



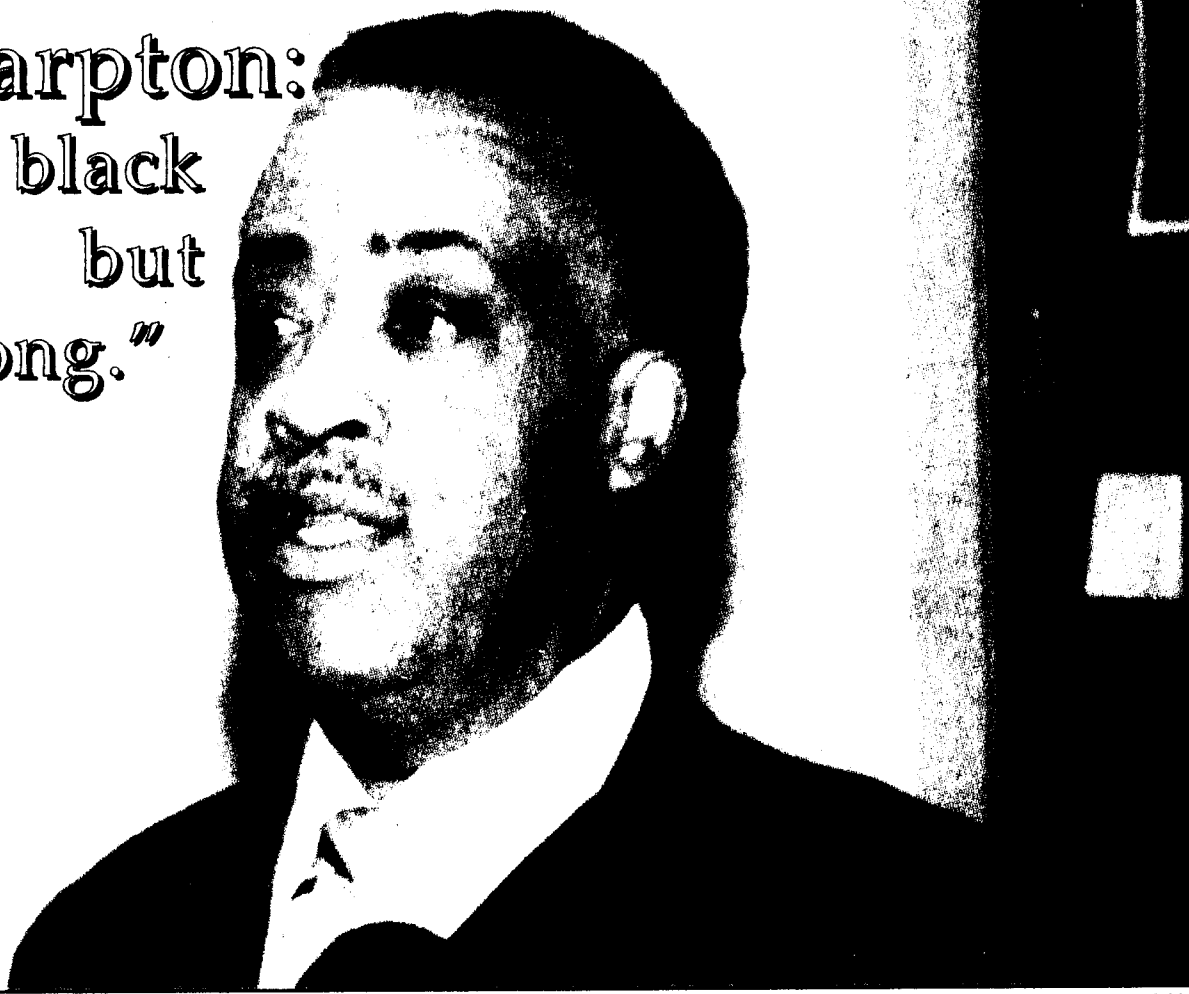
THE BEHREND BEACON

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Rev. Al Sharpton: "It was never black and white, but right and wrong."



Keegan McGregor/THE BEHREND BEACON

Rev. Al Sharpton talks with reporters before he went onstage in Erie Hall on Jan. 24. He spoke about progress made in the civil rights movement.

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According to Reverend Al Sharpton, who spoke at Erie Hall on the evening of Thursday, Jan. 24, there has been a great deal of progress made towards the goals of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. since his death nearly 40 years ago.

"Just to make progress," he said. "Was not the point. The point was to reach a society of equality, and the issue was not to do better, but to do right."

Sharpton has made these points his life's goal and work.

He was brought to Erie as part of "His Voice, Our Choice," Behrend's 2008 celebration of Dr. King's

legacy.

Sharpton urged his audience to remember King and the other civil rights activists that paved the way towards the progress of the present.

"Progress was indeed made," he said. "But let us remember the prices that were paid for that progress. Many of us are impressed with the results and scorn those that paid the price."

He spoke of the amount of people that admire Condoleezza Rice, but reminded the audience that without a Rosa Parks, there would be no Rice.

"Sometimes, people are more impressed with the fruit than the root," Sharpton said.

"It's not that we didn't have the blacks of qualification," he said of the past. "It's just that their qualifications weren't considered."

Sharpton stated his displeasure to the war, and said that he couldn't understand how the government can afford to spend \$6 billion a month in Iraq but doesn't have the monetary funds to computerize schools in Erie.

He also spoke of his displeasure with those who are disadvantaged and treated as so, and made it clear that his qualms along with those of Dr. King's were not as race-fueled as many often assume, and said, "It was never black and white, but right and wrong."

Sharpton fended off questions about who he will endorse in the upcoming election in his pre-speech press conference by saying, "I haven't pronounced my endorsement for anybody yet. I'm going to hold onto my vote."

He went on to say that he might endorse somebody a little later on, and during his speech further

elaborated that he would remain neutral "So that I can challenge all of the candidates on civil rights issues." About the Democratic debate that was held on Monday Jan. 21 in South Carolina, Sharpton stated that he was displeased with the acrimony between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. "They should be arguing about the real issues," he said.

Earl Bass, Sharpton's nephew who introduced him to the audience, referred to his uncle as "strong-minded, strong-willed and set in his beliefs."

These beliefs, according to Sharpton, are to expose injustices and attempt to do something about them, and to make the world and continue the progress that Dr. King helped to begin.

"The idea is not to just sit back and criticize everyone else and not do anything to change things yourself," he said. "It's not enough to just celebrate King. We must emulate him."

Behrend's first administrator dies



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

T. Reed Ferguson gives a speech during a 1999 Alumni Reunion at Behrend.

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T. Reed Ferguson, the first director of Penn State Behrend, died on Jan. 16 at Foxdale Village in State College, Pa. He was 92.

Ferguson was involved with Penn State since his graduation from the university in 1936. He continued his graduate work at Penn State as well as Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania.

Ferguson joined the Penn State staff as an instructor of the fine arts from 1942-1945 at the Pottsville campus, which is now known as Penn State Schuylkill. After serving as a field director with the American Red Cross in Pearl Harbor, Ferguson was named an assistant administrator at Schuylkill.

After the death of her husband Ernest R. Behrend in 1940, Mary Behrend donated the couple's 400-acre Glenhill Farm to Penn State, which created the Behrend Center in June of 1948. In July of that same year, Ferguson was named the first administrative head of the center.

Ferguson was the leader of Behrend until 1954 when he moved to University Park to become the director of the university's Adult Conference Center. He later became director of the university's alumni relations before he was appointed as vice president of public affairs.

In 1988, Behrend honored its first director with the Behrend Medallion. The Behrend Medallion is awarded to an individual who, by serving society and attaining eminence in the public arena, brings honor to himself, the college community and mankind.

In his honor, Behrend created the T. Reed Ferguson Award, which is awarded to a junior at the college who has demonstrated scholarship, leadership, and citizenship that has impacted fellow students through academics and out-of-class involvement. The junior must also give his or her word of future achievement in the senior year.

Ferguson was also honored at University Park in 2003. In recognition of his years of

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Family Ties: Sharpton's nephew Bass

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The Smith Chapel Living Room quickly transformed into a waiting room full of people anxiously anticipating the arrival of the Rev. Al Sharpton on campus. One of those people waiting for Sharpton was Earl Bass, Sharpton's great-nephew.

A student at Penn State Behrend, Bass, is forensic science major from Niagara Falls, New York.

Growing up with Sharpton as an uncle wasn't really that different, Bass said. "He's always been around. But, it has its perks. Sometimes when we are at parties some celebrities are around." Bass goes to some of his uncle's functions, but usually only when he is in New York visiting his family.

Sharpton is known for his run for president in 2004 as well as being an outspoken activist for civil rights. With that fame comes criticism, which Bass thinks is sometimes a little harsh.

"I see it as sometimes he is misunderstood," Bass said. "People think he is a lot more controversial than he is. Sometimes they mistake his mannerisms as cruel or radical but they are really not."

"He's just really passionate about what he believes in," Bass said. "He does what needs to be done to get the job accomplished and I've always respected that."

Bass described his uncle as unapologetic, which may be a reason why so many people find Sharpton so controversial but Bass said, "If he believes something is right, he's going to stand by that."

"He doesn't flip flop, I can tell you that," Bass said with a laugh. "Hes definitely not a flip-flopper."

"He's not as bad as they make him out to be once you get to know him more personally, but I mean it comes with the territory."

Bass said that Sharpton told his family that after the "hanging chads" of the 2000 Presidential Election he was going to run for the office in 2004.

"And he did," Bass said. "It shows that he is dedicated to what he's going to do." Bass was also very realistic. "Did I expect him to go far?" Bass asked. "Not really," he laughed.

Bass, who is torn between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, would like to see the two come together and run as a team. "That would be a force," he said.

As far as his uncle goes, no official endorsement has been made but Bass was willing to make some speculations.

"He has really close ties with the Clintons," he said. "They've supported him and he's supported them. I don't think he doesn't like Obama, it's just one of those loyalty things."

Bass said he doesn't get to New York as often as he used because he likes to spend his break at home with his immediate family.

He is very active on the Behrend campus as well. In addition to the track team, Bass is the Historian for the Multi Cultural Council, a member of the Lambda Sigma Honor Society, a crew worker at Bruno's Café, and has spoken to many students that are considering Behrend as their college choice.

Say it ain't snow!



Keegan McGregor/THE BEHREND BEACON

A fresh layer of snow blankets the Glennhill Farmhouse after the past week's snow storm. Look for more this week.

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Election 2008

Unsure of who to support in the upcoming election?
Find out each candidate's platform on page 7.