

# Political Grab Bag

## By Steve Bagby, Sr., Political Action Committee Chair

The month of February 2023 is celebrated as African American History Month. Of course we know that as a people we have much to celebrate and a month long observance is not enough time to focus on and celebrate our many, many accomplishments. However, that specific time frame still gives us an opportunity to identify, acknowledge and applaud the work of both those who have gone before us and those who are currently making a difference. We are blessed to have within our own Church congregation some stellar examples of committed believers in Christ who are continuing the charge to keep the historic Second Baptist Church as a viable ministry so the Church can continue its footprint of service to the community and beyond. We acknowledge, thank and celebrate these members starting with our own stellar Pastor, Dr. William Saxe Epps, the dynamic Mrs. Agretta Epps and others instrumental in our congregation (in no particular order) including, Dr. Ernest Young, Dr. Venus Butler, Dr. D. Marie Battle, Rev. Barbara Melancon, Minister Lois King, Howard Alston, Charles Gordon Pierce, Jr., Diane Myrick, Charles Myrick, Sydni Myrick-Causey, Wrenetta Howard, Albert D. Matthews, Angela Matthews, Dr. William Elkins, Pamela Elkins, Larry Elkins, Eleanor Elkins, Dr. Lorn Foster, Dr. Kathleen Watkins, Valerie McDonald, Keith McDonald, Sherryll McDonald, Ella Quinlan Oatis, Jackie McMahan, Judith Jones, Pam Bizzell, Dr. Stephanie Quarles Jackson, Gail Quarles, Dr. Lauren Walton, Regina Kimbell, Titi Towolawi, Chelsea Maull, Gerald Harper, Dorothy Harper, Michele Lawson, Donna Pugh, Korey Pugh, Kelsey Pugh, Verdel Baskin, Karen Wright, Terry Martin, Sharon Parker-Martin, Tommie Sewell, Jimmie Johnson, Dr. Lois Winston, Fred Sherrard, Martha Sherrard, Pearl Cochran-Baker, Deena Mangrum, Kimberly Williams Brown, Edna Williams, Sybil Coker, Eric Williams, Mildred Lovett, Phyllis Junor, Fay Osborne, Kerri Sadler, Cassandra Harris, Stephanie Staton, Douglas Van Vactor, Marie Van Vactor, Bradley Moore, Byron Taylor, Georgia Taylor, Kermit Taylor, Bernestine Taylor, Edray Goins, Deborah Washington, Sam Williams, Lillian Williams, Dosie Brinkley, Deborah Carter, Reggie Carter, Ever Lee Hairston, Martha Taylor LaCroix, Barbara Foster, Dr. Richard Foster, Gennie Hogg, Amelia Jones, Shirley Lee, Michelle Waller, Jo Ann Carter-Scott, James Dancy, Henry Purnell, Theresa Purnell, Debbie Fleming, Barbara Terrell, J.

Michelle Woods, Matthew Rainey, Suzie Rainey, Barbara Webb, Natlieth Smith, Jo Evelyn Payne, Pat Samuels, Leonard Smith, Calvin Berry, Willie Stribling, Yolanda Hines, Betty Johnson, Carolyn Blake, Cathy Woodruff, our Sunday School teachers and members of the Henderson and Berean Sunday School Classes, the Trustee and Diaconate Ministries, the Recruiter's League, Christian Women on the Move, Men's Breakfast Club, the Community Relations Commission, the Memorial and Historical Commission and the Altar Guild. **Of course we know that this list of names is not exhaustive and that there are many, many more who devote their time, effort and resources towards helping Second Baptist maintain its viable ministry and for whom we can use the term coined when the Jazzy Fryday Ministry was active, "Unsung Heroes."** We celebrate the commitment of all of you who recognize the great significance of Second Baptist Church as the oldest African American Baptist Church in Southern California and who continue to take the steps necessary through your participation to keep the Church in the forefront and relevant in the history of Los Angeles and beyond. We celebrate all of you during this African American History month and thank you for your leadership, participation and commitment to the historic Second Baptist Church.

### **JUDGE ALBERT D. MATTHEWS—**

When we talk about commitment to Second Baptist Church, we immediately think of **Judge Albert D. Matthews ("Judge")** who we want to highlight during this African American History Month. We all love Judge Matthews. When we talk about Church, Judge has made it clear to all of us at all times, that **he loves Second Baptist Church** and that he consistently attended the various services held at 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., and sometimes stayed for an afternoon service, until his health would not permit. Judge has been a Sunday School Superintendent and teacher for many, many years, where he taught Sunday School to members who are now in their 70s. Since the pandemic, he now participates in the Berean Sunday School class, Prayer Meetings and Bible Study via Zoom, and has made clear to all by his actions that learning about the Bible is an ongoing process and we should all study it to inform ourselves about the word and live it to the best of our ability. He is a great mentor and example for us all to follow!!! Having graduated from Howard Law School first in his class in the 1950s, Judge was one of the first African American lawyers to be admitted to the California State Bar in

1955, having passed the California State Bar the first time. (*Interview conducted by Lorn Foster in 2008*). He later became a District Attorney and was appointed to be a Superior Court Commissioner in 1962. (*Foster Interview 2008*). Thereafter, he was appointed as a Municipal Court Judge and was later elevated to the Superior Court in 1973 where he served for many years. After retiring from the “Bench” as a Superior Court Judge in 1989, he continued to utilize his judicial expertise where he served as a Retired Judge until 2002. (*Foster Interview 2008*). **Our dear Judge Albert Matthews is a great African American man of faith and service**, who has helped Second Baptist continue to be recognized as a beacon of light in the community and beyond, and we are truly grateful that he is still here for us to honor and to love. We celebrate our dear Judge Matthews during this African American History Month and look forward to his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 19<sup>th</sup>, where his family has invited us to help him “bring it in” with a big birthday celebration on February 18, 2023. **We look forward to honoring a truly great man . . . an African American hero, who LOVES and has contributed to the historic legacy of the great Second Baptist Church! Happy Birthday dear Judge! Happy Birthday to you . . . and many more!!!**

### **SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH – LOCATION OF MAJOR PRESS CONFERENCE ON REDLINING –**

**Because of the long-standing history of Second Baptist Church where its influence has been felt far and wide, and the current/continued efforts of its leadership and members to maintain its viability, the Church was recently selected by the United States Department of Justice as the location to announce an historic settlement involving redlining.** The Justice Department accused Los Angeles-based City National Bank of discrimination by refusing to underwrite mortgages in predominately Black and Latino communities, requiring the bank to pay more than \$31 million in the largest redlining settlement in department history. **Kristen Clarke, an African American Woman, who is the Assistant Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and heads that Division**, along with United States Attorney Martin Estrada of the California Central Division, made the announcement regarding the largest redlining case in American history during a press conference on Thursday, January 12, 2023, **at our historic Second Baptist Church of Los Angeles.**



Per the *Associated Press* article on January 12, 2023, ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com)), City National is the latest bank in the past several years to be found systematically avoiding lending to racial and ethnic minorities, a practice that the Biden administration has set up its own task force to combat.

“This settlement should send a strong message to the financial industry that we expect lenders to serve all members of the community and that they will be held accountable when they fail to do so,” said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke. As part of the settlement, City National will create a \$29.5 million loan subsidy fund for loans to Black and Latino borrowers, and spend \$1.75 million on advertising, community outreach and financial education programs to reach minority borrowers.

Per the Associated Press article, **“Kristen Clarke announced the settlement Thursday morning at a historic Black Baptist church in South Los Angeles that was an important force in the civil rights movement and has been the venue for speeches by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and others.”** Yes, that would Second Baptist Church of Los Angeles!!!

We are proud of our Church and proud that its importance is still evident to others on a local and national level. During this African American History Month, we applaud the historic legacy of our Church and commit to take steps to ensure it maintains its significance in the community and beyond! We thank those who facilitated the Department of Justice with access to our historic Church. We are

certain that we all recognized those beautiful stained glass windows in Room 105 when we saw the news conference or read the article!!!!

**HAKEEM JEFFRIES' SPEECH UPON CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES --**

When we speak of outstanding African Americans during this African American History Month, the current Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), comes to mind. After Nancy Pelosi, 82, resigned from the leadership position after holding that position for many, many years, the Democrats elected a young African American Representative from New York, Hakeem Jeffries, to lead them in the House. When it was time to hand over the gavel from the Democrats to the Republicans who won a narrow victory in the House to become the majority party, and after Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) was elected to the Speaker of the House position on the 15<sup>th</sup> ballot, 52 year old Hakeem Jeffries, a lawyer who graduated from NYU Law School where he was on Law Review and who is described as brilliant, **gave a passionate, powerful, rousing and impactful speech, which has been applauded and embraced by many.** The speech noted the significant accomplishments of the Democrats under the Biden Administration, and contrasted the Democrats from the Republicans in terms of the manner in which each would/will handle issues “alphabetically – and without a teleprompter.” **His speech has been described by some as a “masterpiece.”** For those of you who may not have heard the speech, or for those who heard it and want to have a transcript of it to read again, we were requested to include the speech in the Political Grab Bag. This is the transcript of the January 7, 2023 speech **in pertinent part** as provided by CNN via its online website . . . (<https://transcripts.cnn.com/show/se/date/2023-01-07/segment/02>)

REP. HAKEEM JEFFRIES (D-NY): “Madam Clerk, Whip Clark, distinguished Members of the House Democratic Caucus and the House Republican Conference, it is my high honor and distinct privilege to finally be able to welcome all of you to the 118th Congress.

Let me just begin by thanking my good friend Pete Aguilar for his very generous words of introduction and for placing my name into nomination a total of nine times. And I also want to thank my other colleagues from the Democratic Caucus for your generous words of nomination as well, Jim Clyburn, Katherine Clark, Ted Lieu, Dean Phillips, Joe Neguse and Veronica Escobar.

I also want to thank my colleagues, my friends in the House Democratic Caucus for your perseverance, for your strength, for your friendship, for your unanimity of purpose and for your unanimous support. And I simply want to say that that showing of strength is not for any one particular individual. It will be a showing of strength throughout the 118th Congress. Unanimity of purpose on behalf of the American people.

Before I proceed any further, let me begin by acknowledging the distinguished gentlelady from the great state of California, the iconic, the heroic, the legendary speaker, emerita, Nancy D'Alesandro Pelosi. And without question in my mind, Speaker Emerita Pelosi will go down in history as the greatest speaker of all-time. Throughout her time -- throughout her time in Congress, she's been a legendary legislator, a fabulous facilitator, and a no nonsense negotiator.

We know that Nancy Pelosi is a woman of faith, a loving wife, a mother of five, a grandmother of nine, a defender of democracy, a voice for the voiceless, and a powerful champion for the children, the climate, Charm City, California, the caucus, the Congress, the country and the Constitution.

Thank you, Madame Speaker, for all that you have done. It's an honor to stand on your broad shoulders. As well -- as well as the shoulders of the great Steny Hoyer **and the great, Jim Clyburn, two consequential leaders in their own right.**

**Now, Scripture says in Galatians, let us not become weary in doing good. For at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Over the last few years, House Democrats, in partnership with President Biden and our colleagues in the Senate, have been hard at work on behalf of the American people, getting big things done.**

**We passed the American Rescue Plan, saved the economy from a deep recession, put shots in arms, money in pockets and kids back in school. We passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to create millions of good**

**paying jobs, fixed our crumbling bridges, roads, tunnels, our airports, our sewer and water systems, our mass transportation systems and ensured high-speed internet access in every single community.**

**We passed gun safety legislation for the first time in 30 years that will save lives and make our communities safer. We passed the CHIPS and Science Act to bring domestic manufacturing jobs back home to the United States of America and ensure that our workforce has the skills to succeed in the 21st century economy. And we passed the Inflation Reduction Act to strike a dramatic blow against the climate crisis, set our planet on a sustainable trajectory forward, lower energy costs, strengthen the Affordable Care Act, lower health care costs and drive down the high price of life-saving prescription drugs for millions of Americans.**

**It was one of the most consequential Congresses in American history. President Biden gets the job done and the D in Democrat stands for deliver.**

So over the next two years -- over the -- over the next two years, as we begin this 118th Congress, let us continue to fight for lower costs. Let us continue to fight in this Congress for better paying jobs. Let us continue to fight in this Congress for safer communities. Let us continue to fight in this Congress to defend democracy. Let us continue to fight in this Congress to put and protect the public interest. Let us continue to fight in this Congress for economic opportunity in every single ZIP code and let us continue to fight in this Congress for reproductive freedom.

**Because as Democrats, we do believe in a country for everyone. We do believe in a country for everyone. A country that provides for the poor, works for working families, make sense for the middle class, stands up for senior citizens, innovates in the inner city, strengthens suburban communities, helps out the heartland and revitalizes rural America. We believe in a country with liberty and justice for all, equal protection under the law, free and fair elections. And, yes, we believe in a country with a peaceful transfer of power.**

**We believe that in America, our diversity is a strength. It is not a weakness, an economic strength, a competitive strength, a cultural strength. Our diversity is a strength, it is not a weakness. We are a gorgeous mosaic of people from throughout the world.**

**As John Lewis would sometimes remind us on this floor, we may have come over**

**on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now. We are white, we are black, we are Latino, we are Asian, we are Native American, we are Christian, we are Jewish, we are Muslim, we are Hindu, we are religious, we are secular, we are gay, we are straight, we are young, we are older, we are women. We are men, we are citizens, we are dreamers, out of many, we are one, that's what makes America a great country.**

**And no matter what kind of haters are trying to divide us, we're not going to let anyone take that away from us, not now, not ever. This is the United States of America. A land of opportunity. The fact that I'm able to stand up here today is another data point in that narrative.**

**I was born in Brooklyn Hospital. Was raised in a working class neighborhood in Crown Heights. Grew up in the Cornerstone Baptist Church, started off in the cradle roll department. Somehow survived the violence of the crack cocaine epidemic and wound up here in the United States Congress as the highest ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives. America, truly a land of opportunity. Government of the people, by the people and for the people. So on this first day, let us commit to the American dream, a dream that promises that if you work hard and play by the rules, you should be able to provide a comfortable living for yourself and for your family, educate your children, purchase a home, and one day retire with grace and dignity. Let us commit on this first day to lift up the American dream for every single person in this nation.**

Now, I recognize that this is a moment of transition. As we transition from one Congress to the next, from one majority to the next, from a year of -- from a year of accomplishment -- a year of accomplishment to a year of ambiguity, a moment of transition. The American people understandably after the events of this week, recognize that the Congress is at a fork in the road and are asking the question, what direction will we choose?

**On this first day, I do not pretend to answer that question on behalf of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but we do extend our hand of partnership to you. And want to make clear that we extend and intend to try to find common ground whenever and wherever possible on behalf of the American people. Not as Democrats, not as Republicans, not as independents, but as Americans.**

*But I also want to make clear that we will never compromise our principles. House Democrats will always put American values over autocracy, benevolence over bigotry, the Constitution over the cult, democracy over demagogues, economic opportunity over extremism, freedom over fascism, governing over gas-lighting, hopefulness over hatred, inclusion over isolation, justice over judicial overreach, knowledge over kangaroo courts, liberty over limitation, maturity over Mar-a-Lago, normalcy over negativity, opportunity over obstruction, people over politics, quality of life issues over QAnon, reason over racism, substance over slander, triumph over tyranny, understanding over ugliness, voting rights over voter suppression, working families over the well-connected, xenial over xenophobia, 'yes, we can' over 'you can't do it' and zealous representation over zero self-confrontation.*

**We will always do the right thing by the American people. So let us not grow weary of doing good, for the American people will reap the benefit of the harvest if we do not give up. God bless you. God bless the House, and God bless the United States of America.**

It is now my solemn responsibility to hand over the people's gavel to a son of Bakersfield . . . the gentleman from the great state of California, and the next Speaker of the 118th, Kevin McCarthy.” (Emphasis added)

Wow! What a powerful speech! We believe the Civil Rights icons of the past would be extremely proud of the **first African American Leader of any party in the House of Representatives**. He has a lot of responsibilities in this position, including getting relevant legislation passed and helping the Democrats regain the majority in 2024. His late colleague, Congressman John E. Lewis, whom he referenced in his speech, would applaud his efforts to: **“Speak up, speak out, get in the way. Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America.”** (A quote from Congressman Lewis when he was speaking from the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on March 1, 2020.) Minority Leader Jeffries is doing just that . . . speaking up, speaking out and getting in good trouble!!

**STATEMENTS ON POLICE BRUTALITY— GEORGE FLOYD JUSTICE IN POLICING ACT**

Although we have much to celebrate during this African American History Month about the accomplishments of our forefathers and those who are currently making a difference, the reality is that we are still being victimized because of the color of our skin, which remains a critical reminder that . . . “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” Based upon the number of news reports we hear, African Americans and other minorities are killed by the police at a disproportionate rate compared to their share of the population. While the national spotlight has been on the death of Tyre Nichols in Memphis, there have been four “use of force” cases in the Los Angeles/Huntington Park area in January of this year alone that resulted in the death of three African American males and one Hispanic male . . . Keenan Anderson, Takar Smith, Anthony Lowe, Jr., and Oscar Leon Sanchez. Police accountability for this systemic use of force against minorities needs to be addressed at a national as well as local level. There have been calls for the *George Floyd Justice in Policing Act*, which passed in the House of Representatives in 2020 and 2021, but stalled in the Senate twice, to be reintroduced and passed by Congress. **The Act mandates, amongst other things, that federal officers only use deadly force as a last resort and that de-escalation be attempted, and it also conditions federal funding to state and local law enforcement agencies on the adoption of the same policy.**

*([www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1280/text](http://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1280/text))*

The two African American Law Associations in Los Angeles have each issued a statement on Tyre Nichols’ death. We wanted to share their statements with you as the message conveyed is not only applicable to the Tyre Nichols case, but to the Los Angeles use of force cases as well.



January 30, 2023

On behalf of Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Inc., we are disturbed by the footage showing the heinous acts of officers that led to the death of 29 year old Tyre Nichols. We extend our sincerest condolences to Mr. Nichols’ parents, son and loved ones. **As an organization of Black women, we**

**agree that when Mr. Nichols cried out for his mother with his dying words, we were all personally summoned.**

The despicable actions of these officers only further erode trust between police and the communities they're called to protect and serve, not just in Memphis but nationwide. Year after year, case after case, we continue to see the utter disregard and devaluation of Black lives. There is a fundamental, institutional problem in the policing of Black and Brown communities that needs to be addressed. While the swift action of the Memphis District Attorney in bringing murder charges against the officers involved and the Police Chief's disbandment of the Memphis SCORPION unit is a first step, we call upon government officials at every level to critically evaluate the current practice of law enforcement in America and take concrete measures to implement widespread systemic reforms to prevent the callous disregard of Black lives. ([www.blackwomenlawyersla.org/](http://www.blackwomenlawyersla.org/))



**January 28, 2023**

The John M. Langston Bar Association is appalled and deeply saddened by the brutal, inhumane murder of Tyre Nichols. Once again, a young black man was denied his civil rights, and was brutalized by individuals sworn to protect our communities.

The inhumane violence against Tyre Nichols by police officers further illuminates the fact that police brutality is not dependent upon the race of the officers involved but is clearly a factor of the race of the alleged subject. This is a culture that devalues life, hence we need to take immediate action to challenge structural racism and build anti-racist systems that value every human life.

We strongly recommend that congress immediately enact the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. We also support the dismantling of specialized policing

units, such as the "SCORPION" unit, which further targets communities of color and leads to greater racial profiling and disparate treatment.

We finally want to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Tyre Nichols. We urge that our communities remain strong and vigilant against police brutality.

*([www.facebook.com/groups/langstonbar/media](http://www.facebook.com/groups/langstonbar/media))*

Thank you for reading!

(February 2023)