

CNN Analyst Roland Martin Urges Voting at Tennessee State

Contributed by Cara Anthony -- Black College Wire
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"They will stand in line for a concert ticket but won't vote."

Exactly seven days before the presidential election, popular CNN political commentator Roland S. Martin made a stop at Tennessee State University to discuss this year's historical campaigns, and specifically, to encourage students to cast their votes.

Martin addressed hundreds of students on Oct. 28 in the Robert N. Murrell Forum during the Student Development and Symposium Presentation Series, hosted by the Office of Student Affairs. Although Martin may be best known for his contributions to CNN, he is also a nationally syndicated columnist, a commentator for TV One Cable Network. He recently left WVON-AM 1690 in Chicago to become senior news analyst for Tom Joyner's nationally syndicated morning show.

"I believe that it was absolutely proper for him to come at this time," said Michael A. Freeman, the vice president of Student Affairs. "He gave us some real insight."

During his speech, Martin emphasized the importance of early voting, whether it's to support Barack Obama or John McCain's presidential campaign.

"They will stand in line for a concert ticket but won't vote," Martin said, referring to some young voters.

He said that it doesn't make sense that Obama supporters would wear an Obama T-shirt and not go out to the polls.

"He broke politics down in a way I could understand," said Marrio Hunter, a junior speech communications major from Nashville. "It was interesting. Maybe he helped other people understand, too."

Delores Drake, a junior speech communications major from Nashville, agreed with Martin's views on supporting the presidential candidate that is elected.

"Minorities can't just sit and wait on a hand out," Drake said while adding that the black community should come together to discuss political matters.

Understanding Barack's campaign is something that Roland has been committed to since the early 2000s.

Before he debated politics, he had a humble beginning as a journalist.

Although Martin received much of his amateur journalism at Jack Yates High School of Communication, he credits his father for sparking his interest in the field.

When Martin was younger, he said he and his dad watched several newscasts throughout the day.

"I was always in an inquisitive environment," Martin said.

Martin's professional career in journalism began in the newspaper industry. He is the former executive editor and general manager of the Chicago Defender, the nation's largest African American daily newspaper.

He also served as the owner and publisher of Dallas-Fort Worth Heritage, a Christian monthly newspaper.

In 1991 Martin graduated from Texas A&M University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in journalism.

Currently, Martin is studying to receive a master's degree in Christian Communications at Louisiana Baptist University.

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