

OPINION

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'Black-Brown Coalition' Wins Ushering in new era of unity

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS
Los Angeles City Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa toppled incumbent mayor James Hahn last week to become the city's first Latino mayor since the late 1800s. Going into the election Villaraigosa, naturally, had a large Latino following. However, it cannot be denied that the black vote helped put him over the top. We only need to look back to 2001 to find the truth in this statement: it was then that Hahn defeated Villaraigosa, thanks in part to his large African-American following, many of them loyal to his father, a popular political figure.



political and economic gains made during the civil rights era. This gap between African-Americans and Latinos was evident just recently when Mexican President Vicente Fox commented that Mexican immigrants

are willing to do jobs that "not even blacks want to do." With this statement, Fox not only insults African-Americans and takes away from the generations of our people who have worked in thankless jobs, but also shows he is unaware that both groups have been subject to economic exploitation.

While the two groups do often find themselves with competing political interests, they also have agendas that are very much in sync. Access to jobs, improved schools, violence prevention and community development. These are issues that both blacks and Latinos alike have rallied around in recent years.

Villaraigosa knew how important the black vote was this time around and he made a push to secure it. With endorsements from U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., and former LA Lakers star turned entrepreneur Magic Johnson, his popularity in the African-American community began to grow.

Villaraigosa's win is a powerful example of the impact blacks and Latinos can have when they band together. He is not the first big-city mayor to benefit from such an alliance: experts have pointed out that in the past, David Dinkins of New York, Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor, and Federico Pena of Denver profited from a 'black-brown coalition'.

But Villaraigosa didn't rest. The Sunday before the election, he visited black churches throughout the city, Macedonia Baptist Church and First AME Church among them, and delivered his message to potential voters. It worked in a big way: Villaraigosa received nearly 59-percent of the total vote.

Over the next several decades, blacks and Latinos will make up the majority of the U.S. population. With this increase in numbers will come increased political presence and power. We'll all be better served if both groups can find a way to unite and represent our common interests.

With this victory, Villaraigosa has, hopefully, ushered in a new era in politics: African-American and Latino unity.

Judge Greg Mathis is chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

There is a long history of political and social unease between blacks and Latinos. For generations, political powers have pitted the two groups against one another, causing members of both groups to believe that gains made by one will come at the expense of the other.

Many black voters in particular have been reluctant to surrender

Equality Suffers with School Closures

Time to look at what really works

BY RICHARD L. WATSON

To paraphrase a popular book title, it takes a neighborhood to educate a child. While debates go on within the Portland Public Schools about budgets, grade configurations, desegregation, achievement gaps, inequality of opportunities, lack of computers, etc., we are losing our understanding about what really constitutes effective education — direct attention to the needs of our kids.

Portland was fortunate compared to many other cities and suburbs in that it once recognized the power of neighborhood schools in

educate our children, especially in the early, formative years is to involve parents, relatives, teachers and neighbors in the process. Education of our young people requires a "kid-friendly" environment — a community that cherishes its children, teaching them moral and social virtues as well as the three Rs. Good scholarship and good citizenship usually go hand-in-hand.

Children are not widgets. They cannot be fully educated with mass production techniques. In addition, those at risk youngsters with special needs require more, not less, attention or they lose opportunities to bootstrap themselves into those higher standards of learning

and living. We can rightly blame the Portland Public Schools for closing neighborhood schools and arrogantly riding that downward spiral that is demolishing our neighborhood school system.

We can rightly blame some parents for not including good educational and behavioral habits in their children — causes of classroom disruptions and obstacles to learning.

Richard Watson is a grandfather and lives in Kenton neighborhood of north Portland. He mourns the loss of not just one, but both Kenton neighborhood schools in the Jefferson Cluster.

The time-tested way to effectively

educate our children, especially in the early, formative years is to involve parents, relatives, teachers and neighbors in the process. Education of our young people requires a "kid-friendly" environment — a community that cherishes its children, teaching them moral and social virtues as well as the three Rs. Good scholarship and good citizenship usually go hand-in-hand.

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Powerful History Lesson

In reference to your coverage of the Emmett Till kidnapping, torture and murder (Emmett Till Mississippi Murder Case Reopened: Justice sought 50 years after death), I was fortunate to see and hear the recent dramatic documentary on his life by New York filmmaker Keith Beauchamp on OPB, Channel 10

It was powerful and moving, evoking that dark night when Emmett, just 14 years old, the cherished only son of Mamie and Lousi Till, was seized from his uncle's home in a small Mississippi Delta community.

The Till family exemplified middle-class, well-education black

Letter to the Editor

America. Emmett grew up in Chicago, exposed to middle-class values, freely able to indulge in light-hearted, youthful open appreciation of girls and women, as typified by a wolf whistle.

But in Mississippi, he apparently committed the unpardonable sin of whistling at a white woman; something a black male of any age did not do if he valued his life. He was abducted that night. His broken body was found three days later in the Tallahassee River.

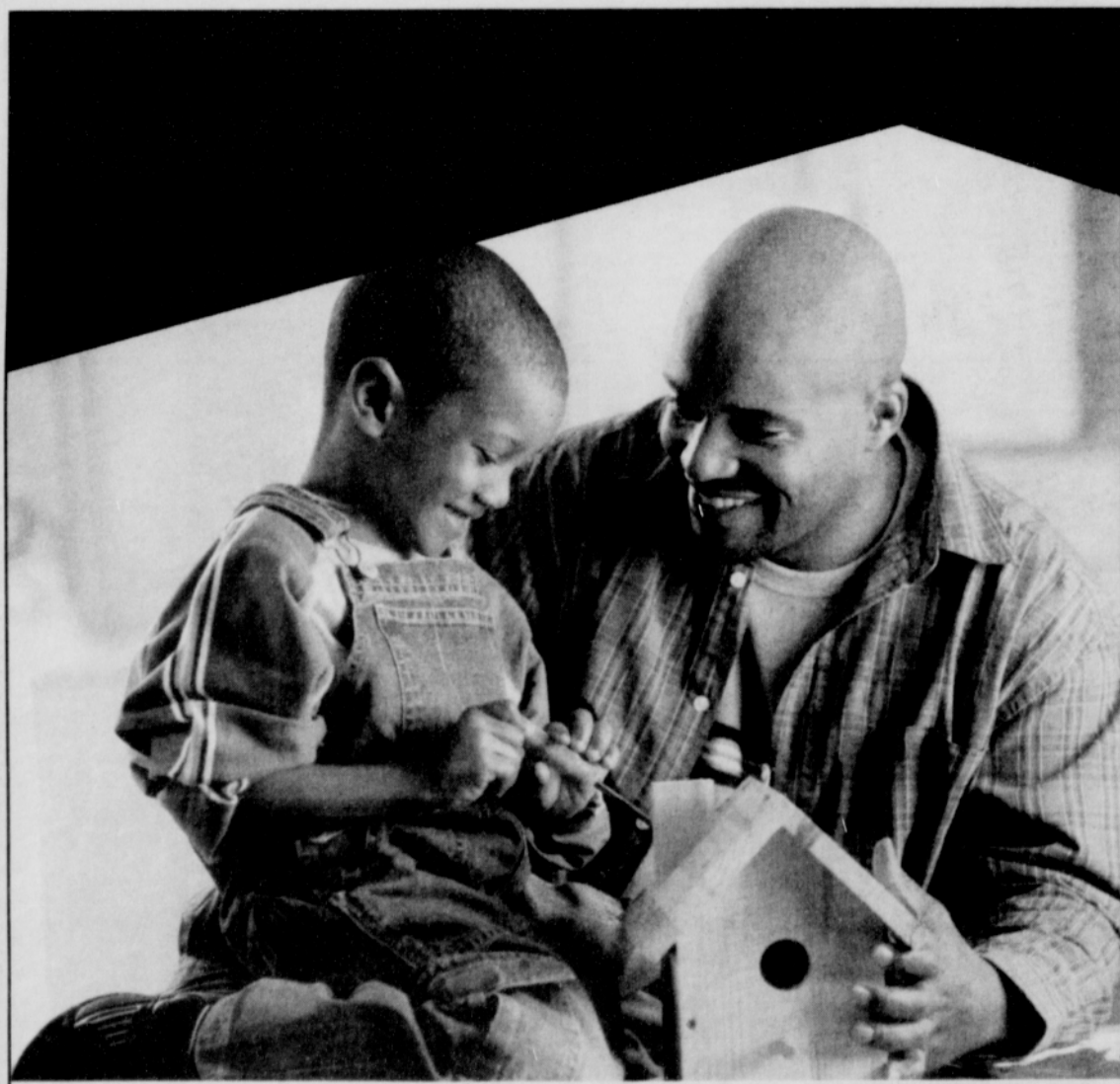
When Emmett's casket was brought to Chicago, it was sealed. His mother requested that it be opened. When she was refused, she demanded, "Give me a hammer and I'll open it myself." Finally, she was assisted in opening the casket,

revealing the remains of her precious only child.

Mamie Till was determined that the casket remain open for the funeral and that her son, unrecognizable because of the severe beating, be photographed so that the entire county could see how a black youth was murdered for his indiscretion by Southern white men.

Following the unanimous Supreme Court decision the previous year outlawing segregation, the brutality of Emmett Till's death was one of the powerful events that fired up the Civil Rights movement. Later that same year, Rosa Parks bravely sat down in the white section of a Montgomery, Ala. bus!

June Potter Acosta
Southwest Portland



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Dr. Billy R. Flowers

THE SPINA COLUMN™

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Part 9. Low Back Surgery:

The unkindest and most unnecessary cut of all.

Q: Should I try chiropractic for my low back pain or have surgery and get it "fixed right?"

A: We hear this question quite often and considering many physicians' pro-surgery preoccupation, it's no wonder people ask such questions. That is, until they examine the facts. The truth is that in about 90% of low back pain, the problem is mechanical. Chiropractic has had and continues to have the best technique for treating spinal mechanical problems through gentle, exact adjustment with highly skilled hands. And Chiropractic requires no drugs, surgery, recuperation or expen-

sive hospital bills. With Chiropractic, the only side effects are the disappearance of symptoms and the recurrence of vitality.

Q: Which technique has better results for low back problems, Chiropractic or surgery?

A: According to a recent issue of Computer Medicine, low back surgery is one of the least effective procedures. In fact, 75 to 99% are unsuccessful. Before you

make any decision, heed the advice of the "father" of low back surgery: "exhaust all methods of conservative care before considering surgery to the lumbar (low back) spine." To find out how Chiropractic can help you avoid back surgery, or for answers to any questions you might have about your health, please call us at the phone number displayed below.

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