

News

NAACP Board Elects Mississippi's Derrick Johnson President

New NAACP President Derrick Johnson Vows to Work Closely with NNPA

By Stacy M. Brown
(NNPA Newswire Contributor)

The future of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is inextricably linked to the future of African Americans and its incumbent upon the nation's oldest civil rights organization to work with the Black Press to get that message out, said new NAACP President Derrick Johnson.

On October 21, the executive committee of the

NAACP National Board of Directors announced that the Detroit-born Johnson would lead the organization as the president and CEO.

Johnson formerly served as vice chairman of the NAACP National Board of Directors and the state president for the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP.

Board members said Johnson was selected to guide the organization through a period of reinvigoration and realignment with the current challenges of today's civil rights movement.

To accomplish that mission, Johnson said the NAACP will lean heavily on the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the trade association that represents more than 200 African American-owned newspapers and media companies across the country.

"We must be successful to ensure that democracy works for all and that individuals of African descent are treated with dignity and afforded equal protections under the law," Johnson told the NNPA Newswire. "We've

met with [new NNPA Chairman] Dorothy Leavell and [NNPA President and CEO] Dr. Benjamin Chavis, Jr., and we see a bright future and we are mutually tied to the same reality, because the NNPA is critical, as the delivery source of information for our community."

The fact that the NAACP chose Johnson to lead the organization was music to Leavell's ears.

"I believe he is the right leader for the NAACP at this most important time in our history," she said. "The NNPA looks

forward to working with him and the NAACP."

Chavis, a former executive director of the NAACP, said he's known Johnson for a long time and he's confident that Johnson's leadership expertise and experience will take the NAACP to greater heights in terms of membership and civil rights activism.

"If there was ever a person alive that personifies the living spirit of Medgar Evers, it is Derrick Johnson. Thus, the NAACP will grow and expand under the leadership of Derrick Johnson,"

Chavis said. "Johnson personifies the courage and genius of a freedom fighter, who will now lead the NAACP forward with fearless boldness."

For his part, Johnson, who received a juris doctorate from the South Texas College of Law, called the Black Press an under appreciated institution.

"It's incumbent upon the NAACP to work directly with the NNPA to make sure that, as we get control of our narrative, we're utilizing our most

See NAACP on page 10

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