

Clarence Thomas' Ex Expounds on Steamy Memoir

Lillian McEwen talks about her book, 'D.C. Unmasked & Undressed'

By Kam Williams, Special to *The Skanner News*

Retired Justice Lillian McEwen was born, raised and educated in Washington, D.C. Her stellar legal career there spanned several decades, including stints as a prosecutor, Capitol Hill staff counsel, criminal defense attorney, law professor and federal judge. Judge McEwen recently published her memoir, "D.C. Unmasked & Undressed," a steamy tell-all chronicling her sexually-adventurous private life, paying particular attention to her longtime relationship with a prominent colleague, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

In the process, McEwen belatedly resurrects the reputation of Anita Hill by offering proof that the disgraced law professor was telling the truth 20 years ago when she testified against Thomas during his controversial confirmation hearings.

Kam Williams: Hello, Your Honor, thanks for the interview. How are you?

Lillian McEwen: Hi Kam. I'm good.

KW: How'd you like my review of the book?

LE: [Chuckles] My PR guy loved it, and we both thank you.

KW: That sounds like you had some issues with it, but I have so many questions from readers, I better get right to them rather than pursue that line of questioning. Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: 'What's it all about Lillie?' Why now? Why not then, when Dr. Hill needed your support in her testimony against Clarence Thomas?

LE: I was counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee under Joe Biden, so I knew pretty much what the process was. What happens when people make offers to testify, the committee's role is to advise and consent as part of its Constitutional mandate. Typically, these letters are anonymous, and they're taken to the nominee who then has a choice of withdrawing their name from nomination or otherwise risk having that person testify against you at the hearing. Quite frankly, the reason that I didn't come forward at the time that Clarence's name was before the committee was because I knew from my experience on Capitol Hill that it really wouldn't make any difference. What happens is that the party in power will nominate whomever they want. In Clarence's case, he was nominated, of course, as a result of our having a Republican president. And neither Joe Biden nor any of the other Democratic senators wanted to risk being labeled as racist or thought of as being against a black nominee after Clarence played the race card.

KW: That leads me to a question from Kola Boof: Why didn't you go to the media back then when the case was such a media circus? We all know that the Democrat males were just as sexist and fearful as the Republicans of sexual harassment being taken seriously. So, they all, as men, took Clarence's side. Lillian, your story would have gotten Clarence dismissed because having a person of your stature speak up at that time in the heat of it would have been too damaging.

LE: Because it wouldn't have made any difference whether I went to the media or not. But most importantly, Clarence and I had a conversation before he was nominated in which he informed me that it was his desire that I always say "No comment!" and not give any interviews at all. I regarded that wish as something I pretty much owed him as a friend and as someone who cared about him. My hope was that he would have a conscience and be compassionate while on the bench of the Supreme Court.

KW: With legal minds who might have approached Thurgood Marshall's greatness, why did you stand by and let someone be appointed who will be remembered for less rather than more of what Justice Marshall represented in this court's history.

LE: First of all, I had no power to prevent him from being appointed. I didn't have a vote. And secondly, I hoped that he would transform himself back into a person who did the right thing. Besides, there were many other witnesses available to the Senate Judiciary Committee. But I did write a note to Senator Biden around the time of the hearing reminding him that I had had a close relationship with Clarence Thomas. I would have appeared, had I been subpoenaed to testify.

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman asks: Why didn't you approach Anita Hill to support her allegations in her time of need? Were you afraid of possible repercussions respecting your career?

LE: There were other individuals who had worked with Clarence who were willing to testify at the confirmation hearings. So, I wasn't the only one who could have corroborated Anita Hill's testimony. Furthermore, long before the nomination, I was utterly convinced that she and Clarence had had a sexual relationship.

KW: Why so?

LE: There came a time during his tenure as Chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that he began to complain vociferously about the behavior of Anita Hill at the office. He would whine about it every day. He even asked me on several occasions to come to the office to wait for him, because "Anita Hill has to see that I have another woman in my life now. It has to be made plain to her that we don't have the same type of relationship we once had."

KW: So, do you think Anita testified out of bitterness as a woman scorned?

LE: I think it's more complicated than that. I think Anita Hill never imagined that

she would be the only person testifying against the man who had given her her job, who had been at her beck and call, and who had made sure that she was a successful attorney.

KW: Have you had any contact with her?

LE: No, other than being introduced to her when Clarence became Chairman of the EEOC, and the times when I went sat around the office to send her a message for him. [Chuckles]

KW: Have you considered leaving a message on her answering machine like Clarence's wife, Ginny, did last fall?

LE: That's never occurred to me.



Lillian McEwen

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