

National

Memphis Mayor Fears City Will Become a Poor Black Enclave

MEMPHIS (AP) — It would be hard to find another American city where skin color plays a bigger political role, or one where its first elected black mayor is putting voters' racial beliefs to a bigger test.

Less than two years after blacks first passed whites in voter registrations in Memphis, Mayor W.W. Herenton is on a course that could shift the city back to majority white.

Friend and foe alike are concerned. Herenton wants to merge his predominantly black city with the well-to-do, mostly white suburbs that make up the rest of Shelby County. Without such a move, he says, the strains of a limited tax base could one day turn Memphis into a poor, black enclave surrounded by rich, white suburbs.

"I see some ugly realities," he said at a news conference late last month. "I see what happened to Newark. I see what happened to Detroit. I see what happened to a number of urban cities that allowed the suburban areas to leave them."

Herenton wants to consolidate the city and county governments, which now have separate mayors, law-making boards, bureaucracies, schools and tax structures.

Suburban residents have long opposed consolidation. City voters



W.W. Herenton

have supported it in the past. But the shift in the city's racial makeup has added a new wrinkle.

"It would dilute our power," said the Rev. Samuel "Billy" Kyles, one black leader. "I know it's the

right thing to do, but the problem in Memphis is our politics are so racial. If blacks are not in the majority, you simply cannot win an election."

Some are more blunt about Herenton's plan.

"I'm stunned," said John Ford, a black state senator whose family runs one of the city's most active political organizations and whose brother is U.S. Rep. Harold Ford, D-Tenn. "Who in the world is it he's talked to that's told him to think this way?"

You'd have to be a plumb fool to think this up on your own."

But Herenton, 53, the city's first black superintendent of schools before becoming mayor, says blacks gain little by controlling a city that is broke.

"Unfortunately, we have a number of elected officials whose private interest comes before the public interest," he said. "What you have is people who look at their own political futures first."

Overall, Shelby County, which includes Memphis, is 55 percent white. The city, with 610,000 residents, is 55 percent black. About 17 percent of the 216,000 suburbanites are black.

Memphis schools are 80 percent black, the suburban schools 80 percent white.

Blacks outnumbered whites in registered voters for the first time in 1991. The year Herenton was elected by a margin of 1-42 votes out of the 247,973 cast.

He got 99 percent of the black vote, while his white opponent, former mayor Richard Hackett, got 97 percent of the white vote.

The same election raised the number of blacks on the 13-member City Council from three to six and on the nine-member city school board from three to five.

Herenton said the city, with its taxing ability just about exhausted, faces a \$50 million budget deficit by 1996, even with little growth in services or the social programs he

championed as a candidate.

He said Memphis must grow, through vigorous annexation if not consolidation. Under state law, the city has the power to annex unincorporated parts of the county.

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At \$98 Million, Oprah is the Richest of Them All

NEW YORK (AP) — In the film "Jurassic Park," a get-rich scheme involving live dinosaurs spelled disaster. Real life may be a bit kinder.

Two of the nation's richest entertainers this year owe their fortunes to the film's rampaging prehistoric beasts — Steven Spielberg, producer of the successful movie, and Michael Crichton, who wrote the novel it was based upon.

But this year's list of top 40 money makers from Forbes magazine, which considers two years

worth of income to smooth out big earnings swings, shows that most wealthy entertainers make money from more modern phenomena.

Consider the top earner. Oprah Winfrey became the nation's richest entertainer by owning the show she hosts and produces, as well the Chicago studio where it's filmed. The Oprah Winfrey show generates over \$170 million in revenue. Her total take in 1992 and 1993: \$98 million.

Spielberg was right behind her. He clinched the No. 2 spot by pulling in \$72 million in the last two years, thanks in large part to "Jurassic Park" box office sales that could reach \$600 million in 1993. With a videocassette release upcoming, Forbes says, Spielberg could top the list next year.

Slipping to No. 3 from last year's top spot was Bill Cosby, dragged down by his TV flop "You Bet Your Life", based on the Grou-

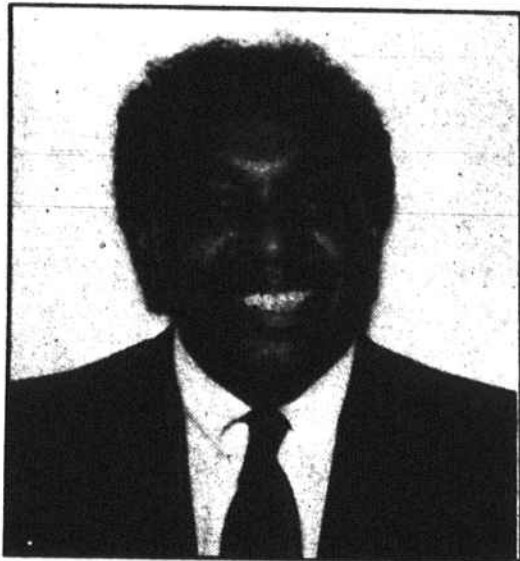
cho Marx classic.

Macaulay Culkin proved that success knows no age. The 13-year star of the "Home Alone" movies made an adult sized \$23 million these past two years, easily becoming the list's youngest member.

Dropping off the list were Rolling Stones, Johnny Carson, Arsenio Hall and Frank Sinatra. Forbes says the Stones could be back, with a possible \$100 million deal for an upcoming tour.

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