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THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION TURNS 30

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In 1964, the year that the Civil Rights Act was passed, I graduated from college. On July 31, 1980, I was a member of The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission when it celebrated its Fifteenth Anniversary. On May 20, 1995, the Commission turns thirty. We again celebrate its purpose and mission.

I had the honor of serving on the Commission under two Presidents, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. President Carter appointed me to the Commission in 1978 (four-year unexpired term of Commissioner Lewis). After the 1980 election, President Reagan appointed me as the Acting Chairman, a post that I held for exactly one year. I resigned from the post when it became clear that my views on equal employment opportunity, as I understood the mandate of the Civil Rights Law of 1964, were different than that of the President. I served on the Commission from 1978-1982.

As the Nation celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of the Commission, it must not forget the legions of citizens who had the courage and tenacity to stand up and to fight against conduct that marginalized persons identified as protected groups in America. I am proud of the opportunity I was given to play a role in providing leadership in the ongoing struggle to help groups, who, historically, have been discriminated against, and to be a change agent in ending illegal acts of discrimination through all available legal remedies.

I believed then as I do now that America would be worse off without the Commission. I also believe that America will ultimately regret any action by the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress to further weaken it because there are present signs that discrimination against protected groups is on the rise.

The backlog at EEOC is the best evidence that discrimination is alive and well, and continues to breed. Some might divert our attention from the existence of discrimination by claiming that the real problem is too much government. However, we all know that government is not the problem when it comes to civil rights; rather government is very much a part of the solution to rid our Nation of the blight of old and new forms of discrimination unwilling to die.

There are many activities and accomplishment that I could reflect upon during my term as a Commissioner and as Acting Chairman none of which could have been achieved without a talented, dedicated and underrated staff at the Commission. The following

items are among those of I am most proud:

- Fought (unsuccessfully) to have EEOC reject a proposal to end the traditional exemption of apprenticeship programs from charges under the Age Discrimination Act;
- Settled protracted Sears litigation;
- First Republican in Reagan Administration to testify before Congress supporting affirmative action policies;
- First Republican in Reagan Administration to testify before Congress on sexual harassment in the work place and in defense of the Commission's Sexual Harassment Guidelines;
- Filed a record number (89) lawsuits under the Age Discrimination Act during Fiscal Year 1981;
- Called for "industrial oversight" of the Federal Communications Commission regarding race and sex discrimination in the telecommunications industry;
- Fought against budget cutback of Office of Management and Budget that would have reduced EEOC operating budget by \$17 million causing the agency to have to close several district offices and furlough hundreds of its personnel. With the competent assistance of the staff, the reduction in budget was reversed and the \$17 million restored;
- Fought against efforts to alter the Uniform Selection Guidelines;
- Only Chairman in history of EEOC to run the Commission without a quorum of commissioners (two months.) Plenary authority was voted to the Chairman by a departing third commissioner. This crisis was due to slowness of administration to fill two vacancies on the Commission. With the cooperation of a competent and dedicated staff no law suits were misfiled or time-barred.

May 20, 1995