

Hands across Eight Mile

Detroit's mayor finds common goal in bigotry fight

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

ONE OF the most powerful black leaders of the generation strode into a Southfield synagogue May 15 to address the topic of black-Jewish commonality.

"I'm here again, extending my hand across Eight Mile Road," Mayor Coleman Young told an audience of about 200 delegates to the Jewish Community Council.

"I know damn well you can't get along without me, and I can't get along without you."

The mayor's keynote address touched upon relationships between the Jewish people and the black community, as well as the interdependence between the city and the suburbs.

"I have a long history of struggling in Detroit and much of that has been with Jewish people," he said.

"WE ARE natural allies. The threat of oppression has always been a common one. When I came to Detroit, blacks and Jews lived in the same neighborhood. Jewish people moved out in a northwesterly pattern, and blacks moved after them."

"As a young man, I knew the Jewish people in my community, and I perceived those who led the fight for freedom were Jews."

Young said it was the same in the fight for industrial unionism. "Religious bigotry and racial bigotry meant black and Jews understood each other better."

One striking commonality, he pointed out, is that Jews and blacks rarely assimilated into the melting pot: "You with your pride and traditions, us with our color."

Coleman Young was brought to Detroit by his parents in 1923 as a small child. They came from Alabama to escape the persecution rampant in the south then.

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— Coleman Young
mayor of Detroit

GROWING UP in Detroit, he found that freedom and civil rights were part of a struggle here as well. Because of his color, he was denied scholarships to study and improve his situation.

During World War II, he was in the infantry and later the Air Force, becoming the first black bombardier. In the post-war years, he was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, a summons he rallied against as unconstitutional.

Elected to Michigan's Constitutional Convention (Con-Con) in 1961, he went on to be a state senator. In 1968 he became Michigan's first black floor leader.

His election as Detroit's mayor in 1973 made him the city's first black mayor. Presently, he has held the office longer than anyone.

From 1977 to 1981, Young served as vice-chairman of the National Democratic Party, and in 1982-83, was elected president of the United States Conference of Mayors.

DURING HIS incumbency, the city has seen the restructuring of its police department, the establishment of the Grand Prix race and the appearance of many new buildings, such as the Millender Center, Trolley Plaza, Millender Center and more on the city's skyline.

"Coleman Young is the embodiment of the American dream," said JCC President Leon S. Cohen in his dedication.

Young recalled that, as an infantry soldier, he was told his mission was to take and hold ground. "Let's

hope we never have in test that theory again," he said, comparing it to the freedom struggle in this country.

"Mostly when we take the high ground, then we relax and that's a mistake because that's when we should dig in. This is like our fight for freedom, where we must dig in and hold the gains."

THE MAYOR recalled that in 1978 he accompanied Vice President Mondale on a trip to Israel. "He was trying to put together an Egyptian-Israeli pact, and it was an interesting trip."

His first time in Israel, one of the things that struck Young was "you couldn't tell the Jews from the Arabs, except for a few blond and blue-eyed European Jews."

"All Semites, yet there is great commonality and great division."

Young cautioned that today some racial division is deeper than ever before in our country, and "racism is more virulent than ever."

"Two months ago," he reminded, "I reached a pinnacle in my life. I was admitted to the Detroit Golf Club and I don't play golf, and in fact, haven't gone there yet."

"I was the first black admitted, but there's not too many Jews either. Many clubs and associations today bar black and Jew alike, and not accidentally."

STATING THAT his city is twentieth on the "big ten," Young said, "I recognize Detroit cannot progress as a good and peaceful place to live



To Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, Jewish traditions and black color are reasons why Jews and blacks never assimilated into the melting pot. Before delivering an address at

Congregation Shaaroy Zedek May 15, he paused to view a metal sculpture of one Jewish tradition, the procession with the Torah on the Sabbath.

without its suburban neighbors, just as the suburbs can't thrive with a sick and suffering city on their borders."

The mayor pointed out that several places in Michigan are claiming to be hub areas. "But if you get more than one hub, you've got a messed up wheel."

"We need to define our roles and share economic development."

"Detroit's budget is balanced today, Young said, adding, "at least it was when I left."

"Yet unemployment is near twice what it is in the nation. There's a growing underclass in America, about 25 percent of Detroit. People are at or below the edge of poverty,

some of them who have not got or ever had a job.

"We can't afford to have people without hope. That's a breeding ground for revolution."

RACISM HAS sharpened in the nation, Young said. "And it can be traced to the White House. But in this area, we can solve our own problems."

Reacting to the talk, Marvin Kasoff, education director at Shaaroy Zedek, thought it sounded a positive note. "Affinity between people who have suffered oppression has to be remembered and in the past 10 years, we've forgotten this."

"We need to forge these coalitions

C.D. STOLFER/staff photographer

again."

Roger Winkelman, of West Bloomfield, an attorney now employed at the National Bank of Detroit, said Young was "very good in reiterating his stand for us to work together."

Ida Joyrich of Franklin said she liked his remarks. "He sounded good, but I'm upset because I've never heard him address these issues to a black audience."

Community leader Ruth Miller of Birmingham, said, "I'm not always a supporter, but the mayor did well tonight."

Disagreeing, Freda Jackson of Southfield countered. "I came to hear something of substance, but got nothing new or constructive."

campus pipeline

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● EARN'S DEGREES

Donna Krasewich of Farmington Hills received both a medical degree and a doctorate in pharmacology from Wayne State University. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in 1977. Krasewich plans to enter a pediatric residency.

● NEW CPAS

The Michigan State Board of Accountancy conferred certified public accountant certificates on Farmington Hills residents Kristine Bietler, James Cummins, Victor Donahue, Julia Gazyrova, Vigna Gutali, Bradford Hubbard, Patricia Johnston, Kenneth Slate, Ronald St. Amour and Linda Syzbly.

● HONORABLE MENTION

John Ellis of Farmington Hills received an honorable mention for his entry in the 1986 Wilson Daugherty Essay Contest sponsored by the school of arts and science humanities at Lawrence Institute of Technology, Southfield.

Ellis's essay, titled, "The Role of the Liberal Arts in a Technical Society," earned him a \$25 prize. He is a freshman in LIT's humanities program.

● MSU GRADS

Farmington residents graduating from Michigan State University include Tamara Apple, Terese Button, Donald Dewar, Stacie Kljorski and Thomas Marra.

From Farmington Hills are David Ahar, Kelly Garver, Carl Gunderson, Terri Hamlin, Kathryn Weller and Craig Wiklund.

● GAINS FELLOWSHIP

The National Science Foundation of Washington, D.C., awarded Gregory Abowd, a Birmingham Brother Rice High School alumnus from Farmington Hills a fellowship for graduate study in the natural and social sciences, mathematics and engineering.

Nearly 4,900 students submitted applications in nationwide competition for an NSF Graduate Fellowship, awarded on the basis of merit.

● UM-D GRADS

Farmington Hills residents graduating from the University of Michigan-Dearborn include Karen Parker, Bernard Bunyak, Kay Hommel, Dale Morgan, Angela Peterson, William Hammer, Dean Celini, Theres Vanderveen, Pamela Black, Dawn Lemow and Sara Reddig.

From Farmington are Yoko Chba and Sylvia Peterson.

● RECEIVES AWARD

Jane Ann Neuhouser of Farmington earned the Don Campbell Award from Depauw University, Greensboro, Ind.

● D.O. DEGREE

Stephen Chapman of Farmington Hills received a doctor of osteopathy degree from the University of Osteopathic Medicine and Health Sciences, Des Moines, Iowa.

● ALBION GRAD

Nancy Summers of Farmington graduated from Albion College. She is a history major.

● DEAN'S LIST

Paul Philip, Paul Frankel, Jane Phillips, Christopher Rose and Darryl Smith from the Farmington area were included on the dean's list at Michigan State University.

Kristen Miennek, Laurie Miller and Surendra Purohit of Farmington Hills were named to the dean's list at Kalamazoo College.

David Cunningham of Farmington was named to the dean's list at GMI Engineering and Management Institute, Flint.

David Burton of Farmington was elected to the dean's list at Grand Valley State College, Allendale. He is a sophomore majoring in film and video communications.

● TWO INTERNSHIPS

Kent Nickol, a senior at the University of Detroit majoring in communications, recently began two public relations internships for the summer in the Farmington area.

He is doing work for Angel Bakos, director of public relations/marketing at the Boisford Inn, Farmington Hills, and for JoAnn Soronen, executive director at the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce office, Farmington.

The Farmington Hills resident is an active member of the U. of D. Communications Council and the Public Relations Student Society of America. He is a Farmington High School graduate.

● GAINS DEGREE

Brian D'Aprile of Farmington Hills graduated from Michigan State University with a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering.

He is a member of Tau Beta Pi, Phi Tau Sigma and Phi Kappa Phi. He also is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

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