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A new vision for future

NAACP leaders stake out organization's mission

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Insisting that a "new day" has begun for the NAACP, Myrlie Evers-Williams and Kweisi Mfume used spirited oratory to encourage an end to "backbiting" and "foolishness" within the organization's ranks. Evers-Williams, speaking Sunday night moments after police and security officers stopped a demonstra-

tion by midwest members protesting the moving of their regional headquarters from Detroit to Baltimore, declared "We in this organization have work to do. We have no time for infighting."

Evers-Williams, the civil rights group's chairman and widow of slain civil right leader Medgar Evers, evoked his memory in accepting the mantle of leadership in difficult times. "On Medgar's blood I took a pledge that I would stand up and follow him," she said.

"I am woman and I can stand here and take the heart and I can take the fire, because I have been there. I have been through the fire. I have been through it all. I know the pain. I know the suffering."

"It is a New Day Begun and no one will turn us around."

Tell me women cannot lead. Tell me we cannot stand up and be strong. I don't need to be cherished. It would be nice, but I am here as your chairman until you put me out.

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Alexander makes a bold move

Lobbies, but fails to keep N.C. position

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Kelly Alexander Jr. tried to launch a "reform" movement Tuesday to force the NAACP national board to re-instate him this week as president of the N.C. conference of branches.



Alexander

"This is not about just me," Alexander told reporters and about two dozen supporters, most local branch members

wearing volunteer badges. "It is time for the rank and file to take action."

Alexander was suspended from the position on May 18, pending an audit of the state branch's financial records going back three years.

The suspension was extended for 60 days, since the initial audit was invalidated, partly because some records are missing, NAACP insiders said. New auditors were hired two weeks ago.

They also said Alexander has used an NAACP credit card since his suspension, including an \$18 charge at Victoria Secrets, an upscale women's lingerie shop in South Park Mall.

Alexander said the board had received false information about the availability of some records. He said The organization's bookkeeper and the auditor hired by the state chapter said all records are available. He admitted to mistakenly using the card, and saying he has repaid the organization.

At his press conference, Alexander blamed the suspen-

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NAACP Chairman Myrlie Evers-Williams encouraged members of the civil rights organization to end hostilities among themselves. The NAACP national convention ends today.

PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Youth will be served - in time

Future depends on young members

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The NAACP sees itself as an old organization, searching for a new identity.

In a fiery speech delivered on what was billed as youth night for the nation's oldest civil rights organization, the Rev. Jamal Bryant, National Youth Director, laid the foundation for the new NAACP.

"A lot of old NAACPers - yeah I will call it like I see it - are afraid of the new generation," Bryant told an enthralled crowd of 2,000.

"They say we are too young, too inexperienced...The fact is, if you don't take care of us today, there will be no NAACP tomorrow."

Bryant 26, who NAACP President and CEO, Kweisi Mfume calls the "architect of the superstructure of the new NAACP," brings a new sense of urgency to the organization whose status and influence has waned in the face of accusations of financial mismanagement. The NAACP has also been accused of ambivalence toward young people, who have traditionally been the foot soldiers of the organization.

"Time is filled with swift transitions," added Bryant. "We have forgotten what has brought us this far."

Bryant called for the NAACP to pick up the forgotten, the unwed mothers, those addicted to drugs and alcohol.

He condemned youth advisors for using the same young people year after year and neglecting the talents of those who need the organization the most.

"Business as usual," said Bryant, "is not acceptable."

And the NAACP's young people have brought whole heartedly into Bryant, Mfume and chair of the board of directors, Myrlie

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S. Africa's changing politics

Nationalist Party no longer factor

By Tom Cohen
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa - Most South Africans are experiencing something they've never known before - a government without the National Party.

During 48 years of icy oppression of blacks mixed with sometimes stunning progress, South Africa under the Afrikaner nationalists built the continent's strongest nation, pioneered heart transplants and made nuclear weapons.

They also implemented a political and social system so repugnant that it rallied unprecedented global opposition.

In the end, the most glorious achievement of the "Nats" - scrapping the apartheid system to free the struggling black majority - brought about their inevitable downfall.

For Afrikaners, the descendants of Dutch settlers and the backbone of National Party support, the moment mixes pragmatism with a twinge of nostalgia.

"On the one hand, I'm very glad about the way in which things have gone," said Ilse Schermers Griesel, 34, who came home in January after five years overseas. "On the other hand, being white and Afrikaans and South African, it's a sad thing. It's an era that's gone past."

The National Party came to power in 1948, exploiting Afrikaner nationalism in the political split that followed World War II, when British-descended whites supported the Western allies and Afrikaners backed Nazi Germany.

In ensuing years, they passed laws that entrenched their rule and codified the nation's white political dominance and discrimination against non-whites.

Under international pressure from sanctions and isolation, the Nats under former President F.W. de Klerk launched reforms in 1990 that led to the nation's first all-race election in 1994. As expected, power shifted to their longtime enemy - Nelson Mandela's African National Congress.

A power-sharing arrangement negotiated with the ANC gave the Nats six Cabinet seats, including a deputy president post for de Klerk. For two years, the unity government that also included the Zulu nationalist

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Grier Heights survey measures residents' wish list for local services

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Positive things are going on in Grier Heights.

In March, the Grier Heights Economic Foundation received a \$28,000 grant for community improvements.

The neighborhood will also soon boast state of the art renovations to the old Billingsville Elementary School.

The renovations, which will transform the school into a community center, featuring a branch office of C.W. Williams Health Center, satellite police office, a Mecklenburg County

youth and family services office, meeting rooms and offices for the community economic foundation.

As part of GHEF's commitment to serving the needs of Grier Heights residents, the organization, Grier Heights Presbyterian Church and the Mental Health Association are jointly sponsoring a survey of residents.

"The survey is a needs assessment for Grier Heights residents," said George Wallace, of GHEF. "It is an effort to address the needs of our residents. We ask basic questions about human service needs and what

they want in the new community center."

The Community Needs survey consists of 28 questions that gauge residents' feelings on housing, employment and human services needs.

According to Wallace, a percentage of the grant money is being used for the survey. Grier Heights residents were trained to administer the survey to insure accuracy and consistency. The group hopes that at least a third of Grier Heights' 1,200 households will participate in the survey.

"The survey is taking a little longer to complete than we thought," Wallace said. "It takes approximately one hour to take the exam. People are really sharing their feelings."

If you are a Grier Heights resident interested in taking or administering the survey, contact Wallace at 375-9566.



PHOTO/FRANK WILLIAMS

Greetings from the Chief Executive: President Clinton and Rep. Mel Watt (D-N.C.) share greetings Wednesday during the President's visit to Charlotte. Clinton addressed the NAACP national convention and Central Piedmont Community College.

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