

FIGHT OVER VALLEJO NAACP PRESIDENCY THREATENS TO TEAR ORG APART

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The Vallejo branch of the NAACP was torn apart this year by the sudden death of its longtime president, Jimmie Jackson, in January. Now, a conflict has arisen over who should take his place. Letters from the organization’s state conference dated March 8 — and lawyers from its national office dated March 15 — demanded that former Vallejo City Council member Hakeem Brown abandon his claims to the position. The post Fight Over Vallejo NAACP Presidency Threatens to Tear Org Apart first appeared on Post News Group.

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Mark Hedin | California Black Media

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Letters from the organization’s state conference dated March 8 — and lawyers from its national office dated March 15 — demanded that former Vallejo City Council member Hakeem Brown abandon his claims to the position.

As Brown tells it, he first worked with Jackson in 2017 to overcome prosecution related to being “the only Black cannabis cultivator in Napa County.” He joined the NAACP branch Jackson had led since 2008 and as the branch’s elections approached late last year, agreed to work as Jackson’s de facto lieutenant.

As Jackson’s health grew worse in January, he named Brown acting president and died unexpectedly a few days later.

Brown and his supporters maintain that Jackson’s endorsement of Brown as his successor was within his rights as president and that Brown’s position was understood and accepted at the branch’s

initial meetings this year.

But those letters from the national and state NAACP offices, stated that according to organization bylaws, because Urban Strategies Council site coordinator Patricia Hunter was "duly and properly elected to the position of First Vice President," she is first in line to take the reins "in the event of the resignation, removal or death" of the incumbent.

When Jackson was re-elected last year, Hunter, Brown and Mark Lampkin won vice-presidential seats.

There is no dispute that Hunter got the most votes of the four candidates and that Brown and Lampkin tied for second, but Brown and his supporters argue that because there was no official ranking of the vice-presidential seats, Jackson was free to later choose any of the three sitting VPs to act in his stead.

"Because there was no numerical ranking on the ballot for the election," it was within Jackson's authority to name Brown to fill in for him, Brown, Lampkin and 10 other members of the branch's Executive Committee asserted in a March 9 "challenge letter" responding to the state conference's notice.

Citing NAACP bylaws Article 7, section 2, they wrote: "The duties of the Vice President shall be: a) to perform all the duties of the President in his/her absence or disability. In case of more than one Vice President, the Vice Presidents shall be designated as first, second, third and so forth and shall perform their duties according to their numerical rank."

"Because there was no such designation, we reject the notion that any one person was the 1st Vice President, until such a time as Pat Hunter was elevated by Jimmie Jackson at the same time Hakeem Brown was elevated to the presidency," the letter reads. "When our election was held, members voted for the Vice-President, not 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Vice-President. Mr. Jackson was of sound mind when he designated Hakeem Brown President."

Included with that letter are minutes from the branch's Jan. 11 Executive Committee meeting in which the leadership matter was discussed.

The challenge letter also says that there were no objections to the appointment at the Feb. 8 branch meeting Brown led. Brown told California Black Media (CBM) that he stepped out of that meeting briefly to allow Hunter to oversee a vote on whether to approve his appointment, and that the entire Executive Committee, including Hunter, unanimously ratified him, with only Secretary Lynda Daniels abstaining.

Daniels, who is charged with producing the minutes of branch meetings, has not provided them for that Feb. 8 meeting.

NAACP officers seem to see it differently.

Rick Callender, California/Hawaii NAACP State Conference President, discussing the election in an email addressed to Lampkin, wrote on March 31: "You lost as you were not the top vote getter. You were not duly elected and indeed lost the election."

The issue under discussion at that time was regaining access to the branch's [Facebook account](#), stemming from Hunter, who on March 7 lost access to administration privileges to the social media page.

On that page, on March 16, Lampkin, Assistant Secretary Tausha Johnson and Tamra Armstrong each posted video statements from 2 to 5 minutes long alleging a "coup" being staged against Brown by Hunter, Daniels and Hazel Wilson, another Executive Committee member.

Hunter has declined repeated requests from California Black Media to comment on the situation or her work as branch president, initially referring this reporter to Captain David Smith, NAACP California Hawaii Area Director, who deferred to Callender, who refused to comment on the record, saying he had no personal familiarity with any of the players in the drama and is only concerned with following NAACP rules and bylaws.

For questions particular to the branch, he suggested contacting Hunter, who has yet to respond to subsequent phone calls or emails.

Last week, CBM also emailed and called NAACP lawyer Janette Wallace, who signed the March 15 "cease and desist" letter sent to Brown from the organization's national headquarters.

Neither Wallace nor the other NAACP members who had been cc'd in an emailed version of the letter and were similarly contacted responded to those requests.

At the Dec. 14 branch meeting, Brown called for congratulating Hunter for receiving an award at the 113th NAACP convention held in Boston for 2022 College Division and Youth Advisor.

He attributes the "coup attempt" to people simply being resistant to change, citing an incident when Hunter asked him in December to relax his posture when dealing with Vallejo officials. There are also suggestions that his interest in the branch's finances may have spurred resistance to his leadership efforts.

Photo screenshot submitted by a member of the local Vallejo NAACP branch Mark Lampkin
(The national NAACP office has not confirmed this ballot)

There are no comments yet.