanor malicious destruction of property, Las Vegas police spokesman Ramon Denby said.

Mos Def's publicist, Carleen Donovan in New York City, did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.



MOS DEF

The warrant was issued Tuesday, said Michael Sommermeyer, a court spokesman.

Corell said he received a cut on his left hand in the scuffle, and that two Las Vegas Convention Center security guards retrieved the camera. Repairs to the camera cost \$178, police said in court documents.

Robbery can carry a sentence of probation or two to 15 years in state prison. A conviction for misdemeanor destruction of property less than \$250 can bring up to six months in county jail.

Smith built a following as an underground hip hop artist in the 1990s, and has been nominated for Golden Globe, Emmy, and Grammy awards. He is the host of the award-winning HBO spoken word show "Def Poetry."

most on my mind when we met with Jarrett, the daughter-in-law of the late Vernon Jarrett, an icon in journalism, was whether Obama can keep his promises in view of the Wall Street debacle, fight-

ing two wars simultaneously, high joblessness, unprecedented deficits and record home foreclosures. Jarrett's reply was as self-assured as Obama's demeanor: "We can't not do this."

# Jackson gives up title to Neverland

LOS ANGELES — Michael Jackson has given up title to his Neverland ranch, transferring the deed to a company he partly controls. The singer filed a grant deed on the ranch Monday that makes the new owner an entity called the Sycamore Valley Ranch Co. LLC.

Sycamore Valley Ranch Co. is a joint venture between Jackson and an affiliate of Colony Capital LLC, according to a person with knowledge of the transaction who was not authorized to speak on the record and requested anonymity.

The person could not say what would become of the 2,500-acre property in the bucolic, oak-studded hills of Santa Barbara County's wine country, 120 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Jackson had gone into default on the \$24.5 million he owes on the property and had faced foreclosure before Colony Capital bailed him out earlier this year by purchasing his loan.

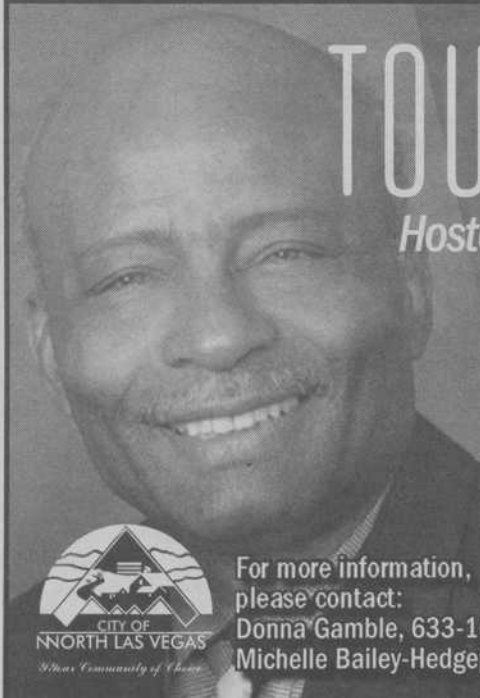
Colony Capital is a Los Angeles-based real estate investment company run by billionaire Tom Barrack. It owns several properties in Las Vegas, including the Las Vegas Hilton.

At the height of his popularity, the superstar invited thousands of children to play on the grounds.

He has not been seen in the Los Olivos area since a jury acquitted him of all molestation charges, and recent aerial photos show the ranch falling into disrepair.

## TOWN HALL MEETING


Hosted by Mayor Pro Tempore William Robinson  
Ward 2



**Date:** Tuesday, November 18, 2008

**Location:** Nevada Partners Culinary Academy (Events Center) Ballroom A & B  
710 W. Lake Mead Blvd  
North Las Vegas, NV 89031

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.



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