



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF REV. DR. EVERETT PARKER

I just got word that a civil rights giant, Rev. Dr. Everett Parker, passed away this morning. Considered by many a founder of the “Media Justice Movement,” he established the United Church of Christ Office of Communication, “a media reform and accountability ministry with a civil rights agenda.” He was committed to improving the coverage and employment of women and people of color in broadcasting and other media before it was “cool.

In 1964, along with the NAACP and at the urging of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Parker petitioned the FCC to deny the license renewal of WLBT, a local broadcast station in Jackson, Mississippi with ties to the White Citizens Council. The station openly used its platform to oppose the integration of the local universities. While the FCC denied their petition, the Supreme Court – in 1969 – ruled that the broadcast industry was required to serve the public interest and the station was ultimately stripped of its license. This case was foundational in determining that there is a recognized connection between the use of publicly-owned airwaves by private companies and a duty to serve the public.

I met this incredible man around the time of his 97th birthday. He was engaged, supportive and sage (forecasting the day when there would be a female chair of the FCC). I never forgot those words and sent him a note thanking him for voicing that sentiment during my term as Acting Chair.

As an FCC Commissioner completing her sixth year of federal service, I will never turn my back on the important legacy and work of Everett Parker. Too many take for granted the fruits of his labor. I never will.

Well done. Rest in Peace.

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