



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**
News Release

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Assembly Honors Jim Brown, Alvin 'Al' Attles, Jr., Joe Morgan, And Other Legendary African American Figures

(Sacramento) – Last Thursday, the California State Assembly commemorated Black History month with a special floor ceremony honoring nine individuals and one organization who have stood out as pioneers and leaders in their fields. The California Legislative Black Caucus (LBC) sponsored and organized the event. [Click here for photos from the event](#)

The session began with members considering ACR 23, which officially commemorates Black History Month. Members of the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, the Latino Legislative Caucus, also spoke in support of the resolution.

“The history of the United States is rich with inspirational stories of women and men whose actions, and achievements have united Americans and contributed to the success and prosperity of the United States. We take this month to commemorate the vibrant and storied legacy of those of African descent who have worked, fought, and advocated for a better community and a better country,” announced Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda), who chairs the LBC.

Following the passage of the resolution, the Assembly began its official ceremony. Honorees and their accomplishments were announced, with each individual receiving a resolution in recognition of their work.

At a press conference following the ceremony, the honorees reflected on the work of their colleagues, as well as the importance of community action.

Jim brown, honored as the greatest football player of the 20th century, remarked on his activism as an athlete, and his continuing work with youth, “It’s wonderful to be recognized as a great athlete. I don’t talk about it often, but I am also an activist. In the 60’s, we brought together a top flight group of athletes to defend the principles of Muhammed Ali. My goal today is to bring together a major number of young athletes and to get them to step up and deal with the education system in this country, as well as youth violence.”

Joe Morgan, baseball hall of famer and five time gold glove winner, spoke to the recognition he and other honorees had received, stating, “What we do is not charity; we are sharing the blessings that have been bestowed upon us. The most important thing I’ve enjoyed is meeting and networking with others who care. They care about other people and they’ve proven that over the years.”

Al Attles, the first coach of the Golden State Warriors remarked that, “There’s an old saying that we’ve come a long way, but there’s a long ways to go. It’s people like you who give us the inspiration to continue doing what we believe we need to do.”

Belva Davis, a pioneer in journalism appeared very appreciative of the recognition she received. She pointed out the important contributions of the press, stating, “I want to remind people just how important it is for the recording of history.”

The Honorable Mervyn Dymally, a former legislator, congressman, and one of the first African American lieutenant governors in the nation, described his deep appreciation to the people of California for giving him the opportunity to serve, and to the LBC and Assembly for honoring him.

Morrie Turner, the creator of Wee Pals, spoke simply on his appreciation for being honored and recognized for his work.

The Honorable Doris Davis, the first African American woman Mayor of a major metropolitan city (Compton) and an activist for children echoed a sentiment that many of the honorees seemed to share, "Our work is not done, it is just beginning," she stated.

Dr. La-Doris McClaney, a humanitarian and civic leader said simply of the honor she received. "To much is given, much is required," she said.

Dr. Charlie Mae Knight, President of the Knight Foundation and an educator for 40 years, took the opportunity to speak on education disparities. Despite her retirement, she plans to continue advocating for quality education.

Accepting on behalf of the NAACP, which celebrates its 100th year, Freddie Davis, second vice-president of the California State Conference NAACP, expressed her gratitude for the Assembly's recognition for the organization's milestone.

The press conference closed a two day long event that began with a reception in the Capitol rotunda, where the honorees mingled with over three hundred guests and legislative leaders, as well as Governor Schwarzenegger. The LBC paid special tribute to Speaker Bass as a champion of California's children, and as the first African American woman leader of a state assembly in the nation. They also recognized Marian Wright Edelman, who is president of the Children's Defense fund and a lifelong advocate of disadvantaged Americans. The honorees then received special recognition at an invitation-only dinner immediately afterward.

Assemblymember Swanson concluded the events by reflecting on the importance of Black History month. "At the end of the day, Black history is America's history, and it is a fundamental part of the fabric of America. This month is an opportunity to share our history, our heritage, and our legends. It reminds us of what people can accomplish, and inspires the next generation of young Americans to even greater accomplishments."

Brief Biographies of the Honorees

Mr. Jim Brown—Athlete, Actor, Mentor To Our Youth and Civic Leader

James Nathaniel Brown is one of the greatest athletes of the 20th Century. For 9 years, he reigned supreme as the most dominant, prolific and feared running back in the National Football League. He founded the Amer-I-Can Program for Social Change, reaching out to young men with the message that there is life and there is hope.

Mr. Joe L. Morgan—Baseball Hall-of-Fame, ESPN Commentator and Role Model

Joe Morgan won five "Gold Glove Awards", played in ten All-Star games and recorded 692 stolen bases. He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame on the first ballot. He is also founder and president of the Joe Morgan Youth Foundation, which provides college scholarships and supports development programs for our youth.

Mr. Alvin A. "Al" Attles Jr.—NBA Player and Coaching First

Alvin A. "Al" Attles, Jr, was the first African American Coach of the Golden State Warriors (Oakland). He lead the Warriors to one NBA title, one conference title, two division titles, and six playoff appearances. He and teammate Wilt Chamberlain hold the highest combined scoring total by two

players in an NBA game at 117 points.

Ms. Belva Davis—Television Commentator and Pioneering Journalist

Belva Davis is our legend in journalism. Following her start as a freelance writer and later as a radio broadcaster, she became the first African American woman television reporter on the West Coast. Currently she is the anchor of *This Week In Northern California* on KQED

Honorable Mervyn M. Dymally—Congressman, Lt. Governor and Legislator

The Honorable Mervyn M. Dymally was the first foreign born African American to be elected to the United States House of Representatives. He was also the first African American elected to the California State Senate and to serve as Lieutenant Governor for the state of California.

Mr. Morrie Turner—Cartoonist, Inspiring Children & Community

Morrie Turner began drawing cartoons in the fifth grade, and created the "Wee Pals" comic strip in 1965 as a way of bringing African American characters to the comic pages. It was Mr. Turner's intention to portray a world without prejudice, a world in which people's differences are cherished.

Honorable Doris A. Davis—First African American Woman Mayor of a Metropolitan City

Doris A Davis was elected Mayor of the City of Compton, California on June 5, 1973, when she unseated the incumbent. With that victory, she became the first African American woman Mayor of a large metropolitan city in our Nation. Dr. Davis also is the founder of Daisy Child Development Center to support unwed-teenage mothers with life services.

Dr. La-Doris McClaney—Humanitarian, Philanthropist & Civic Leader

Dr. La-Doris McClaney is a dynamic woman who embodies the spirit of philanthropy and humanitarianism. She has provided homes for underprivileged children, and has spent 25 years as the owner and operator of a residential care facility servicing clients with mental disabilities. She has also been a mentor and motivational speaker to many.

Dr. Charlie M. Knight—President, Knight Foundation and Educator

On June 30, 2003, Dr. Knight retired after serving 42 years in public education as a Superintendent and elementary school teacher. She committed her career to education of inter-city youth. She then established the Knight Foundation, which provides housing for the economically disadvantaged.

The NAACP – The 100th Anniversary of Its Founding and a Century of Advocacy

The NAACP is the nation's most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. Its more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

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