

Pardon brings Glendening African-Americans' thanks

By JESSICA R. TOWHEY
Staff Writer

Standing in the pulpit before a church full of friends and political supporters, Gov. Parris N. Glendening graciously accepted the thanks of the Annapolis African-American community for pardoning a man hanged 82 years ago.

At Friday's event at Asbury United Methodist Church, more than 150 people applauded the governor's May 31 decision to clear the name of John Snowden, an African-American ice-wagon worker executed for killing a pregnant, white Annapolis woman.

"The reality is there are a lot of things we do not know about what happened," Mr. Glendening said. "There can be little doubt that the hanging of John Snowden was a miscarriage of justice. And the search for justice has no statute of limitations."

Mr. Glendening pledged to end racial profiling and bolster edu-



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Hazel G. Snowden of Landover thanks Gov. Parris N. Glendening Friday at Asbury United Methodist Church for pardoning her uncle.

cation. He also committed to continue appointing minorities to state judgeships.

Among his appointees is chief Circuit Judge Clayton Greene Jr., the county's first African-American Circuit Court judge, who attended Friday's event.

Mr. Glendening also hailed County Executive Janet S. Owens for appointing Carl O. Snowden, who was instrumental in securing the pardon.

"Ten years is long time for some and a blink of an eye for others," said Mr. Snowden, special assistant to County Executive Janet S. Owens and no relation to John Snowden, referring to the decade it has taken to secure the pardon. "Gov. (William Donald) Schaefer agreed for the Parole Committee to look into this and yet eight years later nothing happened."

Mr. Snowden stalked about

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THANKS

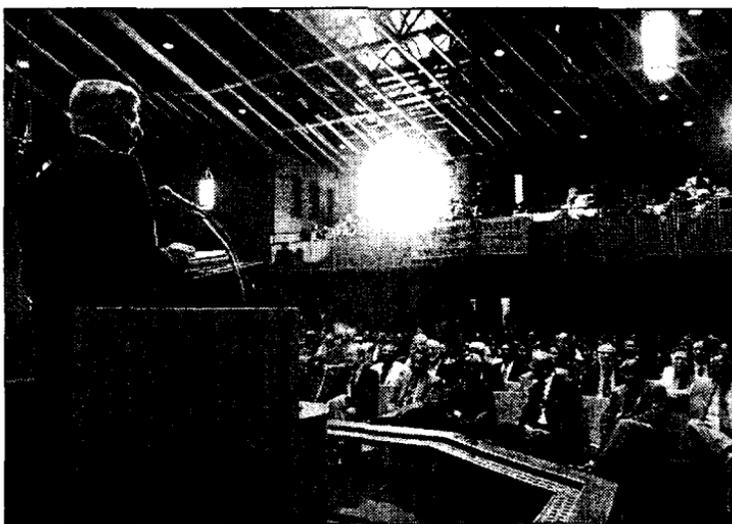
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running into an elderly African-American man two years ago who hesitated to enter the Arundel Center to pay a water bill. The man told Mr. Snowden he didn't like the building because it was the site of the old jail where Snowden was hanged Feb. 28, 1919.

Eighteen months earlier, 20-year-old Lottie May Brandon was found beaten to death and stripped of her underclothes in her home on what is now Lafayette Street. A doctor, basing his analysis on skin found underneath her fingernails, said an African-American man bashed her skull with a blunt object.

Snowden, arrested for the crime on the words of two women who said they saw him exit the home, was convicted in January 1918. Snowden maintained his innocence until his death.

A descendant of Mrs. Brandon's, Judy Kulawiak of Millersville, previously



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Gov. Parris N. Glendening addresses more than 150 people at Asbury United Methodist Church Friday evening at a ceremony thanking him for pardoning John Snowden, an African-American executed in 1919 for killing a white, pregnant Annapolis woman.

criticized the pardon, saying it's "smelling a little political." Ms. Kulawiak did not return calls for comment on Friday night's event.

But for Hazel G. Snowden, Snowden's niece who lives in Landover, the pardon was a relief and a blessing.

Ms. Snowden's father was 18 when his brother was hanged,

and she said he remained bitter about the execution until his death in 1988. She said both men must be rejoicing over the pardon.

"It's precious to me that my uncle was pardoned after 82 years," she said after the ceremony. "I don't feel like the same person. Justice has been served, and my uncle's soul is finally at peace."