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Black Caucus holds Convention

by Lenwood G. Davis

The Oregon Black Caucus held the first Oregon Black Political Convention at the Portland State University Educational Center at 2611 N.E. Union Ave., on June 30 and July 1st. Registration of delegates was held Friday afternoon from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Shortly thereafter, the convention convened with the Black National Anthem being sung by Yvonne Brown. Next, Rev. James D. Manning delivered the invocation.

Eddie Robertson, Political Convention Chairman then introduced Lee P. Brown, Presiding Chairman, who gave the welcoming address. He declared:

"On behalf of the Oregon Black Caucus, I extend to you greetings and a warm welcome to the Oregon Black Political Convention.

We are coming together at a time of great crisis. Yet our coming together is in itself a sign of tremendous promise. Indeed, Oregon history is being made this weekend. This Convention represents the surging of a new Black political awareness. It reflects not only a national Black movement, but also an independent Black spirit for those of us in Oregon.

I would hope that as we meet to develop a Black agenda for Oregon, we keep in mind the economic, cultural and spiritual depression of Black people. We must address ourselves to that degradation. We must move toward the development of a society that represents our interest as Black people. To do this, we must organize and unify to advance the society we want."

Brown gave the historical background of Blacks earliest arrival in the State of Oregon. He stated that the first Black man came to Oregon in 1788. He declared that Blacks have



Imamu Vernon Sukumu

played a significant role in Oregon's history. Yet we are still not reaping the benefits of our forefather's labor. Therefore the time has come for Black people in Oregon to unite and face the challenge of the future in Oregon. Since we have been part of Oregon's past, likewise we will be part of its future. He concluded, in part, by surmising:

"So, Brothers and Sisters, let us consider issues and programs. Let us join together in nation building. Let us seize the time, for time is ours."

Kay Jernigan, Convention Co-Chairwoman, introduced the Executive Committee: Lee P. Brown, Chairman of the Oregon Black Caucus; Ocie W. Trotter, Vice Chairman; John Toran, Treasurer; Julia Robertson, Secretary.

Ocie W. Trotter gave a brief history of the origin of the Oregon Black Caucus. A group of Black people met at Mt. Angel in December of last year and began to formulate

plans for a Black Caucus. Between December and now, the founders' dreams have come true. Trotter sees the Caucus as an organization that is continuing to grow and expand its activities.

Bill Denton, Membership Chairman of the Oregon Black Caucus, spoke of the different types of memberships open to Blacks and gave the justifications for the different types of memberships. The essence of Denton's remarks was that if the Oregon Black Caucus is to become a viable organization it must have broad support from all facets of the Black community. Therefore, different memberships must be made available to include all members of the Black community.

Denton verged from his prepared text, and like a Southern Baptist Minister, became very emphatic and emotional, and drove his point home by concluding that he will do anything in his power to help his young Black brothers.

After he finished, he received a standing ovation. He had captured the mood of the audience with his stirring deliverance.

The program continued with the keynote speaker being introduced by Lee P. Brown, Imamu Vernon Sukumu, West Coast Chairman of the Congress of African People and West Coast Co-Convenor for the National Black Political Convention. He cited the role of the civil rights organizations and how they must change their philosophies and become more Black oriented. The speaker based his address on four main topics: Public offices; community organization; coalition and disruption. He elaborated on each of the above areas.

Sukumu also compared the plight of Blacks in Portland with those in other areas of the country. He also received a standing ovation.

John Toran, chairman of Agenda and Resolution Committees, gave the delegates instructions on the different committee meetings and what was expected from each. The different committees met well into the wee hours of the mornings putting together an agenda and drawing up resolutions to be presented Saturday.

Registration continued on Saturday morning between 8:00 - 11:30 a.m., with a continental breakfast being served.

The General Session started shortly after 9:30 a.m. John once again made announcements and gave instructions to the delegates. The different committees continued to meet until 12:30, when the convention terminated for lunch. At 1:45, the afternoon sessions began after the Black National Anthem was led by Reverend Ellis Casson. Between 1:45

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Caucus asks end to lawlessness

The Congressional Black Caucus asked for a meeting with all members of President Nixon's Cabinet to "discuss their responsibility" for what was described in four days of hearings as "rampant lawlessness within the government."

Representative Ronald V. Dellums (D.-Calif.) chairman of the hearings, said each of the dozens of government agencies mentioned will also be asked to explain formally the accusations made against them and to take corrective action "within 90 days."

The caucus is "considering initiating lawsuits in those instances for which we determine there is no other recourse," Dellums said.

"Nobody ever said democracy is easy," he told witnesses on the final day. "It is totally impossible when the overwhelming mass of American people do not have the information to make sophisticated decisions."

Organized by Dellums' staff, the hearings looked what seemed to be an unending torrent of complaints that government agencies sabotage the rights of the poor and minorities, with no recourse available for those who get hurt.

The complaints touched virtually every agency of the federal government and its local operating arms, from justice to food stamps and education.

And through it there seemed to be a feeling that although some problems stem from malicious employees, even

more are caused by officials who find it expedient to serve business interests and higher government officials rather than people with no power.

Testimony varied widely. There were many charges of outright dereliction of duty similar to the documented one that the Agriculture Department refused to spend at least \$500 million authorized by Congress to feed the hungry, even though malnutrition is still widespread in some areas.

Others were more subtle, like the accusations of Dr. Sidney Wolfe of Washington's health research group.

Wolfe said the asbestos industry forced the Labor Department to back away from a recommended warning label stating: "Fanger, contains asbestos fibers... may cause asbestosis and cancer."

"In other words, industry had convinced the Department of Labor that they don't want to let any more workers know they're being exposed to cancer," Wolfe said.

Representative Parren Mitchell (D.-Md.) said the thousands of examples in oral and written testimony "have been overwhelmingly conclusive in their indictment of federal officials for failing to carry out their congressionally mandated responsibilities."

"We heard during these four days how department after department simply refuses to obey the law," he said, and the costs -- "those which can be estimated" -- he found "staggering."



Leonardo Woods

Boys Choir tours Hawaii

Leonardo Woods, 11 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. William Woods, will tour Hawaii with the Portland Oregon Boys Choir.

The choir, made up of 20 boys ages 8 to 12, is dedicated to the development of music appreciation, individual expression and self-discipline. The boys perform as accomplished musicians and have attained acclaim as one of the finest boys singing groups in the nation.

The group was organized in 1969 by its director, Joseph L. Correa.

The boys practice four

hours a week and study music two to four hours each week. They are required to keep a school grade point average of 3.5. The choir also provides social activities for the boys and their families.

The choir was honored earlier this year by an invitation to become one of only 14 boys choirs in the United States to send a delegate to the International Boys Choir Congress in the Netherlands.

The choir will appear on the Islands of Hawaii, Maui and Oahu, from July 27 to August 9.

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On being a delegate to the Democratic Convention

by Gladys McCoy

Happiness is participating in the 1972 Presidential Election!

It was a very thrilling and rewarding experience to have been elected a delegate to the National Democratic Convention. To have served on the Platform Committee with our next U. S. Senator, Wayne Morse, was a bonus.

My experience on the Platform Committee gave me new hope that the democratic process could work. As I watched people from tremendously diverse political persuasions work together, having been pulled together under the new rules of the National Democratic Committee, new ex-

pectations were raised and realized. There was a sense of commitment of the goal of defeating the Nixon administration. Compromises were worked and minority reports returned when feelings ran high on certain issues. There was respect and enthusiasm when the 20 years olds, able to "think on their feet" pushed hard for issues of importance to their peers. The 60 years olds, former congressmen, farmers, retired teachers, and homemakers were ably represented. A solidarity plank adopted by the blacks and Chicanos was accepted by the entire committee for the record. These were the in-

cidents that renewed my hope and faith in a process that can sometimes be terrible slow and painful!

What of the issues? I believe the issues were real and of vital concern to all of us. There were presented as a result of some twelve hearings held in every region of the country. They represented the input of citizens who testified before Hearings Officers from the Platform Committee and other community leaders who helped. Former Senators Wayne Morse and Maureen Neuberger served as Hearing Officers at the San Francisco hearing June 12, on Corporate Responsibility and Consumer Interests. It is a good platform. It can be characterized as a "People's Platform", speaking to the rights and securities of every group. I believe there may be two criticisms that could be leveled at the platform. One might be the lack of a separate plank devoted entirely to financing -- on the federal, state and local levels, as well as spending for the political process itself. Aside from the fact that many of us have not felt the political process served our best interest, some of us have been deterred from participating by the cost of involvement beyond the precinct level. If the process is to work democratically we must correct this deficiency in order to insure broad representation. The other criticism might be that there was not any overt effort maintaining balance between income and expenditures at the Federal level. However, the major candidates think they can win with this platform. That is important.

The platform planks dealt with:

- (1) Jobs, Prices and Taxes
- (2) Rights, Power and Social Justice

- (3) Cities, Communities, Counties and Environment
- (4) Education
- (5) Crime, Law and Justice
- (6) Farming and Rural Life
- (7) Foreign Policy
- (8) The People and the Government

The work, however, is not over. The convention must vote on these planks as well as the minority reports which often were rejected items in the regular planks. The minority reports will include such items as busing for school desegregation, abortions, the \$6,500 guaranteed annual income for a family of four and tenant control of federally owned and subsidized housing. In accepting the minority reports there was general consensus in the group that while we may not have agreed with the report, in fairness and with keeping with the spirit of the reform rules each position should enjoy open discussion (part of the slow, painful process). At the convention the overriding factor will be "will it help the Democratic Party candidate and will it help to defeat Nixon."

Two events of value to me personally during the committee meetings was the opportunity to co-chair hearings on the quality of life for the Washington, D.C. area and to serve as one of ten delegates at the hearing before the National Association of Counties.

Because the substantive changes that affect our lives come through the political process, I would encourage greater participation in politics. The reform rules adopted by the National Democratic Committee promise that broad representation and involvement can be meaningful and productive.

Brooks attends integration conference

James O. Brooks, a Vice-President of the Irvington Community Association and an Executive Board member of National Neighbors, attended that organization's national meeting in Baltimore.

Residents of interracial neighborhoods from 36 cities met recently in Baltimore to plan practical help for embattled changing neighborhoods faced with problems of exploitation, apathy, and the threat of decay.

The National Neighbors conference responded enthusiastically to a proposal by the staff director of the United States Commission on Civil Rights that multiracial living be subsidized by cash payments to families making housing moves that would increase integration.

Delegates to the conference also adopted a self-help program of a nationwide network of task forces to develop information and resources that can help local neighborhoods maintain viable multiracial communities.

John Buggs, director of the federal government's civil rights agency, told the group assembled at Morgan State College June 9, "We're not winning. We're losing the fight against spreading ghettos," and suggested that a "massive dose of corrective action" is needed to reverse the trend toward an increasingly polarized and segregated society. He proposed that the federal government adopt a plan to pay a white family \$1,000 in cash for moving to a neighborhood with a 15 to 20 percent black population and a black family \$1,000 for moving to a neighborhood only 8 to 10 percent black. His plan would pay increasing subsidies as the degree of pioneering increased, until a white family moving into an all-black neighborhood would be paid \$5,000 and a black

family venturing into an all neighborhood would also get \$5,000.

Buggs said the program would cost about \$1.75 billion to pay half a million families taking advantage of the offer, an amount he described as less than one twentieth the cost of keeping the war active in Vietnam.

The task forces on problems faced by multiracial communities was proposed by a national committee charged

with finding ways to answer the cry for help from local groups.

"Just as all of our neighborhoods have made community self-help into a potent force, so our communities will now help each other," said Ruth Steele, vice-president of National Neighbors and chairman of the committee. "What worked in Portland, Oregon, will probably work in Carol City, Florida, because the one

thing we have learned about neighborhoods like ours is that they face the same problems in this country no matter where they are.

"Our job now is to find out what has worked and who can help. We will make that information available to all the grass-roots organizations trying to do something about unethical real estate practices and the need for quality inter-

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Happiness is being a member of the Portland State University Foundation Board according to this cheerful foursome pictured at a recent meeting of the Board hosted by PSU President Gregory Wolfe. From left are George Christian of Christian Electric Co.; Architect David Pugh, president of the Board and resident partner of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and national vice president of the American Institute of Architects; PSU President Wolfe, and Joseph Edgar, secretary-treasurer of the Teamsters Union. The PSU Foundation, on which Edgar and Christian are new Board members, is a community-wide organization which supports activities as well as scholarly and cultural programs at the University.

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