

Demo of Palm Tavern is another slap in the face

To the Editor:

I am not surprised at all by the front page story in the Lakefront Outlook which outlined a violation of the law and the demolition of Gerri's Palm Tavern by Mr. Parr, a politically astute and well-connected businessman in the Bronzeville community. This kind of behavior is a reality in Chicago and another slap in the face to the people.

After all, it is business as usual in Tillmanville, not Bronzeville.

Thank you Lakefront Outlook newspaper. You are our voice. Thank God you represent the people, not politicians. Thank you for exercising the freedom of the press despite the political terrain in the ward. Keep doing what you are doing.

Indeed, the political machine in Chicago shall not operate as if it has no concern for the rights and legacy of the people. Implied in the words of the writers at the Lakefront Outlook is: Get involved or stop complaining!

I'm particularly concerned about how community-based organizations, landmark preservationists, historians, the families of musical legends and others will respond to the importance of establishing a real voice for the people in our own community. I'm outraged because over the past five years I've witnessed many of my neighbors who do nothing but stand by while capitalism overrides democracy in the 3rd Ward.

Absolutely everyone in Bronzeville and Chicago for that matter should contact John Knight, our buildings commissioner, and declare outrage with how the system does not work.

How is it that some people can manipulate the system for their own personal gain at the expense of "us." To demolish Gerri's Palm Tavern without respect for the law is not only a slap in the face to the area's history, but to Mayor Daley and his new commissioner. Knight and the law must penalize

downright irresponsible.

I am ashamed that I did nothing to get involved with Gerri's Palm when my wife and I came into the community over five years ago. Now I know that while history was being demolished, so were the dreams and aspirations of our children who know absolutely nothing about real music today, and the importance of the art of the heart. I should have done more. Thank you Lakefront Outlook for waking me up.

History must be preserved. People must fight for it for all the right reasons. Several years ago, the legendary Checkerboard Blues Club was sent off to Hyde Park while Bernard Loyd stood alone to challenge the system. The Regal Room is hardly a memory anymore, to newcomers in Bronzeville, but somehow its value has been lost to the likes of the Harold Washington Cultural Center, now turned into the Tillman Family Profit Center, which marginalizes Chicago's history. And no one utters a word about the site which once stood as The Regal Room. That makes me sad because people like Tim Black, our neighborhood historian, knows the price we pay when we lose our past.

Earlier this year, the Ray Kroc Recreation Center was proposed and supported by John Blair of the Bronzeville Chamber of Commerce. It was to be built on the historic landsite at Robert Taylor on State Street. But it too was rejected and ushered away by the 3rd Ward political machine never to be considered again. It now belongs to another historic community, the Pullman area, and I'm certain that they will cherish the value of history forever.

Let your voice be known. Indeed I will.

Mell Monroe

3rd Ward aldermanic candidate



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