

President Canales' commentary to latest Washington Post Article:

As I read the paper this morning, I came across an article (Wiggins, Ovetta, June 4, 2009. Decision in Jail Case Could Cost Ivey Votes, Observers Say. Washington Post, Metro Section.) reporting on the handling of the Ronnie White investigation by States Attorney Glenn Ivey. I was disheartened and insulted as I read it by the fact that the Post has seen it fit to now make the cold and callous death of Brother Richard Findley and his killer a topic for political fodder. With the myriad of issues that are affecting this County, the notion that this membership intends on standing idly by and allowing the old politics of police bashing and fear mongering for political gain is ridiculous.

For the record, I purposely have refrained from making any remarks relating to the death of the murderer of Brother Richard Findley. The actions by this membership throughout this entire unfortunate and tragic situation were commendable. And, I am very emphatic on this point.... No one can or shall ever be able to impugn the integrity, character, and professionalism that was displayed by this membership after the loss of Brother Findley.

Since the death of Mr. White, I have watched and listened to many individuals who stated things such as "Vigilante Justice" and "cover-up." Many of these remarks were prematurely and unwarrantedly directed at this membership. All types of allegations and innuendo were leveled against us. This membership continued to conduct itself in its usual professional manner. We stayed out of the fracas while awaiting the outcome of an investigation by an outside agency. I am mystified by the response of some of those who were so adamant about an outside investigation being conducted, after being advised of the results of the investigation, still clamoring that there is some impropriety.

However, in retrospect, we shouldn't be surprised. With the 2010 elections around the corner, there will be a few who choose to take the tried and true campaign strategy of running for office on this membership's back. They will refer to years gone by and point out isolated incidents of possible police misconduct as their primary charge for why they should be elected. I for one have no intention of allowing this membership or the citizens of this County to be duped again by any unscrupulous candidate that would take this approach.

Allow me to also correct a factually incorrect statement within the article. The article states that "an endorsement from police and correctional officers has not swayed recent county executive races." The reality is that former executive Wayne Curry won his first run for office as a result of the support of this organization. He was able to overcome and defeat his opponent, Bea Tignor, during that election based on the hard-work and efforts of this membership. Based on the deterioration of this organizations relationship with Wayne Curry after the first election, this organization did not endorse a candidate during his second run for office.

As for Mr. Johnson, it is correct that during his first bid for office he won without the endorsement of the FOP. However, there were many within the membership who did not agree

with our choice in candidates at the time. These members staunchly, actively, and publicly supported Mr. Johnson and aided him during his campaign. And, I believe this support was influential and gained him support that aided in his being elected. Now as for the last election, Mr. Johnson won by a mere 5,800 votes. This organization chose not to endorse a candidate. Mr. Johnson, like many other candidates running for office at the time, came to this organization actively seeking our endorsement. Based on the climate at the time and a close race, a “no endorsement” for Mr. Johnson was just as helpful as actually supporting him. Hindsight being twenty-twenty, who knows how different things could have been around the County had we actually weighed in.

During the last local election cycle, we conducted over one hundred interviews for forty-eight elected offices. Just about every candidate seeking office walked through the doors of this lodge seeking this membership’s support. And, we were successful in aiding seventy-five percent of our endorsed candidates with being elected. Based on that, I challenge anyone’s questioning of the strength and influence that an FOP endorsement has on an individual’s successful bid for office in Prince George’s County.

I will close by reiterating what I stated at the beginning. With the myriad of issues that are affecting this County, the notion that this membership intends on standing idly by and allowing the old politics of police bashing and fear mongering for political gain is ridiculous. Do not underestimate this membership’s resolve and influence. And, do not insult the intelligence and support of the citizens of this County for the men and women of the Prince George’s County Police Department.