

NAACP Blasts Radio Host

Written by Robert ID438

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A radio talk show host who called Condoleezza Rice an "Aunt Jemima" issued an apology Friday, but not to Rice. "It is with a heavy heart that I apologize this morning to Aunt Jemima," John "Sly" Sylvester, who is white, said on WTDY-AM in Madison. "She wasn't a self-serving hack politician who got up in front of Congress and lied. Aunt Jemima didn't kowtow to Don Rumsfeld or Dick Cheney."

Sylvester made his comments in conjunction with a giveaway of Aunt Jemima pancake mix and syrup to listeners.

Sylvester said he called Rice "Aunt Jemima" on Wednesday's show to describe her and other black officials as having only a subservient role in the Bush administration. He also referred to Secretary of State Colin Powell as an "Uncle Tom" -- a contemptuous term for black people whose behavior toward whites is regarded as fawning or servile.

NAACP president Kweisi Mfume said people who make such remarks "are just as bad as those who hide under sheets and burn crosses." Mfume said Rice is "an example of how far hard work, education and determination can take one to new heights."

Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz called Sylvester's remarks "racially insensitive," while Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold said he joined all Wisconsin residents in rejecting the statements.

Tom Walker, general manager for Mid-West Family Broadcast Group, which owns the station, said he doesn't agree with Sylvester's statements but defended his right to free speech.

"He has the right to do it and say it," Walker said after Friday morning's broadcast. "As long as he isn't hateful and as long as he isn't racist, I'm fine with it."

Sylvester told listeners he would resign if his employer lost advertisers or was hurt by the uproar over his comments.

He said Aunt Jemima was really a "strong, independent black woman" named Nancy Green. Born a slave in Kentucky, Green was hired in the 1890s to advertise the pancake mix.

"Aunt Jemima never lied about yellow cake uranium, she just makes a damn good pancake," Sylvester said.

The incident came after Mark Belling of WISN Radio in Milwaukee had his talk show taken off the air all of last week after using the word "wetback" to refer to undocumented Mexican immigrants. That sparked protests from the Hispanic community; as reported by the [Associate](#)

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