

Not a voice

Oregon's first black woman senator won't seek reelection

PORTLAND, Ore. (The Skanner/ NNPA) - Oregon's first elected African-American female senator is leaving politics for a career in higher education.

Sen. Avel Gordly, of Portland, announced late last week that she will not seek reelection when her term ends in 2009.

Instead, the senator, who has championed quality education for all children, will join her alma mater, Portland State University, as an adjunct assistant professor in the Black Studies department. She will "focus on understanding and fostering the development of African-American servant leadership and public service."

Gordly, who recently gifted nearly 30 years of her personal papers to the PSU Library and the Department of Black Studies, quotes Nelson Mandela when talking about her move from politics to higher education: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," she quotes.

"I look forward to taking on new challenges, to seizing the opportunities that Portland State offers to expand the role of African Americans and other people of color in the legislative process and to develop a youth leadership institute to help Oregon groom and retain potential leaders for our state," Gordly said in a speech delivered on the Legislature's last day of the 2007 session.

A native of Portland, Gordly has served Oregonians in the public sphere for nearly two decades. She was elected to the Oregon State Senate in 1996 after serving three terms in the House of Representatives, and is serving her current term as the only Independent in the Senate.

Angola receives 60 Cuban doctors

(GIN/ NNPA) - Cuba has sent about 60 doctors to Angola to reinforce the African nation's crumbling health system and strengthen ties between the two Cold War allies, Angola's state-run news agency said.

The medical personnel include surgeons, pediatricians and other specialists and are expected to begin work at public hospitals in and around the Angolan capital this week, Angop reported.

Although it is sub-Saharan Africa's second largest oil producer and also rich in diamonds, Angola is struggling to finance the reconstruction of hospitals and other infrastructure devastated during a 27-year civil war that ended in 2002.

It has one of Africa's worst infant mortality rates, with about one-quarter of children dying before the age of 5.

Thousands of Cuban soldiers were stationed in Angola after the African nation won independence in 1975, helping the government in its civil war with rebels supported by the United States and South Africa.

HUD's FHA celebrates 73 years

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) celebrated the 73rd anniversary of its Federal Housing Administration (FHA) last week at HUD Headquarters. HUD Deputy Secretary Roy Bernardi joined Assistant Secretary for Housing-FHA Commissioner Brian Montgomery to discuss FHA Modernization, the importance of providing housing counseling programs to prospective homebuyers, and the need for Congress to pass legislation to let FHA make the American Dream a reality for more families.



Bernardi

"FHA has given millions of families the opportunity to pursue the dream of homeownership," said Deputy Secretary Bernardi. "Our goal is to continue our education and outreach efforts while also retooling and refining FHA to insure safer mortgages that will keep the dream alive for the next generation of homebuyers."

Since its inception in 1934, FHA has helped more than 34 million people become homeowners, making it the largest insurer of mortgages in the world. The 109th Congress introduced the Expanding American Homeownership Act in June 2006. This legislation would enable FHA to be an option for more underserved low- and moderate-income families so they can achieve the American Dream of homeownership.

Descendants of slaves and slave owners meet in family reunion

MACON, Ga. (AP) - It was a search that took Herman "Skip" Mason 30 years.

Two black families traced their genealogy back to Middle Georgia and found themselves finally meeting the descendants of their ancestors' slave owners at the site of the old McArthur family plantation in Bibb County.

"The ancestors in heaven are crying," said Mason, who is the great-great-grandson of Ellen Barton, a slave owned by the McArthurs. "We have no control over the past, but we have very much control over the future."

During Saturday's reunion of about 100 people, three families met whose paths can be traced to when Ellen Barton and Hearty Thomas were slaves owned by the McArthurs. The families now mostly live in the Atlanta area.

The families joined, prayed and sang hymns. They placed flowers on the graves of John and Harriet Pace McArthur, the only significant remnant of the plantation.

"It's a great historic occasion," said Amma Crum, 69, of Jackson, the great-great-granddaughter of John and Harriet McArthur.

Billy Crum, also of Jackson, said he felt a natural bond with the other families. "We all believe in God, right? Well, we're all brothers."

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Bond predicts 'grander victories'

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NNPA EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

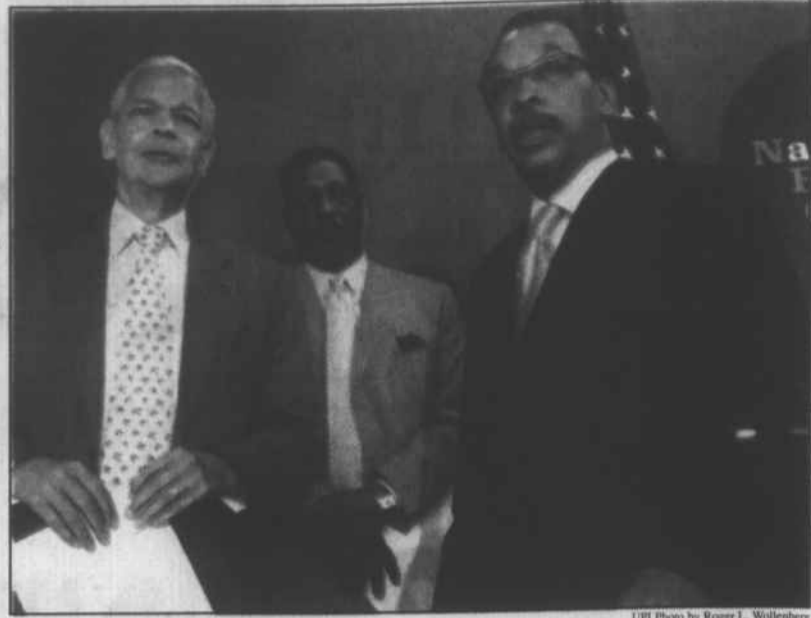
WASHINGTON

NAACP Chairman Julian Bond, while pointing to the ills of America that he says have been exacerbated by the administration of President George Bush, told the NAACP annual convention this week that the organization must now prioritize its own refueling and growth for "grander victories" over injustices.

"There is nothing more important for us to be doing right now than ending felony disenfranchisement elsewhere and registering voters. If you don't believe one vote counts, look at the Supreme Court!" Bond told the audience of thousands in prepared remarks at the 98th Annual NAACP Convention, themed "Power Beyond Measure", in Detroit.

"But there are other things we must do too. We must make strengthening our Branches and State Conferences a first priority, building membership where it is low and insisting on activism where Branches are moribund. We must expand our outreach and collaboration with our coalition partners - the time has long passed when we were the only soldiers in this fight. We cannot and should not go it alone."

The Detroit convention hosted by the nation's largest NAACP branch, comes on the heels of a national appeal



UPI Photo by Roger L. Wollenberg
NAACP Chairman Julian Bond, General Council Dennis Courtland Hayes and former President and CEO Bruce S. Gordon at news conference in 2006.

from Bond for the public to "show some love" to the NAACP by giving money.

Interim CEO Dennis Hayes, who stepped into leadership after former Verizon executive Bruce Gordon stepped down abruptly, has announced that the organization had to cut its Baltimore headquarters staff from 119 to 70 people. He said the organization had used more than

\$10 million in reserves over the past three years to cover shortfalls. Gordon cited disagreements with the organization's 64-member board as a reason for his resignation.

Despite financial woes, Bond, who kicked off the convention with his speech on Monday, said the NAACP's civil rights battles ahead underscore the continued need for the NAACP.

"As we find ourselves re-fighting battles we thought we had already won, we are reminded that the NAACP is as needed now as ever," he said, citing surveys that show increasing belief in the work of the NAACP.

"A 1993 leadership study by Brakeley, John Price Jones, Inc., showed 75 percent of Blacks believed the NAACP the leader among groups with civil rights, social justice and race relations agendas. An October 1995 US News and World Report poll

See NAACP on A5

MLK-style campaign seeks to lift L.A.'s poor

BY GENE C. JOHNSON JR.
THE WAVE

SOUTH LOS ANGELES (NNPA) - Clergy, activists and union leaders have announced that they have kicked off a 21st century version of the Poor People's Campaign, a movement begun 40 years ago by Martin Luther King Jr.

The new effort is an association of elected officials, grassroots organizations and clergy members geared to - in a similar movement initiated by Martin Luther King Jr. prior to his death in 1968 - ending poverty in Los Angeles County.

On Dec. 4, 1967, King announced his plans for a Poor People's Campaign, which he considered a second phase of the civil rights movement. Before his assassination six months later, King and the organization he led, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, set lofty goals, planning to lead thousands of protesters into Washington D.C. to demand congressional implementation of an "economic bill of rights." A key provision being a \$30 billion anti-poverty package that would have included a guaranteed annual income for the poor nationwide.

Tyrone Freeman, the SEIU-United Long Term Care Workers Union leader and SCLC-L.A. board chairman who is organizing the campaign, said the newly begun effort would work to provide job training and education and spur heightened civic participation. He said the movement is about lifting all people out of poverty, "no matter what creed or ethnicity, out of the mist of poverty and into the sunlight of prosperity."

Some of those organizations participating in the campaign include the National Black Business Council, Mothers In Action, Bethel AME Church, Community Coalition, the NAACP and The Organization US.

Inglewood Mayor Roosevelt Dorn said his city will take part in the campaign by passing a living wage ordinance and then establishing an employment office in the city within the next month.

"We recognize the greatest deterrent to crime in our streets is education and good-paying jobs," Dorn said. "We must provide

good-paying jobs for our young people and our seniors. That has been the problem; not creating enough opportunities. Living wages is the only way to go. We stand behind that."

Some of their programs include a SCLC-L.A. pre-apprenticeship program, a pre-employment prep class at the National Black Business Council and a petition drive, spearheaded by the Community Coalition, for the creation of a Construction Technology Academy at Dorsey High School.

The petition drive began about 18 months ago, said Marqueece Harris-Dawson, executive director of the Community Coalition. The idea behind that aspect of the movement: Providing local high school graduates the dual options of going directly into a trade apprenticeship program, or applying to college.

"We are sick and tired of vocational programs that

prepare people for minimum wage jobs," Dawson said. "You cannot live on a minimum wage job."

The campaign will also seek to hold L.A.'s mayor, city council, school board and other elected officials more directly accountable for their anti-poverty strate-

gies, said SCLC-L.A. president/CEO Eric Lee.

"The Poor People's Campaign will not rest until we hold everyone in this city accountable for the issues of poverty that are providing a poor quality of life to people who deserve better," Lee said. "We will

See L.A. on A5

Host an Exchange Student Today!

Anna from Germany, 16 yrs. Likes to play tennis, swim, loves to dance. Anna hopes to play American football and learn American slang while in the USA.

Pascal from France, 17 yrs. Loves the outdoors and playing soccer. Pascal's dream has been to spend time in America learning about our customs and attending American high school.

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