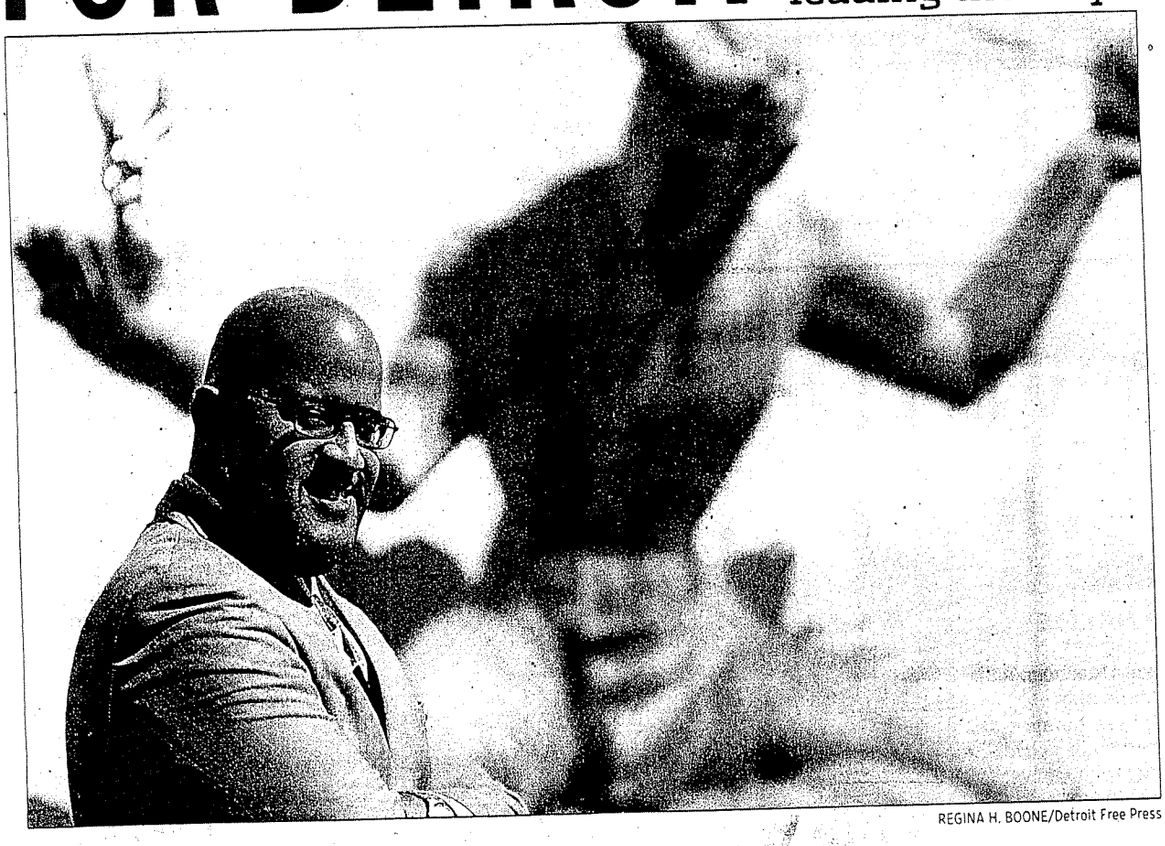
EXHIBIT M

A QUIET WARRIOR FOR DETROIT

Many say Ken Cockrel Jr. is up to the job of leading the city



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By SUZETTE HACKNEY AND ZACHARY GORCHOW
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

Detroit City Council President Ken Cockrel Jr. is not his father.

He has a shy demeanor; his father was loud and boisterous. He can be pensive; his father was bold and chatty. He's built like a linebacker; his father was tall and lanky.

Ken Cockrel Sr. was a member of the city council for one term and was considering a political comeback before a heart attack killed him in 1989 at age 50. Yet both men have been viewed as potential Detroit mayors and have more in common than a first glance shows.

In a city where the electorate has historically embraced mayors who can easily be described as dogged warriors, Ken Cockrel Jr.'s soft-spoken, unassuming ways have some questioning whether he'd be tough enough to be mayor, should the text-message scandal force Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick from office, elevating Cockrel to mayor.

"I'll be the statesman if it serves the

See COCKREL, 14A

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1987 photo by PAULINE LUEBENS/Detroit Free Press

TOP: Soft-spoken Detroit City Council President Ken Cockrel Jr. can rally residents and attract business, says George Hill, who owns Detroit-based Diversified Chemical Technologies Inc. "We don't need flash. We need competence," he said. **ABOVE:** Cockrel says his dad, the late firebrand attorney Ken Cockrel Sr., took him to protest rallies and trials to expose him to community activism.

"You've got to do what you've got to do."

KEN COCKREL JR., on his willingness to become mayor if Kwame Kilpatrick is forced from office

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purpose," Cockrel, 42, said last month.

"But if ... playing the statesman role is not enough, and you have to get your hands dirty and be a fighter, then you've got to do what you've got to do."

George Hill, owner of Detroit-based Diversified Chemical Technologies Inc., said Cockrel has the ability to rally residents and attract business.

"We don't need flash. We need competence," said Hill, 67, a Detroit resident who was a friend of Cockrel's father.

Since winning a seat on City Council in 1997, Cockrel has been viewed as an independent thinker, someone who votes with his gut after he has gathered all the information he can.

Observers said he has had a calming effect on the often-fractious council. Some unions have charged that he has a tendency to support privatization of city services, but neighborhood activists said he has tried to overhaul a system that victimizes residents.

Cockrel has pushed for the prompt demolition of dangerous abandoned buildings and the timely payment of vendors who have worked for the city. He has also reached out to business leaders to allay their suspicions about the council — a first for any contemporary council president.

Cockrel, who became council president by virtue of being the top vote-getter in the 2005 council elections, insists he's not banking on becoming mayor by succession.

But if it were to occur, he said, his 13 years of experience as an elected official — 10 on the council — and his work in city neighborhoods has readied him to become the city's chief executive officer, with oversight of 15,000 employees and a $3-billion budget.

Although Kilpatrick has

GABRIEL B. TAIT/Detroit Free Press

Ken Cockrel Jr. was a newly elected Detroit city councilman in 1997. With him is his mom, Carol Cockrel Valenzuela of Arizona, who says: "Kenny is an honorable man, something quite rare in politics." Still, there are some observers who question whether he's tough enough to be the mayor.

2002 photo by WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press

Kilpatrick, shown with Cockrel, is facing eight felonies. If

JOHN COLLIER/Detroit Free Press

Cockrel is known for being thorough and for reaching out to business

Cockrel's other side

Detroit City Council President Ken Cockrel Jr. exudes seriousness at council meetings, but occasionally, he'll slip in a remark that shows his voracious interest in pop culture.

There was the time when Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick appeared before the City Council, and in a discussion about finding new police recruits, he quoted "The Untouchables" when Sean Connery's Jim Malone gives Kevin Costner's Eliot Ness advice on how to find new cops: If you're afraid of getting a rotten apple, don't go to the barrel, get one off of the tree.

In fact, his love of movies — he will often stay up until 2 a.m. watching DVD extras — and music is one of the ways in which he and his father had more in common than the public may realize, Ken Cockrel Jr. said.

Some other facts:

- His favorite movie is "Fight Club" (he calls it a warning against fascism).
- His favorite book is "The Autobiography of Malcolm X."
- Jimi Hendrix inspires him.
- He lived in the Jeffries Homes housing project as a child.
- When he was a teen, he refused a Calvin Klein shirt his mother offered to buy, saying: "No, thanks. Calvin Klein isn't paying me to advertise for him."
- He loved comic books and created his own as a child.
- His musical tastes are diverse — he enjoys hip-hop, jazz, classic rock and R&B.

More facts about Ken Cockrel Jr.

Age: 42

Personal: Born in Detroit, moved to Highland Park as a child, lives in Woodbridge Estates neighborhood in Detroit

Family: Married to Kimberly Cockrel; sons Ken III, 14, and Kyle, 2; daughters Kennedy, 13, Kendall, 12, and Kayla, 10

vowed not to quit, despite being charged with eight felonies, calls for his resignation have grown. If he is convicted, city and state law require that he be removed from office.

Cockrel has been a vocal critic of the mayor since the scandal broke. He said he voted for Kilpatrick in 2005 because he thought he had generated momentum in his first term. Cockrel backed then-Council President Gil Hill in 2001.

The mayor declined to comment for this story. Kilpatrick's deputy spokesman James Canning referred to a previous statement advising Cockrel not to "steal" the 2009 election.

The statement, made by Kilpatrick spokeswoman Denise Tolliver, was that if Cockrel wants to be mayor, he'll have to run in 2009 because Kilpatrick isn't resigning.

"It is important at these times that elected officials serve in the positions they were elected to serve," she said. "You cannot steal an election. You must earn it."

Following in the footsteps

Cockrel has come of age, even though he grew up in the shadow of his activist father.

For many metro Detroit residents and political observers, the name Ken Cockrel conjures up the firebrand attorney who led the charge to disband a rogue Detroit police undercover squad known as STRESS (Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets) that killed 20 people in the 1970s, 17 of them African Americans. Before his death, Cockrel Sr. was widely expected to succeed Mayor Coleman Young.

The elder Cockrel was thin and gangly. He was recognized by his snappy suits, clean-shaven looks and, at times, a beret that covered his afro. He was a Marxist who filleted his foes with facts delivered in a frenetic rat-a-tat-tat fashion.

The younger Cockrel is a thickset 6 foot 5. He shaves his head and wears a mustache and goatee. He seeks collegiality and speaks professorially.

"At a certain point, you've got to walk in your own shoes, and you've got to do your own thing," Cockrel said. "That's not to say that I'm not mindful of whose name I carry and the legacy that comes with that."

Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, shown with Cockrel, is facing eight felonies. If he's convicted, city and state law require his removal from office.

At the elder Cockrel's insistence, the son went everywhere with him — from protest rallies to court trials. Cockrel laughed when recalling how at age 5, out of sheer boredom, he made a chain out of the paper clips in his father's office.

But he now understands the bigger picture: Cockrel Sr. wanted his son to get a taste of community activism, something Cockrel Jr. now passes to his oldest son, Ken III, by taking him to community events.

Cockrel wasn't supposed to be working in City Hall, at least not in an elected capacity. He majored in journalism in college and covered city government for the Grand Rapids Press and the Cincinnati Enquirer, after a stint as a Detroit Free Press intern.

Eventually, Cockrel found writing about politics unsatisfying and wanted to get involved. "During that time, my dad passed away, and I began thinking about the work that he did and his legacy, and maybe some things that he left unfinished," he said.

When he returned to Michigan, he enrolled in the Michigan Political Leadership Program, now a breeding ground for elected officials.

Personal and professional

Ken Cockrel started dating the woman he married in college. She said his interest in pop culture drew her to him. And he was a terrific listener. "He listens exactly to what you say," Kimberly Cockrel said.

The two said they have a strong marriage, even though Detroit police were called to their house about seven years ago, after a neighbor heard them arguing. No one was arrested and no tickets were issued, they said.

"We love hard, sometimes we argue hard," Ken Cockrel said. "We had a disagreement. One of the neighbors took it the wrong way and called police."

She said she remembers legendary debates between Cockrel and his father and thinks that was Cockrel Sr.'s way of toughening up his son.

"I think his father was always testing him, testing his mettle," she said. "His father told him the world would be harder on him than he was."

The Cockrels returned to Detroit from Cincinnati in 1992, in part because Kimberly Cockrel's father was ill. It was a different Detroit. Ken Cockrel's father was dead, his mother had moved to Arizona to pursue a job opportunity and his stepmother, Sheila Murphy Cockrel, was readying her first run at a council seat. She, too, felt compelled to honor the late Cockrel's legacy and address his unfinished business.

Cockrel and his stepmother have never been close, though neither will discuss the origins of their tension. Since becoming colleagues on the council, the relationship has improved, at least professionally.

"We've got some history between us that isn't all good, but the thing that I appreciate about her and like about her is that when we come to this building and when we go out to that table, none of it is evident," he said. "Professionally, she's been a good ally."

Sheila Cockrel said the two have "mutual respect" for each other because they approach council work in a similar way — letting data drive decisions. She said he's an effective public face of the council because of his approachability.

If Kilpatrick leaves office, Cockrel Jr. is ready for the enormous challenge, Sheila Cockrel said.

"He would be up to the task and would be a steadying influence in a difficult transitional period for Detroit," she said.

A little controversy, too

Observers cite two defining council moments for Cockrel: He opposed a casino license in 1998 for the MGM Grand Detroit Casino because he insisted that there should be one black-owned gaming hall in a predominately African-American city. And in 2005, he sent Detroit police to find Councilwomen Barbara-Rose Collins, JoAnn Watson and Sharon McPhail, who were holding up a key budget vote because they were absent from council chambers.

Cockrel considers the decision to send Detroit police after

leaders and neighborhood activists.

the three councilwomen one of his most difficult decisions.

"It was something I had to do at that time," he said.

His vote against the MGM license, even as he supported ones for the MotorCity and Greektown casinos, signaled to many that Cockrel had come of age. Some Detroiters even saw a flash of Cockrel Sr.

"I felt it was important to stay true to the original vision of casinos in the city of Detroit, which is to ... try to make them ... casinos with a substantial amount of local investment and local participation," Cockrel said. "MGM, at that time, didn't represent that."

Sara Gleicher, longtime chief of staff for the late Council President Maryann Mahaffey, said Mahaffey respected Cockrel's intelligence, even though he tended to be a "little more hands off."

"He tended to play more of a mediator role rather than jumping out with any leadership initiatives," she said.

Eric Foster, a political consultant with Detroit-based Urban Consulting Group, said Cockrel needs to be a tougher opponent. He said Cockrel, for example, should have responded more forcefully after Kilpatrick criticized him in the mayor's State of the City speech.

In singling out Cockrel, who sat in the audience instead of his usual spot on stage because of the text message scandal, the mayor said, "President Cockrel, we have much more serious issues affecting our city than whether we attend a speech or not."

Foster said: "Instead of being a statesman, be the fighter." Cockrel's tenure has not been without controversy.

A former employee, Stacy Ross-Streeter, sued in 2005 after Cockrel fired her; she and the city settled for $95,000. Ross-Streeter said in her lawsuit that she had missed time while she and her daughter were ill, and that Cockrel dismissed her because she was "too sick to work."

Cockrel declined to discuss the lawsuit. In the city's response at the time, he denied making that statement.

Cockrel and his wife also were sued in 2003 after a woman renting an apartment from them claimed her daughter got lead poisoning from the dwelling. The suit was settled; Cockrel said he and his wife did nothing wrong.

Since becoming council president in 2006, Cockrel's biggest move has been reorganizing the council into a committee system. Until last fall, the full council handled every issue, a system observers said was highly inefficient. Critics said that led to long-winded debates and important issues getting overlooked.

Now, the full council meets only once a week while committees of three members — with Cockrel serving as a nonvoting member on all of them — meet on other days.

Critics, principally Council President Pro Tem Monica Conyers and Watson, said the move weakened the council by preventing members from learning about every issue.

Business, neighborhood support

Mike Fisher, president and chief executive officer of Detroit Community Initiative, a neighborhood development group, said Cockrel would immediately bring integrity, accessibility and understanding of the neighborhoods if he became mayor.

But he said he doesn't know whether Cockrel has the business and political connections needed to be successful. "You can be a champion ... for the city of Detroit, but to make this city work, your relationships and experience has to go beyond our borders," he said.

Doug Rothwell, president of Detroit Renaissance, said the council has responded well to the initiatives by business leaders. "Much of that credit, I think, belongs to the council president," he said.

Cockrel said he has gotten to know business leaders on a personal level and demystified the council's role in city commerce.

Referring to whether he has the ability to woo businesses to the city, he said, "Yeah, it's absolutely something I can do."

Cockrel's business-friendly votes haven't always sat well

Florian High in Hamtramck; bachelor's degree in journalism, Wayne State University

Political: Detroit City Council, 1998-present; Wayne County commissioner, 1995-97

Other employment: Reporter, Grand Rapids Press and Cincinnati Enquirer; worked on legislative redistricting project and aiding student interns at Wayne State University

with the city's labor unions.

Leamon Wilson, chairman of the 18 AFSCME local union presidents who represent city employees, said Cockrel has been prone to support privatization of city services. But Wilson, who has called for Kilpatrick to resign, said Cockrel has a mayor's demeanor.

"I don't know what kind of mayor he would be," he said. "We're hoping that he would be strong and clean up this mess that's been made in the city."

Cockrel in 2009?

Cockrel was considering a run against Kilpatrick in 2009, even before the text-message scandal. It's a job he said he's prepared to do — but not one he rabidly covets.

In an e-mail to the Free Press, Cockrel's mother said politics is in Cockrel's blood.

"If called upon to act as mayor, Detroit would find no man better," Carol Cockrel Valenzuela said from Arizona. "Kenny is an honorable man, something quite rare in politics."

When Cockrel spoke before thousands at a memorial service to honor his father, he spoke passionately about how he could never escape his father's legacy — and would never want to; adding: "I don't worry about filling someone else's shoes. I just wear my own."

Nearly 20 years later, he's even more confident.

"I love my dad," he said. "There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about my dad, and don't wish that he was here to help me. ... But I also recognize that I'm me, and I've got to do my thing."

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