

## Senator West: A&M's quick choice raises questions about hiring process

Dallas, TX.- In the wake of the Texas A&M's hire of former Aggie assistant and NFL head coach Mike Sherman, a few questions come to mind.

Although it was highly likely that changes would be made, given the recent controversy surrounding former Texas A&M head coach Dennis Franchione, the speed at which new Aggie head football coach Mike Sherman was hired raises a few questions as to the flagship university's hiring process.

While Texas A&M athletic director Bill Byrne went on record as recently as Saturday saying a nationwide search for a new coach would take place, one has to think that the wheels were already in motion. And while time may prove Mike Sherman to be a great choice, the question is raised as to whether an extensive search was ever conducted.

Within the proud tradition of Aggie football, the past few decades have witnessed a number of marvelous athletes who have worn the maroon and white, many of them African-American. But this search was done in such total secrecy that one is only left to wonder, a) how many candidates were actually interviewed for the job?, (b) if the names of any qualified minority coaching candidates were part of the process? And c), whether minority candidates were given serious consideration- including being interviewed.

The days should be numbered that allow glass-ceiling hiring processes to take place. According to the Black Coaches Association (BCA), of 119 major college football programs, when the 2007 season opened, only six had



State Senator Royce West

African-American head coaches.

Of 23 vacancies this season, just two were filled by minority candidates. Then there's the argument that head coaches are normally picked from the ranks of coordinators. Another problem may exist here. Of 242 coordinator positions at top football schools, the BCA says African Americans number but 31.

The BCA also lists at least 33 "prominent minority" assistants they'd promote as head coaching candidates. Did A&M speak with any of them?

In 2002, the National Football League (NFL) implemented the "Rooney Rule" that requires all teams to interview at least one minority candidate for head coaching vacancies. In 2007, the world saw two African American head coaches lead teams onto the field for the Super Bowl.

While the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) laments that it lacks the cohesive structure to implement such policy, conversations along those lines have taken place as recently as last month. And according to Big 12 officials - of which Texas A&M is a member school - neither is there a policy in place that requires minority candidates to be included in coaching searches.

The National Basketball Association likely boasts the best record of all and Major League Baseball is not far behind when it comes to minority coaching hires. But we still see big time college football programs give chance after chance to a closed fraternity of sideline leaders. America and Texas have progressed to the point where minority coaches should have the same opportunity to be yelled at from living room sofas and stadium bleachers as anyone else.

For more information, please call Kelvin Bass at 214-467-0123-Office of Senator Royce West.

The Rusk Christmas Parade will be held Tuesday, December 4, 2007. The lighting ceremony is at 5:15 PM. with the parade to begin at 6:00PM. The Theme "Gifts For Christmas."

## Watch for Your 2007 Economic Census Form

By Bob Goldsberry-  
Rusk Chamber Director

In December, more than 4 million American businesses will receive 2007 Economic Census forms from the U.S. Census Bureau. The economic census is the nation's most comprehensive measure of business and industry, and is taken every five years. Ben Bernanke has called the economic census "indispensable to understanding America's economy." Business response is so important that it is required by law.

Chances are some of our local businesses could be one of the estimated 330,000 businesses in Texas that will receive a 2007 Economic Census form from the U.S. Census Bureau this December.

The forms ask for basic information like your location, employment, payroll, and sales by type of product or service. Businesses that receive a form are required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code) to respond by February 12, 2008.

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