

THE Skanner

Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now

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Opinion

Reynold's Coretta Scott King Memoir Is a Must-Read

Journalist Rev. Dr. Barbara Reynolds offers us the opportunity to remember history in the Coretta Scott King memoir, "My Life, My Love, My Legacy." Reynolds took copious notes and made extensive recordings in the decades that she worked and travelled with Coretta Scott King, and she has turned them into a memoir. Completed in 2007, it has taken a decade for the book to be published, largely because of complications with the King estate. But Reynolds chooses not to talk about the complications, instead choosing to talk about the many ways her life was enriched and enhanced by her association with Mrs. King. She also chooses to illuminate the leadership roles that Mrs. King embraced, both while her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was living, and after his death.

The book is a great and inspirational read, especially now, when so many have despaired at the irrational-seeming leadership of Donald Trump. It is a reminder that it took 15 years of persistence to establish the King holiday that we now all take for granted.

It is easy to forget that



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.) introduced the King holiday legislation in 1968, just days after Dr. King's assassination. He introduced it again and again, year after year. According to Coretta Scott King, the bill was rejected more than 70 times. But she, and Conyers, persisted

“Reynold's memoir shows Coretta Scott King as a leader in her own right

in their efforts to create a national holiday. Coretta Scott King met with the reformed segregationist Sen. Robert Byrd.

She says she would have been "anxious" to meet with a man who filibustered the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, but was assured that his views had changed.

Indeed, Byrd supported the effort to establish the King

holiday, but through a rules change, a two-thirds vote was needed to establish a holiday instead of a simple majority. In 1979, the bill lost by a mere five votes.

Agitation continued after this loss. A petition drive yielded six million signatures. Stevie Wonder released his "Happy Birthday" song that advocated for a King holiday. Senator Jesse Helms opposed the holiday, introducing a 300-page document that detailed King's "Communist activities." Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was so outraged by the document that he

threw it to the ground, describing it as a "packet of filth." On Oct. 19,

1983, the Senate passed King holiday legislation 78-22, following a House vote of 338-90.

President Ronald Reagan signed the bill into law on Nov. 3, 1983, establishing the King holiday on the third Monday of January, beginning in 1986.

Some states dragged their feet. Arizona did not acknowledge the holiday until a Super Bowl boycott in 1992. South Carolina waited until 2000 to

acknowledge it.

We often see Coretta Scott King as a stoic, dignified lady, and a graceful partner to civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King.

This memoir shows her from another perspective, as a leader in her own right, as a dedicated pacifist, as a persistent adherent to principles of nonviolence, as a gritty fighter for her husband's legacy through the holiday and the establishment of the King Center.

We also see her as a mother, and can read her assessment of her children, their strengths and their challenges.

While I had the privilege to be in Mrs. King's company on many occasions, and to speak with her personally and at length more than once, this book adds a depth to my knowledge of her and makes me wish I'd had the opportunity to know the side of her that laughed with Betty Shabazz and Myrlie Evers (I laughed with both of those women, but never Coretta), enjoyed opera and let her hair down.

Read the rest of this commentary at TheSkanner.com

Freedom's Journal to the NNPA, Black Press Is Still Relevant

No one is better equipped to tell your story better than you.

And logic stands to reason that no one is better equipped and more passionate about telling our story than us. The stories of Blacks in America are equally as triumphant as they are tragic. And many, if not most, of these stories would be lost to time, if not for the Black Press. And in an age where Black people are both progressing exponentially and under attack daily, the need for the Black Press has never been more apparent. And in a day where all media is under assault from the highest level, we must exalt the nations more than 200 Black newspapers, as they continue to serve as the defenders and the vanguard progress, enterprise and liberty.

Since the days of *Freedom's Journal* — the first Black newspaper, published in 1827 during the height of slavery — to today, the Black Press has been a voice reason, compassion and defiance.



Harry Colbert, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

Margot Lee Shetterly, author of "Hidden Figures," said if not for the archives of the Black Press such as the "Norfolk Journal and Guide" and the "Pittsburgh Courier" the inspiring story of the Black women geniuses at NASA would not have been possible to tell. If not for the "Florida

“If not for the archives of the Black Press...the inspiring story of the Black women geniuses at NASA would not have been possible to tell

Sun" in Orlando, the story of the great training in science and technology happening at Bethune-Cookman University — one of the nation's historically Black universities — would go untold and unno-

ticed. In Baton Rouge, it may have been a citizen's lens that captured the senseless killing of Alton Sterling at the hands of police, but it is "The Drum" that keeps Sterling's memory alive and is shining the white-hot spotlight on those responsible for his homicide. When factions of the so-called "alt-right" — a movement of racism and intolerance — try to co-opt and corrupt the words (while ignoring the actions) of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it was the Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Asso-

Supreme Court decision in the Shelby v. Holder case that gutted the Voting Right Act of 1965. Possibly, had the warnings of the Black Press been heeded, maybe, just maybe, the nation and the world would not be in the predicament it now finds itself.

The NNPA wrapped up its mid-winter training conference in Ft. Lauderdale a few weeks ago. The NNPA is a trade association of the more than 200 African American-owned community newspapers from around the United States. Since its founding 75 years ago, NNPA has "consistently been the voice of the Black community and an incubator for news that makes history and impacts our country."

As journalists, our mission is to shine a light in the darkest of corners. That mission was reaffirmed at the NNPA's 2017 Mid-Winter Conference with a level of commitment and intensity never before seen. "Freedom's Journal" ran the first leg of the relay. The NNPA and the Black Press have gladly accepted the baton and we are more than capable of running the race.

In running that race, what we ask of you, the reader, in this age of digital media and the sharing at the click of a button; that you seek out and share the valuable information of the Black Press with your networks as we must preserve and protect the Black Press.



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