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THE REAL DEAL PRESS

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This Week in Politics

Promises and Perils of Power and Politics in Cleveland's Black Community



L to R: Car Stokes (First Elected African-American Mayor of major U. S. city) and Louis Stokes (First African-American congressman elected in the state of Ohio). Ohio Congresswoman Marcia Fudge. Current Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson.

By R. T. Andrews
EDITOR

Politics is considered an inside game by many, and it often is, even on the local level.

But that's often a self-fulfilling prophecy. People who don't have much understanding of the process typically choose not to engage, meaning they

leave important decisions about who represents them and what becomes law to more motivated and active neighbors and community members, whose interests may be in direct opposition to their own. The more politically active thereby become 'insiders' by default, and their most vocal critics are often those who know the least

about the political system.

But politics is a fundamental human activity in a democracy, with remarkably few entry barriers. People get involved for any number of reasons: at the invitation of a friend, or passion about an issue, as a way to become involved in a new community, or simply a desire to make a difference.

There are also those personality types for whom politics just seems natural. They start running for political office in grade school, beginning with student council, and going as far as their talents and voter approval can take them. Consider former Cleveland mayor Mike White as a prototype.

Of course, there are many
Continued on page 6

*The Word on Small Business***Bracing for Tax Surprises - Part II**

By Kirby Freeman
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



In my last column highlighting the impact that small businesses in 2019 are feeling as a result of the ripple effects of the 2017 Tax Reform Act, I focused on revised extension deadlines facing many businesses.

In this column, I will briefly touch on some of the more-heralded changes to the tax code that positively address some of the more immediate needs of small business owners.

The most popular of the changes that initially benefited small businesses, was probably the much-publicized deduction for income through so-called pass-through entities; these would mainly be firms set up as sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies acting as sole proprietorships or partnerships, and sub-chapter S-corporations.

The new law allows individuals who own small businesses under these designations to deduct up to 20% of their qualified business income. The benefits are capped up to the first \$157,000 for individual taxpayers and up to \$315,000 for joint filers. The deduction is also available for trusts and estates that own these types of pass-through entities.

While the new deductions could end up being a real shot-in-the arm for many small businesses, the tax benefit is currently set to expire in 2025. In contrast, the significant cut in the tax rate paid by larger Schedule C corporations — to 21% from 35% — is (at least for now) permanent. This sets the stage for small businesses to structurally pay a significantly higher tax rate in the long-run than much larger corporations will likely pay.

The new tax structure also allows businesses to deduct 100% of the cost of assets — mainly machinery and equipment — placed in service between September 28, 2017 and December 31, 2022 in their first year of service, or in Year 1. This deduction is extended to December 31, 2023 for certain assets with longer useful lives.

This deduction provided a major incentive for many small businesses and corporations to maximize their purchases of new machinery and equipment. While the underlying

intent is to help reduce the costs for those companies seeking to aggressively increase productivity by making significant investments in capital expenditures, this is widely seen as just another short-term tax benefit.

The 2018 Tax Reform Act also expanded Section 179 first-year depreciation deductions for certain building improvements for real estate and other long-term tangible assets, as increased deductions for depreciations for passenger vehicles used for businesses. But again, these deductions are designed to be short-term in nature.

Representatives of several small business organizations, like the Washington, D.C.-based National Small Business Association, have voiced their intention to seek to make permanent certain tax deductions that are extended to single-person and small businesses. This further illustrates that certain deductions that most benefit large corporations were designed to be permanent changes to the tax code.

To be sure there were some changes that were meant to be permanent revisions to the tax code for business. The Tax Reform Act of 2017 repealed the corporate alternative minimum tax (AMT), which was imposed at a 20% rate. But the AMT was largely imposed on companies generating more than \$7.5 million in annual revenue, and thus of little consequence for most small business owners.

Another permanent tax code change would permit many more medium-sized, and large companies to use the cash-basis method of accounting, thereby allowing them to avoid using more complicated inventory accounting methods. This change in the tax code would inordinately benefit larger businesses.

While the Tax Reform Act provided some temporary tax deductions for all companies, there is some debate regarding the long-term impact the permanent changes to corporate rates will have on sole proprietorships and small partnerships. The changes also took away several personal and company tax deductions that adversely affect certain types of businesses.

There has also been some reports of uncertainty by small business owners regarding their opinions about the Tax Reform Act. I will address these items in my next column.

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QUOTE of the Week
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— Winston Churchill

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Signs of New Vigor mark 107th NAACP Freedom Dinner



Attendees at June 22, 2019 NAACP Freedom Fund dinner listened to branch president Danielle Sydnor (Center) and keynote speaker Donna Brazile. Photos by Georgio Sabino

By R. T. Andrews
EDITOR

The Cleveland NAACP continued to show signs at its annual Freedom Fund dinner that it is on the path to a renewed relevance in Greater Cleveland's civic arena.

The chapter recognized sev-

eral community members at its June 22 fund-raiser as "unsung heroes" and "rising stars". In the former category, the chapter saluted John Anoliefo, CEO of The Famicos Foundation; social justice advocate Shakyra Diaz; and community stalwart Dick Peery. Lifted up as next generation lead-

ers were Evelyn Burnett and Mordecai Cargill, founders of Third Space Action Lab.

Other honors went to Alex Johnson, president of Cuyahoga Community College ["Tri-C"]; Judge Emanuella Groves of Cleveland Municipal Court; attorney James L. Hardiman; and Ohio Supreme



Court Justice Melody Stewart.

Veteran Democratic Party political operative Donna Brazile, currently a commentator on the Fox News cable channel, was the keynote speaker.

Chair of the event was Renee Tramble Richard, Tri-C general counsel. TV 5's Danita Harris was emcee.

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Over 400 attend Who's Who in Black Cleveland celebration



Top: Distinguished Gentlemen of the Spoken Word group members strike, yes, distinguished poses, before performing at Who's Who unveiling. Bottom, L-R: Darnell Brown, City of Cleveland chief operating officer, and Jacquelin Muhammad of Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District; near capacity crowd turns out for unveiling; Lorna Wisham, president of FirstEnergy Foundation, and her mother, Carolyn Wisham, R.N. [ret.], enjoy the festivities.

By Lewis Rice
SPECIAL TO THE REAL DEAL PRESS

More than 400 movers and shakers from Northeast Ohio's black community converged on the Inter-Continental Hotel Tuesday evening, June 18 to mix, mingle and celebrate African American achievement at the unveiling ceremony and reception for the 14th edition of *Who's Who in Black Cleveland*.

The 2019 edition features over 300 honorees from various industries, with a special salute to African Americans in architecture, construction and engineering. The edition also features a lifetime achievement tribute to the Rev. Dr. Otis

Moss Jr., pastor emeritus of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church.

Who's Who in Black Cleveland Associate Publisher Rhonda Crowder, Real Times Media CEO Hiram Jackson and Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson provided welcome remarks. The popular group Distinguished Gentleman of Spoken Word, directed by Honey Bell Bey, opened the unveiling ceremony.

Dominic Ozanne, president and CEO Ozanne Construction, who wrote the foreword to the 14th edition, cited both Dr. Moss Martin Luther King Jr. as exemplars of excellence for their contributions to society.

Ozanne's father, Leroy Ozanne, who founded the

company that bears the family name, and acclaimed architect Robert P. Madison were featured in a video presentation, along with eleven "interesting personalities": W. Daniel Bickertstaff, James D. Cowan, The Conwell and Jones families, Michele Crawford, I. Kaye Gaines, Akil Hameed, Pernel Jones Jr., Phoebe Lee, Ramona Lowery, and Glen Shumate.

Another video presentation included dignitaries, friends and family paying tribute to Dr. Moss, who used his time at the podium to deliver a short, powerful speech on the importance of voting.

Television anchor Harry Boomer of WOIO/WUAB 19/43 served as emcee.



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Shakorie Davis - Next Generation

Justin Dean - Whiting Turner

Marvin Echols - Whiting Turner

Margaret Hewitt - Construction Green Team

Christopher Howse - Howse Solutions

Ariane Kirkpatrick - AKA Team

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Orlando Taylor - Turner Construction

John Todd - JWTA

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Promises and Perils of Power and Politics in Cleveland's Black Community

Continued from Page 1

accidental politicians, people who started out to as teachers or housewives or bartenders but wound up appointed to, recruited for, or presented with an opportunity to enter elective office. Lou Stokes was happy practicing law before he ran for Congress. The district he helped create through litigation was one that his brother Carl coveted but couldn't take because he had just become the first black big city mayor in America. So Lou was drafted and, as they say, the rest is history.

Cleveland's most significant black political leaders today seem as accidental as Lou Stokes. Congresswoman Marcia Fudge was a trusted ally of Stephanie Tubbs Jones, who was a natural political personality down to her toes. That personal relationship influenced Fudge's entry into politics, first as mayor of a small community, and then as a process choice to replace Stephanie — by then a five-term successor to Lou Stokes — when she died suddenly in 2008.

Cleveland mayor Frank Jackson likely never saw himself as the city's mayor before he bumped up against the possibility. Again, he was a friend of a political activist and natural leader, Lonnie Burten. His sudden death in office created an opening that Jackson filled, putting him on the road to becoming council president and eventually the longest serving mayor in Cleveland's history.

How people get into office is often an important clue in understanding how they behave once there. One way is not necessarily superior to another. Lou Stokes became a politician by circumstance. Brother Carl became one by nature. They were two of the best public officials Greater Cleveland has ever been blessed to have.

Their successors today, Fudge and Jackson, while fulfilling the constitutional and chartered duties of their respective offices, indirectly inherited responsibility to provide political guidance and leadership for the black

community. Neither has sought that leadership, and neither is temperamentally inclined to that duty, but it comes with the territory of their positions.

It is impossible to imagine either Stokes brother being silent in the wake of 137 bullet massacres, the killing of 12 year old Tamir Rice, an epidemic of custodial deaths at the county jail, and countless other indices of maladministration of justice and duty.

There will never be another pair like the Stokes boys. But we do need to find echoes of their spirits in those who silently represent us in city councils and county council and the Ohio General Assembly.

••••



South Euclid City Council can expect its newest member to be sworn in on July 8, now that Mayor Georgine Welo has interviewed a bevy of new applicants, in addition to those who originally applied to Council. The politically hands-on Welo bypassed a

formal application process after Council was unable to agree on a replacement for Jason Russell, who resigned effective May 31 for personal reasons.

Welo conducted one-on-one interviews with all applicants expressing new or continued interest in the at large council seat: Mary Bastawros, Andrew Fernandez, Beth Grisel, Susan Hardy, Christopher Latham, Mikel Mahoney, Breanna Mays, Curtis Orr, Carol Sisson, Denise Turner, and Justin Tisdale.

Based on the interviews, Welo said in an email that she would submit 2-3 names to the Council to interview. This is not a required step but a practical one, as Welo's appointee will become a colleague of current council members.

Council is expected to hold a special meeting July 1 and go into executive session to interview Welo's finalists. After conferring with council, Welo will announce her decision and swear in her choice at the next regular council meeting on July 8.

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