

Black leaders sold VP position

By JOE WILLIAMS III
NNPA News Wire

COMMENTARY

This nation is overdue for an African-American vice president. The only thing that prevents this reality is Black middle class leadership. They have in fact sold the heritage of the Black social, political and economic struggle down the tubes.

While African Americans have entrusted Black leaders with their affairs, the real agenda of these Black intellectuals has been an agenda of compromise, sell-outs, and backroom corporate deals.

There is no question, this nation has profited from the labor, creativity, hardships, and sacrifice of millions of Black Americans. The Black masses have been the pivotal votes that have elected mayors, governors, and presidents. The masses of Blacks, at certain historical stages in history, have been the moral and spiritual conscience of America.

African Americans have stood

for right over might, at home and abroad. Because of our historical oppression and exploitation, we have always been a defender of the oppressed, the hungry, the homeless, and those locked out of society.

However, we have never been compensated for our "goodness," our fairness, and our collective ability to "do the right thing." We have been lied to, ridiculed, stereotyped, framed and hanged. And, as much as our people have given to America, we are still treated as less than human beings. We are ready, not only to accept the position of vice president, but we also have the intelligence and moral ability to lead this nation to greatness as its president.

The problem is, Black leaders are so glad to just be "on the agenda" or "in the house" that they shake in the knees at the very thought of putting forth a radical "list of de-

mands." It's amazing, a Jewish person, an unknown, can be selected for vice president on the Democratic ticket, while more qualified Black leaders can't get elected as dog catchers. We are a lost people.

We must learn a lesson from this recent experience; no matter how much we play the game, we always end up with a losing hand. It's unheard of for a leader to get fired for being critical of a political decision, except when the leader is Black and the political decision involves a Jewish person. The NAACP should never mention it believes in Christian principles, or Democracy, ever again.

Oh, there is no question about it, the Blacks who do vote, will again vote to retain the Democratic Party in office. And the political leaders will still receive feel good speeches from Al Gore at their Sunday morning church services.

How sad it is that Black leaders are not free enough to repeat the above concepts. How very sad.

National News

BlackPressUSA.com big hit for African-American media

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — In its first week, BlackPressUSA.com — the joint Black Press Web site for special daily coverage of the major party conventions — received over 70,000 hits. BlackPressUSA.com is a product of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the nation's only federation of Black newspapers. The federation represents an audience of 15 million weekly readers.

"The fast success of this new site demonstrates the Black community's need for national platforms to not only cover the news but to quickly analyze the issues and choices that will impact our communities," says NNPA President John J. Oliver Jr.

As the only site on the Web to offer immediate news and analysis of the conventions solely from Black community perspectives, BlackPressUSA.com was an instant hit with Black talk radio hosts and others looking for an alternative to the mainstream media.

BlackPressUSA.com uploaded content live from the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles earlier this month. The site featured:

- Daily news analysis by noted author and expert on Black leadership and American politics, Dr. Ronald Walters
- Coverage on everything from protesters to powerbrokers by the Los Angeles Sentinel, the Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch, the San Diego Voice and Viewpoint, the San Francisco Bay View, and the Black Voice News of Riverside, Calif.
- Exclusive reports and interviews by the NNPA News Service, America's only na-

tional news wire for the Black press.

Currently the site features: "Black America Speaks!" an ongoing series of exclusive interviews with local and national Black opinion makers.

"Forget Bush and Gore," an essay by Jonathan Farley on the importance of remembering fallen heroes.

An assortment of articles about local political issues from the nation's Black newspapers.

Analysis of the Republican Convention in Philadelphia.

"Black newspapers developing original news and commentary on national issues are key to any discussion of the American agenda," says NNPA Executive Director Benjamin Todd Jealous. "BlackPressUSA is where the start of those discussions reside."

Clinton awards Medal of Freedom to several African Americans

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — President Clinton recently awarded the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, to 15 Americans who have dedicated their lives to equality and freedom for all Americans. Three of the 15 were African American.

"More than 60 years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt said, 'Freedom cannot be bestowed, it must be achieved.' Today, we honor 15 men and women who have done exactly that. They have helped America achieve freedom," said Clinton.

Among those honored were: Marion Wright Edelman, founder and leader of the Children's Defense Fund and the first Black woman admitted to the Mississippi bar

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr., lifelong civil rights leader and founder of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition who, as an unofficial U.S. "ambassador," has assisted the nation in numerous human rights crises around the world.

Rev. Gardner C. Taylor, civil rights pioneer and pastor of the Concord Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Ex-BET official files lawsuit against company

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Dwight Crawford, the former chief financial officer of Black Entertainment Television, is suing the company for some \$21 million for wrongful firing and duress, according to reports. The Crawford suit charges that the company's leadership removed him because he would not violate tax law and submit inaccurate tax information it has been reported. BET CEO Bob Johnson and other executives were not available for comment.

The suit comes at a time when the nation's premiere Black cable company was in the process of restructuring much of its approach to national news coverage and competitive wage controversies.

Crawford left his \$250,000 position at BET in January, and, according to him, had spent months in dialogue with company leaders to resolve differences. Crawford believes that senior management at BET was aware of financial improprieties but did nothing. BET's legal offices have gone on record calling the allegations "frivolous and totally without merit."

Although BET is a multimillion dollar company strong enough to weather such a case, the timing of the suit may have negative bearing in the company's share of cable market and image in the African-American community.

In recent months, BET has: Distanced itself from its print publications by partnering with Vanguard Media which led to the closing of EMERGE and BET WEEKEND magazines; Struggled to repair its national image and to prepare to fight to hold onto market share since the launch of NUE-TV, the

new Black-targeted cable company backed by entrepreneur Quincy Jones.

3 years after discrimination lawsuit, Texaco improves its record

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — In 1997, when Texaco Inc. announced it had reached an agreement to settle a class action lawsuit that was brought in 1994 on behalf of about 1,400 individuals, some questioned its long-term effects.

The suit, Roberts v. Texaco, was originally filed in 1994 by Texaco workers alleging an ongoing pattern of racial and sexual discrimination. The complaint charged that by certain policies and practices which had a disparate impact upon African-American employees with regard to salaries, promotions, compensation, training and job assignments.

The suit, comprised of its current and certain former African-American employees, is now in its third year since settlement and a new report details its progress.

Under the settlement, Texaco agreed to:

- Provide a payment to the plaintiff-class in the amount of \$115 million, along with a one-time salary increase of about 11 percent for current employees of the plaintiff-class, effective Jan. 1, 1997.
- Create an Equality and Tolerance Task Force, which will be charged with determining potential improvements to Texaco's human resources programs, as well as helping to monitor the progress being made in those programs (three members of the task force to be appointed by the plaintiffs, and three members by Texaco and a mutually agreed-upon chairperson).

Adopt and implement companywide diversity and sensitivity, mentoring, and ombuds programs.

Consider nationwide job posting of more senior positions that are currently posted.

Monitor performance on the programs and initiatives provided for under the settlement agreement.

Commenting on the agreement, Peter I. Bijur, Texaco's chairman and chief executive officer, said: "Texaco is committed to developing and instituting specific, effective policies that will ensure that discrimination is wiped out wherever it may be, and that will expand the positive economic impact we can have in the minority community. These policies will be clearly defined and achievable — with measurable goals set out on a specific timetable.

"Today's agreement affords us a renewed opportunity to join in common purpose and unified action to achieve shared goals of greater inclusion and opportunity at Texaco — and in America," he added.

Marvin Minter, BVN publisher's father, dies from leukemia

Marvin Newton Minter, the father of Black Voice News publisher Cheryl Brown, died on Aug. 6 at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Los Angeles, following a battle with leukemia.

Minter was born on Sept. 1923 in Durham, N.C.

For the past 38 years, Minter has owned and operated Marvin Minter's Tax Methods located in South Central, Los Angeles.

He is survived by his wife Melba Minter of Los Angeles; two brothers Robert Minter of Long Island, N.Y., and William Minter of Chicago, two sons Marvin Frederick "Freddy" Minter and Dexter Lynn Minter of Los Angeles, and a daughter Cheryl Brown of San Bernardino, Calif.

Sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle.
(Our steaks made us a legendary restaurant, so we decided to let them do the talking.)



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