

Operation Big Vote brings voter participation

The impact of the visible, overt, Black presence on the political machinery of this country alters, forever, the weight and meaning of the Black presence in the world.

- James Baldwin

With this statement in mind Operation Big Vote, a nationwide non-partisan voter participation campaign was launched in 1976 by the National Coalition of Black

Voter Participation, a coalition of 84 national member organizations.

This year fifty areas were targeted, located in 17 states with 70 per cent of the Black electorate.

Although not included in the 50 target areas, Portland organizations formed an Operation Big Vote and on the evening of November 4th declared victory.

Bob Boyer, president of A. Philip Randolph Institute, a member

organization, expressed satisfaction with the heavier than usual turnout, especially in light of projected voter apathy and lack of participation.

Conservatism swept the nation, carrying Ronald Reagan to the presidency; defeating several targeted "liberal" Democrats and making a Republican majority in the Senate. This fortells difficult times ahead for minorities and those traditionally excluded. Although a

sense of complete disaster pervades this community, a quick poll revealed the following bright spots:

- Ron Wyden, a man who has been responsive to human problems, was elected to Congress.

- Dave Frohnmayer defeated Multnomah County District Attorney Earl Haas for State Attorney General.

- Carrie Miller, former president of Portland Federation of Teachers,

joins the Multnomah County Commission.

- Measure 8, providing for the sale of bonds to build new prison facilities, was defeated.

- Measure 6, a limitation on property tax, was defeated.

- Representative Wally Priestley, District 16, retained his seat with a comfortable margin of 900 votes.

- State Senator Jim Gardner, who was challenged by a malicious

campaign by his opponent, retains his position.

- The Black community has a new State Senator, Rod Monroe, elected to the seat vacated by Steve Kafoury. Monroe is largely unknown in this community.

- A moratorium was passed, preventing the building of additional nuclear plants until the federal government provides safe waste deposit."

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City, feds plan new 'PMSC' agency

A committee has been meeting for several months to develop plans for a new city-wide community action program (CAP) to receive and distribute federal funds from the Community Services

Administration (formerly the war on poverty). Portland's CSA funds were received through the Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee until two and one-half years ago, when PMSC was closed.

The closure of PMSC followed years of controversy over the agency which always had a high percentage of Black employees and had two Black directors, Mayfield K. Webb and Cleveland Gilcrease. Also, Blacks made up a large portion of the board of directors.

Over the years the agency caught the wrath of local politicians and the press, who alleged misuse and abuse of federal funds. Multiple audits and investigations failed to produce any evidence to support the allegations. PMSC supporters charged that the allegations and the continuous conflict within the board were racist reactions to the fact that a Black director handled millions of dollars free from city or country control.

Shortly following the resignation of Cleveland Gilcrease, the program was closed. CSA funds were distributed through community organizations: PACT, Inc., in southeast; North Community Action Council, Inc., in North Portland; the Albina Action Center in

northeast; and the Urban Indian Center. Within the past month the Albina Action Center has been defunded and closed with money for programs in its area distributed elsewhere.

In October of 1979, the CSA Region X office in Seattle organized a planning committee to begin to develop a new city-wide CAP agency. Due to change of regulation this is necessary if Portland is to continue receiving funds. A proposal for a private, non-profit corporation called the "Community Action Agency of Portland (CAAP)" will be presented at five public meetings and the City Council will hold a formal hearing in December 1980.

As proposed, the agency will "provide long term planning for the poor; it can coordinate CSA and related programs; it can mobilize resources on behalf of the poor; it can advocate for improvement of service delivery and systematic change; and it can act as a focal point for developing ways to help the poor out of the cycle of poverty."

A board of between 18 and 28 is projected, made up of three groups: public officials; representatives of low-income people (not necessarily poor themselves); private organizations including business, unions, churches, etc.

Representatives of the poor will be selected by the existing CAP agencies - PACT, North

Community Action Council, etc. the City will select the public officials. Those two groups - the officials and the representatives of the poor - will select the private organizations. The organizations selected will choose their own representatives.

The public meetings to discuss the proposals follows: November 6th, Sunnyside School; 3421 SE Salmon; November 11th, University Park Community Center, 9009 Foss;

November 12th, King Neighborhood Center; November 13th, Washington/Monroe High School (Spanish and English). All meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

The CAA planning committee represents: Burnside Projects, Inc., COSSPO (Committee of Spanish Speaking People of Oregon); North Community Action Council, Inc.; PACT, Inc.; Urban Indian Council and the Urban League of Portland.

Jenkins joins postal board

Timothy L. Jenkins of Washington, D.C., Chairman of the MATCH Institution, an international management consultant firm, was appointed to the Postal Service Board of Governors by President Jimmy Carter and confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. Jenkins graduated Magna Cum Laude from Howard University. He graduated from Yale University Law School with special recognition for research and advocacy.

Prior to becoming Chairman of the MATCH Institution, Jenkins was a partner in two international law firms.



TIMOTHY L. JENKINS

NAACP sponsors conference

"Freedom isn't free", said Lucious Hicks IV, President of the Portland Branch, NAACP, "and needless to say, we are facing some trying times in the Northwest. Civil rights violations are escalating. Police practices are still not what we want them to be. We are continually fighting for quality education in our neighborhood schools. Something needs to be done to propel us further down the road toward freedom."

It is primarily for this reason that the Portland Branch, NAACP, is sponsoring a Northwest Regional Conference on Civil Rights.

It will be held in Portland on November 28th and 29th. Participation of civil rights leaders from

across the nation is expected.

The purpose of the conference is to brainstorm solutions to the increasing disregard for civil rights for Blacks and other pressing issues.

Workshops being designed include: Civil Rights reports, police arrests and citizen's rights and responsibilities, and marketing the NAACP.

"As we observe shifting attitudes among whites, it becomes imperative that we develop a broader base of support to address crucial issues. This conference provides a timely opportunity for us to get it together before it's too late," Hicks said. "It's not easy but you can help."



C. Don Vann smiles at his wife, Roberta, the "Golden Girl" of Portland Chapter AKA Sorority. Please see page 5.

(photo: Richard J. Brown)

Thoughts on Black, Hispanic Commissions

By Nyewusi Askari

Interest continues to be expressed in the two Commissions established by Governor Vic Atiyeh recently. Executive Orders have been signed creating a Commission for Black Affairs and a Commission for Hispanic Affairs.

The establishment of the Commissions is the culmination of a three-month study prepared for the Governor by the Governor's Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs. This committee was comprised of five Blacks and five Hispanics. It was chaired by the Governor's Director of Affirmative Action, Kay Toran.

To gather more information about the history, purpose and expectations of the two new Commissions, Kay was interviewed by the Observer.

Observer: Why did Governor Vic Atiyeh appoint the Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs to study the need for the two Commissions?

Toran: The need and interest in special Commissions to address the problems of special groups in Oregon have been evident for many years. In 1964, an Executive Order was issued establishing a Commission for Women. This Commission continues to function with funds appropriated by the legislature.

In 1975, the legislature created an Indian Service Commission by statute, also with an appropriation of funds.

In 1977, a bill was introduced to the legislative assembly that would have created a Commission to address the needs of Blacks in the State of Oregon. This bill died in

committee. Again in 1979, another bill was introduced to the legislature that would have created a Commission on Black Affairs. A similar bill was introduced to create a Commission on Hispanic Affairs. The language in the two bills stated that the two Commissions would study the past and current legal, economic, educational, social and political status of Blacks and Hispanics. Both bills died in committee during the waning days of the legislature.

Because Governor Atiyeh recognizes the special problems of minorities in this state, he decided to respond to the desire expressed by the Hispanics and Blacks for Commissions by appointing a special committee to conduct a study to determine the common and unique problems of each group and (Please turn to Page 2 Col 4)

Is television closed to Blacks?

By Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

Television: it's the new glamor field. Everybody wants to be on the tube, even bonafide actors are trying to get jobs as newscasters, talk show host and news readers. Everybody wants in, but what about Blacks? Is there a conspiracy to keep us off the air? asked Loyd Gite, news reporter and anchor person for Detroit TV station WGPR-TV62 in a recent article in the Black Collegian Magazine.

According to recent statistics compiled by the Federal Communications Commission, Blacks have made no advancement in the television industry over the past two years. In 1978 and 1979, minorities (Blacks, Spanish surnamed Americans, Asians, and American Indians) represent a little less than 14% of those employed by commercial stations around the U.S.

The figure also remained the same

for non-commercial stations in 1978 and 1979. Twelve per cent of those working at non-commercial stations were minority group members. The FCC reported that for the first time since 1971 minorities made no advancement in the television industry.

Of the 658 commercial stations reporting employment reports to the Federal Communications Commission, 101 (15%) had no minorities on their full-time staff. Of the 161 non-commercial stations reporting, 37 (23%) had no minorities on their full-time staffs.

Max Robinson, anchorman for ABC World News Tonight, said "the nonadvancement of minorities in the television industry is understandable. It is reflected in the total mood of the country. Blacks are sort of standing still, period, in this country and have been for the past few years. Blacks have not made advancement in a number of industries, not just television."

What type of people are commercial stations looking for?

John Hansen, for KPTV-12 station manager agreed that experience is "a key factor in obtaining a job as an anchor person or news reporter. A college degree without experience is not worth much. Degrees are helpful because the student gains a sound base in economics, politics, and other disciplines that will give them a strong understanding of the world. Thus, making that individual a more effective communicator of philosophy and ideals."

Where does one get experience?

After graduation, the person with a Communications Degree should pursue the smaller television markets like Hastings, Nebraska, Bend, Oregon and other markets that are short on Blacks. Once the on-air experience is gained, then it is a lot easier to attack the top twenty-five television market.

Pamela Smitty, a west coast

reporter agreed that it's becoming more difficult for Blacks to break into television but she says Black women seem to have a easier time breaking the ice than a Black man.

"Black men have a harder time getting on the air," she said, "Because Black men are still feared and despised by white male managers. White managers are scared of black men. They're very afraid of confronting them with their feelings of racism and paranoia."

Max Robinson backed up Smitty's statement. "Black men have been viewed as threats by white men in this country for ages and it's no different in the television industry. Black men aren't given the same opportunities to get into television as others. Black men are not competing with Black women for jobs in television. Both are under-represented in the industry," he told (Please turn to Page 3 Col 3)