

Protesters 'shopping for justice' in NYC

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his mother. Others at the head of the march were NAACP President Bruce Gordon, the activist and singer Harry Belafonte, U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel, the Rev. W. Franklyn Richardson and Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers.

"We're not coming to buy toys. We're not coming to buy trinkets. We're coming to shop for justice," Sharpton said at a pre-march rally that underscored the message: "Shopping for Justice" - a title he

bestowed upon the protest. "Unless Santa Claus is going to bring justice, we don't want Santa Claus coming down the chimney this year."

On Nov. 25, Bell, Benefield and Joseph Guzman, 31, were confronted by police as they left a bachelor party at about 4 a.m. Believing there was a gun among the three, five officers fired 50 rounds on Bell's car, that struck an undercover officer and an unmarked police van. All three men were unarmed.

The shooting is under investigation by Queens

District Attorney Richard Brown, who will present evidence to a grand jury.

Belafonte, the renowned Calypso singer and international civil rights activist, spoke to applause and cheers about the history of and present forms of racism in the United States.

"It is indeed a sad statement that we have to, after 300 years, still be gathering

to query, look for and demand justice," Belafonte said. "Racism is the root of most of the evils that ruin this country."

"I have nephews, brothers and grandsons," said retired health care worker Ada

Leamon, "If this continues to happen, nobody is safe in the streets with the mentality (police) have."



Sharpton

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House panel to urge joint venture

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areas are not being able to retain students until the 12th grade," she said.

Dropouts impact North Carolina's economy, educators and business leaders

agree. a student who leaves school without a diploma has less than a 50 percent chance of landing a job. For African Americans, the likelihood plummets to 25 percent. Jobs taken by dropouts also earn

less than they did 20 years ago and studies have shown a lack of education is a key factor in crime and welfare dependency.

"When we talk about preparing our citizens to new technology, we're losing them," Parson said. "It makes for a very bleak future for North Carolina."

Second Ward grant

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some aid to continue this mission, in the form of a \$15,000.00 check from the Drakeford Company.

"This is an early Christmas present from a member of a younger generation who values preservation and quality of life in his home town," said Vermelle Diamond Ely, museum executive director and archivist, who knew of the holiday surprise ahead of time.

In addition to studying dropout rates, the committee is also expected to weigh in on whether the state should raise the compulsory age to remain in school to 18.

Bobby Drakeford, owner of the Drakeford Company, is a native Charlottean who knows some of the history of Second Ward, which inspired him to lend his support.

"My mother was a graduate of Carver College," said the Developer. "I have a natural interest in Second Ward."

Outside of personal interest, Drakeford also had professional interest in aiding the groups' preservation efforts.

"I was involved with a development in First Ward that led to the demolition of four homes (that) some asserted were historic," he said.

Drakeford added when the information was first brought to him; he pledged his support to try to save the homes.

"I offered to give them to a non-profit group...to move them and preserve them. There were no takers," explained Drakeford. "If no one could move them, I would support an organization whose efforts were to preserve history in Center City."

Though the houses were demolished, Drakeford kept his word with his donation.

"Virtually all of my development projects are within historic neighborhoods where I do work very hard to preserve the historic integrity of the community," said Drakeford.

"Bobby has an intuitive knowledge of the lingering effects of the wide path cut by urban renewal and he brings an understanding of the deep, emotional value that homes have - both to individuals and to the larger community," said Ely. "He strives to honor the past as he goes about his successful work and understands that knowing our history can help us all build a better community."

The foundation has worked to build an archive of black history images for their on-site archive, the Robinson-Spangler Room of the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, and "An African American Album: The Black Experience in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County" as well as "An African American Album: Vol. 2."

The foundation provided 16 mm film footage from their archive which became the visual backdrop of a documentary "A Colored School" first broadcast on UNC-TV. The foundation also published "Charlotte, North Carolina" as part of The Black America Series through Arcadia Press. The organization has supported research for local and national groups including the Behind the Veil Project of the Duke Center for Documentary Studies.

The funds from this grant will help support two foundation projects this winter and spring:

- To continue work on a digital initiative on the Brooklyn neighborhood; a nearly ten year effort to preserve and tell the story of the lost neighborhood of Second Ward through original, materials, media and digital techniques.
- To support the filming of the three remaining desegregation pioneers of Charlotte school integration. The footage will be part of a new documentary and will include the story of Charlotte photographers who covered those events. In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of school desegregation in America, the alumni group plans to have materials available on the web by September 2007.

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