

Mississippi black leaders disappointed but not surprised by vote keeping state flag

NNPA NEWSWIRE

Many blacks in Mississippi are "disappointed but not surprised" by losing the state referendum that allowed Mississippi to keep its 107-year-old flag that contains the Confederate battle cross in its upper corner, making it the state's official flag. "We are disappointed but not surprised," said Deborah Denard, acting director of voting empowerment of the NAACP State Conference. "This is representative of what we are dealing with in Mississippi." She said at NNPA presstime that state NAACP leadership had not yet decided whether to launch a boycott against the state.

The 65 percent-majority vote, which makes Mississippi the only state to have the symbol on its official state banner, is the current chapter in the long history of blacks protesting Southern state flags with Confederate symbols.

Blacks say the Confederate symbol is representative of their enslavement and Jim Crow, while some Southern whites proudly claim the Confederacy as an important part of their heritage.

The flag had been considered Mississippi's state flag since 1894. The Mississippi Supreme Court ruled last year that technically it had not been an official state symbol since 1906.

The remaining 35 percent voted for a flag with a circle of white stars replacing the cross, representing nations and Native American tribes that held dominion over Mississippi in past centuries.

The campaign for the new flag shied away from the issues of racial history surrounding the Confederacy, instead focusing on Mississippi's economic future. The campaign said the current flag encouraged businesses to leave Mississippi or companies not to locate there.

Blacks represent about a third of the state's electorate and their support alone would not have been enough to select a new flag.

Happy Hill

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introduced Cooley to the Happy Hill association and mentored her during the research process. "I decided to have Cooley work with the community so that it would spark a student's interest in community action," Glenn said.

Glenn is very pleased with Cooley's work and feels that the association will be able to utilize the surveys. "The many surveys that were created were real informative. It was a great vehicle for the residents who want to connect

with each other and start making a change."

The surveys do more than just help provide programs, activities and events, Glenn said that the idea lies within the residents. "People change communities. The programs just help the community see what they need to do."

A total of 61 surveys came back and revealed that neighborliness was low and socialization among residents was a top concern. The surveys also gave the association a chance to find out what skills the residents had, a chance to recognize neighborhood issues and areas that needed

improvement such as housing and children's programs.

Yvonne Jefferson, president of the Happy Hill Community Council, said that she really enjoyed working with Cooley and that if she keeps up her persistence, she will go far. "Cooley is a very special student and this isn't the first time we had to work with Wake Forest University," said Jefferson. "Her surveys caught our attention and because of her surveys we can better help our community."

NBN will continue bringing in students to different communities and even venturing out to other schools. In the meantime, Cooley said that working with Happy Hill has helped prepare her for a future in sociology. "I see myself working in the field of race relations and social justice," Cooley said. "This gave me the practice to work with people who are different from me and other students at Wake Forest University. It also helped me realize that you cannot isolate problems; you have to work at it head on."

Black Women Appreciation Day at Wake Forest April 26

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Xi Eta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity will hold its second annual Black Women Appreciation Day on Thursday,

April 26, at 7 p.m. in the Babcock Parlor on the campus of Wake Forest University. This will be a night of poetry and prose to recognize the achievements and our appreciation for black women.

Retirees

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celebrate all of our years in public housing and all of the experiences we have shared together," said Lucille Ransby, one of the organizers of the get-together.

Organizers located about 60 living HAWS retirees and invited them to the event. Not all could make it to the Hawthorne Inn, some because of health problems. Those who were able to be on hand, about 35 or so, paid tribute to colleagues who are sick or have passed with a candle lighting.

Faye Carter, the chairperson for the event, said she expected that lots of laughs and heartfelt memories would be shared. She remembers a Housing Authority where the employees loved each other and the tenants they served.

"It feels good to be (a HAWS) retiree because I feel we have had an impact on people's lives," she said. "We just didn't provide hous-

ing, we helped start programs so that people could have better lives."

Many of the retirees said they have become too busy in their post-employment days to keep up with current public housing news. But one retiree admits that today HAWS employees have higher hurdles to clear.

"We didn't have to deal with the gun problem and the drug problem back then... Things have changed a lot in public housing," said Frank Mayberry, a 1970s retiree who managed the community once known as Piedmont Circle.

Mayberry was one of a handful at the luncheon who retired more than 20 years ago. A few retired earlier this year. But Claude Rucker received the loudest applause when he announced his retirement date - 1966. Now in his 80s, Rucker, a former painter with HAWS, said he was simply happy to see old and new faces.

"It just feels good to be here with everyone," he said with a

smile.

David L. Thompkins, the first black executive director of HAWS, delighted the crowd with his appearance at the banquet. Carter and Ransby sprang to their feet upon seeing their old boss enter the room.

"He shaped and molded us," Carter said before hugging Thompkins.

Thompkins worked at HAWS for 33 years, serving as executive director for 10 years. There was an unwritten rule during his administration, he said, a rule that was followed willfully by everyone on the authority's payroll.

"We believed that every day we came to work, our mission was to help someone that needed help," Thompkins said. "We knew that was the reason we were given the jobs that we had."

Carter said she hopes to make get-togethers an annual event for the retirees. The retirees may also come together in the future for other causes and events, she said.

Celebration

Senior Life Enrichment Center of Mount Zion Baptist celebrates 10 years

BY CORTNEY L. HILL
THE CHRONICLE

The Senior Life Enrichment Center of Mount Zion Baptist Church celebrated its 10-year anniversary of service with a luncheon and guest speaker Nigel Alston on Tuesday, April 24.

Residents of the center and members of the community attended the ceremony to help celebrate the anniversary of the center as well as members of the Mt. Zion SLEC Advisory Board and Senior Pastor Dr. Serenus Churn.

Hugh Roberts, master of ceremonies and manager of Southern Community Bank, opened the occasion with a welcome and introduced Churn for his brief insight on the existence of the center. "We are blessed as a church family to have a center where we can enjoy much wealth and care that is bestowed upon us," said Churn.

Other speakers that shared many reflections about the center included Dean Burgess, director of the Area Agency on Aging, who mentioned that the organization has provided funding for many programs in several counties for 27 years; and Maurice Johnson, chairperson of the Mt. Zion SLEC Advisory Board, who added her comments about the center as well as introducing Alston.

"We are celebrating 10 years of tender loving care," said Alston. "Nothing can amount to the quality care that the workers and caregivers provide at this center." Alston's speech consisted of taking one day at a time and knowing when to slow down and enjoy the moment. "Have you ever faced the mountain of too much?" he asked the audience. With many



Photo by Cortney Hill
Maurice Johnson, left, presents an award to Dr. Rembert Malloy.

hands being raised in affirmation, Alston went on motivating the audience to always take time to slow down and enjoy moments. Alston touched on four things one must do at least once a day: listen to your favorite song, read a good poem or article, look at a fine picture and have good conversations with good friends.

During the program, a plaque was presented to Dr. H. Rembert Malloy, a physician who has dedicated many years to lending medical assistance to the community. Johnson presented Malloy with the plaque as a token of her appreciation as well as the center's, advisory board's and community's appreciation.

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