

Leon W. Russell, Chairman
Karen Boykin-Towns, Vice Chair
Jesse Turner, Jr., Treasurer
Yvonne White, Assistant Treasurer
Aubrey C. Hooper, Assistant Secretary

4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215

November 6, 2018

**RE: Complaint of Branch Misconduct
Complainant vs Muskogee Unit 6135 Executive Board**

Dear National Board Officers,

This letter comes to you with grave concern as to the direction our branch is headed. It is well known the inconsistencies and discrepancies that have historically plagued the Muskogee Branch. This letter comes to the above recipients as we move into our next two-year period upon the heels of our recent branch election. I, the complainant, am in good standing and am only interested in the continued integrity and community respect for the NAACP as a whole. This correspondence is being spurred by the recent election controversy that occurred Saturday November 3, 2018 in addition to the numerous indecorums surrounding the recent branch activity. The following is a detailed list of infractions and concerns that I have observed as detrimental factors of progress in regard to the election and general unit operations.

Unit Operations

1. I, the complainant, and other inquisitive members were verbally assaulted by an officer during the October meeting after asking questions such as, "How many voting members do we have?"
2. I, the complainant, also asked who had the list of members and was told that the secretary who had the information was unavailable.
3. It was brought to light when I, the complainant, asked to see the list that he was not allowed to see prior to the election, that a large quantity of members who have been deceased for 30+ years were still listed on the roll sheet. The membership had unquestionably been padded. It was revealed that the Treasurer was instructed to leave the deceased members' names on the roll. Three examples of members listed on the roll are as follows along with their death date:

Amanda Fuhr Watts December 20, 1997 (21 years deceased)

Antoinette Fuhr Harrison May 29, 2009 (9 years deceased)

Jake Simmons Sr. died March 24, 1981 (37 years deceased)

Additionally, there were various duplicate names listed. This membership discrepancy could put the branch in jeopardy per the by laws [pg. 79] which states that if a unit fails to notify the association, and fails to maintain 50 members the executive committee will be cleared and a new board.

4. The misappropriation of funds is a major concern that needs to be addressed. It was discovered that there were large quantities of funds withdrawn by the President on multiple occasions WITHOUT the consent of the treasurer or executive board. In addition to the withdrawals, the receipts that coincide with whatever said money was used for were never produced.

Election Concerns

1. Absence of a Nominating Committee
 - a. Per the NAACP Unit By-laws [pg.61], a nominating committee was supposed to be elected however for this most recent election that did not occur and no explanation was provided. If in fact there supposedly was a nominating committee formed the members were not made public to the remaining members of the unit in good standing.
 - b. One of the duties of the nominating committee as stated in the by-laws [pg.62] was to submit a written report to the members as a whole during the October general membership meeting of the branch. No report was ever submitted or orated.
2. Election Supervisory Committee Conflict of Interest
 - a. Per the NAACP Unit By-laws [pg.63], the election supervisory committee should consist of no candidate however the established committee consisted of one member that was a candidate for office despite running unopposed. This self-appointed member of the committee vehemently voiced her opinions on many occasions and verbally assaulted numerous members on election day.
3. Lack of Proper Member Communication
 - a. There should have been numerous notifications of the impending election. However, the information that was "disseminated" was insufficient. The by-laws clearly state that there should have printed notifications detailing the specifics of the upcoming election prior to the date of the election.
 - b. Per the NAACP Unit By-laws [pg.64], the branch should have sent notice by mail to each member in good standing postmarked at least ten (10) days prior to the September meeting, listing the time, place, date and purpose of the September and October meetings and time, place and date of the November election. No notices were sent by mail AT ALL.
 - i. When I, the complainant, asked about the mailed notice he was met with the response "We called".
 - ii. There was a "Press Release" posted to the Branch's Facebook page on October 29, 2018 announcing the upcoming election but it is unsure as to how many members saw this notice because it is a public page. The

letterhead of the notice was outdated and listed Executive members that no longer hold a position within the organization.

- iii. Per the by-laws, the branch was also supposed to place the announcement of such meetings and election in one or more local newspaper of general circulation at least ten (10) days before the date of the November election. Supposedly there was an ad place in the Muskogee Phoenix but there are known ads that were run during the months of September October or November. It is uncertain that it met the 10-day buffer.
- iv. The lack of communication really affected the number of voters that showed up because many had no idea that it was occurring leaving only 15 total votes to be counted.

4. Election Meeting (Date of Election)

- a. The election day process was quite controversial for many reasons.
 - i. The names of the various candidates for the office were not clearly announced or posted in a place visible to all present at the election meeting.
 - ii. Two members of the Executive Committee, the Sergeant at Arms and Treasurer, both counted ballots despite the by-laws stating [pg. 64] that officers shall not serve as teller.
 - iii. The incumbent President Rev. Rodger Cutler continuously entered the polling area during the election period.
- b. Polling Areas
 - i. The portion of the By-laws pertaining to the polling booth states [pg.64] that the minimum number of hours for polling shall be four (4) hours.
 - 1. In the previously stated October 29th Press Release, the polling hours were listed as being 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. (2 hours) via Facebook. It should be noted that the Facebook post is not mentioned in the Association's 2016 Constitutional By-laws as a recognized means of notification.
 - 2. On the day of the election there was an additional post made at 11:28 a.m., after polling had begun, via the Branch Facebook page stating polls would close at 2:00 p.m. This extended the hours to 3 hours but still not enough to meet the minimum time frame of 4 hours. Apparently, this decision was made solely by the incumbent presidential candidate and not by the election committee.

I, the complainant, participated in one of the first civil rights demonstrations in the State of Oklahoma and in the United States therefore I have a special sentiment towards the progress of this branch and the community as a whole. I am a Life Member of the NAACP and am thoroughly concerned about the actions of this specific branch and their impact, or lack thereof, within the local community. However, there is a potential explosion of membership in and surrounding our branch. The reach of this particular branch could be exponential because of its proximity to numerous small towns and educational institutions within Muskogee County. There are also, within our communities, a large group of professional young adults that have yet to be invited as perspective members of our local branch. There is a notable amount of Pan-Hellenic young professionals who would be ideal candidates for membership in order to support some of the already established programs and initiatives of the organization. Capitalizing on these groups of potential members would likely triple the membership.

I also happened to be the other presidential candidate and was not allowed to view the current membership roll until after election. The roster was withheld and full access was never given to me therefore the 25 additional member signatures normally required to go along with this formal complaint are virtually unattainable. However, there are a few members willing to sign this complaint and willing to testify during any inquiries and investigations in regard to this grievance. As this letter is reaching your hand, I feel it is my duty to inform you that there are news reporters and a number of inquisitive community members sniffing around for controversy within the Muskogee NAACP's financial standing. It is my earnest desire to see a thriving and impactful branch in Muskogee and in order to do that we need your guidance.

I am asking that based upon the language in the NAACP unit by laws and constitution [pg.79; article 10. 1&2] [pg. 80; Article 10. 4, 5& 6] a full audit and investigation be initiated immediately for the last 3 years and that the recent election held on November 3, 2018 be vacated until the investigation and ruling is complete.

Respectfully,

Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Craig

Members in Agreement