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Community Mourns The Loss Of A Giant - Henry Beauchamp, Jr.

By Chris H. Bennett

Chair, The Seattle Medium Group

The State of Washington lost one of its truly great Citizens and the State's African American Community lost a truly great icon and leader with the passing of community activist and former Yakima mayor, Henry Beauchamp, Jr. Mr. Beauchamp was born in Clinton, Louisiana on November 9, 1933 to Henry Beauchamp, Sr. and Cornelia Smith Beauchamp. He passed away peacefully with a smile Thursday, April 25, 2013 at the Leon Sullivan Health Care Center in Seattle, Washington, among loving friends and caretakers. At age 13 his family moved to Yakima, Washington in 1946, where he made his home until his passing.

Henry, with a signature smile, was known as a committed, passionate and effective civil rights leader. Yakima, a small central Washington town, with a small and close knit African-American community elected Beauchamp as its first and only African American Mayor.

Growing up in the segregated south, Henry never forgot the fear and humiliation of being Black in the South. It was during the Jim Crow era that his roots put him on a lifelong mission to fight for racial and economic justice, a path that spanned across Washington State. A realist, Beauchamp realized that if he worked for the benefit of all people, his people, African Americans, would benefit also. That vision led to the founding of Yakima's Opportunities Industrialization Center (YOIC), a nonprofit agency providing education, work and housing services. Furthermore, this vision also allowed Henry's political path to cross all racial lines and barriers to be elected by the people and he served almost a quarter century on the Yakima City Council and two terms as the City's mayor.

A graduate from Yakima High School, Beauchamp was a master bricklayer by trade. However, in 1967, his activist mission began when he was appointed the director of the Southeast Yakima Community Center, which is an anti-poverty community action agency. Beauchamp championed Yakima's block grant program, which spent more than \$20 million to rehabilitate housing and improve neighborhoods; he also helped create the Substance Abuse Coalition and Yakima's first anti-gang program, and pushed the city to open its workforce to women and ethnic minorities. He was unafraid and didn't shy away from controversy when it came to jobs and business opportunities for Blacks and other minorities. He challenged the hiring practices of local unions raising issues of racial and economic discrimination against Black and Hispanic workers. Henry Beauchamp was little known outside of the central and eastern Washington communities, however, that soon changed in the 2002 when he and his Board of Directors stepped-up to the plate to help save Washington State's only African American nursing home. After a bitter and hard fight by a half dozen community activists against the



Henry Beauchamp, Jr.

State's first minority Governor, Gary Locke, the State's Attorney General's Office, and the State's huge, mammoth agency DSHS, prospectors, developers and community rip off artists, Beauchamp and his YOIC Board rescued the failing facility through a little known underground highly effective networking of African Americans by one of the group's activist. At their first meeting, Henry and the community activist discovered that both groups had one champion - God. Henry and his group came in praying and the group continued to trust God with their prayers—prayers that defeated all efforts of the State and community agency's snitches and provocateurs. The angels of God that are often sent to answer His people's prayers were realized.

Henry loved the Lord and in all ways acknowledged Him and served Him. He never wavered in his faith and belief that all things work through Him. Every major decision he made in his private and public life included strong deliberation and prayer for guidance. He was a member and faithful servant of the Morning Star Church of Christ Holiness for 56 years, where he served on the Board of Trustees, the Deacon Board, as a choir member, Sunday School Superintendent and teacher, and various other offices. As we say our last farewell to our departed Brother, Henry Beauchamp, Jr., we also salute his great work and many contributions. The family and the community will miss his presence, but his spirit and legacy remain very much alive, Matthew 25: 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

Rest in peace, you have fought the good fight.

As important as his public service was, Henry's love of his family and their well-being was always his first priority. He is survived by his loving spouse, friend and helpmate of 57 years, Wilma Jean Mitchell Beauchamp; one son, Jon Mark Beauchamp; one daughter, Korie L. Beauchamp; six grandchildren, Africa, Michael, Tyler, DeMarcus, Jazmyn, and Mar'lon; six great grandchildren; one sister, Jeri Beauchamp Mims of Tacoma, WA, and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and other extended family and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, five siblings and one daughter.

Visitation will be held on Friday, May 3, 2013 from 3-7:00 PM at Shaw & Sons funeral Directors 201 N. 2nd St. in Yakima.

Funeral services will be held at Saturday, May 4, 2013 at 11:00am at Mourning Star Church 509 N. 4th St. in Yakima with interment services following at Tahoma Cemetery in Yakima.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to NAACP Youth Services, 1211 S. 7th ST, Yakima WA 98901

To the family and friends of Henry Beauchamp, Jr., we leave you with this scripture: John 14: 1-4 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

17 Arrested, Jailed During NAACP 'Pray In' Protest

By Ben Wrobel

Special to The Seattle Medium

RALEIGH, N.C. — Seventeen people, including eight ministers, civil rights leaders, and students, were arrested during a prayerful protest at the state legislature in Raleigh, North Carolina on Monday.

The activists were handcuffed and taken to jail while they sang and prayed in front of the locked doors of the North Carolina Senate. The nonviolent civil disobedience was the opening round in a series of protests to focus national attention on what Rev. Dr. William Barber, North Carolina NAACP State President, called "the ideologically driven, extremist, mean-spirited agenda" that has captured both legislative houses and the Governor's office in North Carolina.

"The decision to engage in civil disobedience is not one we take lightly," stated Dr. Barber. "But the extremists are acting like the George Wallaces of the 21st century. They are pursuing a cruel, unusual and unconstitutional agenda reminiscent of the Old South. What happens in North Carolina does not stay in North Carolina. It has national implications. North Carolina is ground zero in a national struggle to defend democracy for all."

The group arrested Monday was composed of men and women of many different races and backgrounds, with ages ranging from 18 to 74. They were charged with second degree trespassing and with singing loudly and holding placards in the General Assembly, which is not allowed.

The ministers included Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II; Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins; Rev. Curtis Gatewood; Rev. Nelson Johnson; Rev. John Mendez; Rev. Maria Palmer; Rev. Larry Read and Rev. Theodore Anthony Spearman. The others included three college professors, two students, and veteran civil rights leaders: Adam Sotak; Dr. Timothy Tyson; Margaretta Belin; Bryan Perlmutter; O'Linda Gillis; Professor Perri Morgan; Molly McDonough; Barbara Zelter; and Bob Zellner.

In the first 50 days of the North

County Council Sends Proposed Parks Levy To August Ballot

On Monday, The King County Council approved sending to the voters in August a six-year property tax levy lid lift proposal to raise revenue for the maintenance and operations of the County's regional park system, as well as funding for local city parks and the Woodland Park Zoo. If approved by voters, the proposed levy would replace two voter approved measures set to expire at the end of 2013.

"All residents of King County have access to the regional park and trail system," said Council Chair Larry Gossett. "This ordinance will give the people the opportunity to decide how much value they get from the system."

"The Parks levy proposal that we adopted today is intended to ensure joint parks operations and maintenance," said Council Vice Chair Julia Patterson. "It also includes trail investments that may eventually connect communities in South King



Rev. Barber and other activists sing during the "pray-in" outside the doors of the NC Senate. Photo/NAACP.

Carolina legislative session, the Republican-controlled legislature enacted policies that will adversely impact hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians. A recent PPP poll found that North Carolinians oppose this extreme and aggressive agenda. However, the legislature appears steadfastly committed to acting outside the best interest of the people of North Carolina. This session, the legislature has:

- Rejected funding to expand Medicaid to cover 500,000 North Carolinians without health insurance;
- Rejected more than \$700 million in federal funds for unemployment benefits, affecting 170,000 laid off workers;
- Cut the payroll tax credit for over 900,000 poor and working people, while giving a tax break to 23 of the wealthiest people in our State;
- Planned to reduce access to preschool and kindergarten; and
- Attacked the right to vote with a series of voter suppression laws, including a voter ID bill that will disenfranchise nearly 500,000 voters.

"Love and justice demand a witness in the face of this regressive public policy," stated Rev. Barber. "The noblest sentiment of our constitution and deepest aspirations of our religious traditions summon

us in the public square to enact policies that maintain a commitment to the protection of civil and human rights, the common good, the good of the whole, equal protection and justice for all, and the uplift of the poor and marginalized. Anything opposing these principles must be challenged."

He continued, "This much is clear: the Republican-led legislature is standing in the way of progress and passing laws that violate fundamental constitutional rights. As leaders of moral conscience, we must draw the line somewhere. That is what this direct action is all about."

The attack on voting rights seen in North Carolina is being mirrored in state legislatures across the country, particularly the South. Legislators are pursuing extremist, regressive agendas to block progress by making it hard for people to vote.

"Those most impacted by these policies are seniors, students, people of color and the working poor," stated Attorney Al McSurely of the North Carolina. "Reverend Barber calls on all people of conscience to hold similar protests and direct actions in cities and states across the country, in solidarity with us in North Carolina."

go toward funding the maintenance and operation of King County's 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, and 26,000 acres of open space. Levy funds would also be used to expand the regional trails system — including developing the Lake to Sound Trail — and to expand the Community Partnership and Grant program, as well as to support local city parks and the Woodland Park Zoo.

"I want to thank the County Council for giving people the opportunity to support our open space and parks," County Executive Dow Constantine said. The levy proposal is consistent with county's practice to end the use of General Fund monies on regional parks, trails and open spaces and on local facilities in the rural unincorporated areas. King County also continues its regional business plan for parks with support from non-profit, corporate and community partners.

"Voters now have the opportunity to renew this levy and decide if they want to continue supporting the operation of parks and the preservation of open space in King County," said Councilmember Joe McDermott who chairs the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee.

The adopted legislation sends to voters a six-year property tax levy lid lift of 18.77 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value — an estimated \$56 per year for the owner of a home valued at \$300,000. If approved by voters, the proceeds from the levy would

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