

Black influence gains in politics

Among the encouraging political developments in the South during 1970—a year in which such developments were not overabundant—was the fact that it's getting harder and harder to keep track of black candidates and officeholders in the South. Just a few short years ago, when black candidates were emerging in large numbers on the Southern political scene, the candidacy of one black man or woman, even for a minor office, made front-page news across the state.

Nowadays, however, black candidates are a standard part of the region's politics. Blacks can and do run for local offices and get elected with little being said about it beyond the candidate's immediate community. Consequently, it's getting more and more difficult to locate and identify black candidates—a fact that has to mean the South's political health, thanks to black voters, is improving.

On the basis of the best information available to the Voter Education Project, there were approximately 370 black candidates running in the 11 states of the Old Confederacy. This includes incumbents, part nominees without opposition, write-in candidates, blacks running against other blacks—in short, any black running for a public office in a contest decided by vote of the people. The total does not include candidates for political party offices, such as the various Democratic and Republican city, county, district and state executive committees.

Of these 370, the VEP staff has been able to identify about 110 winners. Again, this includes incumbents those running without opposition and blacks who

defeated blacks. In 1968 general elections, for the sake of comparison, there were 280 black candidates in the region, of whom more than 100 were elected.

Southern blacks continued to capture some significant offices in 1970, although they failed to raise the level of office-holding to the congressional and state level. George Wallace's Alabama, ironically the only state in the nation with a black sheriff, now will have four. Elected to join Macon County's Lucius D. Amerson were black sheriffs in Greene, Bullock and Lowndes counties. In Greene County, William McKinley Branch was elected probate judge, becoming the first of his race in Ala. to win this locally important post.

Eight black county school board members were elected in Mississippi. In Hancock County, Ga., a black majority was elected to the school board, giving blacks control of that county in the same way that blacks previously had gained control of the county government machinery in Greene County. Arkansas supplied two additional mayors of a biracial town. Two Macon Countians won seats, giving Alabama its first black legislators since Reconstruction. They will represent Gov. Wallace's home district in east central Ala. South Carolina elected three black legislators, the first in the state since 1901.

The highest level, in terms of power and authority, remains the state legislators, the sheriffs, and the various local judges. The big prizes—the congressional seats and state-wide offices—continue to elude Dixie's black politicians.

Hamilton's Statement

It is appropriate that this press conference following my departure from state service should be held under the auspices of the Urban League of Portland. It was 16 years ago around this time of the year that Urban League officials persuaded me to close my law office to accept an appointment as an assistant attorney general for "two to three" years. I have chosen this mean and opportunity to report on my three year term which somehow got extended to sixteen.

Some of you have expressed concern over the fact that I have declined to make a public statement before leaving office amidst public speculation concerning the circumstances and reason for my resignation. I thought it impudent to make a public statement on this matter while still on the state pay roll processing cases for the Labor Commission as my client and the attorney and the attorney general as my boss. A full and truthful statement would have reduced my effectiveness on the job after giving my 30 days notice. Any other statement would not only have sounded false, but could have placed me in a position where I would not have been able to speak truthfully even after leaving the state pay roll.

It is not my purpose to attack or discredit any public official for the purpose of doing so. I have no hostility toward any of the public officials with whom I worked for the last 16 years. I do intend to be candid with you on all matters touching upon my reason for resigning my job as assistant attorney general of the State of Oregon. If what I have to report results in embarrassment to anyone, I apologize ahead of time as I prepare to tell it as I think it is.

During my 16 years in office I served under four (4) different governors and two different attorneys general. During the entire period of time my clients were the Wage and Hour Commission, the Apprenticeship and Training Council and the Bureau of Labor. Much of my time was spent on Wage collection and Civil Rights laws enforced by the Bureau of Labor. During my stay the Bureau of Labor has conducted a fairly vigorous program in these fields.

Both Tom McCall and Lee Johnson have expressed interest in having Civil Rights program transferred to their office. Em-

ployee lobbyists have worked with success to reduce the effectiveness of the Wage collection program over the past several years. So successful have their actions been with state budgeting officials, the wage collection program is now fighting for its very existence.

The uncertainty involved in these circumstances alone would be sufficient to look around for employment elsewhere, but this was not the cause for my departure. The conflicts which have arisen between my boss, Lee Johnson, and my client, Norm Nilsen, with me sitting as a buffer and shock absorber would be sufficient to look elsewhere for employment, but this alone was not the cause for my departure. The attorney general's incredible style of operating his office would be sufficient cause for leaving my job, but this was not my sole reason for leaving.

Perhaps it would be accurate to say my reasons for leaving is all of these and more. The best way to summon my reason for leaving is to say "I reached the conclusion that the sacrifice my family and I were paying for my remaining in office was not justified by my impact on office operation".

Statement by Belton Hamilton
December 22, 1970

Cascade Center Winter Term

Registration for winter term classes at PCC's Cascade Center in Northeast Portland will open at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, January 6.

Courses are offered in Anthropology, Art, Biology, Business Education, Economics, Geography, History, the Humanities, Journalism, Personal Health, Literature, Mathematics, Philosophy, Physical Science, Political Science, Psychology, Radiologic Technology, Reading and Writing, Sociology and Speech.

Many are available in both day and evening schedules.

For information, call 244-6111.

250 Black Troopers

When George Wallace was trying to win back the Alabama governorship from incumbent Albert Brewer last spring, a spot announcement heard on some radio stations in the state implored the voter to consider the prospect of his wife being stopped on the highway late at night by a state trooper who turned out to be black.

Wallace won the election, and the white voters presumably will not have to worry about any black troopers. But then, they didn't have to worry anyway. There are no black state policemen in Alabama.

In fact, there are at least 10 states that have no black troopers, and only five states have as many as 10.

California, with 80 blacks and 174 other minority officers, leads the list. California's total force numbers 5,388. Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland are the only other states having more than 10 black patrolmen. The numbers in those states range between 13 and 23. Oklahoma has 102 officers (most of them Indians) who belong to a racial minority other than black. Texas (50) and Colorado (17) are the only other states reporting double-figure totals in that category.

Only four states—Arizona, Montana, New Hampshire and New Mexico—yielded no information for the survey.

The states reporting no black troopers are not confined to the South. The 10 known to have none include Idaho, Iowa, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming, as well as Alabama. In addition, 10 states have only one black officer each: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Eight states in addition to California have state police forces numbering in excess of 1,000.

Some black officers point out that state police forces have been exclusively white for so long that it is difficult to convince blacks of the opportunity available. Other spokesmen say their pay scale is not high enough to be competitive. In some states, hiring is handled by the civil service, and that method apparently limits the police in their efforts to attract minority-group members.

Discriminatory hiring practices have been charged against police in at least two states. In Mississippi, two black men filed suit in federal court this fall, saying they sought to apply for positions in the highway patrol but were refused the application forms.

Massachusetts, the state's Commission Against Discrimination filed a legal complaint against the state police last month, charging them with a complex of discriminatory practices. All 812 members of the Massachusetts police force are white. Commissioner William F. Powers, acknowledging "an unfortunate record" of minority hiring in the past, pledged a concerted effort to change the picture. "We shall do everything we possibly can...to bring in qualified minority personnel," he said. "We need them, and we want them. I want this to be clear." A comprehensive recruiting program is now under way.

Accelerated efforts to increase the numbers of state policemen from minority groups may bring some change in the picture, but effective recruiting techniques are at a premium. The Illinois spokesman, wrote: "If you have any suggestions as to how to more effectively attract qualified black men into police work we would like very much to hear them."

Under good timber management, three to five times the normal number of timber crops can be grown, says Georgia-Pacific Corp.

Santa's Learning About Accessories

Santa may not be up-to-date on the latest feminine fashion news, but one thing he knows for sure is that the women on his list are very fashion aware indeed.

When he steps up to the accessory counters of local stores, he may be just a bit bewildered. Plenty of helpful information will be awaiting him there.

Still, a little homework can come in handy. Here's a rundown of this season's fashion highlights, covering her favorite accessories.

Belts, in a variety of leather textures, are generally wider and bolder. Hardware trim enlivens sporty belts, while evening styles may be bejeweled or printed.

A "something different" fashion gift could be a supple suede sash, fringed, beaded or otherwise trimmed.

Scalloped edges, cutouts, piping, flaring and fringes are details being featured on the latest leather glove styles.

Handbags in leather and suede range from pouches, and clutches to satchels and carryalls, with swingy shoulder bags leading the way.

Festive scarves in many sizes and lengths focus on posey and patterned prints, sometimes with gay little border fringes.

Knitted and crocheted shawls may wrap up Christmas with an array of colors and styles, some border trimmed or fringed.

Hip accessories for young moderns include headbands, dog collars and wide bracelets with new overtones.

Fashion jewelry incorporates pewter, copper, handcarved wood and silvertone for creating bibs, chokers, pendants, rings, earrings and bracelets with new overtones.

For ski there are head warmers and furry helmet hats; for glamour, fur hats and fun

fur hats and for day and anytime there are knitted hats that come with long matching scarves.



MRS. LILLIE SIMMON

Basic Black facts

BASIC BLACK IS IN.

And the basic fact is, Portland Observer women readers spent 35 per cent more on clothing than white women with the same income. They buy half again as many evening dresses.

And their fashion ideas don't come from Vogue, Mademoiselle or Seventeen. 85% don't read them.

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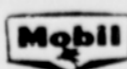
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