

Martin Luther King Jr.'s daughter calls 'Barbershop' jokes an act of incivility

ERIE, Pa. - The youngest daughter of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. said jokes about her father in the movie "Barbershop" were disrespectful and she took them as a personal act of incivility.

"A very disparaging, unfounded comment was made about my father," the Rev. Bernice A. King told a crowd of more than 300 at Penn State Behrend last week in Erie during her hour-long speech.



King

Her comments come as the Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton called on MGM to remove from future releases a scene from the film that derides Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks. While the producers of "Barbershop" have apologized for the film's barbs, MGM says it will not remove the scene.

The flap stems from a scene featuring a barber named Eddie, played by Cedric the Entertainer, who jokes about King's alleged promiscuity and says Parks wasn't the first to refuse to give up her bus seat, but was given credit because she was connected to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The character is immediately condemned by others in the barbershop for being disrespectful.

Bernice King, who serves as assistant pastor of Greater Rising Star Baptist Church in Atlanta, said the film "was a personal act for me of incivility."

She said such behavior usually stems from three factors: arrogance, selfishness and greed. King urged people to be more mindful of how they treat one another and perform acts of kindness to overcome the "evil spirits" that cause incivility.

"If at the center of our relationships was unconditional love, I think we'd see much more kindness. I think we'd see much more politeness," King said.

Lawsuit names AKA sorority in death

The family of Kristin High, a California woman who died during an alleged sorority hazing, has filed a \$100 million lawsuit against the Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority Inc. for the wrongful death of their daughter.

"It is now turning (into) what we believe is a coverup," attorney Mansfield Collins told reporters. "Nobody is talking to us. We had no choice but to file this lawsuit. This is a very courageous family. They don't want their daughter to die in vain."

High, 22, and 24-year-old Kenitha Saafir, students at California State University at Los Angeles, drowned on Sept. 9 while taking part in pledging activities.

The suit in contends that High was led into heavy surf late that night at Dockweiler State Beach by sorority members.

According to the Los Angeles Police Department, the drownings were accidental and although hazing has not been ruled out, there is no evidence of foul play. Blindfolds and ropes allegedly used in the incident have not been found.

"There was some sorority-related activity; that's why they were at the beach," Lt. Mike DePasquale said. "The actual drownings, however, occurred after the activities were over.... Was there hazing? Maybe. But we don't think so."

Saafir and High were "blindfolded and tied by their hands and their bodies and led into the rip tide conditions of the ocean," according to the family's lawsuit. "That night, the waves were cresting at six to eight feet and creating a strong undercurrent resulting from rip tide."

Officials of AKA, the nation's oldest black sorority, have denied any connection to the incident and claim the activity was not an actual sorority gathering.

"We have no chapter of AKA at California State University-Los Angeles. You may recall we suspended the local chapter more than two years ago over minor pledging infractions," Linda M. White, the sorority's supreme basileus, said in a statement from its Chicago headquarters. "If any individuals involved in the incident purported to represent AKA, they did so without the approval or knowledge of our organization. In fact, we are trying to determine whether the individuals involved have ever been members of AKA."

Producer Suzanne de Passe named to Howard University endowed chair

Suzanne de Passe, film director and former Motown producer, has been named AOL Time Warner Endowed Chair in Media at Howard University's School of Communications.

"We are delighted to welcome Ms. De Passe to Howard University," said H. Patrick Swygert, university president. "Her outstanding accomplishments and reputation as a dynamic mover and shaker in film, television and music mesh perfectly with the responsibilities of the position."



De Passe

Her appointment is effective this fall. De Passe began her career at Motown Records as creative assistant to Berry Gordy, eventually rising to the position of president of Motown Productions. In 1992, she established her own production company, De Passe Entertainment.

The recipient of an Academy Award nomination for co-writing the screenplay "Lady Sings the Blues," De Passe also has won two Emmy Awards as executive producer of "Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever" and "Motown Returns to The Apollo." She also was executive producer for the award winning television mini-series "Lonesome Dove," "Small Sacrifices," "The Jacksons: An American Dream" and "Buffalo Girls."

"De Passe brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the program that will benefit the students, enhance the curriculum and garner increased support for Howard University from the communications and entertainment industries," Jannette L. Dates dean of the school of communications, told reporters.

- Compiled from staff and wire reports

There she is, Miss WSSU Alumni

BY FELECIA P. McMILLAN, PH.D. COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Beverly Barnes Evans ('70) of North Plainfield, N.J., was crowned Miss Alumni 2002-2003 of Winston-Salem State University Friday evening at Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium.

Wanda Starke of News Channel 12 served as the master of ceremonies for the crowning ceremony, and Ron Hughes was the vocalist for the event.

Evans competed against Barbara Whiting Puryear ('68) for the crown. Together they generated more than \$78,000 in scholarship funds for incoming WSSU Rams.

A native of Durham, N.C., Evans resides in New Jersey and represents the New Jersey Chapter and the Eastern Atlantic District of the Winston-Salem State University National Alumni Association. She works as a resource teacher/coordinator for the Newark Public Schools.

Evans raised more than \$49,000 for the cause. She raised funds for the competition from June until Sept. 13.

"I worked super hard. We had to do whatever we could to get money for our school. I contacted over 40 principals in Newark and four senators and asked them to give money for scholarships," Evans said. "I also spoke with President Bush, but he let me know that he could not be involved in this kind of fund raiser. It was not about winning, but was about helping the school."

"As a 32-year veteran in the education area, it is my firm belief that all students can learn if they are inspired and challenged. In order for them to excel, they must be given the proper tools and strategies to achieve their goals," Evans said. "My former WSSU professors inspired my motivation to ignite that exciting learning spark in students. My mission and goal is to continue to pass on the vital knowledge in the way that it was exhibited to me."

The queen's mother, Lou Suit Barnes, 80, was at the luncheon, and she offered words of wisdom.

"I'm a Ram today. It is so nice to be in your presence. I am so glad that this contest is over for my daughter. I was there in New Jersey when Coach Gaines spoke about the winning basketball teams," Barnes said. "His speech resulted in her getting many more memberships. It is very important that you keep this group together. We must save our children."

"I heard you speak about Louise Smith, who had the stroke in Houston, Texas. She and Maya Angelou were very close. She was a good member and strictly a Ram. Give her your prayers. She needs that," Barnes said. "My daughter, I call her my Mama. The relationship reversed somewhere down the line. She told everybody on street corners and everywhere she could think of to take out an ad to help Winston-Salem State University."

Puryear represented the Brown Alumni Chapter of Winston-Salem State University and the city of Winston-Salem. Puryear has been teaching English, journalism and drama since 1968. She raised funds for the competition from July until Sept. 13.

"I worked very hard for the benefit of the school. I have enjoyed fraternizing with Queen Evans. We have carried on a marvelous relationship," Puryear said. "I was glad to do what I could for the school."

Alice D. McNeil president of Former Queens Chapter of WSSU Alumni Inc., presided over a luncheon in honor of the new queen Saturday before the WSSU Rams met the Fayetteville State Broncos at Bowman Gray Stadium.

"This luncheon is designed to welcome the new queen to our sisterhood. We can never disband the luncheon. It is to honor the queen and her court," McNeil said. "Both of our candidates have done a fine job of raising funds for the university."

The candidates helped to



Miss Alumni 2002-2003 Beverly Barnes Evans ('70) and Barbara Whiting Puryear ('68) of the court raised more than \$78,000 for WSSU student scholarships.

judge the dormitory contest for dorms were decorated to welcome the alumni back to the campus. Moore Hall placed first in the competition. The

Gladys Wilson ('79), a member of the Homecoming Alumni Committee, and chairman Yvette Hatcher of the Special Events Committee were elated that the queen and her court raised a much higher amount than was expected for only two candidates.

"They both worked extremely hard. The money will be used for scholarships for the students that the Scholarship Committee selects from a pool of candidates," Wilson said.

To be eligible to run for Miss Alumni, a candidate must be a graduate of Winston-Salem State University. The person must also be a current dues-paying member of the alumni association. The two candidates used various methods to raise funds. They encouraged alumni to update their memberships, held raffles and baby contests, sold ads in the souvenir booklet, got patrons and had a Little Miss Ram contest.

Wilson has worked with the Homecoming Committee for more than 10 years.

"I like to communicate with the alumni. We sponsor activities for the school such as the senior cookout in May, and we encourage alumni to be a part of the school and watch the school grow," Wilson said.

Come on, Vogue



Mozik, Winston-Salem State University's student modeling troupe, brought the runway to the school's homecoming parade Saturday. Here members of the group strike a pose.



Her meeting went well

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