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Durham Committee to Honor Kenneth Hammond and Andrea Harris

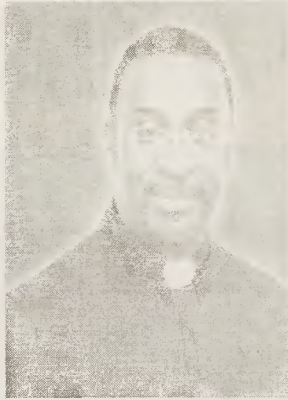
The Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People (DCABP) will honor Kenneth R. Hammond, Pastor of Union Baptist Church (UBC) and Andrea L. Harris, President CEO of North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development (The Institute) at the 74th Founders Anniversary Banquet, Sat., Aug. 22, at 6 p.m. This gala celebration, to be held at Greater Emmanuel Family Life Enrichment Center, 2722 E. Main St. will feature Congressman James E. Clyburn, U.S. House of Representatives, South Carolina's Sixth Congressional District. On November 16, 2006, the House Democratic Caucus unanimously elected Congressman James E. Clyburn, a native of Sumter, S.C. and a graduate of South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, S.C., as Majority Whip for the 110th Congress. This was a historic day for Jim Clyburn, who became the second African American to ascend to the third ranking position in the U.S. House of Representatives. On January 4th, 2007, when Representative Clyburn assumed this esteemed position, his leadership authority rank placed him only behind Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer in the Congressional Democratic Caucus.

Each of the distinguished 2009 Honorees, Pastor Hammond and President Harris, has made immeasurable contributions through their respective professional and varied public service careers. The public is cordially invited to attend this festive occasion in appreciation of many outstanding achievements realized by two significant leaders. In addition, it will be an opportunity to meet and hear from one of the most highly influential congressmen in the nation. Banquet tickets for this grand event are \$50 and reserved tables are available for \$425. Contacts for tickets and reserved tables may be made via DCABP's telephone 530-1100, email (drela@aol.com), fax 688-9357, and personally with Committee officers.

The Founders Leadership Award will be presented to Kenneth Hammond as a tribute for more than thirty years of pastoral ministry that includes seventeen years as pastor of Union Baptist Church. Hammond is a native of Greenville, N.C. and an alumnus of East Carolina University and Shaw University Divinity School. He completed the B.A. degree in History, the M.A. degree in Education and a Certificate of Advanced Study at ECU. He earned a Master of Divinity degree from Shaw and completed additional doctoral studies at North Carolina State University. His scholastic achievements are marked by his induction into Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society, The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Who's Who in Education and Who's Who Among Black Americans. In October 2007, Pastor Hammond was recognized as the National Pastor of the Year by Christian Tools of Affirmation (CTA, Inc.).

Prior to accepting the pastorship at Union Baptist, Hammond served as pastor of: Mount Shiloh Baptist Church in Williamston; Cedar Grover Baptist Church in Greenville; and Youth Minister, Mount Shiloh Baptist Church in Winterville. In addition to his ministerial service, Pastor Hammond held leadership positions at ECU as: Associate Director of the Department of University Unions; Assistant Director for the Mendenhall Student Center; Program Director, Mendenhall Student Center; support group leader for battered women; and leadership for an Anger Management Counselor.

Kenneth Hammond was installed as pastor of Union Baptist Church in January 1992. His career at Union has been marked by



REV. HAMMOND



MS. HARRIS



REP. CLYBURN

exceptional growth, remarkable administrative achievement, and both fiscal and facilities expansion. Exemplary accomplishments include: membership growth to more than 5,000 resulting in three Sunday morning services at 7:30 am, 9:30 am, and 11:15 am; more than 25 new ministries launched; a multi-ministry staff of 22; a quadrupled budget of more than \$2.5 million and an established endowment fund; building a new worship center, administrative offices; a completely renovated educational edifice at a cost of \$3.5 million; and host for the Durham Scholars Program with Dr. James H. Johnson, Jr., the Williams Rand Kenan, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Management at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Kenan Flagler Business School, who directs the Scholars Program. Pastor Hammond has been and is a champion for the establishment of quality educational experiences, especially for those with the greatest needs. By far, one of Hammond's monumental achievements, with his Union Church family, is the new, 49,000-square foot Union Independent School, scheduled to open July 15, 2009. The school initially will enroll 75 students in kindergarten through grade two, adding a kindergarten class each year until it has 250 students through eighth grade. All children in the 172-block Northeast Central Durham area will be eligible applicants, with selection by a lottery. This fully endowed private school building enhanced by pedagogic guidelines will also include space for a separately run day-care center, preschool, and health and wellness center. This unprecedented accomplishment is a reminder of the important role African American churches have played in the historical past. It is evident that black churches must begin anew to address the overwhelming challenges causing serious educational racial disparities. "The Durham Committee is extremely proud to honor Kenneth R. Hammond, a dynamic visionary humanitarian."

The President CEO and co-founder of the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development (NCIMED), Andrea L. Harris also will be presented the Durham Committee Founders Leadership Award. This is a most deserved tribute for her more than thirty years of tireless efforts toward building economic parity and assets in minority and low-resource communities. Ms. Harris is a native of Sumter, S.C., the daughter of the Mrs. Geneva Smith-Harris and the late Dr. Andrew L. Harris.

Register To Vote

Her mother, Geneva Smith-Harris, this May will celebrate an historic event. She will participate in her 70th class reunion at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, S.C. The honor to be bestowed upon her daughter, Andrea Harris, represents values, standards of excellence, public service commitment, and determination to give back - all principles stressed by her mother throughout her growing and adult years. This honor, for Ms. Harris, is also a tribute to Ms. Harris' mother whose profound influence helped mold Andrea into the leader she is today.

Ms. Harris is a graduate of Henderson Institute in Henderson, where her leadership skills began to flourish. She earned the B.A. degree in Psychology from Bennett College where she distinguished herself as a scholar and a leader. She began her professional career as a teacher in the Vance County school system. Her work in the community

dates back to her work as Director of the Community Organization of Senior Citizens' Program 7 for the Franklin-Vance-Warren Opportunity (F-V-W). She later became the Executive Director of F-V-W Opportunity and Associate Director of the North Carolina Senior Citizens' Foundation.

Harris' tenure with F-V-W Opportunity resulted in extraordinary accomplishments including: major rehabilitation of housing for low to moderate income home owners; increase in energy efficiencies in rehabilitated homes through partnerships with NCSU School of Design with the U.S. Department of Agriculture; an elderly transportation program to serve basic needs and trips to medical facilities in Durham and Chapel Hill; an expanded Head Start program; community garden projects with youth programs; and expansion of the Employment Program.

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Jackson says NAACP must help save auto industry

By Corey Williams

DETROIT (AP) - Pushing for blacks to have equal access to jobs has been part of the NAACP's mission for much of the civil rights organization's 100-year history.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson believes fighting to save jobs - and Detroit's struggling car makers - should be part of the NAACP's newest mandate.

Much progress has been made in business, education, and politics with the election of Barack Obama as the nation's first black president, but the current battle is with the troubled U.S. economy. Jackson said during his 25-minute keynote address at the Detroit NAACP's 54th Fight for Freedom Fund dinner at Cobb Center.

"We are not there yet," the civil rights activist and Operation PUSH founder said. "We defeated Jim Crow. Women and people of color have the right to vote, workers a right to organize."

"There is a sense of joy because it's high noon in our politics, but it's midnight in our economy. We cannot have joy while Chrysler is in bankruptcy and GM is in line."

Detroit is ground zero for the U.S. automotive crisis, with thousands of city residents dependent on General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler, and their suppliers.

A number of factories in the Detroit area and across the country have been closed with thousands of jobs already lost as the companies crawl through painful restructuring.

Chrysler, the nation's third-largest automaker behind GM and Ford, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after months of surviving on government loans.

Detroit has mirrored their failures. The city's poverty and unemployment are among the highest in the country, as is its home foreclosure rate.

The city's population is more than 80 percent black. Detroit's black residential base began swelling decades ago as blacks from the south moved north to find jobs in manufacturing and in the auto industry.

Those jobs must be saved, Jackson said.

"Detroit is not just your city," Jackson told the crowd. "It is the soul of industrial America. We must fight back to save GM, Ford and Chrysler. That's our lifeline. It's time for a righteous rebellion, civil disobedience."

Jackson also criticized federal bailouts to banks that in turn have given million-dollar bonuses to executives while urban neighborhoods continue to suffer and jobs are being lost.

His message came at the right time, said 27-year-old Jonathan Guest of Detroit.

"We need to stand behind them and fight for them," Guest said of the auto industry and its workers.

The industry's crisis has affected others outside the car companies, said Doris Jordan-Smith of Detroit. The 65-year-old works in marketing for an insurance company.

"We fought to get those jobs. We've got to fight to keep them," she said.

Detroit NAACP president Wendell Anthony attributed the rise of the black middle class to the auto industry, which was honored at the dinner.

"Detroit is still the motor city capital of the world," Anthony said. "Standards have been set and innovations have been met."

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Skepticism at high court on voting rights measure

By Mark Sherman

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Supreme Court's conservative justices led a sustained attack on a key element of the Voting Rights Act, questioning whether one-time bastions of segregation still should be held to account for past discrimination.

The justices who were skeptical of that part of the voting rights law included Justice Anthony Kennedy, whose views are likely to prevail on the closely divided court. He tends to side with his more conservative colleagues on matters of race.

On the other side, the liberal justices defended Congress' decision to keep the law in place to prevent ongoing discrimination.

The tenor of the quick-paced argument suggested that there could be a court majority to strike down the provision of the voting rights law that has been the Justice Department's main enforcement tool against discriminatory changes in voting since the law was enacted in 1965. It opened elections to millions of blacks and other minorities.

The law requires all or parts of 16 states, mainly in the South, with a history of discrimination in voting to get approval in advance of making changes in the way elections are conducted. The idea behind it is to prevent discriminatory measures from being put in place.

The court is being asked by a small Texas utility district to strike down the extension as an unconstitutional intrusion into the domain of state and local governments that have made substantial progress since the era of Jim Crow and government-sponsored discrimination.

Kennedy acknowledged that the provision has been successful in rooting out discrimination in voting over the past 44 years. But times have changed, he said, questioning Congress' judgment in 2006 that it was needed for another 25 years.

"Democracy was a shambles," Kennedy said of the era when the law first was enacted. "That's not true anymore."

When Justice Department lawyer Neal Katyal pointed out that the high court has upheld previous extensions of the law, Justice Antonin Scalia dismissively replied, "A long time ago."

At another point, Chief Justice John Roberts asked, "At what point does that history ... stop justifying action with respect to some jurisdictions?"

Katyal did not specifically answer that question. But he said, "After 16,000 pages of testimony, 21 different hearings over months, Congress looked at the evidence and determined that their work was not done."

Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito also noted that by some measures of racial disparity, states not required to submit election changes fare worse than those with a history of discrimination.

The court's liberal justices said Congress pointed out that instances of voting discrimination occur more often in the states covered by the portion of the voting rights law that is under challenge.

"I don't understand with a record like that how you can maintain ... that things have radically changed," Justice David Souter said, acknowledging that there has been progress.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg referred to the "second-generation discrimination" that Congress was aiming to stop. "You start with the blatant overt discrimination, and then in time people recognize...that won't go any more, so the discrimination becomes more subtle, less easy to smoke out," Ginsburg said. "But it doesn't go from blatant overt discrimination to everything is equal."

The Obama administration and civil rights groups also argued that Congress was well within its power to renew the law.

President Barack Obama's election did not come up in court, although both sides used it in their briefs.

Outside the court, more than 100 NAACP members wearing yellow rain slickers, jackets and hats sang and chanted while the justices were hearing the case inside.

Betty Johnson, 62, of Elkton, Md., said, "Just because we have an African-American president doesn't mean that people's voting rights can't be taken away."

Republicans controlled Congress and the White House in 2006. If the court strikes down a portion of the voting rights law, Democrats now in the majority are likely to write a new measure, although they could be restricted by what the court says, according to election law expert Richard Hasen, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

The justices also could find a way out of the case without ruling one way or the other on the constitutional issue. They could determine that the Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District No. 1 in Austin, Texas, can opt out of the advance approval requirement, although a lower federal court found it could not.

For the only time this term, the justices made available audio recordings immediately after the arguments.

A decision should come by the end of June.

The case is Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District No. 1 v. Holder, 08-322.

Administration seeks change in crack sentences

By Larry Margasak

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Obama administration joined a federal judge in urging Congress to end a racial disparity by equalizing prison sentences for dealing and using crack versus powdered cocaine.

"Jails are loaded with people who look like me," U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton, an African-American, told a Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing.

Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer said the administration believes Congress' goal "should be to completely eliminate the disparity" between the two forms of cocaine. "A growing number of citizens view it as fundamentally unfair," Breuer testified.

It takes 100 times more powdered cocaine than crack cocaine to trigger the same harsh mandatory minimum sentences.

Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat who chairs the subcommittee, said, "Under current law, mere possession of five grams of crack - the weight of five packets of sweetener - carries the same sentence as distribution of half a kilogram of powder or 500 packets of sweetener."

Durbin said more than 81 percent of those convicted for crack offenses in 2007 were African-American, although only about 25 percent of crack cocaine users are African Americans.

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