



The group Bloco AfroBrazil performs for the masses on Columbus Avenue as part of the 7th Annual BeanTown Jazz Festival, which drew more than 70,000 music lovers and onlookers to a number of jazz hotspots across the city over its three-day run last weekend. For more festival coverage, please turn to pg. 19. (Phil Farnsworth photo)

## Johnson calls on community to help reform Boston schools

Talia Whyte

New Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Dr. Carol Johnson said that it is up to students, parents, educators and the community at large to share responsibility for reforming education during a forum at Freedom House in Roxbury on Saturday.

Johnson's remarks came one day after the release of a new Boston school system report revealing that nearly half of Boston students don't graduate from the city's public high schools in four years.

Serving notice that she will not be the "lady sheriff" doing all the

work to improve the present system, Johnson said, "The city has to come together. It is our collective energy and work together that will help our students be successful."

Over the next two months, Johnson will be addressing similar community meetings all over Boston about the report's findings and possible strategies for improving the city's climbing dropout rate.

Saturday's forum, entitled "Students and Parents United to Reform Education: Taking Back Our Education," was hosted by Project Listen, a Freedom House program focusing on education reform issues.

Parents and students participated in workshops on negative media representations of hip-hop culture and the impact of school violence on academic achievement with the superintendent.

But much of the participants' attention focused on the information in the BPS report, conducted over a 10-month period, which aimed to determine the most likely reasons why students drop out and to compile data on those who have already dropped out. School officials hope to use the results to create strategies for rectifying the problem. Right now,

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## Turner walks through prelim, looks to Nov.

Yawu Miller

Faced with a choice between a well-connected political newcomer, a perennial candidate and a three-term incumbent, voters in District 7 last week chose the incumbent — City Councilor Chuck Turner — by a three-to-one margin.

Turner topped the preliminary ticket with 75 percent of the vote.

Carlos Henriquez, legislative aide to City Councilor Michael Flaherty, came in a distant second with 15 percent, and Althea Garrison garnered just 7 percent of the vote.

"I'm happy that I was able to keep the support of three out of every four voters," Turner said. "I think it's a marvelous example of being able to turn out the vote in an election which had no coverage in the major media."

While Henriquez garnered just 317 of the 1,949 ballots cast in the preliminary vote, he said he still has his sights set on victory in the Nov. 6 final election.

"It means we have a lot of work to do," he said of Turner's victory in the preliminary. "The challenge of going against a three-term incumbent is that you have to let people know that there's a difference between you and the incumbent."

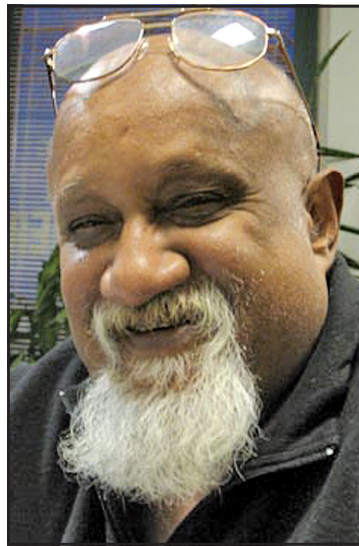
The job of differentiating himself from Turner shouldn't be too difficult.

For starters, Henriquez is several decades younger than Turner and has a full head of hair. Turner's red-and-white campaign signs feature the slogan, "Bold, bald and bright."

In his three terms on the council, Turner has gained a reputation for principled stands in support of issues opposed by the council's white majority, ranging from rent control to increasing funding for youth jobs.

The son of Boston Housing Authority Administrator and CEO Sandra Henriquez and community activist Julio Henriquez, Carlos says he has had to counter rumors that he was asked to run by Flaherty, who has frequently clashed with Turner on the council.

He also cites Team Unity, the caucus formed by Turner and the three other councilors of



Chuck Turner had plenty to smile about after his victory in last week's District 7 preliminary election. (Yawu Miller photo)

color on the 13-member body, as an impediment to his candidacy.

"It was interesting to see some of [Sam] Yoon's volunteers manning the polls for Turner," Henriquez said.

Turner's supporters say it's Turner's popularity in District 7 that is the greatest impediment to challengers.

"If there's one word to describe Chuck Turner, it's 'sincere,'" said political activist Louis Elisa. "He's an honest, sincere person. You don't find that often in a politician."

Elisa, who worked a phone bank **Turner**, continued to page 26

## Now Harvard's gatekeeper, Evans recalls Arkansas roots

Brian Wright O'Connor

When David L. Evans last visited his hometown along a slack water loop of the Mississippi River, his mother's house was gone, but the sewer still ran down the middle of the street.

In Helena, Ark., a tough river-port notorious for juke joints, billiard halls and all-night blues, even a kid from the worst corner of the worst neighborhood received enough guidance to raise his eyes beyond an unpaved lane of a Mississippi Delta town and dream of another life.

Now the senior admissions officer at Harvard College, Evans wears bespoke suits and bowties, speaks in clipped consonants and sonorous vowels. Nearly 40 classes of Har-

vard students have graduated since he first began recruiting and reviewing applicants.

But any conversation with Evans soon makes clear there's still more Helena than Harvard in his soul — the memories of family that stuck together through death and hardship, teachers who took interest in a bright, bookish child, and the church-folk who looked after you, whether you liked it or not.

"Those days are gone," says Evans with no trace of sentimentality. "Parents have to be very, very vigilant, very involved in every aspect of the education of their children if they expect them to be successful."

Evans, the fourth of seven children of sharecropper parents, was 10 when his father died. His mother

abandoned tenant farming to become a maid and "literally worked herself to death," says Evans. She died of a cerebral hemorrhage in her employer's kitchen. His older sister moved home from college to care for him and the younger children.

Intrigued by Sputnik and encouraged by teachers and church ladies alike, he studied engineering at Tennessee State University, earned a graduate degree from



Due in part to the efforts of admissions officer David L. Evans — shown here in his trademark suit and bowtie — Harvard has seen 15 times more African Americans pursue undergraduate education in the past four decades than it had in the prior 334 years. (Brian Wright O'Connor photo)

Princeton in 1966, and became an aerospace scientist, working in quality control on the Apollo missions

— a long way from the cotton rows of Phillips County.

While working in labs from California to Long Island, he volunteered thousands of hours recruiting and preparing poor black students for admission to some of the nation's top colleges and universities. That experience led to his appointment to Harvard's admissions office in 1970.

These days, traveling around the country, working to boost the ranks of the "Talented Tenth" proportion of African Americans at Harvard, Evans sees fewer teachers and counselors in poorer communities acting as both educator and parent, smaller circles of extended kin stepping in to rescue the children of broken homes and broken hearts.

"What you see are 2 to 3 percent of the black community doing very well while the rest are in trouble. What you see is a generation that believes the struggles are behind us. Well, things haven't changed as

**Evans**, continued to page 8

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