

Carter v.s. Williams — District 18 heats up

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.— Was it made explicitly clear that the winner of the District 18 Leadership Forum would receive the endorsement of the community? Did all the losers agree to drop out? Was the Leadership Forum fair? Did it favor one candidate over the others? Was the forum controlled by outside forces?

These are questions raised by Harold Williams and those in the Williams' camp as they rebound against the charge that Williams broke his promise to the community.

"It was made clear from the very first meeting held in the New Hope Baptist Church that this process would be developed so the community could get behind one candidate. Everyone involved in the process knew what the process was for and both candidates had their representatives at each and every meeting," stated Ronnie Herndon of the District 18 Leadership Forum.

"At no time did Harold Williams say the process was unfair or that he would not abide by the process."

But Williams supporter, salesman and businessman Paul Knauls, said, "If the leadership in the community was really concerned about District 18, then they should have looked at the candidate who almost won, before bringing in some one who was new. Had they stayed with the candidate who almost won, then there would be no problem."

The need for the Leadership Forum developed out of the political embarrassment that resulted in 1982. Eight candidates split the vote and a former checker from Fred Meyer walked away with the seat.

"The leadership was called to the carpet for allowing that to happen."

"The issue is not Ed Leek. District 18 was created for a Black candidate to represent the District. Ed Leek never fought for this district," Herndon explained.

"The organizations of the forum made it clear that we were not supporting any candidate. We would support whomever was chosen from that process."

Knauls felt differently. "It looked

like it was an open forum, but everything does not always look as it is, especially, in politics. As time goes by, things will come out which have not been said. The supporters of the opposition (Margaret Carter) ran the forum. There were other people who were encouraged to get in the race to make it look as if it was fair. I can't believe less than 200 people can decide what a whole community would do and I can't believe the leaders would consider it."

Prior to the forum in November, 1983, Carter supporters and others felt the forum was in favor of Williams. Herndon said, "We took criticism that Harold was the chosen son. The one person that people do not talk about is Luther Strong. He had a following and wanted to run. But he respected and abided by the process which was the wish of the community."

Strong said he got involved in the process a week before the forum. "I came in toward the end and I don't recall either of them saying they were going to drop out. It was made clear to me that the winner would be the choice. I was agreeable to dropping out if I did not win."

Strong said he remembered the morning of the forum Herb Cawthorne and Herndon laid down the forum's rules and it was stated in the beginning that the loser would drop out and support the winner.

"I talked with a lot of people who were concerned that Blacks would split the votes up and Leek would get back in. I did not want to see that happen."

As far as the forum being controlled by outside forces, Herndon said the forum was controlled by local ministers and organizations. "I don't understand why he said that when he was involved from beginning to end. Why didn't he say that when he was attending those meetings? Why did he participate at all?"

Sen. Frank Roberts said he was amazed Williams said he and his wife had manipulated the forum. "I didn't know anything about it. All I know is what I read in the newspaper. I had nothing to do with Ed Leek's campaign. The only con-

nection I had with Leek was our interest in the Kennedy campaign four years ago. My major activity is in Salem in the legislature. At one time, my district included a part of the Black community. I tried to establish a relationship and understand the different interests."

Herndon expressed concern for Williams' supporters. "Sometimes you disagree with your friends. I hope we can work together on this in the future."

Knauls said, "The news media should not have been invited. It should have been a closed meeting. Everyone assumed Carter was the candidate on 200 votes against a

man who registered over 1,000 votes in the general election."

He also said Williams will not take votes away from Carter. "She will take votes from Harold."

Williams said he believed since he came so close to winning in '82, with seven candidates, "I'm a sure bet with three." Herndon disagrees. "He is misreading the times. Leek is now the incumbent. It is much more difficult to beat an incumbent. For better or worse, Leek's name has become a household word in District 18. We do not have the luxury of having two or three people run when we only have 45 percent of the vote."

Platform chair reprimanded

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.— Charges of unethical use of title have resulted in an official reprimand of Bill Thomas, chairman of the State Platform Committee of the Oregon Democratic party, by Dick Celsi, chair of the Democratic party of Oregon.

Thomas circulated a letter of endorsement for Rep. Ed Leek which he signed as chair of the state Platform Committee.

In an April 26th letter, Celsi said, "What a person does as an individual must be distinct from what they do as an official of the Democratic party. No one would question your right to endorse and support any candidate; but it must remain clear that the action is that of Bill Thomas, Democrat; and not Bill Thomas, chair of the State Platform Committee."

Thomas circulated his letter of endorsement to Democratic precinct committee people. The results were no endorsement was given for State representative in the 18th District.

Carter received 17 votes, Ed Leek 8 and Harold Williams 0 in the district voting. The county-wide vote was: Carter 62, Leek 68 and Williams 3.

Kenneth R. Adair said, "The Committee to Elect Margaret Carter unquestionably feels that Thomas used his name and position within

the party to improperly endorse a candidate before the endorsement process has even begun. While flagrantly using his name and privilege within the Democratic party to support Leek, Thomas also failed to disclose that he was employed during the last legislative session as a legislative assistant to Leek."

Adair also felt Thomas's letter of endorsement signed as chairman of the State Platform Committee of the Oregon Democratic party, influenced voters away from the other candidates in the race.

"The improper use of a state party position is tantamount to electioneering, and we deplore the use of a party position in this manner."

Celsi agreed. "The health and strength of the Democratic party lies in its openness, fairness and dedication to the principle of equal opportunity of participation. As chair, I have struggled to maintain these values and to refrain from using my position to the advantage of any primary candidate. I trust that this is a standard to which we can expect all party officials to adhere."

At the April 30th general meeting of District 18 Democrats, a recommendation to appoint a committee on party's ethics was made. It was accepted at their May 3rd meeting.

Vote for Roosevelt Robinson


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Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

After David Kennedy's death, his uncle, Senator Ted Kennedy implied that he wants to see the drug dealer prosecuted. Street Beat asked, "Should a drug pusher be charged with the murder of a person if the drug he or she sold resulted in that person's death?"



Evelyn Goldaby
Case worker

"Yes! They should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. They know what is going on. It is a tragedy."



Sandra Pollitt
Teacher

"That is a hard question. I think the user is just as responsible as the person using drugs. They are both guilty."



Glynis Dickey
Waitress

"No, I do not think they should be charged with murder, but the court system should be stricter on drug cases."



Kirt Bossier
Truck Driver

"That is questionable. You have the pusher's rights to consider. I feel you should go ahead and charge them. However, the pusher has rights and he or she is forced into a situation where they have to do what they have to do."




George Hiltunen
Retired

"Yes! The most violent people on earth are drug dealers. Putting them in jail is the least we can do with them."



Eibert Jenkins
Construction Worker

"Certainly! They should not have sold it in the first place. I don't believe in drugs."



For State Representative, Dist. 18

Vote for One

53 Margaret L. Carter

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Vote Margaret Carter

Tuesday May 15th!

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