

Forum

A salute to Congressman Hawkins

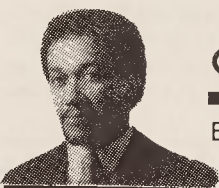
Augustus Freeman Hawkins deserves the praise and respect of Americans. At the age of 83, Congressman Hawkins (Democrat - California) has announced his retirement from the stress and wear of being an African-American member of the Congress for the past 27 years. Yet Augustus Hawkins has stood out high above his colleagues on Capitol Hill as a steadfast and an effective legislator who always championed the rights of the poor and working masses of people in this society.

dential veto of the bill mandating that federal funds be withheld from any institution which discriminates against persons because of race, gender or religion.

Now as Hawkins prepares to

wrong...and yet, I can't see them changing it." We must continue to insist that the legacy of Augustus Hawkins be kept alive in the halls of Congress.

The Congressional Black Cau-



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN CHAVIS JR.

The wisdom that Congressman Hawkins has acquired over the years is an invaluable resource for those who seek to make our society more just and equitable. In the effective leadership tradition of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Congressman Hawkins rose to become Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee of the House of Representatives. Hawkins represented the aspirations and hopes of not only the congressional district encompassing south central Los Angeles, California, but also, he spoke for the rights of all African-Americans and all others who yearn for a better way of life.

retire from the Congress he is helping to lead the fight to ensure passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1990 even over the threat of a veto by President Bush. Congressman Hawkins, in a recent interview with the *New York Times* stated, "You get frustrated by staying here, but I have more confidence in the people outside than I do in public officials inside." Hawkins has maintained a rare confidence in the "power of the people" when organized and mobilized around the agenda of justice and civil rights.

During the current rounds of congressional budget cutting, Hawkins again emerged as a staunch fighter for those who depend on Medicare and Medicaid for basic health care. Hawkins confessed, "This obsession we seem to have with spending cuts as the only way you can balance the budget is to me so devastating and so

cus of the United States Congress has grown in number and in its collective impact on the legislative process.

Yet with the retirement of Congressman Hawkins concerning the importance of politicians to represent the interests of the constituency above personal motives. Hawkins stated, "It's pretty difficult to get individual politicians in particular, to subordinate their own egos to group activity." Representative leadership is not easy, but Congressman Hawkins has shown for the most part of his 83 years that a politician can successfully represent group interest in the cause for freedom and justice. Thank you Congressman Hawkins for your excellent leadership and wisdom.

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. is executive director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ.

'Nasty' jury, not verdict, is issue

A jury in south Florida a few days ago convicted Charles Freeman of selling the obscene version "As Nasty As They Wanna Be," the controversial album by the controversial rap group, 2 Live Crew.

and supports 2 Live Crew because the ACLU also claims that Miami-based rap group's right to free expression is being suppressed.

The one caveat lost in all of this, however, is the fact that the

Logic would seem to dictate, then, that setting these standards requires full community participation, but who sets the standards for Broward County?

Further, our legal system provides for one to be judged by a jury of one's peers. Would each member of the all-white, mostly female jury privately claim to be one of Freeman's peers? Further yet, can it be said accurately that the same all-white, mostly female jury is representative of Broward County?

I have seen the lyrics and I think they are disgusting, but I choose not to purchase the album and federal laws prohibit it from being imposed on me over public airwaves. People under 21 cannot legally buy it (Freeman sold his copy to an undercover agent) or attend 2 Live Crew concerts.

Assistant State Attorney Pedro Dijols, who is black and helped to prosecute Freeman, said he thought race played no role in the case.

On the one hand, I agree with Dijols, but on the other hand, it bothers me that no blacks were on the jury; thus, once again blacks were left out of the decision making process.

Inadvertently or not, this sends the all-too-familiar message that white folks still know what's best for us all.

Esther Mock



AGAINST THE GRAIN

By ROOSEVELT WILSON

The conviction appears to vindicate Broward County Sheriff Nick Navarro, who said afterward: "This is a country of laws. The law was violated and the system worked. This was never a case of censorship, but rather one man flaunting the law. The First Amendment is alive and well."

First Amendment does not protect Freeman, 2 Live Crew or anyone else against obscenity laws. Thus, Navarro was simply enforcing the law as he is sworn to do.

That seriously weakens the "racially motivated" arguments advanced by Freeman, 2 Live Crew, the ACLU and many other artistic freedom proponents across the nation.

But following his conviction Freeman said of the jury: "They don't know where my record shop is. It's an all-white jury. There wasn't one black on it. The verdict does not reflect my community standards as a black man in Broward County."

The truth to that statement, not the verdict, is what troubles me.

Each community sets its own standards for what is obscene.

We need print media

From Page A4

depth which newspapers have the ability to do better than radio or television.

interest and importance. We need informed votes.

All voters need to know who Harvey Gantt is, his record in office in Charlotte, and his direct statements of intent for work on the issues, including education, environment, health care, agriculture, senior citizens, housing, choice and drugs. All voters need to know how

Helms has voted on bills dealing with these issues. All voters do not have the time nor the resources to gather this information for themselves.

The print media is very much needed to bring sanity instead of sensationalism to North Carolina.

Esther Mock

Police stamp out crime in black community

Editor:

Police ride past crime in the black community, but "stamp out" crime in the black community with full blast. The crimes that the youth are slapped on the wrist and told to go home are the crimes that black youth are incarcerated for. The misdemeanor charges for white men become the felony charges for black men. Some murder for black men. A \$10,000 bond for a white man becomes a \$10,000 bond for a black man. A weekend sentence for white men, likewise, becomes a 12 year sentence for the black man.

If the courts were not sending black males to prison for every little infraction against the law, the jails and prisons would not be overcrowded, not to mention the black men who sit in jails and prisons whose only crimes have been that they could not afford high priced lawyers or lawyers whose integrity means more than greed.

Afro-Americans or whatever we want to call ourselves can no longer tolerate the inequities in the law system by which we are annihilated. We do not need more prisons. We need a color-blind and judicially responsible law system, the plot to re-enslave black people must be stamped out.

Raymond L. Anderson

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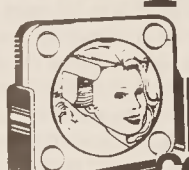
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