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Ambassador Patrick Gaspard

Patrick Gaspard to Receive Prestigious NAACP Spingarn Medal

BALTIMORE – The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the nation's foremost civil rights organization, has announced that Ambassador Patrick Gaspard will be awarded the prestigious Spingarn Medal during the NAACP's 110th Annual Convention taking place in Detroit, Michigan on July 24.

The award recognizes Gaspard's lifelong commitment to equality and civil rights. Gaspard, a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo, moved with his parents to the United States when he was three years old. He served as political director for President Barack Obama in the White House and as the Executive Director of the Democratic National Committee, overseeing the party committee's efforts to re-elect President Obama. In 2013, President Obama nominated Gaspard to the post of United States ambassador to South Africa. He worked to strengthen civil society and worked in partnership with the South African government to develop the country's healthcare infrastructure and to support innovations in local governance. He also worked to connect South African entrepreneurs to United States markets; develop clean, renewable, and efficient energy technologies; and to end wildlife trafficking.

"Patrick Gaspard is a global champion for civil and human rights. His contributions to campaigns to end police brutality, improve access to affordable health care, and increase dignity for working families is unparalleled," said Derrick Johnson, NAACP President and CEO. For over 100 years, we have honored leaders who have served as pillars in the fight for justice and this year's selection of the Patrick Gaspard is no exception."

"The NAACP has been a beacon and an inspiration to me my entire life; Its leaders blazed the trails we now walk, and helped make my career, and the careers of countless other organizers and activists, possible," said Gaspard. "The previous recipients of this incredible honor are among my greatest heroes, who showed us what dedication and the courage of our convictions could achieve. To be in their company is beyond humbling. I am enormously grateful for this recognition, and will do all that I can to try, now and in the years to come, to live up to its promise."

"Ambassador Gaspard's service within the Labor Movement as well as his tenure as a member of the Obama administration has always inured to the benefit of all Americans," said Leon W. Russell, NAACP Chairman, National Board of Directors. "His service in the diplomatic corps as Ambassador to South Africa during a challenging period of that nation's development was stellar."

The NAACP Spingarn award was established in 1914 by the late Joel E. Spingarn then Chairman of the NAACP Board of Directors. It was given annually until his death in 1939. The medal is awarded "for the highest or noblest achievement by a living African American during the preceding year or years." A fund to continue the award was set up by his will, thus, the NAACP has continued to present this award. Previous recipients of this award include: Mrs. Daisy Bates (Little Rock Nine), Jesse L. Jackson, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Earl G. Graves Sr., Oprah Winfrey, Cecily Tyson, Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier and the Honorable Nathaniel Jones. Tickets to the Spingarn Dinner can be purchased on the NAACP Convention website [here](#).

ABOUT NAACP 110TH CONVENTION:

Other highlights will include a Presidential Candidates Forum, a legislative session, a CEO Roundtable, LGBTQ workshop plus the highly anticipated NAACP Experience retail expo and diversity career fair. More information about the 110th Annual NAACP National Convention, including a detailed schedule of events may be found by visiting [naacpconvention.org](#). Media interested in covering the event should apply for press credentials [here](#).

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. You can read more about the NAACP's work and our six "Game Changer" issue areas [here](#).

COMMENTARY: Running for Exposure

By Julianne Malveaux, NNPA Newswire Contributor

Twenty-four people are running for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. From where I sit, at least half of them are only running for exposure, for the Vice-Presidential nod, for Cabinet secretary, to push a platform, or to simply be seen. Their ambitions have made the process turgid and impractical, often amusing and only sometimes illuminating.

The candidates do best when they have time to expound on their ideas, as they did at Rev. William Barber's Poor People's Congress on June 17, or at Rev. Jesse Jackson's National Rainbow Coalition International Convention June 28-July 2. Barber's meeting drew nine candidates, each who had the opportunity to give a four-minute speech and 26 minutes of questioning from Rev. Barber.

The Rainbow PUSH gathering drew seven candidates who had about 15 minutes to address those assembled. Vice-President Biden, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Mayors Bill Di Blasio and Pete Buttigieg had press conferences with Rev. Jackson. Senators Harris and Booker did not attend Rev. Jackson's meeting, although Harris did get to Rev. Barber's and pledged to support a debate dedicated to poverty issues. With a crowded field and calendar, it is clear that everybody can't be everywhere, but I'd like the two African American Senators to explain why they snubbed Rev. Jackson, a leader who provided the very foundation for them to run for office.

Memo to Andrew Yang, Marianne Williamson, Montana Governor Steve Bullock, Miramar, FL Mayor Wayne Messam, and a few others, what are you running for, really? You've got ideas – doesn't everybody? But you have about as good a chance of being President as the proverbial snowball has a chance of surviving Hades. You've raised a little money, and you've got a skeleton staff. Why not sit home and write op-eds about your good ideas? Somebody will publish them.

Memo to California Congressman Eric Swalwell – age baiting is neither thoughtful nor cute. It's fine to tell Vice-President Joe Biden to "pass the torch" once, but to say it more than once seems like badgering and makes you look like a junior high school heckler. Biden should have come back at you for hedging your bets. You told the San Francisco Chronicle that, while you are running for President, you haven't closed the door on keeping your congressional seat. You have until December to decide, you say. Do us all a favor. Decide now!

Memo to Beto O'Rourke. Just like the South lost the Civil War, you lost the Senate race in 2018. Losing a statewide competition is hardly the foundation for a successful Presidential run. You were a nondescript Congressman that sponsored little legislation, a Democratic sensation mainly because you came close to toppling the odious Senator Cruz. But what do you stand for other than white male exuberance, jumping up on tables with the wild hand gestures? Run for Senate in Texas again. Maybe you'd win and really make a difference!

Memo to Julian Castro. Don't patronize your own community by speaking Spanish poorly. I think Latino people care more about your policy positions than your Spanish language ability. Good move in going after Beto O'Rourke in the debates on immigration issues. Wrong move in missing the Poor People's Congress after confirming that you'd be there.

Memo to Vice-President Biden. You're better than your act, better than your debate performance, better than your wandering, long-winded speeches. I know you've been doing you for a long time, and the wordy gaffes seem to work for you. Actually, they don't. There's nothing wrong with saying you made a mistake, nothing wrong with apologizing to Anita Hill, which you haven't done yet, nothing wrong with talking about busing unapologetically. If you don't get your act together, Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris are going to make mincemeat out of you.

It's only July, seven long months before the February 3, 2020, Iowa caucuses. Only July, eight months before the delegate-rich Super Tuesday, March 3, 2020, when at least 15 states, including Texas and California, will hold primaries, and 1321 Democratic delegates will be up for grabs. It's the beginning of July, and by month's end, there will be yet another debate with 20 people on the stage in two clumps. We won't learn much at these debates, because they are less debate than guided conversation with interruptions and outbursts.

What we must know, even at this point in July, is that all twenty-four candidates aren't running for President. At least half of them are simply running for exposure, and most of the nation is not paying attention. Can you name all 24 candidates without the use of Google? Probably not.