

Sharpton Objects To Ads Using Him To Attack Edwards

WILMINGTON, NC (NNPA)—The candidate who presents the greatest obstacle to John Edwards' chances of garnering a lion's share of the Black vote in next year's Democratic presidential primaries, has blasted a conservative Republican group for producing an ad that features him to criticize the North Carolina senator.

Rev. Al Sharpton, on a campaign stop in South Carolina, issued a statement charging that "the right-wing" was trying to put a wedge between him, Senator Edwards and the other seven Democratic presidential hopefuls.


"I am outraged and disgusted to see the Committee for Justice—a White House front group—use my name, my face and my statements in a misleading manner to smear Senator John Edwards," Rev. Sharpton said. "I demand that this ad be immediately pulled from the air and that this group issue a prompt and public apology."

The 30-second attack ad in question is airing in South Carolina, and criticizes Senator Edwards, currently the frontrunner there, for his opposition to federal judicial appellate nominee Janice Rogers Brown, a Black conservative California Supreme Court justice.

Justice Rogers, a candidate to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, is a staunch conservative who once said she wasn't sure all 50 states were covered by the Bill of Rights. She has also expressed a belief that the Constitution upholds property rights over civil rights.

—Cash Michaels, The Wilmington Journal

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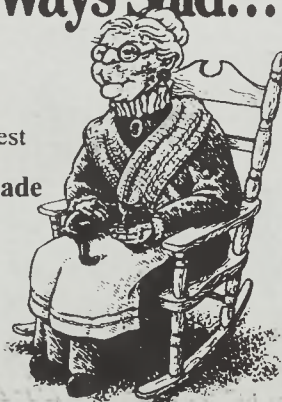



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NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM APPROVED

WASHINGTON—Congress has ratified a nearly century-old movement to build a national museum of African American history and culture here.

By a unanimous voice vote, the Senate approved a \$17 million down payment to begin planning the \$350 million project on Nov. 20, while the House of Representatives voted 409-9 to give its authorization earlier in the week.

"I feel very, very good. I'm really pleased that after these many years of struggle we're now at this point," Rep. John Lewis (D-GA), himself an important figure from the Civil Rights Movement, told reporters after the Senate vote.

Rep. Lewis is the only surviving speaker who addressed the historic August 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom at which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech. As the then-25-year-old leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Mr. Lewis led many important civil rights campaigns, including the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery, Alabama voting rights march.

"This has been a long, hard, tedious journey," said Mr. Lewis, who indicated that efforts to officially acknowledge the contributions of Blacks to this country go back to the efforts of Civil War veterans. "We are here, today, because members, staff and many supporters never gave up. They did not give out. They did not give in."

In 1915, a group of Black Civil War veterans proposed a national "Negro Memorial" in Washington. In 1929, Pres. Calvin Coolidge signed a bill into law authorizing construction of a museum, but the Great Depression upset fundraising efforts.

Eventually, the museum, which will become part of the venerable Smithsonian Institution, will be funded with equal amounts of federal money and private donations. The Smithsonian already operates Washington's most prominent museums and cultural repositories, including the National Museum of American History, the Air and Space Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, and the National Galleries of Art. The new museum's planning committee has been given one year to choose a site.

Various previous efforts to establish a national Black history museum have been derailed in the past over whether or not the museum would be independent, or part of the Smithsonian Institution, and over its location. Some recent efforts were defeated because of claims that there was no more room on the National Mall.

Ironically, in 1994, Washington gained a museum dedicated to the Holocaust—an event that occurred 4,000 miles away in Europe. Last year, a popular, private International Spy Museum opened. A new national museum dedicated to the American Indian is scheduled to open next September, and the Freedom Forum Foundation is building a news museum, called a "Newseum," which is due to open in 2006.

The African American History Museum is not expected to open before 2013. Organizers hope to include exhibits illustrating the entire Black experience in America, from slavery and the Civil War, to segregation and the Civil Rights Movement, as well as Black contributions to U.S. fighting forces in two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf, as well as documentation of Black achievement in sports, politics and the arts.