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LOS ANGELES MOURNS 'EMPEROR OF GREAT NINTH'



"Emperor of the Great Ninth," Gilbert William Lindsay: 1900-1990

Councilman Gilbert Lindsay Is Dead at the Age of 90

By A.S. DOC YOUNG
Sentinel Contributing Writer

When Los Angeles City Councilman Gilbert W. Lindsay first described himself years ago as "the Emperor of the Great Ninth District," some people—fellow politicians among them—snickered.

They thought the claim was imperious, pompous, arrogant, hilarious. But, like the late baseball legend, Satchel Paige, Gil Lindsay was an American original, one of a kind and colorful both in speech and deed, a unique individual.

And, as Dr. Josie Bain, an administrative analyst at UCLA, said shortly after his death, "His uniqueness enabled him to say things and get away with things that others couldn't say."

Like Satch, when Lindsay spoke on his unique style and manner, he captured the attention of all who heard him. When he made political pitches, like Satch, he won impressively, establishing himself as a most unforgettable character in the process.

On issues and in matters large and small, downtown and uptown, he won so often and so skillfully that the snickering stopped, and the cynics realized that what he was, really, was awesome!

Just how awesome was conclusively proven in the hours following his death at 2:11 Friday morning, December 28, in the Queen of Angels/Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center. He died as a result of a long illness which began with a severe stroke in early September that left him paralyzed on his right side and unable to speak and, at the end, was complicated by a heart attack.

It was proven by the warm, sincere, glowing tributes and testimonials paid to him by his peers and countless others who had known him. Not only was he

highly praised for his great political achievements but also for numerous acts of human kindness.

"Gil Lindsay proved that you could do anything you wanted," said John Ferraro, president of the Los Angeles City Council; and Councilman Robert Farrell said: "He had a profound impact on the city. His hands and fingerprints are as much on downtown Los Angeles and the core of the city as anybody's."

"Under Councilman Lindsay's guidance," Mayor Tom Bradley said, "Central City became one of the premiere urban business centers in the country and the world. Downtown Los Angeles contains nationally recognized restaurants, cultural activities, gleaming skyscrapers, and developments that reflect rich cultural diversity."

His leadership of the Great Ninth District has included the development of senior citizens housing, recreation centers, child care centers, and the creation of the Vermont/Slauson Shopping Center."

Bradley also said: "He was a beloved public servant, one who declared on many occasions that he was going to be emperor and councilman for life. He got his wish."

"He's been a long, hard worker," City Councilman Nate Holden said. "He was like a father to me. In fact, he looked like my father. I loved Gil Lindsay, and I still do."

Lindsay, who spent 27 years in the Los Angeles City Council after becoming its first Black member in 1963 at age 63, left behind credits galore that none less than a long, hard worker could have amassed.

The Great Ninth District extends from 81st Street on the south to

See Lindsay on Page B-12

Official Who Insulted Blacks Dealt Out in Japanese Cabinet Shuffle

Following the meeting with During their Sentinel interview

shooting of a 13-year-old boy as he slept on the couch in his grandmother's Pomona home.

Police said that Adrian Ferrusca of Claremont was not a gang member, but the home is known to be frequented by gangs.

Lindsay...

(Continued from Page A-1)

Chinatown on the north. Lindsay liked to say that he was on call for his constituents 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. He demanded the same availability from his deputies, wearing out several of them who could not keep up the pace.

"In his prime, he could wear you out," said Deputy Councilman Robert Gay, who worked for him for 16 years. "He was really a man's man. He walked faster than most men. His grip was stronger. He could drink men under the table. ..."

Hard-working Gilbert W. Lindsay was the chairman of the Council's Public Works Committee, vice-chairman of the Arts, Health and Humanities Committee, and was a member of the Community and Economic Development Committee.

"During his nearly three decades in office," City News Service Writer Cathy Franklin said, "the downtown area exploded into one of the premier business centers in the world."

During his tenure, the Ninth District gained more than 24 million square feet of office, commercial-retail, and service-industry space. In addition, more than 4200 hotel rooms and 400,000 square square feet of convention-exhibit space are now available in the Central City.

Other highlights of Lindsay's administration included the redevelopment of Little Toykyo and Chinatown. He worked to expand the amount of senior citizens housing in the downtown and South Central areas through projects such as the Stovall Foundation, Philips Temple Community Housing, and the Lindsay Recreational Center.

Also located in his district is the Angelus Plaza complex, the largest publicly subsidized senior citizens housing facility in the country with 1094 units.

His work in revitalizing the South Central area included the \$12

considerate, and generous with his actions."

Someone else compared Gil Lindsay to the late Richard J. Daley, legendary mayor of Chicago (his son, Richard M. Daley is now mayor of that city).

But California Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Mike Roos captured the essence of Lindsay's career when he said, "His life was a true Horatio Alger story, an outstanding example of someone rising from humble origins to become a major, positive force in the City of Los Angeles. As the guiding force behind much of the major development planning in downtown Los Angeles, his place in our city's history is secure."

Gil Lindsay was born on a Mississippi cotton plantation on November 29, 1900. When he was a teenager, he left Mississippi and enrolled in a school in Pittsburgh. From there, he moved to Arizona, where he served with the U.S. Army in the 10th Cavalry and the 25th Infantry.

As part of an Army program, Lindsay attended the University of Arizona's School of Business Administration.

After leaving the military, Lindsay moved to Los Angeles and took a job as a janitor for the Department of Water and Power. While working, he continued to take classes in governmental administration and political science at USC and in business administration at UCLA.

C.A. (Bob) Barber first met Gil Lindsay in 1940.

"He was a janitor," Barber, a Los Angeles businessman, said. "His wife was from Greenville, Texas, about 75 miles from my home in Mt. Pleasant. ... The thing I remember most vividly is that Gil Lindsay always was determined to do things, to be the best.

"He was a hellova janitor! That was an important job for Negroes in Los Angeles at that time. He gave the janitor's job the same respect he gave the council position. Whatever Gil was doing was very important him."

Ruth Galanter said: "Mr Lindsay's death marks not only the passing of a great man, but also of an era. Mr. Lindsay saw and overcame all the obstacles in his way. ..."

"He made it!" Robert Farrell said. "He was 63 years old when he was appointed to the City Council,

wife, Mrs. Theresa Lindsay.

Gil Lindsay was quite proud of the fact that the Women's Sunday Morning Breakfast Club gave 24 full scholarships to college students and purchased five Life Memberships in the NAACP. Lindsay was a member of the NAACP's board of directors from 1953-58 and also was a vice-president of that organization.

Lindsay first made national Black political history when he was appointed as a deputy to Supervisor Hahn. After 10 years in that position, Lindsay was appointed in January, 1963, to fill the vacant Ninth District City Council seat, becoming, as Rick Orlov said in the Daily News, "the first Black to sit in one of the 15 high-backed leather chairs around the ornate council horseshoe." Lindsay replaced Edward Roybal, who had been elected to Congress.

Gil Lindsay stood only five feet, three inches tall. But, he felt like a giant of man after he made his way up from being a janitor to being a Los Angeles city councilman, and the first member of his race to do it, too. A few months later, Tom Bradley became the first Black elected member of the Los Angeles City Council. The other day, Bradley said he and Lindsay remained friends for 27 years.

In 1965, Lindsay was elected to the Los Angeles City Council in his own right, and went on to win six re-elections in the ninth district.

"Gil Lindsay was one of the few politicians who never ran for anything else," said his deputy, Bob Gay, who first went to work for him as a volunteer. "He really loved that district and that job."

When Lindsay last ran for re-election at age 89 in 1989, he received 73 percent of the Ninth District vote!

While recalling his appointment to the Los Angeles City Council in 1963, Lindsay once said.

"I helped everybody get elected around here—presidents, governors. I thought I should do something for myself."

"His ability to talk to virtually anybody, from the guys at the shoeshine stand to the corporate executive deeply impressed me," Gay said. "Gil Lindsay had a sensitivity to the average person. He loved young people; he loved senior citizens. He was open. His door was always open. He supported every good cause. He was

in his life," Howard said.

A family friend said: "I believe Gil Lindsay began to decline mentally and physically after Theresa died."

Funeral services for Lindsay will be held at 10 a.m., on Friday, January 4, in the Victory Baptist Church, 4802 South McKinley Avenue, Los Angeles.

Victory Baptist is pastored by Rev. Charles Chapman, who once worked for Lindsay. The funeral is being held there because its auditorium is larger than the one in People's Independent Church of Christ. People's minister, Rev. William Naylor, will officiate at the funeral.

John Ferraro said: "Anyone who knew Gil Lindsay and didn't love him—there had to be something wrong with them."

U.S. Role...

(Continued from page A-1)

to go out to kill and be killed for democracy when we have no democracy here."

During the demonstration, held during the Kwanzaa Celebration, Hassan asserted that African-Americans cannot be fooled or tricked by big talk; that African-Americans must stand up and speak for ourselves.

"This is the second day of Kwanzaa," he said, "Kujichagulia which is translated as self-determination and means to name ourselves, speak for ourselves, and to govern ourselves."

The demonstrators, who ranged in age from four to sixty, carried candles and picket signs that read, "No Iraqi ever called me nigger," "George Bush send your son" and, "The real Gulf crisis is the U.S. gulf between Blacks and Whites." And, although the protectors' ages may have run the gamut, they were all united in taking a stand against a war in the Persian Gulf—a war that could commence Jan. 15 under a resolution approved by the U.N. Security Council.

"I'm taking a stand against the fact that Black men are being sent to fight a war that has nothing to do with us," said Chinganji, an organizer with the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. "I have my son and nephew here trying to show them that they have to take a stand now because if this war doesn't impact them, the next one will. They must know that they have a right to

million vermont/STAUSON Shopping Center and the creation of more than \$14 million in low-interest loans to homeowners for rebuilding projects.

Lindsay also created child care centers such as the Children's Collective, the Betty Boop Child Care Center, and the Delta Sigma Theta Child Care Centers.

The California Medical Hospital dedicated the Gilbert W. Lindsay Child Abuse Center for the councilman's contributions to the Central City community.

As if all that did not make enough demands on his time and talents, Lindsay was an active member of the Democratic State Committee, the American Legion, the YMCA, Los Angeles Area Council, Boy Scouts of America, the Urban League, Town Hall and the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs.

"Personally," said City Councilwoman Ruth Galanter, "I learned a great deal about how this city works just by watching Gil Lindsay."

Congressman Mervyn M. Dymally said: "Councilman Gil Lindsay will go down in history as one of the great politicians of our time. I first met him when I worked for the Kennedy campaign, under the leadership of then-Assemblyman Gus Hawkins, and we remained friends over the last 30 years. He was a practical non-nonsense legislator. In my judgment, history will be kind in recording his accomplishments.

"In his prime," said Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky, "Gil Lindsay was one of the savviest politicians around. He will long be remembered for paving the way for minority representation in the City Council."

Councilman Richard Alatorre said: "We have lost a leading citizen and public servant. Gilbert Lindsay devoted his entire life to working for his constituents and this work gave meaning to his life ... it was his life."

City Attorney James K. Hahn said: "Gilbert Lindsay never let anyone forget that the renaissance of downtown was in his 'Great Ninth' District, and he never took a back seat to anyone. He was loyal to his friends, no matter the cost."

Los Angeles County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, the father of James K. Hahn, said: "During his council career, Lindsay championed the cause of civil rights and projects that would benefit his Great Ninth District. He took care of the little and big things for his constituents. He was thoughtful, kind,

In ages 63 to 90, he exceeded everybody's expectations. When he was appointed to the City Council, some people expressed cynicism. 'What's his background?' they wanted to know. They were shocked when they were told that he used to be a janitor. But, he turned around where he came from and what he had done and made them a badge of pride. ... He wore them as a badge of pride to stimulate and motivate people. Gil was a genius in his own way."

Lindsay, who had come to Los Angeles in 1923 (as one source has reported) or in 1924 (as he told me years ago), worked for the Department of Water and Power for 25 years—in the basement. Even after he became a DWP clerk, he worked in the basement. It was as if a department head was trying to hide him!

Lindsay began his political career in 1934, when he helped Augustus F. Hawkins run for the California State Assembly. (Hawkins recently retired after 28 years as a member of the U.S. Congress).

In 1947, Kenneth Hahn was teaching a class in political science at Pepperdine University, which was then located in South Los Angeles. One of Hahn's students was Herbert Howard, Lindsay's stepson.

One day, after Hahn told his class he was planning to run for the Los Angeles City Council, Howard said: "You should see my dad." Hahn agreed to go to see him. Howard also took Hahn to meet the late Rev. Clayton Russell, a minister often compared to New York City's Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., who was the pastor of the People's Independent Church of Christ at 18th and Paloma Streets.

Lindsay was, or was to become, a member there. (He was a People's Independent member when he died.) Rev. Russell greeted Hahn warmly, saying: "If Herbert is for you, I'm for you; and, if I'm for you, my church is for you."

Kenneth Hahn and Gilbert Lindsay were closely associated in politics and personal lives until Lindsay's death.

"Without his help," Hahn said, "I would not have been elected to the Board of Supervisors in 1952."

Lindsay was the associate manager of Hahn's 1952 campaign.

Kenneth Hahn also received substantial help in his political campaigns from the Women's Sunday Morning Breakfast Club, which was founded by Lindsay's

exceptionally and intensely loyal."

He received loyalty in return from his employees, one of whom, Irene Matsubara, worked 27 years for him.

"I found him to be a very outgoing individual," said Dr. Josie Bain, who for seven or eight years was the program coordinator of the Women's Sunday Morning Breakfast Club. "He liked attention and wore it well. He was very interested in helping almost anyone in need. He would reach far beyond that which would be normally expected.

"He was proud of himself and rightfully so, knowing that he had come from the cotton fields of Mississippi. Such a background and such an achievement made him a very proud individual."

Businessman Celes King III, who came to Los Angeles with his family in 1936, knew Gilbert Lindsay most of his (King's) life.

"Los Angeles and America have lost one of the great community legislators," King said. "He had possibly more impact on more people than any other local politician.

"I can remember as a kid when I was sitting as an altar boy in the People's Independent Church and Gil Lindsay would read the announcements each Sunday. He is the person who took the younger members of the church and gave us a sense of direction.

"He made it clear that we must be accountable and we must be successful. He gave us a type of pride that carried many of us through."

James M. Woods, Sr., is another highly successful, Los Angeles businessman who knew Lindsay well.

"From time to time," Woods said, "we were very close. Once, when he was sick, I wanted to go to see him. Someone told me, 'You can't see him.' I said, 'Let me walk into the room.' Just as I walked in, he raised his head and said, 'Hello, Jim.'

"He put a lot back into the community. He changed the whole downtown area. People stayed on and didn't move out. He gave the people confidence. He was interested in his people. I think he'll be greatly missed."

Gilbert Lindsay's son, Melvin, died last year. Theresa, his wife of 49 years, died in 1984. He is survived by a daughter, Sylvia Thornton, who lives in Chicago, and stepson Herbert.

"Theresa Lindsay was a balance

take a stand."

Ali Talib, who is 19, said that he was demonstrating because he believes that America has no business in Saudi Arabia's fight.

"I'm 19, but I'm not going to fight in this war if called to do so and I'm willing to go to jail because of my decision," Talib said, explaining that he has several reasons for not fighting, the first of which is based on religious beliefs. "I'm Muslim and I don't feel that Black Americans should be over there fighting because they are fighting against themselves in that those are people of color."

Tommy Austin, a 34-year-old member of the Coalition Against Black Exploitation said, "I'm out here because I feel that this is a worthwhile cause. I don't believe that we or anybody of color should be over there.

"I have no love loss for Hussein, he is doing wrong out there, but that is the Muslim world. The west is always interfering in things that they really have no right. There is really no difference in what Hussein is doing and what America has done in the past and continues to do. The U.S. has invaded areas throughout history and annexed them to itself, but all that is glorified in the history text. Both are wrong, but I don't see why this country is over there in the name of justice when we don't even deal with the racism faced in this country."

The group has planned to have more demonstrations and a teach-in on January 12, three days before the U.N. deadline. The teach-in will focus on bringing people together to give concrete answers and look for real solutions for Black people around this issue.

Official ...

Continued From Page A-9

years for toys and books unflatteringly portraying Black characters and for controversial racial remarks made by politicians.

In November, a Japanese city that is bidding for the 1998 Winter Olympics advised schools and libraries to destroy materials featuring the "Little Black Sambo" character—another stereotype that has drawn protests—to improve the city's image.

In August, a citizen's group forced a major publishing house to strike out expressions and drawings exaggerating physical features of Blacks in five popular comic books.