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**AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE
MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER**

The Honorable Norm Rice
Mayor-Elect, City of Seattle
464 12th Avenue, Suite 410
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Dear Norm:

On behalf of Hannibal, Kunta-Kente, Joseph Cinque, John Brown, Harriet Tubman, Abe Lincoln, John Quincy Adams, Tilman, Frederic Douglass, Robert Smalls, Marcus Garvey, William Dubois, Booker T. Washington, The Kennedy Brothers, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmicle, and all who have struggled with their lives and sacrificed over the years, my brother Clarence who was not quite a year older than I and who was brutally and unmercifully shot down by a racist in September 1970 in Portland, Oregon in a phone booth while talking his last words on earth to me, I commend you, Norm Rice, our honorable Mayor-Elect.

Unnoticed by most, we have just had our fourth anniversary at the African-American Heritage Museum at the former Colman School. I personally find it a little amazing that issues of this importance, that is so intricately interwoven into our communities' social, political, educational, cultural and economic survival would go by uncelebrated, particularly by those who, due to our direct thrust and fearless sacrifice, recognize the importance and notoriety of such an institution and are first in line demanding the dessert before the main course when our works push the issues to the front burners and they see monetary or self elevation opportunity.

A man is either weakened or strengthened by adversity to either extreme. The four years of struggling without a budget, lights, and water on behalf of the development of the Museum has only served to the blessing of the Almighty Father to strengthen me even beyond my own political and spiritual awareness.

Over the past four years, I have enjoyed the pleasure of being discounted and underestimated while steadily working without fear or compromise toward the

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development of a first-rate African-American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center. Mayor Royer's from the offset statement of refusal to negotiate with our organization because we lacked credibility. Outspoken members in the community's statements that they supported the idea of a Museum but challenged our methodology as well as our ability or credentials to carry out the development. The political establishment admitted that we were at a stalemate and that they would just wait until we got tired and walked away. The recent attitudes of many surface glancers who said a Museum and Cultural center by all means but anywhere but its present location ran by anyone except those who have sacrificed, braved the elements and made it possible.

Mayor Royer's committed an unforgivable blunder when he attempted to give a little "outhouse" to the community for a Museum. His public prepared statement posed doubt that the occupiers would accept his offer but the more responsible members in the community would. To this day, we have not been able to find his descriptive, responsible people in the community to support that dwarfed concept. (See attached letters to Mayor Royer dated December 7 and 30, 1985.)

As any alert agent or facilitator of social change recognizes the changing of time as well as political climate, I recognize that with your election to Mayor, I can no longer play the sincere, political novice. There are few people in the current political climate I personally recognize and take a back seat to, because most of them are newcomers and recipients to political events unknown to them in which I helped to orchestrate.

Sam Smith, George Fleming, and yourself were the only political forces representing community interest in 1978 when as President of the Black Democratic Organized Committee, we forged forward against the odds and literally captured the 1979 State Democratic convention caused 25% of the Washington delegation to the National Democratic Convention in New York to be African-American which was the highest percentage of African-American delegation of any state in the country. This permanently changed the attitude and climate of Washington State politics causing a political harvest that those around the State and local politicians continue to feast on.

Since then, I have with pleasure observed the election of Michael Preston, Jesse Wineberry, Ron Sims, and others while founding members or descendants of B.D.O.C. have had major involvement in their campaign efforts including Jesse Jackson's state-wide campaign for President and up to the last coordinator Vern Thomas for the National Democratic Presidential Nominee Dukakis. Of course, I give full credit to Jackson's State Coordinator Charles Rollins for Mr. Thomas' transitional political elevation.

The only societal loss in my life occurred when I was just 17, when the State of California brutally and unjustly--because I was a juvenile without the protection of due process--deprived me of four years of my freedom for a mere neighborhood fist fight. Seventy-five percent of that time was spent in solitary confinement because even at that age, I refused to compromise and accept society's interpretation that I was a of a criminal mind because I took

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a stand against racial aggression and bigotry and what I believed to be true and fair.

In the last few years while maintaining full occupation of the African-American Heritage Museum effort, I made at least ten self-supported trips to the State of California and successfully developed, sponsored, and lobbied its passage through the California State Assembly and Senate by way of the African-American Parent Council, Legislation #AB1012, authored by the Honorable Assemblywoman Gwen Moore, which required that a child receive Multi-Cultural education in the public educational sector prior to graduation. This was not a cake walk. The Governor initially vetoed this legislation last year, but this year we fought it once again through the State Assembly and Senate with him singing it into state law. The Good Book calls that returning good for evil. As I grow in maturity I have learned that my early unfair encounters with the mighty State of California was not a loss, but an experience required for me to develop the type of resolve required for me to become the fighter for people's justice and needed reform. The Parent Council has had similar success with the Washington State Legislature with help and guidance of the Honorable Rep. Jesse Wineberry.

I supported your candidacy solely on the merit of your proven commitment to represent the interests of the grassroots community. Over the years, Sam Smith, Senator Fleming as well as yourself have demonstrated even in times when you only had one vote on the City Council, that vote always represented the interest of the people; from banning the choke hold, anti-discrimination legislation, Multi-Cultural Education, Jobs, Food and Housing, Anti-Apartheid, etc.

A few years ago, Sam Smith and yourself cast the only two votes in favor of attaching funding for the community museum to the levy for the Seattle Art Museum. That measure, even though it was popular with other councilmembers, did not pass due to Mayor Royer's utilization of practically all his political chits to sway City Council to vote against the proposed amendment. But the merits of the political vehicle caused him to reverse his two years' staunch stand of refusal to negotiate with our organization or take the communities' eight year struggle for a museum seriously. In order to get City Council to change their vote, he made a full commitment to City Council to research, identify location, resources and methodology of the achievement of a first-rate African-American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center.

As a direct result, the city has sponsored three studies at a cost of \$165,000. The first completed study confirmed the need and justification of a first-rate African-American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center. The second study which was to identify possible sites suggests that the present location because of size, cost advantage and location has strong advantages over the remaining two sites in consideration. (Langston Hughes and the Martin Luther King Memorial Site) The third and final phase of the study is currently underway. Stripling and Associates has been awarded the contract for the purpose of identifying the permanent site out of the three remaining

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contenders as well as stimulating the community for organizational fundraising and participation in the development of this most-needed institution.

While I am somewhat encouraged in the movement of this long-enduring and patient process, I am very concerned about the Department of Community Development's change in the third phase consultant's specifications that basically eliminates the involvement of the Citizen's Oversight Committee that was very critical in seeing that community grassroots participation and ideas were inclusive in the previous Phase I and Phase II consultant studies and recommendations.

In recent discussions with City Council President Sam Smith, he reaffirmed that the full intent of City Council was that the Citizen's Advisory Oversight Committee was to work in concert with the consultants to assure that their recommendations reflect the ideas of the community. While I feel this issue can easily be resolved, it is an issue I know the grassroots community and myself cannot ignore.

The struggle for a Museum touches many main fibers in our community. You are one of the few officials who are aware of its full ramifications from the Community's successful stand against the police precinct on 23rd and Yesler to its present political elevation and popularity. You also know of the double-dealing on the part of the outgoing administration to undermine at every opportunity my hard work and commitment for the establishment of this most deserving institution.

This correspondence is not intended to be a statement of arrogance or defiance, but one that represents the facts and my true belief and uncompromising commitment for a first-rate African-American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center.

In conclusion, I applauded your most recent statement at the New Hope Baptist Church banquet honoring Rep. Jesse Wineberry when you said, "as Mayor, one of my utmost priorities is to make our Central and South End Community consistent with the rest of the City's National Most Livable City in the Country status." It is our hope that you recognize the establishment of the African-American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center as a major cornerstone in that happening.

In keeping with our effort to represent the views and needs of our community, in addition to establishing a first-rate Museum and Cultural center, we join hands with Mt. Baker Community Council and other community entities in requesting that due and deserving focus be also placed on the development of a sports stadium, recreational, contractual training facilities, low-income housing and other viable development in the I-90 corridor.