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2-20-96 Mfume Swearing-in C'mony (as Pres./CEO NAACP) Washington, D.C. [2]

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REMARKS BY PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR THE HONORABLE KWEISI MFUME
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE NAACP
THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, GREAT HALL
WASHINGTON, DC
FEBRUARY 20, 1996

[Acknowledgements: Myrlie Evers-Williams, for introduction; Jason Hines, political science senior at Morgan State University from Warren, Arkansas; Vice President Gore; Roger Wilkins; Cardinal Keeler; Rev. Johnson; Rev. McKenzie; Rabbi Adler; Attorney General Reno; Judge Higginbotham; Ms. Jaimie Smith of Baltimore School for the Arts; Ayinde Jean-Baptiste (EYE-YIN-DAY JON BAPTEEST) of Whitney Young Magnet High School in Chicago; and the Honorable Kweisi Mfume (KWY-EE-SEE UMM-FOO-MAY)]

I am honored to be here today to share in this celebration of rebirth and renewal for both Kweisi Mfume and the NAACP. Before I go any further, let me say that the talent and energy in this room is truly amazing. When I heard that young Ayinde Jean-Baptiste was going to be here, I polished up on my oratory skills so I'd at least have a chance of measuring up to him.

It is also great to see so many accomplished women here today. Young Jaimie Smith appears to be well on her way to carrying on the legacy of many of the great African American women who came before her. In my proclamation marking the observance of African American History Month this year, I urged all Americans to recognize and honor the often unsung contributions of African American heroines -- leaders like Sojourner Truth, Mary McLeod Bethune, Rosa Parks, Barbara Jordan, Dorothy Height, Mary Frances Berry and Myrlie Evers-Williams. Throughout our history, these and countless other brave and eloquent women have challenged America to end its ignoble association with the twin evils of racism and sexism. And we are all better because of their sacrifices.

This is a day of great expectation -- both for the new President and CEO of the NAACP, and for all Americans who share our hope that under his dynamic leadership the nation's most important civil rights organization will emerge from a time of turmoil, stronger and more focused than at any time in its illustrious history.

As I said in the State of the Union, we live in an age of great possibility. More Americans, from all walks of life, will have more chances to build the future of their dreams than ever before -- and our nation will be stronger for it. We see the evidence of this all around us even now. We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years. Unemployment in the African American community is in single digits for the first time since the Vietnam war. And for three years in a row, we have had a record number of new businesses started in our country -- nearly 100,000 of them by African Americans.

Our leadership in the world is also strong, bringing new hope for peace from the

Middle East to Bosnia. And I am proud that last week we saw the first peaceful democratic transfer of power in the history of Haiti. But, perhaps most important, the American people are coming together again around our most fundamental values. The crime rate, the welfare and food stamp rolls, the poverty rate, and teen pregnancy are all down.

The future for our children is brighter than it's ever been before. But we also know that great challenges lie ahead. This is a time of great change, requiring strength and resilience on the part of all our people. Too many of our people feel economically insecure. Too many are worried about whether they can give their children the values and care they'll need to lead successful lives. And they wonder if they and their children will be winners in the age of possibility.

Our mission is, first, to make the American Dream of opportunity a reality for all who are willing to work for it. Second, to preserve our old and enduring values as we move into the future. And third, to meet these challenges in the only way that has ever really worked in this country -- together, as one America.

All of this is why, now more than ever we need more groups doing what the NAACP has always done -- reaching out...taking the lead...helping us face up to our challenges and achieve our goals. We know that the era of big government is over. But we cannot go back to the time when our citizens were left to fend for themselves. As Thurgood Marshall once said, "None of us has gotten where we are solely by pulling ourselves up from our own bootstraps. We got here because somebody bent down and helped us."

The only way we are going to succeed in this new environment is if all of us bend down and pull together to help people make the most of their lives and to make this nation great. That means businesses taking an active part in their communities. Schools preparing our young people for the future and teaching citizenship and values. Religious institutions bringing their teachings to life through service to the community. Parents loving their children and teaching them right from wrong. And civic organizations like the NAACP pushing for social change, celebrating the strength of our diversity and caring about all our people where they work, where they live, and where they go to school. All of us -- expecting more of each other and facing our challenges together. The great lesson of American democracy is that when we are together we are never defeated, and when we are divided we defeat ourselves.

We are here today to pay tribute to a man who realizes that there are many different ways to move America forward. As a Congressman and head of the Congressional Black Caucus, Kweisi Mfume captured the nation's attention with his powerful eloquence and leadership in the fight for freedom and justice at home and abroad. But he understands that government service is not the only service that matters. He understands that the NAACP, and other grassroots organizations, are essential to building strong communities, neighborhoods, and families.

That's why my initial sense of disappointment in learning that he was leaving his House seat to assume the presidency of the NAACP did not last long. Because, even though I will miss his support in the Congress, I know that he is the right man at the right time for this important job. And I know he will continue to offer me his wise counsel in his new role.

We know that we will never save our children from gangs and drugs...give our people the security they need to work hard...renew our cities...make our schools strong unless we learn from one another, work together, and join hands in a true spirit of community. But for all the opportunity we create, we have to have people who seize the moment and take personal responsibility for making their lives better. That is the lesson the NAACP has taught us for so many years. And that is the lesson I thought of when I heard about the 8 young Jobs Corps trainees who perished in the tragic train crash in Maryland a few days ago. Those young people were working to turn their lives around -- learning to become carpenters and nurses aides and bricklayers. They were participating in a government program that would never have been created without the struggles of groups like the NAACP. But it was a program that ultimately relied on the hard work of these young people -- taking personal responsibility. The hope that briefly illuminated their lives is a testament to our constant search for common sense, common ground solutions to our problems.

For 87 years, the NAACP has been a beacon of grass-roots activism in the struggle for a more just America. From the darkest days of segregation to this modern age of possibility, your voice has challenged all our fellow citizens to move from antipathy to equality...from apathy to action. I know you will rise to the new challenges we face. My confidence is bolstered by the caliber of leadership you have chosen to guide you into this new era.

Kweisi Mfume is without a doubt, one of America's most thoughtful, articulate, and effective advocates for equal justice and personal responsibility. The NAACP is fortunate to bring this true gentleman warrior aboard as its new President and CEO. Congratulations President Mfume. I look forward to an even greater partnership with you and the new NAACP as we continue our work of uplifting the land we both love.

At this time I would like to turn to another giant for justice...a man whom I recently appointed to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and to whom I was proud to award the 1995 Medal of Freedom...the Honorable Judge A. Leon Higginbotham...who will administer the oath of office. Thank you.

draft 2/19/96 1:30 pm

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FAX

Date 16 FEB 96

Number of pages including cover sheet 5

TO: TERRY EDMUNDS

Phone

Fax Phone 456. 5709

CC:

FROM: *Yolanda H. Caraway*

1010 WISCONSIN AVENUE, NW

SUITE 540

WASHINGTON, DC 20007

Phone *202-965-5089*

Fax Phone *202-965-2812*

REMARKS: ☒ *Urgent* ☐ *For your review* ☐ *Reply ASAP* ☐ *Please Comment*

URGENT!

DATED MATERIAL...PLEASE READ IMMEDIATELY.

Per your request —

(Paul)

25TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

The Sun (Baltimore)

December 31, 1995, Sunday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: EDITORIAL, Pg. 2L

LENGTH: 995 words

HEADLINE: Marylander of the Year: Kweisi Mfume; Self-made leader: NAACP taps congressional talent to head crusade for American rights.

BODY:

SINCE ITS FOUNDING in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has been the most important civil rights organization in this nation. It remains so even as African Americans -- in events as spectacular as the Million Man March or as humble as a barber shop conversation -- voice their fears that past civil rights gains are eroding.

Part of that erosion, many feel, is due to the lack of relevance the NAACP seems to have not just among white people today but also African Americans, especially young people. It was thus tragic when an experiment to have the organization broaden its appeal among the young failed miserably last year with executive director Ben Chavis being fired after only 16 months in office.

The resulting maelstrom over misspending and debt within the organization produced such great expectations for a new fiscally savvy NAACP leader who could bring in the young without alienating the old that many of its members doubted anyone would want to take on such a challenge.

But when Baltimore Congressman Kweisi Mfume said he would, the match seemed so perfect that just the announcement was enough to re-energize the organization in ways that even last year's naming of the widow of NAACP martyr Medgar Evers as its chairman did not.

Mr. Mfume isn't even on the job yet and he has begun to turn the NAACP around. The remaining task is to steer a course that will restore the organization's vitality in continuing the fight for equal justice for all Americans. Mr. Mfume is up to the challenge. His whole life seems to have been mapped out for this day, for accepting leadership of the NAACP.

* * *

Attentive Baltimoreans were bound to be pleased when the NAACP board turned to Mr. Mfume as its new "president" -- not just a director but a real CEO in every sense. There came praise for the selection from all sides. For Mr. Mfume was not Baltimore's secret. The Mfume story is the stuff of legend. He is the first NAACP executive not to come from the comfortable classes. He is off the streets, up by his bootstraps, self-invented, and for real.

Frizzell Gray lost his mother, moved around, ran the streets, dropped out of school, attracted police and fathered children irresponsibly. Then he found work

and purpose, attended college, got a degree from Morgan State and became a disc jockey. As a political militant in a --iki who changed his name to Kweisi Mfume, he won election to City Council in 1979.

Mr. Mfume was a passionate speaker in council meetings, but not truly effective. That was partly his fault, partly Mayor William Donald Schaefer's. Mr. Schaefer called the young council member in for a scolding. Mr. Mfume was outraged and went into opposition that was frustrating, because he wanted to achieve results, make a difference.

Upon Rep. Parren Mitchell's retirement, Mr. Mfume made a bee line for a new start, winning the Seventh District Democratic primary and election in 1986. From the first day, Mr. Mfume was a better congressman than he had been a councilman. Quiet spoken and conservatively tailored, he knew how to cooperate, work in committee, improve legislation. He and fellow freshman Rep. Benjamin L. Cardin teamed up remarkably.

It was no surprise when Mr. Mfume was tapped to chair the Congressional Black Caucus for 1993 and 1994. In the 1992 election, the Black Caucus nearly doubled and the Democrats won the presidency. Never before had blacks in Congress so much clout or the chairman so key a role. Mr. Mfume maneuvered brilliantly to get the most for cities, to hold the president's feet to the fire on civil rights, to oppose the dumping of Lani Guinier. It was delicate stuff, because the caucus was disappointed in policies, with nowhere else to go.

Those were Mr. Mfume's years of prominence. He bid on the strength of them for the third-ranking job in the Democratic House leadership, but lost. He was languishing in reduced responsibility, honing his skills as a television talk show host on the side.

There matters stood when the NAACP scored its coup. At 47, Mr. Mfume is at the peak of his powers, including a tremendous network of contacts, a razor-sharp mind and powerful eloquence. If asked to cite a single over-arching skill for young people to emulate, it is his voice and diction, the power to say precisely what he means as well as it can be said. He sounds like a fine Shakespearean actor, or great black preacher, or the former playing the latter.

Now Mr. Mfume is the chief executive, fund-raiser and spirit of a great organization, headquartered in the town of Thurgood Marshall, its great lawyer, and Clarence Mitchell Jr., its great lobbyist.

As executive director of the NAACP, Mr. Mfume, who isn't as well known to the rest of the world, will join the diversity of national African-American leadership that ranges from politician Jesse Jackson to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. Mr. Mfume has in the past challenged Mr. Farrakhan's anti-Semitism and bias against women while acknowledging, as does the NOI head, that black people first have to depend on each other. With interest in Mr. Jackson flagging, Mr. Mfume could develop into the predominant figure in black America.

In leaving Congress to become a principal spokesman for civil rights, Mr. Mfume is once again reinventing himself, once again raising the standards. The stakes are enormous. America desperately needs to overcome its racial divide. Mr. Mfume is now in position to be a major player in this transcendent endeavor.

Past Marylanders of the year

1987 Steven Muller, Johns Hopkins University President.
1988 Vincent DeMarco, gun law draftsman.

1989 Anne Tyler, novelist.

1990 R. Robert Linowes, Washington area lawyer, state tax reformer.

1991 Cal Ripken Jr., American League's Most Valuable Player.

1992 Bea Gaddy, feeder of the homeless.

1993 James W. Rouse, developer-visionary .

1994 Cardinal William H. Keeler for.

TYPE: EDITORIAL

LOAD-DATE: January 5, 1996

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200,000. It's now the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was President, and as a percentage of our civilian work force, it's the smallest it's been since 1933. The Democrats did that. We did it by treating our Federal employees humanely, giving them good retirement and severance packages. We did it by increasing the productivity of the fine Federal employees that are left. We reduced the burden of big Government. We're eliminating 16,000 pages of Federal regulation. Those were Democratic reforms.

This is not about the problems of big Government. They want to strip the National Government of its ability to protect and advance the interests of the elderly and the children and the disabled people of this country. That is what is going on here.

[*The next questioner asked the President what he had done to give children a better education and brighter future.*]

The President. To answer your question in the way you posed it, the most important thing we have done is to give this country a comprehensive education policy focused not only on greater educational opportunities but on higher standards and higher quality education. And I'd like to give you some specific examples.

We have increased the number of our young people in Head Start programs by tens of thousands. For the public schools, we have written into law the national education goals and said to every State we will give you extra help if you will commit to try to reach these goals and if you will commit to a system which holds you accountable so that we can see whether you're making progress toward reaching these goals. We will give you extra help, and we will give special help to districts that are poor or that have a lot of poor children, but we all have to have the same high standards and we all have to be willing to be held accountable.

For young people who aren't going to college, we have launched a national school-to-work program to help every State give young people good training so they can get good jobs even if they don't have 4-year college degrees. Then, for young people who are going to college, we've launched a new direct student loan program that has lower cost college loans available to more kids with better terms of repayment.

One of the most successful things we've done—I've talked about it a lot in Florida—we have dramatically increased the number of student loans and the possibility of earning money through college through our national service program, AmeriCorps. Every single one of those things is at risk in the Republican budget, and I am fighting for every single one of them.

But we have a comprehensive education strategy based on national standards and grassroots reforms and more opportunity. That is what I think we ought to be pushing for. No company in the world and no country in the world would go into the 21st century by cutting its investment in education and technology and research. But this budget cuts our investment in education, technology, and research. It is a prescription for bad economics. That's the other thing I want to say to people: This Republican budget is not just bad in human terms, it's going to be bad for the economy. It will undermine the economic strategy that we have pursued that has given us the world's strongest economy again, and I want you to stick with us on the education issue.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 10:17 a.m. from the Dempsey Thomas Film Studio in Little Rock, AR, to the convention meeting in Miami Beach, FL. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida, and President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti.

Statement on the Nomination of Kweisi Mfume as Chairman of the NAACP

December 10, 1995

I was delighted to hear about the nomination of Representative Kweisi Mfume to the leadership of the NAACP. In his distinguished career as the Representative of Baltimore's 7th District, Congressman Mfume has been an outspoken advocate for working Americans, an articulate voice on race relations and a tireless fighter against crime. His was a voice in the Congress that sought not to be divisive but to find common ground

on a wide spectrum of issues. I am disappointed that I will lose his support in the Congress, but I know that he will continue to provide me with wise counsel in his new role. He is a superb choice to lead the NAACP at this juncture, which for so many years has been an extraordinary champion of civil rights. I wish him all the best.

Remarks at "Christmas in Washington"

December 10, 1995

Thank you. Thank you, Kelsey. I'd like to thank all the cast of "Frazier," Peri and Jane and John and David, for the wonderful job they did tonight; Gloria Estefan, Clint Black, Al Green, Dawn Upshaw, the Naval Academy Glee Club; makes you proud to be Commander in Chief—[*laughter*]—the U.S. Army Band's Herald Trumpets, also do; the magnificent Eastern High School Chorus, and of course, Ian Frazier and the "Christmas in Washington" Orchestra, for the magnificent music all of you have given us. Let's give them a great hand. [*Applause*]

Every year, Hillary and Chelsea and I really look forward to this wonderful "Christmas in Washington" evening. Besides getting us into the holiday spirit, it also gives us the opportunity to recognize one of our country's preeminent health care facilities, the Children's National Medical Center right here in Washington. As always, Christmas is a time for us to reflect on our good fortune in the past year. This Christmas, I have much to be grateful for. But among the things I am most grateful for is the way the people all around the world still look at our beloved land.

Recently, I returned from Europe where this was brought home to me ever more than before. People see America as a nation graced by God with peace and prosperity, a land of fundamental fairness and great freedom. And even though it sometimes imposes extra burdens on us, it is wonderful to know that people the world over trust us to work with them to achieve and share the blessings of peace.

So at Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of a homeless child whose only shelter was the straw of a manger, but who grew up to become the Prince of Peace, let us remember that He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." And let us ask the blessings of peace this Christmas for everyone, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, to Bosnia, and not only for the children there but, of course, for our troops as well. And let us also as Americans resolve, each of us, to do what we can to be peacemakers, not only to bring peace and reconciliation around the world but also to the most difficult neighborhoods of our own Nation, to every child who deserves to be free from violence and full of hope. That is our prayer for this Christmas.

Hillary and Chelsea and I offer this wish of our season to all of you and to all Americans everywhere. Peace on Earth, goodwill toward men. Merry Christmas, and God bless you all.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 6:20 p.m. at the National Building Museum for broadcast at 10 p.m. on December 13. In his remarks, he referred to Kelsey Grammer, David Hyde Pierce, Peri Gilpin, Jane Leeves, and John Mahoney, cast members of the TV show "Frazier," and entertainers Gloria Estefan, Clint Black, Al Green, Dawn Upshaw, and Ian Frazier.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel

December 11, 1995

The President. Good morning everyone. It's a pleasure and an honor to have the Prime Minister here. We're about to start our talks. And as you know, after we have those talks, we will have a press conference, and we'll be available for your questions. But I'm very much looking forward to continuing our work on the peace process and continuing our strong partnership.

Q. Will you, Mr. President, become actively involved in an Israeli-Syrian track?

The President. Well, we're going to—let us have our talk, and I'll be glad to answer the questions after we finish our visit.

Thank you.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

Congressional Quarterly's Politics in America 1994
The 103rd Congress by Phil Duncan, Editor

Maryland - 7th District

7 Kweisi Mfume (D)

Of Baltimore — Elected 1986; 4th Term

Born: Oct. 24, 1948, Baltimore, Md

Education: Morgan State U., B.S. 1976; Johns Hopkins U., M.A. 1984.

Occupation: Professor; radio station program director; talk show host.

Family: Divorced; five children.

Religion: Baptist.

Political Career: Baltimore City Council, 1979-87.

Capitol Office: 2419 Rayburn Bldg. 20515; 225-4741.

In Washington: Mfume, whose adopted Swahili name means "conquering son of kings," blends the collegial style typical of younger-generation black House members with a bit of the provocative rhetoric of their elders.

He spent his first years in the House presiding over floor proceedings, where his radio-trained voice and impeccable clothes, not to disregard his mastery of the rules, earned him notice. Having quietly built bridges to the House Democratic leadership and between the newer and older members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mfume was ready in the 103rd Congress to assert his own brand of leadership from two new positions of responsibility.

As chairman of an enlarged and thus empowered black caucus, Mfume was expected to elevate its status to pressure the Democratic hierarchy, while working within the system to achieve the legislative goals of its minority constituents. And as chairman of the newly reconfigured Minority Enterprise, Finance and Urban Development Subcommittee of the Small Business Committee, Mfume could pursue the economic agenda he adopted when first elected.

Representing some of Baltimore's poorest black neighborhoods, Mfume could have succeeded politically by simply voicing anger and frustration with "the system." Instead, he has become known as a thoughtful lawmaker who tries to help the disadvantaged by making legislative allies. Mfume learned the importance of coalitions on the Baltimore City Council, where his confrontations with Mayor William Donald Schaefer were legend. Upon Mfume's election to the House and Schaefer's to the governorship in 1986, Mfume made peace, knowing that they would one day need to work together.

Mfume's willingness to accommodate earned him a challenge for the black caucus chair from Texas Democrat Craig Washington, who promised a more aggressive style. Mfume was elected by acclamation after winning a first ballot, 27-9.

Lest anyone think Mfume would shirk from confronting the leadership or the White House, he moved quickly to declare the caucus' concerns. In March 1993, he blasted the Clinton administration for continuing its predecessor's policy of intercepting Haitians seeking to escape their strife-torn nation, and returning them to Haiti. Mfume, like other black leaders, had given President Clinton time to alter the policy, but when the administration asked the Supreme Court to uphold it, he said, "The time has passed for this kind of grace period."

A few weeks later, the black caucus supplied a key bloc of Democratic votes to join with Republicans in thwarting for a time the leadership's effort to pass a version of the line-item veto that Clinton sought. In what Mfume described on the floor as "a pure position of principle," most black caucus members opposed the measure, saying it would cede too much power to the president.

The combination of Republicans, who thought the measure too weak, and the black caucus caused House leaders to pull the measure from the floor even before it came to a vote. A few weeks later the leadership used its muscle to pare away enough black members from the caucus position to pass the bill.

Mfume is outspoken in his support for civil rights and other traditional minority concerns, but he has always seen his role as one of fostering "economic development and economic empowerment" for his minority constituents. In his first term on the Banking Committee, he worked to learn the issues. Later, in the 102nd Congress, he relinquished a seat on the Education and Labor Committee to move to the Joint Economic Committee, where he could advance his ideas.

At the start of the 103rd Congress, Mfume unveiled a seven-point plan to revitalize the nation's cities, incorporating existing ideas, such as enterprise zones and a plan for national service for young people, with enough fine-tuning that he could call it his own.

And he worked with Republican Christopher Shays of Connecticut to introduce a bill creating tax credits for long-term investments in small businesses started by minorities.

Maryland 7

Downtown Baltimore's resurgence looks like a mirage to residents of the low-income black neighborhoods of west Baltimore and to those living north and east of the city center. The areas' ills — crime, drugs, teen pregnancies, school dropouts, lack of job opportunities — starkly contrast the vitality of the Inner Harbor.

Baltimore's population reached 939,000 in the 1960s, but the subsequent spread of urban problems sparked an exodus. By 1990, the city's population was 736,000, and an increasing number of middle-class blacks were joining whites in the suburbs.

As a result, the 7th — once wholly within the city — now swings out across western Baltimore County. But by following the black migration west on Liberty Heights toward Randallstown and down the Baltimore National Pike to Catonsville, the 7th maintains a 71 percent black population.

During his tenure as Baltimore mayor, Democratic Gov. William Donald Schaefer was berated by black activists for funneling development money into downtown. Since becoming mayor in 1987, Democrat Kurt L. Schmoke has channeled some resources to low-income communities in the flats east of downtown to row houses along Broadway and to tenements in west Baltimore. But major improvements have been slow.

The picture within the city (which contributes nearly 80 percent of the 7th's population) is not all bleak. Just north of the downtown business district is the gentrified Mount Vernon area, home of the Walters Art Gallery and the Peabody music academy. Farther north are Johns Hopkins University and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Inner-city Baltimore; Western Baltimore County

To the west is Druid Hill Park and the Baltimore Zoo. To the east is integrated Waverly and Memorial Stadium, home of the baseball Orioles for 37 years; the team left for a new downtown park in 1992. To the northeast is Morgan State University.

Though overshadowed by Harborplace, the old retail section west of the downtown hub survives; the Lexington food market and Baltimore Arena are here. There are middle-class black communities along Liberty Heights Road in west Baltimore. The national headquarters of the NAACP is near the city's western border. Over the line in Baltimore County are mainly black suburban settlements in Woodlawn and Lochearn. The Social Security Administration complex and Security Square Mall in Woodlawn are important sources of jobs.

To the south is Catonsville, site of the University of Maryland at Baltimore County. To the north, the 7th reaches to Randallstown, then leaps through a mostly undeveloped area to Reisterstown (both suburbs are shared with the 3rd). Although black residents have a strong presence in many of the 7th's suburban areas, the Baltimore County portion of the 7th is three-fifths white.

Democrats are assured of victories in the 7th. But getting the vote out can be a problem for Democrats; only 67 percent of the registered voters in the city part of the 7th turned out in November 1992, well below the 81 percent rate for the state.

1990 Population: 597,680. White 162,848 (27%). Black 424,132 (71%). Other 10,900 (2%). Hispanic origin 5,268 (1%). 18 and over 448,177 (75%). 62 and over 87,650 (15%). Median age: 32.

On Banking, Mfume gives voice to the concerns of public housing residents. In 1990, the Housing Subcommittee approved a Mfume amendment to change the way tenants calculate their rents, allowing them to pay according to their actual income, not their estimated income, which could include alimony or child support payments that do not come through.

He has been a participant in debate on bills to keep the savings and loan bailout operating. He won adoption of an amendment to increase business for minority contractors with the Resolution Trust Corporation, the bailout agency. And he engineered another to allow minority investors to operate branches of failed thrifts in minority neighborhoods rent-free for at least five years. But he largely has opposed providing more money to finance the bailout.

In 1992 he and other black caucus members opposed a Russian aid bill, which included a $12 billion increase in the U.S. contribution to the International Monetary Fund, on the ground that more money should be devoted to domestic needs first.

Amid the chorus of voices expressing concern over drug abuse and proposing grand plans to combat it, Mfume has tried to make a dent in the problem by focusing on a small corner of the issue. In 1989, he began pushing to curb sales of electronic beepers to minors, who, he said, use them to arrange drug deals. He reintroduced his bill in the 102nd Congress.

In mid-1992, Mfume was named to the House ethics committee to fill a vacancy when Gary L. Ackerman of New York resigned. Mfume had served temporarily on the panel

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

KWEISI MFUME
7TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

KWEISI MFUME (pronounced Kwah-EE-see Oom-FOO-may) represents Maryland's 7th Congressional District, to which he was first elected in 1986. He was born, raised and educated in the Baltimore area, and it was there that he followed his dreams to impact society and shape a more humane public policy.

Congressman Mfume, whose African name means "conquering son of kings," became politically active as a freshman in college. He graduated magna cum laude from Morgan State University in 1976 and later returned as Adjunct Professor, teaching courses in political science and communications. He earned a masters degree from Johns Hopkins University with a concentration in International Studies.

As Mfume's community involvement grew, so did his popularity. He translated that approval into a grass-roots election victory when he won a seat on the Baltimore City Council in 1979.

Since coming to Congress, Mfume has been active with broad committee obligations. He serves on the Banking and Financial Services Committee and is the Ranking Democratic Member on the General Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. He is also a member of the Financial Institutions & Consumer Credit Subcommittee. He also serves on the Small Business Committee and the Subcommittee on Government Programs. He has been able to focus Congressional attention on a broad range of minority business development concerns in the United States. Those efforts included minority business development in federal government contracting, the Personal Communications System (PCS) Spectrum Auction and health care reform. He has also just completed a brief term as Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee and continues to serve on that Committee.

During his tenure in the House of Representatives, Congressman Mfume has consistently advocated landmark minority business and civil rights legislation. He successfully co-sponsored the Americans with Disabilities Act and authored the minority contracting and employment amendments to the Financial Institutions Reform and Recovery Act. He strengthened the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and amended the Community Reinvestment Act in the interest of minority financial institutions. He co-authored and amended the Civil Rights Act of 1991 to apply to U.S. citizens working for companies abroad. He is the sponsor of legislative initiatives banning assault weapons and establishing stalking as a federal crime.

Congressman Mfume just completed two incredibly successful years as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and continues to remain an active member. He was recently appointed to Chair the CBC Task Force to Preserve Affirmative Action and to a leadership position in the House Democratic Caucus as the Vice Chairman for Communications. He serves on the Morgan State University Board of Regents, the Board of Visitors for the United States Naval Academy and on the Advisory Board of the Schomburg Commission for the Preservation of Black Culture. He is a Lifetime member of the NAACP. He is the Honorary Chair of the Theater for a New Generation Advocacy at Baltimore's CenterStage. He is also a member of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Central Maryland and Parents Anonymous of Maryland. His background in broadcasting includes 13 years in radio and for the last three years he has hosted local and national television shows.

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE RISE OF KWEISI MFUME

From Haiti to the crime bill, the Congressional Black Caucus has won new power in White House dealmaking, and Kweisi Mfume has won new power in the caucus.

BY PETER J. BOYER

JUST over two years ago, Kweisi Mfume was a junior Democratic congressman from Baltimore who was impatient for influence and exasperated by a seniority system that kept even third-term congressmen (like him) on the back rows. Congress, he believed, was stifled by a mind-set from an obsolete system under which young members, trying to get ahead, "scratched where they didn't itch, shuffled when they were not nervous, and bowed their heads when they were not engaged in prayer." In this respect, Mfume was hardly distinguishable (except for his name, which is Ghanaian and is pronounced Kwah-ee-see Oom-foo-may) from any of the other congressional backbenchers with frustrated ambitions. Then, in the summer of 1992, he found a shortcut to the power loop. Foreseeing a Democratic Presidential victory, coupled with big gains by black congressional candidates, Mfume recognized that the Congressional Black Caucus stood to become a significant force in the new Washington. He campaigned hard for, and won, the position of caucus chairman, and his calculations about the 1992 elections proved accurate. The Black Caucus swelled from twenty-six members to forty, and thus established a voting bloc whose favor would be crucial to a President with a forty-three-per-cent mandate.

Mfume's gambit has since been amply validated, as on one evening last May when President Clinton tracked him down by telephone at a Baltimore television studio and interrupted a taping to tell him he planned to withdraw Lani Guinier's nomination as head of the Justice Department's civil-rights division. The President wanted political cover, but Mfume refused to give it. The two men argued back and forth for several minutes, with Clinton defending his decision, and Mfume telling the President why he was wrong, before the conversation ended, cordially. Only then did Clinton call Guinier, to inform his old friend that her nomination was dead.

Such deference is the tribute paid to a voting bloc in a time when legislative margins tend to be measured in the single digits. The Black Caucus is far from monolithic, but its members are unified often enough to wield swing votes in such contests. "I call it the new arithmetic," Mfume says. When the President won passage of his budget package last year, the caucus was able to claim credit for delivering the key votes—votes that were yielded only after the caucus won more than ten billion dollars' worth of pet concessions (among them the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Mickey Leland Hunger Act). "They are a major force in the Congress," Richard Gephardt, the House Majority Leader, says of the caucus members. "They're good. They know what they're doing, and they know what they want."

Mfume has spent much of the last several weeks tormenting the White House over the pending crime bill, which Clinton desperately wants as a boost for his own popularity and to give Democrats a sexy legislative victory for the fall campaign. As a congressional conference committee waited through June and into July, Mfume haggled with the White House over a Racial Justice Act, which would give convicted killers the right to appeal their death sentences based on statistical evidence of racial imbalance. Mfume, representing the Black Caucus in backstage negotiations, insisted upon Clinton's endorsement of the racial-justice provision; Clinton's emissaries, wanting to please, sought compromise language that wouldn't alienate conservatives or contradict the President's own pro-

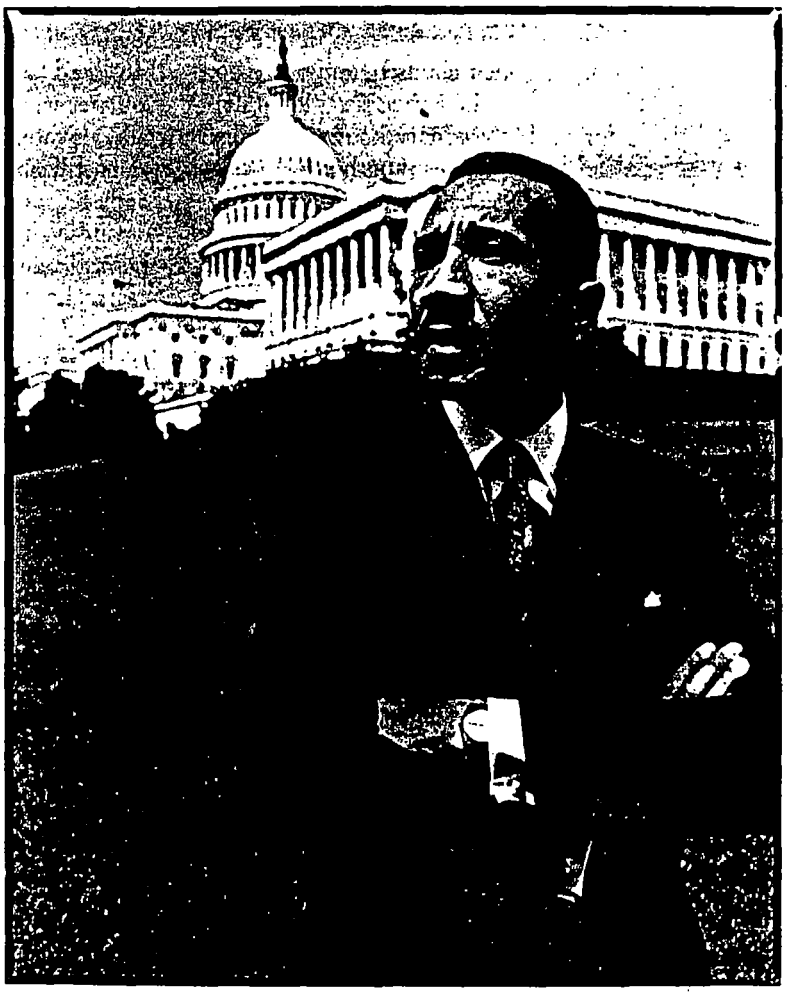
death-penalty posture. No common ground was found, and finally an exasperated Clinton decreed that the crime bill should move forward without the provision or risk being lost altogether. Mfume, however, refused to play the good soldier; instead of quietly acceding to the President's decision, he publicly scolded the White House for its lack of "respect" and declared that the majority of the caucus would oppose the legislation, seriously endangering the bill's chances. That forced the White House to scramble, with Clinton aides lobbying the caucus in the hope of achieving one of the Administration's trademark squeak-by victories.

Mfume says that the caucus has "nonnegotiable" demands on health care and on the President's proposed welfare reform as well. But no issue has been more associated with the Black Caucus than the Clinton Administration's policy on Haiti. The common perception in Washington that the United States plans to return exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power through military intervention, possibly as early as this week, credits (or blames) the Black Caucus for this turn in American foreign policy. For the past few weeks, Mfume has been a hot topic on the political airwaves, from Rush Limbaugh, who ridicules the influence of the caucus, to John McLaughlin, who referred to him as "General Mfume" and said he "is telling the Secretary of Defense how to actually conduct the invasion."

While it may be absurd to assert, as Republican Senator Larry Pressler does, that American Haiti policy is now "foreign policy by the Black Caucus," and that invasion is a quid pro quo for giving up the racial-justice provision of the crime bill, it is plain that the Clinton Administration's evolving Haiti policy is driven by domestic politics and that the caucus is a central factor therein. The Black Caucus's official position, adopted in a resolution last October, calls for a "protective military force" to insure Aristide's return.

From the moment of Aristide's removal from office by the Haitian military, in September of 1991, the caucus has made his return the "central focus" of its Haiti position, and has—along with Randall Robinson, the executive director of the TransAfrica lobby—forced the issue to the top of Clinton's foreign-policy agenda. (Mfume and the caucus are said to have brokered the ending of Robinson's hunger strike with the Clinton Administration.) Even before Aristide arrived in Washington with his government-in-exile, he had been visited in Venezuela by Mfume and New York Representative Charles Rangel. Allegiance to Aristide and an insistence that he be returned to office are, in fact, two of the only issues on which the caucus has been unanimous.

Significantly, the Black Caucus has succeeded in framing the Haiti problem as a social-justice issue, rather than as a foreign-policy issue, thus giving its position the weight of moral righteousness. In a letter to President Clinton, for example, Representative Major Owens, of New York, likened the President's situation to that of Abraham Lincoln before the Emancipation Proclamation, thereby equating the reinstallation of Aristide to the freeing of American slaves. This line is lent force by the very real discrepancy between American policy toward Haitian refugees (interdiction) and Cuban refugees (the welcome mat); the Haitian problem is, inevitably, a racial issue. "If Haitians were not black," Mfume says, "we would not sit back and watch this murder occur."



Presidents Reagan and Bush could afford to ignore the Black Caucus. President Clinton can't. Mfume calls it "the new arithmetic."

KEN SCHLES/ONYX

Mfume is a signal figure in politics today: a new kind of black leader, arisen from outside the civil-rights struggle, and a new kind of politician, wired to a power source beyond the traditional structures. "Power must take on the personification of leadership to be precise and focussed," Jesse Jackson, whose own star Mfume has occasionally eclipsed, says. "Kweisi embodies that personification. He's a well-studied, smart, dedicated person, who has integrity and is fearless."

THE Father's Day service this year at St. Edward's Catholic Church in west Baltimore was no greeting-card homage to dear Dad but, rather, a call to arms in a war for cultural survival. St. Edward's, like many African-American congregations, calls the holiday Men's Day, and uses it as an occasion to focus on the imperilment embedded in the daily lives of young men in the black

community and to rally its men to the challenge. Outside the church, hundreds of men gathered in brutal heat; inside, seated in pews, women waited, cooling themselves with hand fans provided by a local funeral home. The men made their entrance in an exhilarating ceremony called the Procession of Warriors, led by a men's choir singing a martial hymn ("We are soldiers in the army. We've got to fight, although we have to die"). Marching at the end of the procession, in the place of honor, was Kweisi Mfume, the guest speaker.

Mfume's appearances in his district are charged with a peculiar intensity, such as accompanies visitations from a close relative who has become a celebrity. His usual public posture is one of studied sobriety, punctuated by narrow-lidded eyes and a thin mustache that lend him an almost austere aspect; but the old neighborhood has a loosening effect. Before and after the Men's Day service, people up and down the street greeted him in a very personal way, with men exchanging elaborate ritual handshakes, and women embracing him and whispering in his ear. When he spoke in church, he began in the quiet, measured, almost scholarly tones of his press conferences, until he reached the point of his homily, about the meaning of manhood, and then he became a preacher. "You're not a man because you killed somebody," he said to a chorus of "Amen"s. "You're a man when you know how to heal somebody. . . . We must say, even from experience, brother, you're not a man if you can make a baby, you're a man when you learn how to raise a baby. That's when you become a man." With this, Mfume jabbed at his chest with the forefingers of both hands, as if he were directing his message partly at himself—and, indeed, the congregation knew that he was.

Mfume speaks with particular authority on the subject of fathers and sons, of men struggling to do the right thing for their children, and of the consequences when the struggle is abandoned. He was once known as Frizzell Gray, and was just another lost boy on the streets of Baltimore in the nineteen-sixties. He dropped out of school and joined a gang, often barely escaping jail. Along the way, he fathered five children with three women in the space of five years. Now, as we drove away from the church in his black Lincoln Mark VIII, he told me that part of his mission was to show himself to the young men of his old neighborhood as often as he could. "My purpose," he said, "is to illuminate the possible."

It is difficult to reconcile the smooth Capitol Hill power broker in the black Lincoln with the street hoodlum named Frizzell Gray. But Mfume, who is an amateur actor, knows the value of a good script; in a political era that values personal drama (e.g., "The Man from Hope"), he embraces his own narrative of redemption much as the George Bush–Bob Dole generation did its war record. As Mfume tells the story (which he has contracted with a publisher to make into a book), Frizzell Gray, born in 1948, grew up in and around Baltimore, first in the small black enclave of Turner's Station, in the shadows of the smokestacks of Bethlehem Steel, and then in the row-house neighborhoods of black west Baltimore. He lived with his mother and three younger stepsisters and an abusive stepfather, whom he loathed. His mother, Mary Elizabeth, was a devout Roman Catholic, who nurtured her son's talents and insisted that he make the most of them. Frizzell was small for his age—he was nicknamed Pee-Wee by his family—and he is remembered as having been a serious, even a bookish child. "Kweisi had the thirst for knowledge," Carl Swann, a lifelong friend, says. "He would come out and play, and then sometimes you wouldn't see him for weeks, and he'd be in the house reading and studying." When Frizzell was not yet thirteen, his stepfather, who was a truck driver, left home, and life took a distinctly Dickensian turn. Mary Elizabeth found work as a maid, when she could get it, and the family lived a hand-to-mouth existence in a series of rented row houses, ever in anticipation of the next eviction. Then, when Frizzell was sixteen, Mary Elizabeth fell ill; over a period of months, she grew weaker, and long, late-night conversations that Frizzell had cherished became more strained, until one night, Mfume recalls, she died in his arms. He rode to the local hospital, and stayed by his mother's side until a doctor told him, "You know, your mother is dead. She is not going to wake up."

Frizzell returned to a household of which, he realized, he was now the head. After a time, there was a knock on the door, and Frizzell opened it to see a man he'd known all his life as Mr. Charles, a friend of his mother's who had always been especially kind to the boy. Mr. Charles worked as a sometime chef, and often brought food, either sto-

len or left over, from work. Frizzell was happy to see Mr. Charles. "I couldn't think of anybody else that I would want it to be," Mfume recalls. "I immediately went to say, 'I'm sorry. Do you know that Mama died?' And he said, 'I already know.' And he just looked at me and said, 'I'm your father.' I looked back at him, and I wasn't shocked or astonished. I just almost felt like my mother was hugging me. I didn't know how he was my father, and I knew he would explain, but I knew he didn't lie to me. He came in and he threw his arm around me, and we sat down on the couch, and I was really crying then. And he said, 'Your mother never really had a chance to tell you what I'm about to tell you, but this is the rest of the story.' We sat there for hours, just talking, and he told me about how my mother and he had fallen in love, and that her family didn't want her seeing him, because he was running around—a real slick guy, a dapper dresser, and a ladies' man and a numbers man. And how he had developed a heroin habit, and he had let her down and they broke up, and she ultimately met my stepfather, who promised her security and everything else, and who eventually adopted me."

The revelation may have been comforting but was of little practical consequence, for Mr. Charles was either unable or unwilling to accept responsibility for his son. The family was broken up, with the girls going to live with their grandmother, and young Frizzell moving in with two uncles. He quit school the week he buried his mother.

Mfume says that he took whatever jobs he could get—shining shoes, working in a bread factory, and the like—believing that it was up to him to provide for his sisters. As his aspirations shrank, his bitterness grew. "I was very bitter, and I kept it inside of me," he says now. "I couldn't understand why this God that my mother thought was so divine and worshipped just unrelentingly had come into our family in that way. I mean, we had enough problems as it was, because she was a single parent, and we moved from house to house—it was difficult for her, as a maid, to stay on top of all the bills. Why, of all the people to take, would it be my mother? And to split up my family like that . . ." Soon he was hanging around with the very street toughs that his mother had told him to avoid, and eventually he joined the neighborhood gang. His rite of passage was to follow a drunk man to a side street and mug him; he was instructed to do whatever was necessary, but not to return without the man's wallet. "I *had* to come back with his wallet, but I didn't want to hurt the man," he recalls. "I had no desire to hurt anybody in my life. So what I did was to grab him, push him down to the ground, rip his wallet out, and hope that he didn't jump at me. But he did. And I had to hit him." After that, the slide was steep and fast, and Frizzell's life became an endless round of cheap wine and street-corner machismo, as he awaited a turn in jail, or something worse. His friend Carl Swann, who is now an assistant to the congressman, says, "He was like any other city-raised young black man—he was in the struggle."

But Frizzell Gray knew that if his life came to ruin he would be the cause, and one night in the late sixties, after an epiphany that he still cannot explain, he decided to walk away from the streets. "People thought I was crazy," Mfume recalls. "But that night I left that corner and prayed and asked for God's forgiveness and asked my mother to please forgive me this one time for letting her down. I *had* let her down—that was not the way I was raised. I said that if I had just one more chance I would never, ever again go back to that, and I would try to find a way to atone for it. And I cried on the floor that night on my knees. I made a very real promise to myself, to my mother, and to God that night—that if I could just get to that point and get one more chance I would do everything I could do to make a difference."

FOR his new life, Frizzell Gray gave himself a new name. In a consummate act of self-reinvention, the fatherless child of the streets once known as Pee-Wee became Kweisi Mfume—"the conquering son of kings." He had to fight to get out of his gang: he was "banked," or jumped, by his former companions regularly until they decided that he was a lost cause and left him alone. A man called Diamond Jim Sears, who had known him since he was a boy and had witnessed his descent and his climb back, gave him a job at WEBB, a radio station of which he was general manager. WEBB was a popular black station, owned by the soul singer James Brown, and Kwa, as Sears called him, was thrilled to hold even a menial job there. He did errands for the city's star jocks, men with names like Fat Daddy Johnson and Big Al Jefferson. He was infatuated with the life and was determined to make it on the air himself. He sat for hours in front of a mirror, talking into a recorder, working on his diction and locution, perfecting a delivery that his colleagues still marvel at. Eventually, Sears gave him his chance, letting him read the news during the week and serve as host of his own show on weekends. He quickly developed a singular style, eschewing boisterous jock rap and dance music in favor of cool dialogue and jazz. "Kweisi was a d.j. who was very progressive," Swann says. "He could handle bebop, but bebop wasn't his whole makeup. His thing was communication, the freedom of life. He spoke on issues that concerned the people. He was the *man*."

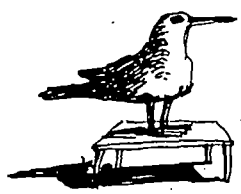
Mfume's show, called "Ebony Reflections," was a hit, but James Brown hated it. "Brown was saying, 'Well, Mr. Sears, we've got to put somebody else in on that slot,' " Sears recalls. "I said, 'Yes, sir, no problem.' We kept him hid for two years. Every time Brown came into town, I'd tell Kwa to take the day off. He was too advanced for Brown, back then—'69, '70. 'He's just too hard to dance to,' Brown said. 'I would stay with soul music, whooping and hollering and getting down.' Kweisi's thing was smooth. Very smooth. Silky." Mfume considered an acting career, and even went to New York for a time, but gave up that idea. "It was a lot more involved than what he really had the time to do," Swann says. "They wanted him to prepare himself, and he was on a much faster track."

Mfume took classes and earned a high-school equivalency degree in 1968. Soon after, he entered the Community College of Baltimore, and became a campus radical, joining the Free South Africa movement and nurturing his own Afrocentrism. Eventu-

ally, Mfume graduated magna cum laude from Morgan State and earned a master's degree in liberal arts from Johns Hopkins.

Along the way, he discovered women. His mentor Diamond Jim Sears wasn't surprised. "Any disk jockey that's been on the air, women, you understand, have a tendency to flock to him," he says. Mfume's attraction had consequences, and by the time he was twenty-two he was the father of five boys. "I don't know if I found sex or if sex found me, but every time I did it, it seems as if someone was pregnant," Mfume told me. "It was a harrowing experience." He did not marry any of the women who bore his sons, but on learning of each pregnancy he went to the girl's parents and promised that he would do his part, he says. The women eventually married ("They are all good women," he says), and he says he continued to help to support his sons—Ronald, Donald, Kevin, Keith, and Michael, who are now in their twenties. ("One of the reasons I was so glad to get this job," he says of his 1986 election to Congress, "is that for the first time in my life I didn't have to hold down two jobs.")

An advantage of deriving one's own story from street lore is that some facts are less easily found than, say, one's school record; and here, at least, Mfume's version seems to have undergone certain revisions. When I asked Mfume's first serious girlfriend—the mother of Donald and Ronald—whether Mfume had paid her child support, my query was greeted with incredulous laughter, of considerable duration. "I don't remember it that way," she said at last. As she tells it, both times she became pregnant by Mfume, her parents strongly urged matrimony. "But he said no. My mother said, 'You're going to,' and he said, 'Oh, no I'm not, either.' And I think that's when it really started being rocky." She offered the additional information that Mfume had been briefly married, and that her relationship with him ended when she met one of his other girlfriends. "You know how men are," she said. "He had told me one thing and his best friend had told me another thing, and I met her when she came up to the car and wanted to fight me. That's how I met her."



However, the woman verified much of the rest of Mfume's account ("Looking back, I realize he was a true hoodlum in the beginning"), including his sudden and mysterious turnaround, which she attributes to his mother's lasting influence. She said that Mfume did eventually help to support her boys, at her prodding ("I used to give him the blues—I stayed on his case, and, finally, he did"), and that when he had time he spent weekends with Donald and Ronald. "His time was pretty much not there," Donald, who is a finance major at Howard University, says. "But on the weekends we'd always go to the park or a baseball game or somewhere, just go down to the harbor or just cruise around town." When the boys were growing up, Mfume wanted them to meet his father, their grandfather—an endeavor complicated by the fact that the old man was frequently in jail. One day, Mfume told his boys that they were going to visit their grandfather "at work," and they went to the county jail. It proved an awkward experience. "He didn't know I was bringing them, so when he came in and sat down at the table across from us he started crying," Mfume says. "He'd just had pictures of them up until that point. Then my kids said, 'Why is he crying on the job?' "

In his office, Mfume proudly displays a photograph of his sons with him, and notes that all five have either gone to college or have entered the armed forces. (There have been rough spots, though, including the arrest in Atlanta two weeks ago of Michael Mfume on a rape charge. Michael, who is twenty-four and makes music videos, was reared mostly by his maternal grandmother, because of persistent disagreements with his mother, according to the mother of Donald and Ronald Mfume. Michael denies the charge; he was freed last week on thirty-five thousand dollars' bail. His father said in a statement, "No parent ever wants to get the dreaded call that their son or daughter has been charged with violating the law," and expressed confidence that Michael was innocent.)

Mfume's radio show and his campus activities drew him into politics, but his approach was problematic. In 1978, wearing a dashiki and spouting slogans, he stormed into the Baltimore City Council chamber, hurled himself into the seat of one of the community's elder statesmen, Dr. Emerson Julian, and declared, "This seat will be mine!" A few months later, Dr. Julian died, and Mfume decided to run for his seat, despite having no support from the local Democratic Party bosses. An influential Baltimore businessman advised him to tone down and dress up—advice he took seriously. With the help of a core group of supporters, mostly college friends, he mounted an underdog campaign. His campaign theme was "Beat the Bosses," and he won by just three votes ("the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," Swann says). In office, Mfume was inclined at first to maintain his outsider's posture, fighting ferociously with the mayor, William D. Schaefer, and with fellow-councilmen—an approach that broadened his public identity but hampered his effectiveness. He eventually mastered the concept of consensus, and became an accomplished politican, ready in his mind, at least, to run for the congressional seat vacated in 1986 by Parren Mitchell.

Baltimore has a rich tradition of energetic black politics, dominated in recent history by the Mitchell family—particularly the late Clarence Mitchell, Jr., a longtime lobbyist for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and his brother Parren. In 1986, the anointed Democratic candidate was Clarence Mitchell III, then a state legislator, and Mfume found himself once again fighting the bosses. It was a difficult primary campaign, and it degenerated into an ugly one. Mfume had six Democratic opponents besides Mitchell, and one of them was a mentor—his college political-science professor, Augustus Adair. But the worst moment came after Mfume won the nomination, when his Republican opponent publicly revealed the fact that Mfume was the father of five boys born out of wedlock. "He pulled all of us over to the side and pretty much let us know what was happening," Donald, who was in high school at the time, recalls. "In politics, your life is an open book. It didn't really affect me much. Well, it did in that I had people coming up to me and asking me things—all different kinds of people."

The details of Mfume's private life did not harm his candidacy, however. He won the election, and in 1987 he went to Washington as District Seven's congressman.

Mfume now lives in a brick colonial house in a Baltimore suburb. He has box seats behind third base at Camden Yards. He wears tasselled loafers with double-breasted suits and monogrammed shirts with French cuffs. And, according to those who seem to know, he is considered something of a Washington heartthrob; the conservative political commentator Mary Matalin ranks him as one of the ten most attractive men in the capital. One of Mfume's friends, the actress and writer Anna Deavere Smith, laughs when she tells of a recent evening she spent with him in New York. She had been nominated for two Tony Awards for her show about race in America, "Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992," and Mfume escorted her to the awards ceremony. "He *is* charismatic—there is no doubt about that," she says. "People just come to him, all kinds of people. They just come right to him. We were leaving Sardi's, and I was getting into the car and he was following me, and somebody came running after him looking for an autograph. And he said, 'No, no, you want her.' And this person said, 'No. I know you. You're who I want.' "

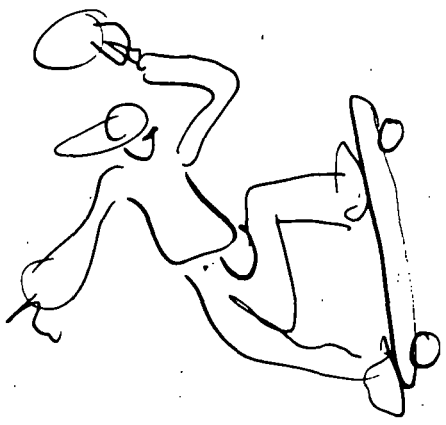
Such scenes are fairly common. A few weeks ago, while awaiting Mfume's arrival at another black-tie awards dinner, I asked one of the hostesses of the event several times whether the congressman had arrived. Finally, she answered me by saying, "Has my heart started fluttering yet? When it does—mine and those of about thirty-five other women—you'll know he's here."

IN the past, selection of the Black Caucus chairman had always been a matter of pro-forma "elections," but in 1992, with the "new arithmetic," came the first true contest for the position. Mfume announced his candidacy early—in July of that year—and he was challenged by Craig Washington, of Houston. Although the caucus vote, that December, was surprisingly one-sided—27–9 in favor of Mfume—the chairman has since been learning the lesson that the Black Caucus is not a monolith and that his victory was a

hedged mandate. In recent years, as more blacks have entered Congress from outside the traditional urban-center base, the caucus has become dramatically more diverse, making unanimity rare. For example, Mike Espy (now the Secretary of Agriculture) was elected to Congress from Mississippi with a significant percentage of white votes, and his relatively conservative positions (he was a member of the National Rifle Association, for example) reflected that. Many of the senior members of the Black Caucus hold key committee chairmanships and thus derive their power from the institution, rather than from membership in any group; a Charles Rangel or a Louis Stokes yields to no dictate. "The whole notion of having a caucus position on any one issue is, at best, a tenuous thing, and Mfume has to work through that," Ronald Walters, the chairman of the Political Science Department at Howard University and an unofficial Black Caucus insider, says. The caucus vote on NAFTA was divided, and Mfume has had to work at building consensus positions and imposing the discipline necessary to give meaning to their numbers. In doing so, he has had to overcome the resistance of such Clinton loyalists as Representative John Lewis, of Georgia, a Chief Deputy Majority Whip, and Representative William Jefferson, of Louisiana, both of whom normally oppose any caucus direction that runs counter to the Administration's interest.

Mfume has consciously sought to gain for the caucus (and thus for himself) a public identity in the African-American universe such as was usually reserved for the major civil-rights organizations and their leaders. When the caucus was founded, in 1970, it reflected a black-nationalist ethos, but in the mid-seventies it moved sharply to a more traditional legislative agenda. That "old Black Caucus," as Mfume calls it, was barely known outside Washington, except to the national black élite who attended its annual Legislative Conference, which was considered the premier bash on the African-American social calendar. Mfume has literally taken the caucus outside the Beltway, to conduct conferences in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami. "I didn't want to take the organization off the deep end," Mfume says, "but I did want to make it have a greater degree of credibility among the mass of people."

His boldest move in that direction, however, was seen by many as a spectacular leap off the deep end—his announcement of a "sacred covenant" between the caucus and the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan. The incident occurred at last year's Legislative Conference, a five-day affair attended by the civil-rights, show-business, and political black establishment, and by President Clinton as well. It was a showcase moment for Mfume, his first Legislative Conference as chairman, and events dictated high drama. The civil-rights leadership was convulsed with anxiety over Farrakhan, whose Nation of Islam newspaper had been thundering against its members—Jesse Jackson and the executive director of the N.A.A.C.P., Benjamin Chavis, Jr., in particular—for having excluded Farrakhan from the thirtieth-anniversary celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.,'s march on Washington. The Black Caucus invited Farrakhan and other nontraditional black leaders (including some gang members) to the conference, to participate in various discussions on race relations. The common ground was a perceived need for unity, so that black leaders could attack the problems of violence and drugs and other social malignancies rather than each other. Chavis and Farrakhan patched things up, and, in a gesture meant to insert the caucus into the mixture, Mfume included in his closing address (without having consulted the caucus) a vow to work with all black leaders toward achieving shared goals. "We want the word to go forward today to friend and foe alike that the Congressional Black Caucus, after having entered into a sacred covenant with the N.A.A.C.P. to work for real and meaningful change, will enter into the same covenant with the Nation of Islam—" Mfume intended to continue down a list of other black organizations, but, at the mention of the Nation, enthusiasts stood and cheered wildly, effectively putting an exclamation mark on Mfume's new "covenant" with Farrakhan.



Mfume's remarks, already controversial, became more so when, within weeks, Farrakhan's former "national assistant," Khalid Abdul Muhammad, gave a speech at Kean College, New Jersey, slandering homosexuals, Jews, Catholics, and the Pope. Jewish groups demanded that black leaders, including Mfume, denounce Farrakhan and the Nation, and within the caucus, which relies for some of its funding on key Jewish benefactors, the whole matter stirred up a tempest; some members, including Representative Owens, made clear their feeling that Mfume had no right to freelance in the name of the group. But Mfume stood firm. He never repudiated Farrakhan, and, though he issued a public statement saying that the Black Caucus had no "official" tie to the Nation, he repeated his intention of working with Farrakhan on issues of mutual interest, such as the Nation's stop-the-violence and self-help campaigns. Mfume told me he regrets that the Nation's agenda has been obscured by charges of "alleged" anti-Semitism. "The problem is that the anti-Semitic rhetoric, whether real or imagined, does not allow for the broader message to reach beyond the black community," he said. "Whether real or imagined, it has certainly created a barrier." Mfume knows very well that there is nothing "imagined" about Farrakhan's or Muhammad's incendiary remarks, but he also knows that the connection the Nation of Islam has in the black community, especially among young men, is powerful and in many respects beneficial. In that perspective, for all the outrage prompted inside the Beltway and on the op-ed pages by Mfume's "sacred covenant," the controversy may well be a net plus for the Black Caucus, and, of course, for Mfume.

Mfume says that his other mission as caucus chairman has been to give the group a new identity within Congress,

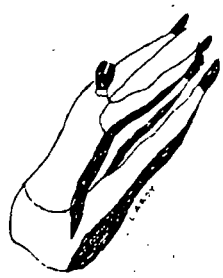
and particularly in the eyes of the Democratic House leadership, which he says has long taken the caucus for granted. "It was a relationship that I thought was akin to feudalism," he says. "I thought that the caucus was like serfs, and that the leadership was the lords. And as long as you did what the lords said, you could stay on their land and you'd be O.K. But the minute you didn't you were in big trouble. You might even get beheaded." When the new Congress convened, Mfume says, he talked to the House Speaker, Thomas Foley, about his expectations for the caucus. "I remember saying to the Speaker, 'This process is not a spectator sport. If I wanted that, I could go to Camden Yards. We don't want to be in box seats, we want to be on the field, in the game, and making the plays. Not that we want to run the team—we just want to be on the field.' And he said, 'Sure, I understand.' " But within only a few weeks the caucus's relationship with the House leadership was put to the test, when Foley tried to deliver to President Clinton the power to exercise a line-item veto—to delete parts of a bill without killing the entire measure—which Democrats had for twelve years denied to Presidents Reagan and Bush. The line-item veto is a sensitive issue for many black representatives, who, as state legislators, saw it exercised by governors in ways that had the effect of hurting the black community. But Foley and the House leadership pushed ahead with the measure without consulting the Black Caucus.

"I said to the Speaker and to others that this is a problem for my members and for me," Mfume says. "It didn't mean anything to them, because, conceptually, it was the *former* Black Caucus." Just minutes before a procedural vote on the measure was to be taken, Mfume called an impromptu caucus meeting in the Speaker's room and said, "If there is ever going to be a defining moment, it has to be now." The members agreed, and Mfume went out to the floor of the House and declared that the Black Caucus would not support the line-item veto—a move that effectively killed its chances. Mfume delights in the memory. "Some of the people around me didn't hear me at first, and people who did started whispering to them, and whoever was in the chair at the time didn't know what to do, and the parliamentarian was saying, 'Hold up, hold up, don't call for the vote.' The Speaker rushed out on the floor. He was a little red-faced, and they huddled there at the well for a long time, and the Speaker immediately wanted to meet with me and with other members of the caucus. So we met, and we said, 'Look, this is not about showboating. And it's certainly not a grandstand. We just can't operate this way. We have real problems with the measure.' And the Speaker said, 'God, if we do this, the Republicans are going to see this as a crack in our ranks, and we have to hang together. This is the wrong issue to make your point on.' But when the Speaker realized that his arguments were not catching hold I think he kind of understood that this was not the old Black Caucus. He didn't know what it was, but he knew that it had changed. So he pulled back, withdrew. He went out on the floor, and they withdrew the rule."

Foley now holds regular monthly meetings with the executive committee of the Black Caucus—except, Mfume says, "for times when we just had too much to do, and thanked him for being ready to see us." In late June, when health-care measures were finally beginning to move through several key committees, Mfume declared that the caucus wanted several features that it considered "nonnegotiable"—including a definable universal coverage. This development occurred at just the moment when the White House and key Democratic congressional leaders seemed ready to soften their position on universal coverage (to the point, Mfume thought, of gutting reform) in the hope of getting some legislation passed. The caucus may yet prove an unexpected complication in the already fragile system of coalitions needed to achieve health-care legislation this year.

As in its dealings with the Democratic leadership, the Black Caucus under Mfume has been insistent upon prior consultation with the White House. Presidents Reagan and Bush could safely ignore the caucus, which was not their constituency. It is Clinton's constituency, however, and the re-

lationship began unhappily, with the President's decision to hold to the Bush policy on Haiti and, especially, with his bailout on Lani Guinier, which the caucus viewed as an unforgivably craven act. When the White House told reporters after the Guinier-nomination withdrawal that Clinton would be meeting with the Black Caucus to discuss a new nominee, Mfume announced that the caucus would not be there. A second meeting was planned and was also postponed. "I deliberately refused to meet with the President," Mfume says. "There was one, maybe two, who said, 'Well, it's the President. If the President calls, we can't say no.' I said, 'We don't have anything to meet about. Wounds take time to heal. This is a big wound, and we're not going to meet with the President.' I had to say that a couple of times on network television in order to crystallize the fact that we weren't going, and to kind of lock my membership into that position."



The caucus develops its own positions on almost all major issues, not just "black issues," and reporters have got into the habit of attending Mfume's regular press conferences whenever an important new White House initiative is announced—partly because the Black Caucus can be relied upon to disagree with all or part of any given Administration policy. In June, when the White House sent its long-awaited welfare-reform proposal to Congress, Mfume followed the Republicans into the press gallery to criticize it. He said that the caucus could not support welfare reform that took funding away from existing social programs, and blasted the White House for not including the Black Caucus in the formulation of its policy. "It is a mistake that should not continue to be repeated," he said. "This isn't any way to run a railroad."

DURING 1993, the aim of United States policy on Haiti was basically twofold: to restore democracy (and thus Aristide, who had won Haiti's democratic national election with almost seventy per cent of the vote) and to do so in a manner that would last—a considerable undertaking, given Haiti's political culture of corruption and violence. Lawrence Pezzullo, who at the time was Clinton's special envoy to Haiti, and his team called this a "durable scenario," and it depended upon persuading Aristide to agree that, once returned, he would broaden democracy by accepting the idea of government by consensus. That meant giving some voice to his opposition, and Aristide and his followers here rejected that idea, according to Pezzullo. The initial Clinton policy was thus essentially a continuation of the Bush policy—imposing sanctions, turning back refugees, passively supporting the return of Aristide.

On March 18th of this year, the Black Caucus sent a letter to President Clinton that began, "The United States' Haiti policy must be scrapped." The letter was signed by all forty members of the caucus (including the sole Republican—Gary Franks, of Connecticut). Within weeks, Pezzullo was fired, and was replaced by a former chairman of the Black Caucus, William Gray, who was then a representative from Pennsylvania. Before accepting the post, Gray telephoned Mfume and said that he would not accept the position without caucus support. "I reminded him that although he was gone, he was still a member, and this was just like having one of us in that position," Mfume says. Mfume and several other caucus members kept the heat on Clinton through the spring by protesting outside the White House and openly ridiculing the President's foreign-policy acumen. "There's some bad judgment at work in the White House by people who don't understand history," Major Owens said of Clinton's foreign-policy team.

In late May, Dante Caputo, a special United Nations representative to Haiti, wrote a memo to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the United Nations Secretary-General, outlining his view of American intentions regarding Haiti. On the basis of discussions with Strobe Talbott and other foreign-policy advisers close to President Clinton, Caputo concluded, "The U.S. administration considers that an invasion of Haiti is its best option." The military intervention, Caputo wrote, would return Haiti's ousted President Aristide to power through "a unilateral action, a surgical action, with the eventual participation of several countries in the region so as to give it a certain legitimacy." The diplomat's assessment of American policy mirrored Kweisi Mfume's recommendation that the United States consider "surgical air strikes to at least send a message to the military."

According to notes from a meeting attended by Caputo and the Secretary-General, the Clinton Administration's recent decision to abandon efforts to force Aristide into a consensus mode and to end negotiations with the Haitian military "acted as a brake to a diplomatic solution, creating a situation where the intervention became nearly inevitable." The new Clinton Haiti policy halted the summary turning back of refugees, sought safe havens for them, drastically tightened sanctions, and stopped commercial air traffic to and from Haiti—all actions urged by the Black Caucus.

With invasion, if it comes, the will of the caucus will have been done. What happens then? In his letter Major Owens assured Clinton that intervention would last only "a few months" and that "human casualties" would "be negligible." Pezzullo, who is openly bitter about these developments, says that intervention "would be a disaster," explaining, "You have no institutions, you have nothing resembling solid ground you can put your feet on. . . . The Black Caucus is going to pay a terrible price here. . . . They have assumed completely the Aristide line. They're not even questioning it. And they're pressuring their own government to pursue the Aristide line, and, indeed, their government is pursuing the Aristide line. . . . But, you see, the problem is, this will not work. If we invade—which is very likely, not because the President will have the stomach for it but because he's going to find himself with no option but to invade—then the costs will come."

An underlying doubt about the viability of an invasion resides in Aristide himself. His class-war rhetoric and alleged condoning of violence (including the practice of "necklacing," by which victims are bound inside gasoline-soaked tires and burned alive) has suggested to some observers that he may not be the romantic democratic figure his reputation in exile holds him to be,

and that his return will not resolve Haiti's instability.

Mfume discounts these concerns. He has met often with Aristide, he says, and during the exiled leader's time in America he has learned moderation toward his opposition. "He has been tempered, in the last couple of years following the coup, with a greater realization that democracy must be broad enough to tolerate dissent, and at the same time be careful enough in guarding against something such as an overthrow," Mfume told me.

MFUME'S House seat is safe, but he is probably several years away from the chairmanship of a standing committee, and it is by no means certain that his caucus tenure has enhanced his chances for a place in the Party leadership. On the contrary, when Speaker Foley chose the Democrats' four deputy whips, the slot more or less reserved for a black member went to John Lewis, who entered Congress with Mfume. A Senate run is unlikely soon, because both Maryland senators are Democrats. Still, it is difficult to imagine Mfume, accustomed now to the light, returning comfortably to the relative obscurity of a middle-level congressman. His ambition runs deep and swift; family and friends say that he covets a higher station in Congress and that he has discussed an eventual try for the Speakership, or perhaps statewide office.

As it has turned out, Mfume guessed right about the role the Black Caucus would hold in this congressional term under this President. By the end of last week, the caucus was holding emergency meetings on the racial-justice provision of the crime bill with Attorney General Janet Reno and the White House chief of staff, Leon Panetta, in the hope of getting what Mfume called "a win" for the caucus despite Clinton's reluctance. The matter of a Haitian invasion, meanwhile, seemed increasingly a question of "when" rather than "if." When Mfume was asked what United States military intervention to restore Aristide would say about the caucus, he replied, "It will say that the new Congressional Black Caucus is now able to effectuate change in both domestic *and* foreign policy." And that may be the ultimate verification of Mfume's new arithmetic. ♦

Terry - call me abt this - GB

2/20

ROUTING SLIP

DATE: 2/1/96

FROM: Stephanie Streett and Anne Walley
Deputy Assistants to the President and Directors of Scheduling

SUBJECT: Swearing in of Congressman Kweisi Mfume as new President of NAACP

Don Baer	✓	Mack McLarty	
Erskine Bowles		Leon Panetta	
Peg Cusack		Jack Quinn	
Rahm Emanuel		Carol Rasco	
Jack Gibbons		Paige Reffe	✓
Laura Graham	✓	Patti Solis	
Pat Griffin		Doug Sosnik	✓
Marcia Hale		Speechwriting	✓
Alexis Herman	✓	G. Stephanopoulos	
Nancy Hernreich		Todd Stern	
Kitty Higgins		Ann Stock	
Harold Ickes		Kim Tilley	
Jennifer Jose	✓	Jodie Torkelson	
Ron Klain		Laura Tyson	
Anthony Lake		Melanne Verveer	
Bruce Lindsey		Maggie Williams	
Mike McCurry	✓		

FILE: Accept 2/20/96

COMMENTS: Per SS and AW on 2/1/96

SCHEDULING PROPOSAL 02/07/96 1/30/96

----- ACCEPT ----- REGRET ----- PENDING

TO: Stephanie Street
Deputy Assistant to the President & Director
of Scheduling

Anne Walley
Deputy Assistant to the President & Director
of Scheduling

FROM: Douglas B. Sosnik
Assistant to the President & Director
of Political Affairs

Alexis Herman
Assistant to the President & Director
of Public Liaison

REQUEST: For the President to attend the swearing in of Congressman Kweisi Mfume as the new President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

PURPOSE: February is Black History Month and the President's attendance at the NAACP event will allow him the opportunity to build on his relationship with the African American community.

BACKGROUND: The NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Mfume's swearing in will have in attendance more than 200 of the nation's most prominent African American and civil rights leaders.

DATE & TIME: February 20, 1996; 11:00-12:30.

DURATION: 1 hour.

LOCATION: Washington, D.C.; The Department of Justice Great Hall.

PARTICIPANTS: The President; Congressman Kweisi Mfume; 200 prominent African American and civil rights leaders.

REMARKS REQUIRED:	To be provided.
RECOMMENDED BY:	Doug Sosnik.
CONTACT:	Doug Sosnik or Eric Eve.
ORIGIN OF REQUEST:	Request to Doug Sosnik by Congressman Mfume.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Welcome to Wash. & hope you refrain from nasty name calling at common core
& I hope during the course of your meetings, none of you throw around vicious words like moderate, mainstream or open to compromise.

SOTU - Community -
NAACP - changed name -
reinspire - from govt. to community
Bob Putnam - 1909 - many orgs
founded same year -
603-532-8929
Robert Putnam -
Bowling Alone

February 15, 1996

MEMORANDUM TO SPEECHWRITERS

FROM: GABRIELLE

I will be out of the office for the next couple days and will return mid-day Wednesday. I can probably be tracked down by calling 603-644-1996, although I will be moving around a lot.

I've attached the schedule for the next week, as far as I know it. I will deal with logistics for the trip to California on Wednesday, but if you need anything before hand, Nicole Elkon will be holding trip meetings at 3 pm every day in Room 188.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
4805 MT. HOPE DRIVE • BALTIMORE, MD 21215-3297 • (410) 358-8900

NAACP AN OVERVIEW OF OUR HISTORIC MISSION

MYRLIE EVERS-WILLIAMS
Chair, Board of Directors

ORIGINS

On February 9, 1909 on the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, sixty prominent black and white citizens issued " The Call" for a national conference in New York City to renew "the struggle for civil and political liberty". A distinguished group of black leaders added their voice to the movement. Principal among these were W.E.B. DuBois, who was to serve as the sage of black professionals to form the Niagara Movement which drew up an agenda for aggressive action not unlike the group he now joined. Also involved was Ida Wells-Barnett, a young journalist , whose eloquent editorials focused national attention on the epidemic of lynchings. Participants at the conference agreed to work toward the abolition of forced segregation, promotion of equal education and civil rights under the protection of law, and an end to race violence . In 1911, that organization was incorporated as the Association for the Advancement of Colored People - The NAACP.

Working Through The Courts

The distinctive strategic emphasis of the NAACP- ending discrimination through legal action- evolved during its first twenty years. By assuming the legal challenges that were required to gain full citizenship for blacks, the Association became a formidable force for change in its early years . First in Guinn v. United States, the Supreme Court in 1910 struck down the grandfather clauses of state constitutions as an unconstitutional barrier to voting rights under the Fifteenth Amendment. In 1917, the Court declared as unconstitutional a Louisville ordinance that required blacks to live in certain sections of the city, thus challenging residential segregation through city ordinances. Court decisions to follow, initiated through NAACP lawsuits, nullified the restrictive covenants - a claus in real estate deeds that pledged a white buyer never to sell property to blacks. And in 1923, the court declared that exclusion of blacks from a jury was inconsistent with the right to a fair trial. Thus, in just a few years, formidable obstacles to black voting, integregated communities and intergrated juries had been removed through concerted legal action. The Association then widened its scope and faced the next barrier to equal rights and then the next. Case precedents were established. The process was slow and evolutionary, but as history has demonstrated it was the only way to win full constitutional guarantees for the rights of minorities.

A VOICE FOR CHANGE OVER THE YEARS

For 86 years, the NAACP through political pressure, marches, demonstrations and effective lobbying - has served as the voice, as well as as the shield of minority Americans. As the nation's largest advocacy organization, our prolonged agitation for peaceful change has been felt in every corner of American life.

Born in response to racial violence, the Association's first major campaign was the effort to get the anti-lynching laws on the books. In 1919, to awaken the national conscience, the Association published an exhaustive review of lynching records entitled, **Thirty Years of Lynching In The**

United States, 1889-1918. NAACP leaders, at potential risk to their own lives, conducted first-hand investigation of racially motivated violence which widely publicized.

Though bills succeeded in passing the House of Representatives several times, they were always defeated in the Senate. Nonetheless, NAACP efforts brought an end to the excesses of mob violence through public exposure and the public pressure it mobilized.

In the 1930's, as lynchings declined, the NAACP shifted its focus from racial brutality to the grim economic conditions produced by the Great Depression. The Association lobbied fiercely against racial discrimination in New Deal Programs. Only the imminent threat of a National March on Washington led to FDR's Executive Order to create a Fair Employment Practices Committee and to ban racial discrimination in industries which received federal contracts. The door to new employment opportunities had opened slightly.

As the nation threw itself into World War II, the NAACP launched a "second war" to end discrimination and segregation in the Armed Services, while expanding employment opportunties on the home front. Though unable to obtain the creation of racially mixed voluntary units, the NAACP affected formation of the nation's first black air force units. It was not until 1948 that President Truman issued an Executive Order prohibiting racial discrimination in the federal service. Through the Association's sustained pressure, the desegregation of the armed forces had become inevitable.

While Brown v. Board of Education proved the end of a long struggle, it also marked the beginning of a new one. Despite attempts to outlaw the NAACP throughout the south, the Association pressed ahead with voter registration, sit-in demonstrations (The NAACP Youth Council in Oklahoma City pioneered the tactic in 1958), and grassroots protests of injustice. One memorable example took place in Alabama in 1955. NAACP Montgomery Branch Secretary Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. This defiant act triggered the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and another chapter in the civil rights struggle.

The NAACP's creation of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights - a coalition of civil rights organizations - institutionalized broad-based support for the struggle and was crucial to the Association's drive to win passage of civil rights legislation in Congress. It began with the 1957 Civil Rights Act - the first since Reconstruction. Subsequently, the NAACP-led coalition produced the Civil Rights Act - laws which ensured government protection for legal victories going back some 75 years. In one decade, a non-violent social revolution had transformed American Society.

The NAACP wrought other changes through public pressure and raised consciousness. We have long fought to end the racial stereotypes that create misunderstanding and prejudice. We have worked to change attitudes, laws, and hate and separatism, seeking to bind old wounds and unify our nation. Today, after more than 80 years of unrelenting struggle, we affirm our commitment to the true American Dream - an integrated society rich in diversity and open equally to all. The struggle continues and we invite all Americans to stand with us - black and white, young and old, Jew and Gentile, male and female, wherever Americans of good will and decency reside - all are welcome to join our ranks until freedom is won.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release September 29, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT IN PRESENTATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

The East Room

9:45 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning and welcome to all of you, especially to the honorees, their family members, their friends, distinguished members of Congress. The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest honor given to civilians in the United States. It has a special history, established 50 years ago by President Truman, to honor noble service in time of war.

In 1963, President Kennedy expanded its purpose, making it an honor for distinguished civilian service in peacetime. The 12 Americans we honor today embody the best qualities in our national character. All have committed themselves, both publicly and privately, to expanding the circle of freedom and the opportunities the responsible exercise of freedom brings at home and around the world.

In this time of change, where people's living patterns and working patterns are undergoing such dramatic transformation, it is necessary and fashionable to focus on new ideas and new visions of the future. We are here today to celebrate people who have always been for change, and who have changed America for the better, but who have done it based on the enduring values that make this country great -- the belief that we have to give all of our citizens the chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given capacities; the conviction that we have to do everything we can to strengthen our families and our communities; the certainty that when the chips are down, we have to do what is good and right, even if it is unpopular in the short run; the understanding that we have the obligation to honor those who came before us by passing better lives and brighter opportunities on to those who come after.

This medal commemorates the remarkable service and indelible spirit of individual Americans. But it also serves as a beacon to all Americans, and especially to our children. For our

children, especially now when so many of their lives have been darkened by violence and irresponsible or absent role models, the robbers of innocence, of poverty and drug abuse and gang life, the excesses of our modern commercial media culture and other forces that are undermining the fabric of good lives.

All of these things require more and more people to live by the values and measure up to the example of the winners of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. They represent in so many ways the true face of American heroism today.

Let me begin now by introducing each of them in turn.

As a young mother 27 years ago, Peggy Charren took a good look at her children's frequent companion: television. And she did not like what she saw. But unlike others who simply bemoan the problem, she actually did something about it. She took a stand against entrenched and powerful institutions in government and in business and she made them listen. She started Action for Children's Television. As a result, she uplifted the quality of what comes into our homes and inspired a whole generation of citizen activists.

In 1990, the campaign that began in front of Peggy Charren's television set reached Capitol Hill when Congress passed the Children's Television Act. And, for the first time, the television industry was challenged to fulfill its responsibility to educate our children, not just to entertain them. Peggy Charren, mother and now grandmother, leader and reformer in the best American tradition, has put all of our children first, and we thank her for it. (Applause.)

Now, I'm going to change the order here a minute -- just a little -- and go to Joan Ganz Cooney. While Peggy Charren forced television to change its ways from the outside, Joan Ganz Cooney did the same thing from the inside. In 1968, she launched the Children's Television Workshop and a whole new landscape of joyful education opened up before our children's eyes. Out of this effort came "Sesame Street," "The Electric Company," "3-2-1 Contact," and other programs that enlighten not only our youngsters, but older people as well. With a host of loveable characters like the Cookie Monster and Big Bird, who became as familiar to me at one point in our family life as the people I grew up with -- (laughter) -- these shows have helped teach a generation of children to count and to read and to think. They also teach us more about how we should live together. We all know that Grover and Kermit reinforce rather than undermine the values we work so hard to teach our children, showing kids every day what it means to share, to respect differences and to recognize that it's not easy being green. (Laughter.)

Joan Ganz Cooney has proven in living color that the powerful medium of television can be a tool to build reason, not reaction, for growth, not stifling, to help build young lives up

rather than tear them down. We all know that T.V. is here to stay. Most of us, frankly, love it even when we curse it. But we also know that there are clear, damaging effects to excessive exposure to destructive patterns of television. As the Vice President and Mrs. Gore have pointed out on so many occasions and as their recent family conference on media and the family demonstrated, the numbing effects of violence or the numbing inability to concentrate that comes from overexposure to mindless, repetitive programming are things that we have to fight against.

Peggy Charren sounded the alarm; Joan Ganz Cooney developed an alternative. And even today as we grapple with this challenge -- how to get the best and repress the worst -- we know that we would be nowhere near where we are, were it not for these two remarkable American heroes. We thank them. Thank you so much. (Applause.)

William T. Coleman, Jr.'s, first public act to advance equal opportunity came early in his life. He tried out for his high school swim team, and in response, the school disbanded the team. (Laughter.) For four decades -- in the courtroom, the boardroom, the halls of power -- Bill Coleman has put his brilliant legal intellect in service to our country. He was the first African American accepted on the Harvard Law Review; the first to serve as a clerk on the United States Supreme Court; the first to serve in the President's Cabinet -- the second to serve in the President's Cabinet; and the first to reach the pinnacle of the corporate bar.

As Secretary of Transportation to President Ford, he helped to open the doors of opportunity to thousands of black entrepreneurs. As a corporate director, he broke the color barrier in the nation's executive suites. Today, as Chairman of the Board of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, he continues the fight.

I have known Bill Coleman for a long time. I had the honor and pleasure of being his son's roommate for a year in law school. I think it is fair to say that the first time we saw each other, he never dreamed that I would be here and he would be there. (Laughter and applause.)

But I can honestly say, if you are looking for an example of constancy, consistency, disciplined devotion to the things that make this country a great place, you have no further to look than William Coleman, Jr. Thank you. (Applause.)

Fifty years ago, John Hope Franklin was on a train in North Carolina, jammed into a compartment reserved for baggage and for African Americans. When he asked the conductor if he and his fellow passengers could move to a near-empty car occupied by just

five white men, he was told it couldn't be done -- for the men, the conductor said, were German prisoners of war. John Hope Franklin and those with him were prisoners of something else -- American racism.

John Hope Franklin has both lived and chronicled the history of race in America. He is the author of many books, including the classic, "From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans." He provided Thurgood Marshall with critical historical research for the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education. He has taught throughout America and around the world, and he has influenced countless, countless students of the American scene with his profound scholarship.

"I look history straight in the eye and call it like it is," John Hope Franklin has said. This has meant telling the untold stories of Northern racism and of slaves successfully striking for better conditions under the sinful confines of slavery.

It has meant blazing a trail through the academy, but never confusing his role as an advocate with his role as a scholar. It has meant holding to the conviction that integration is a national necessity if we are to truly live by the values enshrined in the Constitution.

John Hope Franklin, the Son of the South, has always been a moral compass for America, always pointing us in the direction of truth. I think I can speak for Hillary and for the Vice President and Mrs. Gore in saying that one of the most memorable moments of our campaign in 1992 was having John Hope Franklin take a ride with us on our campaign bus, and he sat in the front. (Laughter and applause.)

In 1944, at the age of 16, Leon Higginbotham arrived at his midwestern college only to be pushed back by the icy hand of racism. There, he and 12 other African American students were housed in an unheated attic. Fed up with sub-zero nights, Leon Higginbotham went to the university president to protest. "Higginbotham," the president said, "the law doesn't require us to let colored students in the dorm, and you either accept things as they are or leave the university."

So Leon Higginbotham set out to change the law. He went to Yale Law School, and after he was rejected by every major Philadelphia law firm because of his race, he turned to public service, working as a community lawyer and a state and federal official.

When Leon Higginbotham was named to the federal bench at the age of 36 by President Kennedy, he was the youngest federal judge to be appointed in three decades. He served with distinction and eventually became judge of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

He also found the time to write and speak with idealism and rigor on the great dilemmas of race and justice.

His retirement has been spent remarkably -- helping to draft the constitution for a democratic South Africa and teaching a fresh generation of students at Harvard. We honor Judge Higginbotham whose life as much as his scholarship has set an example of commitment, enlargement and service to new minds at home, and now, thank God, to a newly-free South Africa an ocean away.

Thank you, Leon Higginbotham. (Applause.)

Judge Frank Johnson could not be here today, and so had to send the young gentleman to my left to receive his award for him. He was advised by his doctor not to travel. I admire that doctor. I imagine that he is the first person who ever got Frank Johnson to do something he did not want to do. (Laughter.)

For his steadfastness, his constitutional vision, his courage to uphold the value of equal opportunity, even at the expense of his own personal safety -- for these things, we honor Frank Johnson with the President Medal of Freedom.

During 40 years on the bench, Judge Johnson made it his mission to see to it that justice was done within the framework of law. In the face of unremitting social and political pressure to uphold the traditions of oppression and neglect in his native South, never once did he yield. His landmark decisions in the areas of desegregation, voting rights and civil liberties transformed our understanding of the Constitution. He fought for the right of Rosa Parks to sit where she wanted on the bus and battled for the right of Martin Luther King and others to march from Selma to Montgomery.

Armed with a gavel and the Constitution, Frank Johnson changed the face of the South. He challenged America to move closer to the ideals upon which it is founded and forever will be an inspiration to all who admire courage and value freedom. We wish you were here with us today, but his spirit is in this place, and we thank him. (Applause.)

For a good long while now, Dr. C. Everett Koop, as Surgeon General of the United States, and afterward as America's most well-known private doctor, has told the nation the truth as he sees it, whether we want to hear it or not. In so doing, he has saved countless lives and left an enduring legacy of the doctor as a healer in the broadest and deepest sense of the word.

Dr. Koop's life has been defined by doing the right thing. He chose children's medicine for the simple reason that his colleagues were ignoring it. He refused to let political

considerations leave Americans vulnerable to the epidemics of AIDS and teen pregnancy. He fought for sex education knowing that if he were to be true to the value of protecting our children, we could not let them live in perilous ignorance. He told America that tobacco is addictive, that it kills, and that we have to get cigarettes out of our children's hands.

He helped us to come to grips with the painful shortcomings in America's health care delivery system and what it means for children that over 40 million of our people have no health insurance. And we value his support for the action now being taken to try to protect children's lives from the epidemic of smoking, which embraces 3,000 of them a day and will shorten 1,000 of their lives every day.

Dr. Koop's record is a priceless reminder that disease is immune to ideology, and that viruses do not play politics. Over the course of his career, I have seen him attacked from both the left and the right for his strong convictions. But all of us who have watched him not only in public, but as Hillary and I have had the chance to do in private, know that in the very best sense, he stands for life in America and for the potential of all of our children. And for that, the United States should be eternally grateful to C. Everett Koop. (Applause.)

Twenty-five years ago this year, Americans came together for the very first Earth Day. They came together to make it clear that dirty air, poison water, spoiled land were simply unacceptable. They came together to say that preserving our natural heritage for our children is a national value. And they came together, more than anything else, because of one American -- Gaylord Nelson. His career as Wisconsin's Governor, United States Senator, and now as counselor of the Wilderness Society has been marked by integrity, civility and vision. His legacy is inscribed in legislation, including the National Environmental Education Act and the 1964 Wilderness Act.

As the father of Earth Day, he is the grandfather of all that grew out of that event -- the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act. He also set a standard for people in public service to care about the environment and to try to do something about it. And I think that the Vice President would want me to say that young people like Al Gore, back in 1970, realized, because of Gaylord Nelson, that if they got into public service, they could do something to preserve our environment for future generations.

In the 1970s, when a river was so polluted it actually caught on fire, Gaylord Nelson spoke up. He insisted that Americans deserved the safety that comes from knowing the world we live in will not make us sick. He warned that our leaders should never let partisan politics divert us from responsibility

to our shared environment. He inspired us to remember that the stewardship of our natural resources is the stewardship of the American Dream. He is the worthy heir of the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt and the Vice President's work and that of all other environmentalists today, as the worthy heir of Gaylord Nelson.

Today as much as at any time in modern American history, we need to remember what we share on this precious planet and in this beloved country. And I hope that Gaylord's Nelson shining example will illuminate all the debates in this city for years to come. (Applause.)

Walter Reuther was an American visionary so far ahead of his times that although he died a quarter of a century ago, our nation has yet to catch up to his dreams. A tool and die maker by trade, Walter Reuther built a great union that lifted industrial workers into the middle class. But he always understood that the UAW stood for something greater and nobler than a few more dollars in the paycheck. So he fought for causes on the edge of America's horizon -- from racial justice to small cars that would conserve fuel, and compete successfully both here and abroad.

He wanted America to create an economy strong and supple enough to convert from peacetime production to defense work and back again without costing workers and their families their livelihoods. As the journalist Murray Kempton said later, "Walter Reuther was one man who could reminisce about the future." The union he led and the future he built stand as a memorial to what is bravest and best in the American spirit. Would that we had more people like him today. We are honored that his daughters are here and that he will -- his award will be received by his young grandson. Walter Reuther. (Applause.)

Our homes, our cities, our neighborhoods, our communities -- all these represent who we are. With the helping hand of James Rouse, many of these places have come to reflect our best values. In the 1960s, James Rouse saw a problem. Poorly planned suburban neighborhoods did more than take away from the landscape, they had a corrosive effect on our sense of community. So he did something about it -- he conceived and built Columbia, Maryland. By updating the colonial village for modern times, he gave a generation of architects and designers a blueprint for reviving community all across our nation.

A decade later, James Rouse turned to another monumental task -- healing the torn-out heart of America's cities. He met the challenge head-on. With Boston's Faneuil Hall, Baltimore's Harbor Place and other developments, he put the town square, squarely back into America's urban life. He proved that we could reclaim and recreate our urban frontiers. Advisor to presidents,

foe of economic and racial segregation, champion of high-quality, affordable housing, James Rouse's life has been defined by faith in the American spirit. He has made our cities and our neighborhoods as beautiful as the lives that pass through them.

He has shown us that we can build communities worthy of the character and optimism of our people. I know that he has had a special impact on our Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Henry Cisneros. And I can tell you that he has had a very special impact on my life. Every time I see James Rouse I think, if every American developer had done what James Rouse has done with his life, we would have lower crime rates, fewer gangs, less drugs. Our children would have a better future. Our cities would be delightful places to live. We would not walk in fear, we would walk in pride down the streets of our cities, just as we still can in the small towns in America.

James Rouse has changed this country. And if more will follow his lead, we can do the entire job we need to do in our cities. Mr. James Rouse. (Applause.)

His name was William C. Velasquez, but everybody knew him as Willie. Willie was and is now a name synonymous with democracy in America. Through the organization he founded, the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, he nearly doubled Hispanic voter registration, and dramatically increased the number of Latino-elected officials in this nation. His appeal to the Hispanic community was simple, passionate, and direct -- "Su voto es su voz" -- your vote is your voice.

The movement he began here at home went on to support democracy abroad in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mexico, and in South Africa. From the farm fields of California, where he organized workers with Cesar Chavez, to the halls of Harvard, where he taught politics, Willie Velasquez was driven by an unwavering belief that every American should have a role in our democracy and a share in the opportunities of our great nation.

Willie Velasquez died too young. He was just 44 when he passed away in 1988. But in his vibrant life, he restored faith in our ideals and in ourselves. And no person in modern America who has run for public office wherever Hispanic Americans live has failed to feel the hand of Willie Velasquez. He made this a greater country, and we're honored that his wife is here with us today. (Applause.)

It is not surprising that Lou Wasserman has devoted his life to helping others to see. For it was his vision that led him from the streets of Cleveland to the top of Hollywood, and his perspective that inspired him to give so much back to a nation that had given so much to him. Lou Wasserman helped to build MCA from a small booking agency into a vast multimedia company. His

feat awakened the world to the infinite promise of the American entertainment industry.

It also showed a new generation of American business leaders that a company's success can be measured by the depth of its values as well as by the size of its revenues. In honor of MCA's founder, the eye doctor, Jules Stein, Lou Wasserman has made an astonishing contribution to treat and to cure blindness. He has devoted himself to strengthening the American community through his role as citizen advisor to almost a half-century of presidents of both parties, and with his support for countless humanitarian efforts.

Never for a moment has he forgotten his roots, the value of hard work or the importance of giving people in far, far less fortunate conditions a chance to make something of their lives. The story of Lew Wasserman is the story of the American Dream not -- not -- just for what he has achieved, but far more important for what he has given back.

I have met a lot of philanthropists and successful people in my life. I don't know that I ever met anybody that more consistently every day looked for another opportunity to do something for somebody else, to give somebody else the chance to enjoy the success that he had in life. I thank you, Lew Wasserman. (Applause.)

Let me close, before we hear from the official citation and present the medals, by saying that I think that all the people who are here, were they to speak, would tell you that they did not come here alone. They were guided by parents and teachers, by neighbors and mentors. Many were inspired by other great Americans who themselves at some time in the past received this very medal.

The miracle of American life is that this cycle can be repeated over and over again with each succeeding generation; and that with each succeeding generation, we make freedom a little more real and full to all Americans. I ask all of you to think about that. You couldn't help feeling, when you heard these stories, that this is a very great country. And we do not have to give in to our lesser selves. We do not have to be divided. We do not have to achieve less than we can. If we will follow their examples, we will make sure that in the next century, this country will be all it was meant to be for all of our children.

I'd like to now ask the Military Aide to read the citations as I present the Medals of Freedom.

(The citations are read and medals are presented.)

END 10:30 A.M. EDT

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Public Papers of the President

August 8, 1994

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HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medals of Freedom

BODY:

The President. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. As you might imagine, one of the great pleasures of the Presidency is selecting recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to civilians by the United States of America.

If I might begin on a very personal and immediate note, last fall this annual ceremony was held on a very happy day for me and for those of us who want a safer and more humane United States. It was the day we made the Brady bill the law of the land. Today as we gather here, Congress is on the verge of voting on the most comprehensive anticrime bill in history. But that bill has been held hostage for 11 days by certain special interest groups. So as we recognize the contributions of civilians to our country's way of life, I'd like to take this opportunity to call on those groups who are blocking the crime bill to let it come to a vote and ask the other citizens of the United States to ask the Congress for the same thing. Many people we honor here today have given their whole lives to enriching the fabric of the future, and we can do no less.

This afternoon we will present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to nine remarkable individuals whose service to our democracy and to humanity has advanced the common interest of freedom-loving people, not only here at home but throughout the world: Herbert Block, the late Cesar Chavez, Arthur Flemming, Dorothy Height, Barbara Jordan, Lane Kirkland, Robert Michel, and Sargent Shriver.

The medals these Americans receive today has a special history. It was established by President Truman in 1945 at first to reward notable service in the war. In 1963 President Kennedy amended the award for distinguished civilian service in peacetime. The honorees that year included the singer Marian Anderson, Justice Felix Frankfurter, diplomat John McCloy, labor leader George Meany, the writer E.B. White, playwright Thornton Wilder, and the artist Andrew Wyeth. By the time that first ceremony was held here in the White House in December of 1963, President Johnson had added to the roll of names President Kennedy and His Holiness Pope John XXlII.

Listen to this: At that time, Under Secretary of State George Ball said that the President is establishing what we can proudly call an American civil honors list. How many of our greatest citizens, who went on to achieve other things, said that the greatest thing that could ever be said about them was that they were good citizens. That is true in every way of those we honor today.

Herbert Block, or "Herblock" as we know him, became an editorial cartoonist

with the Chicago Daily News in 1929, not a very good year to begin writing funny cartoons. [Laughter] His long and prolific career has spanned the Presidencies of 11 different Presidents. The fact that he gets to choose the targets in cartoons may have something to do with the longevity of his career. His cartoons have appeared in the Washington Post since 1946, the year I was born. [Laughter] He educates and persuades public opinion with effectiveness, artistry, warmth, and great good humor. He has a big heart. He sides with the little guy, people of common sense, and all who hold healthy irreverence for any sort of pretensions.

Cesar Chavez, before his death in April of last year, had become a champion of working people everywhere. Born into Depression-era poverty in Arizona in 1927, he served in the United States Navy in the Second World War and rose to become one of our greatest advocates of nonviolent change. He was, for his own people, a Moses figure. The farm workers who labored in the fields and yearned for respect and self-sufficiency pinned their hopes on this remarkable man, who with faith and discipline, with soft-spoken humility and amazing inner strength led a very courageous life and in so doing brought dignity to the lives of so many others and provided for us inspiration for the rest of our Nation's history. We are honored to have his wife, friend, and longtime working partner, Helen Chavez, to be with us today to receive the award.

Arthur Flemming served every President from Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan as the Republican member of the Civil Service Commission, as a member of the Hoover commission on the executive branch established by President Truman, as Director of Defense Mobilization and a member of President Eisenhower's National Security Council, and as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. In addition to being an able administrator, Dr. Flemming is also a respected educator and former journalist. Over the course of his long and eminent career in public service, he contributed to the struggles for Social Security, civil rights, and most recently health care reform, something for which the First Lady and I are particularly in his debt. These three struggles he calls the greatest domestic crusades of his lifetime.

James Grant is the remarkable executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, where he has tirelessly waged a global crusade on behalf of the world's children. Like his father before him, he was born and raised in China, where he took up his family's tradition of offering assistance abroad and first went to work for the United Nations at the end of World War II. In the fall of 1992 he helped to broker a brief ceasefire during the siege of Sarajevo and personally directed the safe passage of a convoy carrying winter supplies of clothing, blankets, and food. As the international community's guardian of innocent children in troubled regions, he oversees the delivery of humanitarian assistance that without him might otherwise never reach those in need.

Dorothy Height is one of the world's most tireless and accomplished advocates of civil rights, the rights of women, and the health and stability of family and community life. from the days when she helped Eleanor Roosevelt to organize the World Youth Conference in 1938, she has remained engaged in the public arena for 60 years and more. As a leader of the National Council of Negro Women and the Young Women's Christian Association, she's been a powerful voice for equal opportunity here and in developing nations around the world. In recent years, her Black Family Reunion celebrations have reminded our society that self help

and self reliance within loving extended families are the dominant cultural traditions of the African-American community.

For 20 years Barbara Jordan has been the most outspoken moral voice of the American political system, a position she reached soon after becoming the first black Congresswoman elected from the deep South from her native Texas in 1972. From national platforms she has captured the Nation's attention and awakened its conscience in defense of our Constitution, the American dream, and the commonality we share as American citizens. As professor of ethics and public policy at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, she ensures that the next generation of our public servants will be worthy of the legacy she has done so much to build.

Lane Kirkland has been at the center of the American labor movement for almost 50 years. After serving in the merchant marine during the Second World War and his subsequent graduation from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, he became a researcher for organized labor in the same year that he worked as a 26-year-old speechwriter in the 1948 campaign of Harry Truman and his running mate, Alben Barkley. Throughout the cold war, when some leaders saw only the threats to our freedom overseas and neglected the barriers to freedom and inequality within our own land, Kirkland showed America that you can stand up to communism abroad just as forcefully as you can stand up for working men and women here at home. As president of the AFL-CIO for the last 15 years, he has helped to teach us that solidarity is a powerful word in any language and that a vibrant labor movement is essential to every free society.

Robert Michel has served in the United States House of Representatives since 1957. That is the second longest tenure of any Republican in American history. As minority leader in the House for the last 13 years, he has served his party well, but he has also served our Nation well, choosing the pragmatic but harder course of conciliation more often than the divisive but easier course of confrontation. In the best sense he is a gentleman legislator who, in spite of the great swings in public opinion from year to year, has remained always true to the midwestern values he represents so faithfully in the House. He retires at the end of this year, generally regarded by Democrats and Republicans alike as one of the most decent and respected leaders with which any President has had the privilege to work.

Sargent Shriver is the man who launched the Peace Corps 33 years ago. Because of his creativity, his idealism, his brilliance, the Peace Corps remains one of the most popular Government initiatives ever undertaken. From the time he and his wife, Eunice, helped to organize a conference on juvenile delinquency for the Attorney General in 1947 to his efforts for public education in Chicago in the 1950's, to his leadership of Head Start and legal services and now the Special Olympics, Sargent Shriver has awakened millions of Americans, including many in this administration, to the responsibilities of service, the possibilities of change, and the sheer joy of making the effort.

These recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom represent different political parties, different ideologies, different professions, indeed, even different ages. Their different eras, different races, different generations in American history cannot be permitted to obscure the fact of what they share in common: an unusually profound sense of responsibility to improve the lives of their fellow men and women, to improve the future for our children, to embody the best of what we mean by the term "American citizen." By their remarkable

records of service and by their incredible spirit, we have all been enriched.

And now I would ask the military aide to read the citations as I present the Medal of Freedom.

[At this point, Major Leo Mercado, Jr., USMC, Marine Corps aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, in closing let me say that I couldn't help thinking, as the citations were read and I looked into the faces of our honorees and their families, friends, and admirers here, that we too often reserve our greatest accolades for our citizens when they are gone. I wish that Cesar Chavez could be here today. I am grateful that his wife is here, and I am so grateful that all these others are here.

Let us remember today that the greatest gift any of us can give the Founders of this Constitution and this Republic is to emulate the work of these citizens whom we honor today, every day, each in our own way.

Thank you for being here. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 6, 1994

returned to Washington, DC.

October 18

In the evening, the President traveled to Baltimore, MD, where he attended a fund-raising dinner at a private residence. He then returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The White House announced that the President and President Jacques Chirac of France have agreed to reschedule President Chirac's November 3d state visit at the White House for February 1, 1996.

October 19

In the morning, the President had a working visit with President Thomas Klestil of Austria.

In the evening, the President attended the Africare reception at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Who's Who Among African Americans, January, 1996

PERSONAL:
Born February 25, 1928, Trenton, NJ; divorced; children (previous marriage): Stephen, Karen, Kenneth, Nia.

OCCUPATION: Judge (retired), educator

ADDRESSES: BUSINESS ADDRESS: Professor, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, U.S.A.

EDUCATION: EDUCATION: Antioch Coll, BA 1949; Yale Law Schl, LLB 1952.

CAREER:
CAREER: Harvard Univ, prof, 1994; US District Court and US Court of Appeals, 1964-93; Federal Trade Comm, commissioner, 1962-64; Norris, Green Harris & Higginbotham, partner, 1954-62.

AWARDS:
HONORS/AWARDS: Author, more than 100 published articles; author "In the Matter of Color; Race and the American Legal Prcess," Oxford Univ Press 1978; over 80 honorary degrees.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release January 31, 1996

NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH, 1996

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Today's schoolchildren are fortunate to grow up in classrooms where they are taught to appreciate all of the many heroes of American history. While previous generations read textbooks that told only part of our Nation's story, materials have been developed in recent years that give our students a fuller picture -- textured and deepened by new characters and themes. African American History Month provides a special opportunity for teachers and schools to celebrate this ongoing process and to focus on the many African Americans whose lives have shaped our common experience.

This year, our observance emphasizes black women and the strides made to bring their achievements to the fore. From Sojourner Truth's sermons, to Mary McLeod Bethune's speeches, to the contemporary novels of Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, the voices of African American women have called attention to the twin burdens of racism and sexism and have invited listeners to discover the richness of traditions kept alive in back kitchens and workrooms. In churches and communities, and more recently in universities and statehouses across America, these women have fought extraordinary battles for social, economic, and political empowerment.

Barbara Jordan once wrote,

> 'We the people'; it is a very eloquent beginning. But when the Constitution of the United States was completed on the seventeenth of September, 1787, I was not included in that 'We the people.'

As we mourn the loss of this great American, let us honor her by seeking to further the progress made since those early days toward true equality and inclusion. During African American History Month and throughout the year, we must embrace the diverse strands of our story so that all children can see themselves in our Nation's past and know that they have a role to play in seizing the future's countless opportunities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 1996, as National African American History Month. I call upon Government officials, educators in schools, colleges, universities, and libraries, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness of African American history and invite further inquiry into this area of study.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of theUnited States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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MESSAGE EVENT SCHEDULE
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 19-25

Tuesday, Feb. 20 -- Swearing-in of Kweisi Mfume: President will deliver remarks.

-- Principals' Meeting re Bosnia: (American leadership) President will receive briefing from his foreign policy team on the status of Bosnia mission.

Wednesday, Feb. 21 -- Domestic Violence Hotline Event (tentative) (Family/ Crime): President will announce the start-up of hotline for abused spouses. Also in attendance will be Secretary Donna Shalala and Bonnie Campbell (DOJ).

-- Meeting with Ukranian President Kuchma (American Leadership): This meeting will include a pool spray at the top (Q & A re New Hampshire).

Thursday, Feb. 22 -- White House Conference on Empowerment Zone (Economy/Community): President will deliver speech to conference, announcing second round of new empowerment zones.

Friday, Feb. 23 -- School Uniforms Event (Crime/Gang/Family): In Long Beach, California; the President will announce directive to Secretary Riley and Attorney General Reno regarding how schools can implement uniform policy.

-- C-17 Event (Economy/ American Leadership): At McDonnell-Douglas, President will announce next order of new C-17s.

Saturday, Feb. 24 -- Radio Address: topic tbd.

-- Community Policing Event (Crime): President will visit San Diego to discuss community policing.

-- Olympics Event (Community/ American Leadership): President will visit U.S. Olympics athletes now training at Chula Vista facility.

-- School-to-Work Event (Economy): site tbd in Washington state.

when it was investigating the House bank scandal because Chairman Louis Stokes, who had overdrafts, recused himself. Mfume did not know it at the time, but he had 12 overdrafts.

At Home: Before his 1986 House election, Mfume was well-known in Baltimore for his broadcasting and City Council careers. But his background was anything but typical for a congressional candidate.

Mfume was born Frizzell Gray in the slums of West Baltimore. After his mother died when he was 16, he quit high school, drifted through a series of jobs and, between the ages of 17 and 22, fathered five sons by four different women. But in his early 20s, he adopted a new name and way of life, climbing the career ladder at Morgan State University's radio station. Mfume finished high school, graduated from Morgan State at 27 and earned an advanced degree from Johns Hopkins University.

After achieving popularity as a radio talk show host, Mfume won a seat on the City Council, where he promoted the causes of his inner-city constituents. Criticized early by some colleagues for his confrontational style, Mfume developed a more temperate approach that helped win some victories, including a law ordering the city to divest itself of investments in companies doing business with South Africa.

Although Mfume entered the 1986 Democratic House race as an underdog, he was well-positioned when the front-runners slipped. State Sen. Clarence M. Mitchell, the nephew of retiring Rep. Parren J. Mitchell, was damaged by reports on his personal finances and his alleged relationship with a jailed drug dealer. Another prominent contender, the Rev. Wendell H. Phillips, a civil rights activist, was hurt by accusations that he was cozy with the city's white power structure.

Mfume quietly promoted himself as the compromise candidate. Assisted by a group of black clergy, Mfume swept to an easy primary victory.

Though Mfume was unbeatable in the heavily Democratic 7th, his GOP opponent, Saint George I. B. Crosse III, harassed him by making an issue of his children. Mfume stated that he supported his sons financially and emotionally, and the local media portrayed his rise from poverty in a positive light.

Mfume won with 87 percent of the vote, an outcome that would become typical. In both 1990 and 1992, he defeated Republican Kenneth Kondner, a dental technician, with 85 percent.

Committees

Banking, Finance & Urban Affairs (10th of 30 Democrats)
Financial Institutions Supervision, Regulation & Deposit Insurance; Housing & Community Development

Small Business (9th of 27 Democrats)
Minority Enterprise, Finance & Urban Development (chairman); Procurement, Taxation & Tourism

Standards of Official Conduct (5th of 7 Democrats)

Joint Economic

Elections

1992 General		
Kweisi Mfume (D)	152,689	(85%)
Kenneth Kondner (R)	26,304	(15%)
1992 Primary		
Kweisi Mfume (D)	55,842	(84%)
Michael Vernon Dobson (D)	10,310	(16%)
1990 General		
Kweisi Mfume (D)	59,628	(85%)
Kenneth Kondner (R)	10,529	(15%)

Previous Winning Percentages: 1988 (100%) 1986 (87%)

District Vote for President

	1992
D	159,191 (78%)
R	32,431 (16%)
I	13,009 (6%)

Campaign Finance

	Receipts	Receipts from PACs	Expenditures
1992			
Mfume (D)	$255,269	$131,687 (52%)	$216,518
1990			
Mfume (D)	$224,826	$128,000 (57%)	$205,671

Key Votes

1993	
Require parental notification of minors' abortions	N
Require unpaid family and medical leave	Y
Approve national "motor voter" registration bill	Y
Approve budget increasing taxes and reducing deficit	Y
Approve economic stimulus plan	Y
1992	
Approve balanced-budget constitutional amendment	N
Close down space station program	Y
Approve U.S. aid for former Soviet Union	N
Allow shifting funds from defense to domestic programs	Y
1991	
Extend unemployment benefits using deficit financing	Y
Approve waiting period for handgun purchases	Y
Authorize use of force in Persian Gulf	N

Voting Studies

	Presidential Support		Party Unity		Conservative Coalition	
Year	S	O	S	O	S	O
1992	12	87	90	6	13	88
1991	23	76	89	6	5	95
1990	15	81	85	7	9	91
1989	31	66	86	5	15	83
1988	23	76	93	4	21	79
1987	13	66	93	3	9	88

Interest Group Ratings

Year	ADA	AFL-CIO	CCUS	ACU
1992	95	92	13	0
1991	100	100	20	5
1990	94	92	29	13
1989	90	100	30	0
1988	95	100	21	4
1987	100	100	7	0

FEBRUARY 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR PRESIDENT CLINTON

FROM: MIKE MCCURRY

SUBJECT: AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH ACTUALITY

We received a great deal of interest in the African American History Month radio actuality. We fed your statement to the following stations:

1. The American Urban Radio Network, 400 stations nationally
2. KJLH Los Angeles, CA
3. KPOD San Francisco, CA
4. KACE Los Angeles, CA
5. WXVI Montgomery, AL
6. WBIL Tuskeegee, AL
7. WEXY Fort Lauderdale, FL
8. WSWN Belle Glade, FL
9. WFXA Augusta, GA
10. WJLB Detroit, MI
11. WCXT Hart, MI
12. WTYJ Natchez, MS
13. KPRT Kansas City, MO
14. KIRL St. Charles, MO
15. WQOK Raleigh, NC
16. WTNC Thomasville, NC
17. WSRC Durham, NC
18. WCKX Columbus, OH
19. WJTB Elyria, OH
20. WVGB Beaufort, SC
21. WBOL Bolivar, TN
22. WNOO Chattanooga, TN
23. WFXS Chattanooga, TN
24. WLOK Memphis, TN
25. KHRN Hearne, TX
26. KSJL San Antonio, TX
27. KJOJ Houston, TX
28. WRBD Fort Lauderdale, FL
29. WPUL South Daytona, FL
30. WRXB St. Petersburg, FL

OPENING ADDRESS

Myrlie Evers-Williams
Chairman
NAACP Board of Directors
July 9, 1995

NAACP 86th Annual National Convention
Minneapolis Convention Center
Minneapolis, MN

"CELEBRATING OUR LEGACY - A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY"

INTRO/GREETINGS:

It's been a long interesting and challenging journey from Jackson, Mississippi where Medgar Evers and I opened the first NAACP state headquarters. I was Medgar's support system and he was the NAACP's "Man in Mississippi". With the full responsibility of organizing branches throughout the state, investigating lynchings, such as the Emmit Till, Rev. George Lee and others; getting the news of this infant movement from behind the cotton curtain; and sending coded messages by Western Union to the NAACP headquarters in New York where Roy Wilkins and others informed the world as to the happenings in Mississippi, I sat behind that desk at 1072 West Lynch Street and played many roles in keeping that office and my husband on solid footing.

At this moment, I am reminded of the youth who sat in at the lunch counters, fearful yet brave in their actions ---challenging the adults who were more cautious, to move faster because time was short. I recall the elderly members of the NAACP who said, "Those young children are right, and we're gonna march and sit-in side by side with them.

One of the disarming issues was whether we should continue our attack on racism in a non-violent way or resort to more violent means. Before that issue could be settled, Medgar Evers was cut down violently.

I can tell you that way back in 1953 as a secretary/gal-Friday for the NAACP, I never dreamed that in 1995 I would be serving as Chairman of the Board of this beloved organization.
In the midst of all of the challenges we face, and the overwhelming hope and support you have all bestowed upon me, it is truly a humbling experience.

To serve our beloved NAACP and you, my friends. in a time when the association is being tested as never before is the greatest challenge of my life -- and I have faced many.

THE LEGACY

When we look back at our legacy, we must not forget the heroes and sheroes of our struggle. Long before there were enough elected black officials in the South to fill a telephone booth, there was a brave and dynamic woman by the name of Ruby Hurley who put her life on the line to organize the NAACP branches in the South. Ruby Hurley, Southeast Regional Division, bravely served this organization and the Nation along with W. C. Patton, the Association's Voter Education Director, gave their last ounce of dedication and devotion to our struggle. Today we celebrate the fact that we have over 8,400 black elected officials, more than half in the old South, but let us not forget that this accomplishment did not come into being by elite academicians sitting in comfortable ivory towers or by prognosticators or

pontificators, but by the little people who in the rural areas and urban centers stood up for what was just and right.

Our legacy includes a cadre of brilliant legal minds, Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall, and Robert Carter set forth the strategy for eliminating legal segregation, they were joined by an array of volunteers who successfully challenged the Plessey v. Ferguson decision of 1896 which declared that separate but equal facilities were constitutional and the law of the land. Their efforts culminated in the Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education and a score of subsequent decisions which broke the back of legal segregation. Even in the face of recent setbacks, we can celebrate these precedent-setting legal victories and dynamic women, such as Ruby Hurley, who all put their lives on the line to organize the NAACP.

We can look back with pride and celebrate our victories in the legislative arena. It was your NAACP under the leadership of the legendary Clarence Mitchell that succeeded in securing the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first Civil Rights legislation enacted

since the Civil War. This legislation established the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. The NAACP Washington Bureau was instrumental in securing the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that called for the elimination of discrimination in employment and public accommodations; the 1965 Voting Rights Act which made the registration of millions of African Americans possible; the 1968 Fair Housing Act which outlawed discrimination in the sale and rental of housing; the Voting Right extensions and the South African Sanction Bill which facilitated the fall of Apartheid in South Africa.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Clarence Mitchell, and Althea Simmons whose quiet, yet effective work on Capitol Hill made a difference in the political landscape of America.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the hundreds of local and State Conference Officers who lobbied their state legislators, city and town councils to make possible the enactment of progressive statues and ordinances that enhanced economic and social opportunities for African Americans.

Over the years the NAACP, more than all other Civil Rights groups combined marched and demonstrated against racial injustice at home and abroad. Today, we are confronted with severe challenges to the progress we have made over these past 86 years, but we have met the enemies of justice before and emerged victorious. We defeated Orvill Farbus; we defeated Governor George Conley Wallace; we defeated Bull Connor and Sheriff Jim Clark; we defeated William Bradford Reynolds, we defeated Judge Bork, we defeated Carswell and Haynesworth, we defeated the mobs who said that we must remain on the outskirts of the American storehouse of opportunity. So tonight, I say to those who are arrayed against affirmative action that we can prevail. I say to those who would cut benefits to the poor and the nations elderly, we shall prevail. I say to those who would take from the needy to give to the greedy that like the lions who were in the den with Daniel, we have a power on our side that will take away your appetite and your avarice.

I say tonight to those who are celebrating and rejoicing in the current difficulties that the NAACP is experiencing that we met the

challenges of the klan and the White Citizens Council; we met the challenge of the depressions and recessions; we met the challenges of adverse public opinion and predictions of our earlier demise.

Tonight we are imbued with a spirit of renewed optimism. We know that our mission is not yet accomplished and that our task is not complete.

We know, that today, the fact is, all of us live in a world of many challenges. Our nation's capital, once a peaceful place of honor, open to the world, is now closed to the public and protected with concrete barricades from "unibombers."

We live in an environment filled with paranoia, doubt and despair -- all of which beckon the storm clouds of divisiveness, fear, scapegoating and racism. When the nation is in distress, racism rares up its ugly head, with bravado, once again -- and the signs are everywhere from the thinly-veiled racism implied in the anti-affirmative action attacks of the Republican presidential candidates like Phil Gramm and Pat

Buchanan, to the most recent Supreme Court decision which could wipe out more than half the African-American and Hispanic Members of Congress.

Never has there been a more critical need for the NAACP -- a strong and virulent organization with teeth and muscle and intestinal fortitude. And yes, we have our work cut out for us. For example -- the U. S. Supreme Court.

For 40 years we looked to the Supreme Court as a sympathetic referee in the struggle for civil rights and social justice. With the recent decisions passed down by this prestigious body, I think we must all agree that today, this Supreme Court is no longer a friend of civil rights.

In the term that just ended, they dismantled federal affirmative action programs that provided minority entrepreneurs and minority businessmen and women the opportunity to create black wealth and

compete on an almost level playing field for the first time. Despite the need to make improvements, the intended goal of these programs was being accomplished.

They then delivered a knock-down punch against us when they invalidated the boundaries of a majority African-American congressional district in Georgia. This decision could end the careers of half the elected black and Hispanic officials in the country. There was some good news, however. They did not outlaw affirmative action as "unconstitutional." They may have cut off the head but there's still hope for the body.

This disparaging decision makes racial minorities the only group not allowed to have their group's interests taken into account where reapportionment is concerned.

The Supreme Court also destroyed or severely weakened the gains we had made in federal contracting.

o They permitted the dismantling of a University of Maryland scholarship program set up exclusively for African-Americans;

o And, perhaps most disturbing of all, they essentially ruled that *Brown vs. Board of Education* is dead. That the Supreme Court is no longer in the businesss of protecting African-American and other minority students from the damage of segregation.

My friends, education is the gateway to opportunity, to self-sufficiency and success in America. But... at this critical time when our schools are wracked with violence, infected with an epidemic of teen pregnancy and swamped with the highest drop-out rates in history, the Court is saying to urban kids, parents and educators: you're on your own!

We also live in a time where the Governor of the State of California, a state which is home to the largest diversity of minority groups in the country, has rescinded some affirmative action policies by executive order and is supporting a proposed referendum on the 1996 ballot which would virtually outlaw all government-sponsored affirmative action-based initiatives.

In Newark, New Jersey and countless other embattled communities across the nation, governors and state legislatures seek to fund suburban schools at the expense of already hard-pressed urban schools;

Across the TV screen of the nightly news we witness the parade of politicians pandering for votes using such racial code words as "welfare reform", "quotas" and "racial preferences."

As critical as the good health is to the continued success of our nation's people, we live in a world where the federal program that distributes free vaccine to millions of children has been added to the hit

list for dismantling by the Republican members of Congress. Despite an audit report that cites underestimation of costs to deliver vaccines to doctors and clincs around the country, the program provides free vaccine against such diseases as measles, mumps and polio to children 18 and younger who are eligible for Medicaid, have no health insurance or have private insurance that does not cover vaccine. How can we expose our children and, indeed, all of us to the perils of uncontrolled epidemics? This is incredibly self-destructive leadership.

And over the airwaves, the Rush Limbaughs spew their venom and incite violence and hatred.

We live in a world where a U. S. Senator is allowed to call for the abandonment of AIDS research because the victims of AIDS are not worthy of saving due to their engaging in activities he finds unacceptable. Our esteemed Senator Jessie Helms continues to flaunt his ignorance and prejudice without accountability nor fear of reprisal.

Who in this room wishes to remain silent?

Do I hear a motion calling for Senator Jessie Helms to be put out pasture? Can I get an "Amen!"

Yes, my friends, we live in world where it feels as if the Supreme Court, Congress, governors, state legislatures and organized right wing groups have all decided that their worst enemy is people of color generally, and African Americans in particular.

SO ... the question for those of us gathered today in Minneapolis -- the hometown of that "happy warrior" Hubert Humphrey and, since the age of four, our very own Roy Wilkins, is this: How do we deal with what is happening to us?

First, let me give you my bottom line answer: No turning back.

-No turning back to the days of Jim Crow!

-No turning back to the days of separate and unequal!

-No turning back to political isolation and segregation!

NOW, let me tell you what we <u>will</u> do.

First priority, we will save our beloved NAACP. Because in times of crisis, like too many in the past, there is no more important, more relevant and more experienced organization than this one.

Beginning today -- right here in this hall -- all of us must make a commitment to end the backbiting and infighting that has caused us to lose sight of our goal. We didn't keep our eyes on the prize, my brothers and sisters and we are suffering the consequences for it. But we are an organization and a people of God and we know that "*all things are possible for he that believeth.*" I believe in the NAACP and I know that you do, too.

We are family and that means we fight and fuss sometimes. It also means we make up because we love one another. It's time for us to get on with the making up and cleaning up our act for the real business at hand. We no longer have the luxury of squandering our precious time

and talent fighting each other. The ship has incurred much damage, has taken on water, but there are enough us bailing that we shall not sink. We can, we will and we must stand together, proud, as a people and proud of our legacy of struggle and triumph in our beloved America. It is truly our land, too. I say, hold on to your hats, "Nutety-lovers" and the like, because you're in for the fight of your life!

THE NAACP HAS LAUNCHED AN EMERGENCY CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE NAACP .

The mission of this campaign is to REBUILD our financial strength, RESTORE our credibility and DOUBLE the number of members and supporters.

To date, the members of the board, committees and national staff have worked together to tighten up our overall operations and make the necessary cost cutting measures to ensure our continued operation over the short-term.

As far as old business, the board will review the final and complete audit report from Coopers & Lybrand on Wednesday of this week. The results of that report and our findings and recommendations moving forward will be made public and the matter will be settled. I promised you an organization with integrity and my commitment still stands. Sunshine of disclosure is still the best disinfectant.

To ensure financial integrity from henceforth, we are managing an aggressive plan to reduce our debt and pay off our patient creditors under the direction of a newly appointed Acting Chief Financial Officer who comes to us from Price Waterhouse.

Within the next three months, we will have in place, enhanced fundraising capabilities which will allow us to meet our immediate financial needs while also helping put in place an internal fundraising and development structure which will meet the NACP's future needs.

As you are aware, we have embarked upon a bona fide search for a permanent Executive Director. The Search Committee appointed by the

Board is looking to submit its candidate of choice for recommendation for the position at the October Board meeting. Let me assure you, we will, however, take the time needed to identify the best and most qualified person to fill this critical management position.

BUT -- even as we work on cleaning up our internal house and putting the past behind us, we have even more important work to do.

The greatest strength of the NAACP lies at the grass roots. Those 2200 local branches who are hard at work day in and day out. And today, perhaps more than at any time in our history, they are more essential than ever.

As the Gingrich Gang and the Supreme Court return more and more power over our lives to the states, we must be prepared. The decisions which affect our lives and our children's future will not be made just in Washington, D.C., but increasingly by local school boards, county commissions, state legislatures and state executives.

And it is here that your work and the work of your Branches becomes key. And it must be the goal of the National Office to provide the help you need:

- Legal assistance
- Media and communications
- Financial assistance

We are also working to bring you "on line". Yes, the NAACP is going to be a mover and a shaker on the Information Superhighway, too. In fact, we've already started. The Black Information Network has created a World Wide Web page for the NAACP to promote our activities and the news of our leadership on the Internet. It is apalling that less 10 percent of African American households have personal computers. 70 percent of the 24 million USA Internet users today are white males. Surely we must do what we need to, to make a difference here for our community. Internet is currently paid for by all taxpayers.

We have a right to be included in the 30 million users worldwide.

We have also been talking with several telecommunications companies who are willing to work with us to network our branches and regional offices with the National Headquarters and our Washington Bureau.

My goal is that by January 1 of next year, we will have an electronic NAACP Crisis Network in place which links at least 50 percent of our Branches to each other electronically.

This is a powerful technology for sharing information, trading tips on techniques, and, in general, helping us stay politically competitive with those who want to turn back the clock.

Frankly, in recent years we have failed you. it is my pledge to you that this will change. You will get the help you need. The help you deserve.

While we are in the process of rebuilding internally, we will focus on providing the leadership in civil rights mandated by today's crisis. Through the launching of our NATIONAL EMERGENCY CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE NAACP will will engage in a full-scale crisis mobilization effort to defend our civil rights.

We will:

- **Organize Emergency Task forces of experts from the African American community and other sectors of American life in critical areas such as <u>media</u>, <u>public relations</u>, <u>finance</u>, <u>corporate support</u>, <u>communications</u>, and <u>entertainment</u>.**
- **Put these task forces to work on raising the money and building the skills we will need to meet the crisis in civil rights we now face.**

Ours is a community rich in talent and resources. The time has come for everyone who has made it in our community to now come forth; to "pay back" those who sacrificed for them yesterday by doing their part to meet today's crisis.

And when it comes to dealing with crisis our NAACP has a proud and effective history. So, the central component of our National Emergency Campaign to Save the NAACP is a CRISIS MOBILIZATION which must get underway at once.

There are two key steps--proven steps--in dealing with the current political crisis faced by African Americans, other minorities and the women of America:

- **STEP #1. REGISTER A RECORD NUMBER OF VOTERS**
- **STEP #2. MOBILIZE THE GRASSROOTS TO TURN OUT THE VOTE AND DEMONSTRATE OUR POLITICAL CLOUT**

If there's one characteristic all politicians have in common, it's that they can count. Now is the time to put faces and numbers to what is happening to us.

When African Americans, other minorities and women voted in record numbers in 1992, we made great gains. But when we sat out the 1994 congressional elections, we lost ground--and lost ground badly.

Therefore...our top priority, beginning right now, must be mount the largest, most effective block-by-block, precinct-by-precinct voter registration and education campaign ever conducted by the NAACP.

BUT...we can't be content with registering record numbers. We must also get out the vote. Consequently, my pledge to you is to work with all the strength and energy in me to build and support the grassroots power of our Branches.

As our organizers and Branches work to register and educate voters, we will work to provide the legal teams and resources needed to counter what I fully expect will be a barrage of challenges and attacks on our franchise and challenges to the make up of legislative districts as a result of the recent Supreme Court decision.

At the same time we must turn to our brothers and sisters in the television and entertainment industries to do everything in their power to popularize and highlight the importance of registering and voting.

Of course, there's nothing "new" in all this. We've done it time and time again. And each time we've posted great gains. What is "new" is the clear and unmistakable message that we "get back to basics" in this time of crisis.

Now is the time to go forward, not backward. To remember our martyrs and take strength from their blood and their legacy.

Now is the time to turn our attention outward, to put the internal squabbles of the past behind us.

I urge you to stand--right now--and join hands in unity. This is our first action in our new National Campaign to Save the NAACP. Our first action in aiming our passion toward the future and our children's future.

We won't go back!