



Dr. Doris Forte



Carol Ray-Holmes

The Democratic & Republican Candidates



Barack Obama

John McCain

90 Days to making White House History



See Sports

The Houston Sun

Vol. 25, No. 20 8 pages Section 1 July 29, 2008 • Houston's No. 1 Community Newspaper 713-524-0786 • f. 713-524-6786 • www.houstonsun.com • info@houstonsun.com

Justice is the topic at City Hall

MYRA GRIFFIN
THE HOUSTON SUN

'Houston we have a problem' was the theme of the unofficial congressional hearing held Friday, July 18, 2008 as Congressman John Conyers, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, sat with a grimace listening to the pain of the Houston residents that filled City Hall.

Houston's Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee called for an open hearing at City Hall to discuss the widespread issues of Harris County's criminal justice system such as: jail overcrowding, inmate abuse, the district attorney's office and sheriff's department's racist email,

the crime lab and the under-funding of DNA analysis and the lack of indictment of Pasadena's Joe Horn, a vigilante homeowner who shot two men to death exiting a neighbor's home after an alleged burglary attempt.

A room filled with a 150 plus bodies, opinions, pains and concerns stated their case against the city of Houston, pleading for change.

"We are tired, we need justice and if they have to come from Capitol Hill to do it then so be it," said Joseph White as he stood with his two sons looking on at the proceedings.

Where do we begin were the sentiments of Congressman Conyers? Sitting on a panel with the Congressman was the Mistress of Cer-

emony Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, State Senator Mario Gellos, City Councilman M. J. Khan and State Representative Harold Dutton.

With a broken judicial system in view Conyers listened as Stephanie Storey, the fiancée of Hernando Torres, 38, spoke on how Joe Horn took the law into his own hands and should face a jury trial even though she is not condoning the actions of her late fiancée of his friend Diego Ortiz, 30, whom were shot to death in Pasadena by Joe Horn earlier this year in a burglary attempt.

The jails were brought into question as well, overpopulation, sanitation and the excessive force used by guards. Jose Saavedra, spoke on

his mother's unfortunate death from an infection while serving jail time at the County jail.

"She (Saavedra) complained that the medical staff were not caring for her injury," said Saavedra about his mother Margarita Saavedra, 44.

A multitude of Houston's human hurts and pains rang out in City Hall at 10am Friday morning on July 18, 2008. Congressman Conyers of Detroit echoed a need for further investigation and change. The problems of Houston won't be solved over night or in one City Hall hearing but the problems of the constituents have been heard and change may surely come.



Barack Obama

Obama promotes foreign policy agenda; McCain promises education

WASHINGTON (AP) _ U.S. presidential candidate Barack Obama pressed ahead with attempts to burnish his foreign policy credentials, outlining his plans to keep America safe from nuclear, biological and cyber attacks.

Obama pointedly chose Purdue University for its location in Indiana, historically a Republican bastion where he is trying to engineer a Democratic breakthrough.

He was joined Wednesday by the state's popular Democratic Sen. Evan Bayh and former Democratic Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, an expert on nuclear issues, especially weapons proliferation.

Both men have been mentioned as possible running mates, but could also prove valuable in helping Obama make inroads in traditionally Republican states like those in the U.S. South.

As Obama _ the first black candidate on a major-party presidential ballot _ campaigned to overcome attempts by Republican opponent John McCain to paint him as naive and untested on foreign policy issues, the four-term Arizona senator spoke to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, promising to boost educational opportunities for students in failing schools, many of which are in black communities.

McCain was received politely by members of America's oldest civil rights organization. Obama was given a hero's welcome by convention-goers three days earlier.

McCain told the NAACP that he will expand education opportunities, partly through vouchers for low-income children in failing public schools to attend private schools.

The Arizona Republican praised Obama's historic campaign, but faulted the Illinois senator's opposition to vouchers. Obama has spoken in favor of performance-based merit pay for individual public school teachers.

McCain also praised Martin Luther King, Jr., as a leader who "loved and honored his country even when the feeling was unreturned, and counseled others to do the same."

In praising King to the NAACP, McCain used similar language to his mea culpa in April on the 40th anniversary of the civil rights leader's assassination, saying he had been wrong to vote against a federal holiday honoring King.

Meanwhile, Obama, fighting perceptions that McCain is better prepared to deal with issues of foreign policy and national security, outlined his blueprint for keeping the country safe. Two goals of his administration, he said, would be securing all loose nuclear material during his first term and ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

He said adhering to nonproliferation treaties pressures nations such as North Korea and Iran. North Korea has tested a nuclear weapon, and Iran has an energy program the Bush administration warns could be a precursor to nuclear weapon development.

Obama called for investing in methods to prevent, detect and contain biological attacks and said he would appoint a national cyber security adviser. He highlighted a proposal to spend US\$5 billion over three years to develop an international intelligence and law enforcement infrastructure to stymie terrorist networks.

Blacks still rare in top military ranks, just 10 earn four-star rank in history

WASHINGTON (AP) _ Sixty years after President Truman desegregated the military, senior black officers are still rare, particularly among the highest ranks.

Blacks make up about 17 percent of the total force, yet just 9 percent of all officers. That fraction falls to less than 6 percent for general officers with one to four stars, according to data obtained and analyzed by The Associated Press.

The rarity of blacks in the top ranks is apparent in one startling statistic: Only one of the 38 four-star generals or admirals serving as of May was black. And just 10 black men have ever gained four-star rank _ five in the Army, four in

the Air Force and one in the Navy, according to the Pentagon.

The dearth of blacks in high-ranking positions gives younger African-American soldiers few mentors of their own race. And as the overall percentage of blacks in the service falls, particularly in combat careers that lead to top posts, the situation seems unlikely to change.

Still, officials this week can point to some historic gains by blacks in the services as the Pentagon commemorates Truman's signing of an executive order on July 26, 1948, mandating the end of segregation in the military.

First black commander named to Tinker post

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) _ Col. Allen Jamerson has become the first black commander of the 72nd Air Base Wing at Tinker Air Force Base.

Jamerson on Friday officially succeeded outgoing Col. Mark Correll, who served at Tinker for four years.

In his new role, Jamerson is responsible for a \$261 million operating budget for the 72nd Air Base Wing

and oversees more than 3,000 employees in base operations and support.

The secretary of the Air Force determines base command assignments. Jamerson is the wing's first black commander, although minorities previously have held other leadership roles at the base.

Apology for black soldiers convicted in WWII case - An AP Member Showcase

By CASEY MCNERTHNEY
Seattle Post-Intelligencer

SEATTLE (AP) _ The lodging the Army provided for black soldiers on trial for the 1944 riot and lynching of an Italian POW at Magnolia's Fort Lawton was far from luxurious.

Samuel Snow was one of the 43 who were stuck in tents or shacks that winter at a camp near the Duwamish River, surrounded by barbed wire. Across town, Leon Jaworski _ the Army's prosecutor in the case who would later make headlines as a special prosecutor in the Watergate scandal _ was treated to the comforts of the Olympic Hotel in downtown Seattle.

Jaworski had evidence that likely would have cleared Snow and the others. Instead, he sat on it, and the case was nearly forgotten until a book by Seattle author Jack Hamann proved that the black soldiers didn't lynch the Italian soldier _ something Army investigators knew during the largest and longest court-martial of World War II.

This week, Snow and 32 family members of some of the men wrongly convicted will get a measure of justice and an apology.

The assistant secretary of the Army is coming to Discovery Park, the site of what was an enormous Army base where the lynching happened. As part of a series of tributes that run Thursday through Sunday, he is expected to apologize for the court-martial, which last year an Army appeals court ruled as fundamentally unfair.

In October, the appeals court reversed the convictions of the 28 men found guilty. And that planted the seed that culminates in the tributes.

"We're a little nervous to see where it all began, and we're all wondering what kind of emotions will be elicited by coming to see where it all happened," said Lashell Drake, a Milwaukee, Wis., woman whose late grandfather, Booker Townsell, was wrongly convicted.

Mayor Greg Nickels, King County Executive Ron Sims and U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott asked to help with the tribute after hearing the soldiers' stories. So did officials at the Northwest African American Museum and Seattle University, where a Mass to honor the lynched POW is scheduled Thursday.

Ezell's Famous Chicken is sponsoring a free community picnic Saturday on the former Fort Lawton parade grounds, and Metro is providing increased bus service to get people there.

"This really is Seattle coming together," Hamann said before listing dozens of people and organizations who helped raise nearly \$20,000 for the four-day tribute. "We just told the story and people said, 'How can we help?'"

For Howard Cohen, that moment came at a Rotary meeting earlier this year.

He heard Hamann tell how the court-martial at Fort Lawton was the only time in American history that a group of black men had gone on trial for lynching a white man. He showed how the trial played a role in the eventual decision to desegregate the armed services and revise the Military Code of Justice.

And for decades, those wrongly convicted were overlooked.

"I was really taken by what he talked about," Cohen said. "I'd lived

here for 25 years and never heard the story before. ... I wanted to help out however I could."

White soldiers at Fort Lawton resented the Italian POWs who were allowed to go out on dates with adoring high school girls. False allegations by white military policemen led to an August 1944 riot. One shy Italian, Pvt. Guglielmo Olivotto, was the victim of hatred that Jaworski later blamed on black men who weren't there when he was lynched.

Cohen, the manager of the Best Western Executive Inn and two other Seattle hotels, donated 14 room nights to visiting families of those wrongly convicted. And as a board member of the Seattle Hotel Association, he pitched the idea to his friends.

In all, Cohen helped secure 60 room nights at some of the city's best hotels during the year's busiest season _ a savings to the families of at least \$13,000.

Snow _ one of two of the 28 convicted men still alive and the only one able to travel for this week's tribute _ said Tuesday that he is thankful for Cohen's efforts.

"For years, they mistreated me and did me wrong," he said of the Army. "I was just 19 years old."

When he was here as a soldier waiting for the trial, Snow said he spent his days picking up trash and, on the weekend, cleaned Army bathrooms. When he left Seattle after the trial, he did so in handcuffs.

Jaworski left what's now the Fairmont Olympic Hotel, destined for fame and fortune.

This week, Snow and his family will stay as complimentary guests of that same hotel.



Correction_ The full name of Elias Blacke, Jr. was not printed in the July 22nd edition of The Houston Sun in the Black lawyers' story. July 26 - August 2, is the time when the National Bar Association (NBA) will hold its 83rd Annual Convention & Exhibits at The Westin Galleria and The Westin Oaks Houston. We regret he oversight. Pictured are: The Honorable Clarence Thomas, U.S. Supreme Court, Attorney Alvin O. Chambliss, Jr. and the late Dr. Elias Blacke, Jr.

Eta Phi Beta Sorority boules selects Houston as site

The Twenty-Eight Biennial Grand Boule' of Eta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. will be held at the Hilton Post Oak Hotel 2001 Post Oak Boulevard in Houston Texas. It is hosted by the Southern Region and Xi Chapter from August 3-8, 2008.

The conference attendees are as follows: Sorority members, Men's Auxiliary, Youth groups from throughout the United States and the Virgin Islands. The members are firmly committed to dispensing charity, awarding scholarships, and to the extent possible, helping to stamp out poverty and illiteracy.

The national will include workshops, exhibits and talent built around the theme, "PHI BETA WOMEN: SHARING, EMPOWERING, AND FULFILLING THE LEGACY"

The community is invited to attend the "OFFICIAL OPENING", "TALENT EXTRAVAGANZA, QUEEN BEE PAGEANT, BANQUET DANCE and view the exhibits.

XI CHAPTER members and Ms. Ruby Mayes, President and National

Co-Chair are busy planning and holding meetings to assure the success of the conference.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN ARE AS FOLLOWS: (Mesdaines) Johnnie Dotson, National Co-Chair, is serving as chair of the following committees: Golden Hall of Fame Luncheon, and Housing; Jodie Oliphant, Ban and Ball; Deborah Barriere, Convention Bags and Souvenirs; Yvonne Gentry, Exhibits; Callie Lewis Watson, First Aid and Health Services; Pamela Barrett Hospitality, Scholarship and Standards; Marguerite Grice, Marketing and Saleable Items; Artie Mitchell, Merits and Awards.

Other committee members are: Dr. Jewell Christy, Queen Bee Pageant, "the Walk" for Mentally Challenged and Social Activities; Ardener Franschaw, 'Extravaganza'; Brenda Carr, Transportation; Rev. Robin Cook, Youths; Carolyn Simples, Memorial Service; Ruby Mayes, National Souvenir Booklet; and Evangelist Zoia L. Jones, National Publicity.