

Seale delivers emotional speech at Aquinas

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Young, he is no longer.

Still angry? You'd better believe it. Bobby Seale, one of the most famous angry young men of the 1960s, put his well-known intensity on display for the Aquinas Institute student body last Tuesday, Feb. 11.

Arms waving and his gravelly voice often roaring, the 55-year-old Seale displayed the energy of a man half his age while speaking in rapid bursts from the Aquinas stage.

Seale appeared at Aquinas as part of the Dewey Avenue high school's commemoration of Black History Month. He spoke extensively of his involvement with the Black Panther Party, a black political revolutionary group which he co-founded in 1966 in Oakland, Calif.

"The struggle of the 1960s, all the way back from slavery, is a struggle of resistance. The power structure in this country has never liked resistance," Seale said. "I don't see myself as any different than the people of Germany who fought Hitler, or the people in this country who opposed King George III."



Steve Spencer listens to Seale's response during the discussion period after the activist's speech.

Our Lady of Mercy to host performance of Lewis Carroll play

ROCHESTER — Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* will be presented to public and Catholic grammar school students on Friday, Feb. 28, at Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road.

Performed by the Mercy Parents' Association Children's Theatre, the play will be presented at 9:30 a.m., noon and 7 p.m.

Tickets may be ordered in advance or purchased at the door for \$2.50. Call 716/383-1594 or 716/288-7120 for information.

Youth group in Geneva to host dinner on Feb. 29

GENEVA — The youth group at St. Stephen's Church, 48 Pulteney St., is sponsoring a dinner theater at the American Legion Hall on Lochland Road. The event is set for Saturday, Feb. 29, from 6 p.m. to midnight.

In addition to the show, a spaghetti and meatball dinner will be served. The dinner will be followed by DJ music and dancing at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased at St. Stephen's after Sunday Masses or from any youth group member.



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Bobby Seale, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, spoke to students at Aquinas Institute Feb. 11. The program was part of the school's commemoration of Black History Month.

Because Black Panther members were famous for carrying guns, Seale was asked by one student if he encourages firearm use among U.S. citizens.

Seale replied that the guns he carried were only used as a means of self-defense against potential police brutality.

The black activist gained his greatest notoriety when, in 1968, he was one of the "Chicago 7" who were charged with conspiring to riot at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

All seven activists were eventually acquitted, and Seale pointed out to the Aquinas students that "I've won every political case I've ever been charged in."

Mixed in among his battles with authority were several public programs Seale was responsible for starting, including the Youth Job Program, Breakfast for School Children, Senior Citizens Free Busing and Preventive Medical Care. He also implored blacks to utilize their voting power so that more of them would be elected to public office.

Although he resigned as chairman of the Black Panthers in 1974, Seale's zest

for activism hasn't slowed. He frequently lectures, has written several books, and continues to vocally and financially support a variety of social causes.

Kimberly Branch of Rochester, a black senior at AQ, helped organize the event and had lunch with Seale prior to the assembly.

"I don't see myself as any different than the people of Germany who fought Hitler, or the people in this country who opposed King George III."

—Bobby Seale

"To have the courage to go on like he has — he gave me a feeling I can't describe," said Branch.

According to figures provided by William Ouweleen, director of development at Aquinas, about five percent of the 896 students at Aquinas is black.

Seale encouraged the audience to

examine black history more closely. "African American history is not just for blacks," he said.

As he departed the stage, Seale received a healthy round of applause. He told the *Catholic Courier* afterward that his emotionally charged style seems to be largely accepted by white audiences.

"I find they're receptive to it once they know what my message is," Seale said.

Ouweleen spoke of the benefits of bringing in a controversial speaker such as Seale, saying, "Our role as an educational institution was to provide some forum for discussion ... There are a few people who disagreed, thinking this was an endorsement by the school of Bobby Seale's views. But his message is now more of a pro-active, positive theme, where he's trying to activate social relations with people of all origins."

Ouweleen said that Seale's appearance was met with disapproval by one faculty member and a small handful of alumni.

Father Harold B. Gardner, CSB, principal at Aquinas, declined to comment on Seale's visit.

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