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Black History Edition

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THE 'M' VOICE

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA'S MINORITY VOICE - SINCE 1987

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Five Human Service Organizations Receive United Way of Pitt County Venture Grants

The United Way of Pitt County will not only benefit and support its 33 local member-agencies in Pitt County, the organization will also be helping five additional agencies in 1994. These five agencies will be receiving "venture grants" this year to assist them in

serving the needs of their clients. The venture grant funds are one-time start-up money totalling \$33,810.

"This money will go to agencies that are addressing emerging and diverse needs and that have immediate and significant impact in

this community, said Bernita Demery, Venture Grant Committee Chair.

Mrs. Demery said that the money is given to enhance the organization's long-term plan to be a community problem-solver in Pitt County and to try to help more

people in Pitt County.

The agencies selected range from those helping at-risk children to adults who are unemployed.

The largest grant of \$8,610 was awarded to Florence Crittenton Services (formerly Eastern North Carolina Maternity Home). Venture grant funds will serve as a match of other grant money and permit the home to operationalize a kitchen to serve the nutritional needs of their clients. These funds are contingent upon the successful merger of ENCMH and Florence Crittenton Services.

Foundation for the Future, an after-school enrichment program administered through the Greenville Police Department received \$8,310. This program targets youth from low-income communities for character-building, monitoring, and participatory activities. The funds will support the "Discipline Equals Growth" component of the program that involves students in martial arts, drama, dance, and visual arts.

A \$7,000 venture grant was awarded to Opportunities Industrialization Center/O.I.C. This pro-

gram provides counseling, motivational, and support services for unemployed and underemployed people. The funds would provide support for job development and motivational training. The organization currently serves 31 clients.

Communities in Schools/C.I.S. received a \$5,000 venture grant from the United Way. This program works with 63 at-risk students at D.H. Conley through the Pitt County Education Foundation in an effort to keep them in school. The funds will allow a special parental component to be initiated.

For the \$4,890 venture grant, the Pitt County Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy will develop a pilot program in the Ayden school district called T.E.A.M. (Teens Empowering And Making a difference). This program will involve a minimum of 30 at-risk students from grades six through eight to be able to utilize teen fathers and mothers as young adult resources.

Each of these venture grant recipients was required to experience an in-depth review process

from the United Way's Venture Grant committee that required an application and presentation to the committee. Ten applications totaling \$107,837 in requests for venture grant funding were received by the committee.

The committee that made these venture grant recommendations for the United Way of Pitt County was comprised of local volunteers. The chair of the committee was Bernita Demery of the City of Greenville. Other members were: Cherie Evans, The Daily Reflector, Mike Barrett, Proter & Gamble Paper Products Co., Inc., John Bulow, County of Pitt, and Milton Carney, City of Greenville.

The United Way of Pitt County has been awarding venture grants yearly since 1992 when a total of \$70,000 was awarded to seven local programs. In 1993 funds totaling \$83,532 were awarded to ten human-service programs.

The United Way of Pitt County is a non-profit organization that supports 33 member agencies dedicated to serving the human health care needs of people of all ages and walks of life.



Kenyetta Sharpe crowned "Miss Martin Luther King, Jr."

In a beauty pageant sponsored by the Men of Judah as a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., held on Saturday, January 15, Miss Kenyetta Sharpe, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Langley of Greenville, was crowned Queen. Miss Sharpe, who was crowned Queen on the eve of her thirteenth birthday is a seventh grader at Wellcome Middle School. She was crowned Queen by Keshia Rodgers of Williamston, Miss Martin Luther King, Jr., 1993.

First place runner-up was Miss Renee Bell of Williamston. Renee, daughter of Mrs. Alfreda Bell, is a sixteen year old sophomore at Williamston High School.

Second place runner-up was Miss Tenesha Davette of Greenville, daughter of Mrs. Brenda Coggins. She is a sixteen year old sophomore at J.H. Rose High School.

Third place runner-up was Miss April Michelle Sutton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Sutton of Greenville. She is a seventeen year old senior at J.H. Rose High School.

Fourth place runner-up was Miss Kerketia Quinerly of Ayden, daughter of Mrs. Janice Quinerly and Mr. Clarence Dixon. Kerketia is a seventeen year old senior at J.H. Rose High School.

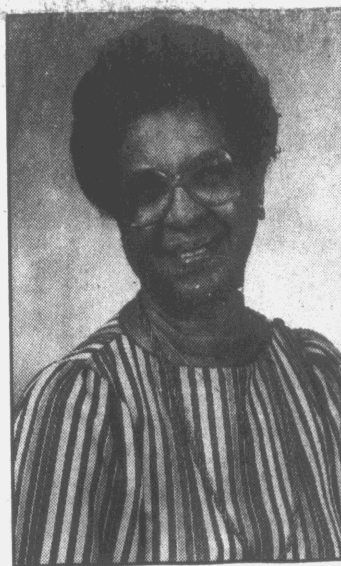
Other contestants were:

Miss Artisha Harris, sixteen year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Powell of Greenville, is a junior at North Pitt High School.

Miss Quameerah Rogers, eleven year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rogers of Greenville, is a fourth grader at Elmhurst School.

Miss Victoria Rhinehart, fifteen year old daughter of Mrs. Uverna Jordan of Greenville, is a freshman of North Pitt High School.

These beautiful young ladies are all winners as was displayed on January 15, before all present, and we encourage them and other young women and men to pursue the God given talents that have been instilled in each of them.



To the Editor:

"Would America have been America without her Negro people?" said Dr. W.E.B. DuBois.

Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the founder of Negro History Week in 1926, later becoming African-American (Black) History Month in 1976, had as its purpose to help people reflect upon and celebrate the outstanding tradition of educational, cultural, and spiritual excellence among blacks; for Blacks have contributed to the very building of this country with true blood, sweat and tears. Each teacher's lesson plans, regardless of grade level, could and should reflect it.

This is the 69th observance of this remarkable celebration which has for its theme - 1994 - "Empowering African-American Organizations: Past, Present and Future."

1 - Has the observance become a symbol or a burden?

2 - Do setting aside one month in the year invite people to forget about Black accomplishments, achievements and recognitions the rest of the year?

3 - Does the observance appease white guilt or is it a means to exploit Blacks?

4 - Does knowledge not lessen prejudice and racial barriers?

5 - Do books and curricula upgrade so schools can teach African-American history the entire year rather than one month?

6 - Is education complete without Black culture? Africa and African-Americans are an indispensable part of American culture.

7 - Does any instructor bar his students from wanting to be aware of African-Americans?

8 - Do history books equally discuss Blacks' contributions to in-

ventions, writing or heroic women (as well as other disciplines) in the same breath with non-minorities?

It is unfortunate that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the second American to be honored with a national holiday, is not given an equal place in our hearts and minds as the first American, George Washington. Rarely do we hear about Dr. King on or around his birthday, January 15 or the third Monday annually in January.

Prejudice is essentially an outgrowth of ignorance. The effect of prejudice is devastating.

Benjamin Banneker, the mathematical genius said, "The color of the skin is in no way connected with strength of the mind or intellectual powers."

Let's give African-American History Month its rightful place.

Beatrice Maye

The Be's For 1994

- 1 - Be understanding to your enemies.
- 2 - Be loyal to your friends.
- 3 - Be strong enough to face the world each day.
- 4 - Be weak enough to know that you cannot do everything alone.
- 5 - Be generous to those who need your help.
- 6 - Be wise enough to know that you do not know everything.
- 7 - Be foolish enough to believe in miracles.
- 8 - Be willing to share your joys.
- 9 - Be willing to share the joys of others.
- 10 - Be a leader when you see a path others have missed.
- 11 - Be a follower when you are shrouded by the mists of uncertainty.
- 12 - Be the last to criticize a colleague who fails.
- 13 - Be sure where your next step will fall, so that you will not stumble.
- 14 - Be loving to those who love you.
- 15 - Be loving to those who do not love you and they may change.
- 16 - Above all be YOURSELF.

From: Dr. C.C. Craig

Are You Practicing Good Character?

Then you should:

Be a good friend.

Desire to do the right thing and do it.

Every deed should be a good deed.

Be responsible, kind, fair, pa-

tient, honest, control self, love, care and share.

Work hard toward your goal.

Show school spirit.

Smile.

Don't talk about school, your teachers, your classmates. Spend time with an older person. Finish your homework and do your best.

Cheer up a sick friend.

Compliment your teachers, parents and classmates.

Crime, Violence, Misbehavior...

We will never solve our crime and drug problems simply by having more police, more prisons, more judges and more juries. We will solve our problems only when all parents are held responsible for their children. This statement has been repeated so many times. It is time for us to hear it now.

Parents who attend parent/teacher conferences, provide a quiet place to study, read with their children, participate in school activities, screen TV programs, limiting its viewing; in fact, parents who are involved with their children do better in school and in life. Think of the impact this could have on promoting education and reducing crime.

Teenagers, how much enjoyment/satisfaction is there out of sex, wallowing around in the back seat of a car with a boy who zips up his pants and goes home? Are you respecting yourselves, are they not irresponsible males having fun at your expense? How much assistance do you get from these boys when you are pregnant or even supporting them after birth? Do they stick with you, marry you or do they jump on another girl, releasing their passion? Grow up, girls. Senseless sex is sickening. Teenagers should be concentrating on their books/studies instead of concentrating on sex. If you don't start it, you'll have nothing to worry about.

Mothers, grandmothers, if you let these teenagers be solely responsible for their children/babies, you would help instead of encouraging. Oh, yes, these are challenging, self-examination statements.

Note: Excerpts from Ann Landers

Essay: Finding A Space For Myself In A Question Of Color

By Kathe Sandler

I am a Black American woman from an interracial background. In most, of the world, someone who looks like me, with sandy blonde hair, green eyes — a person who looks White — would not be considered Black. And yet because I am an American, raised in a society with a legacy of slavery, apartheid and the "one-drop" theory of Blackness, I was raised as a Black person and identify myself as Black.

Color consciousness has left a lingering imprint on Black American life. During the early days of slavery, a caste system emerged in our community which valued light skin color, straight hair texture, and "European" features as a physical ideal. "Mulatto" children of White masters were limited opportunities. Ingrained in the multi-hued and ethnically varied African-American population, these White racist values continue to affect us today, despite the impact of the "Black is Beautiful" movement of the 1960s and 70s and today's resurgence of Afrocentrism.

I have spent the last eight years exploring this lingering internalized racism for my documentary, A Question of Color (airing on PBS), but, in many ways, I have been making this film all of my life. Everything that has happened to me around "color" in my family, my community, in White America, and in the world, has prepared me to tell this story. The process in which my own experiences were transformed and retold by the many



A photo of newly freed slaves is featured in A Question Of color, Kathe Sandler's documentary about color consciousness in the African American community

people I talked to and worked with.

People shared hidden, painful stories with me about tensions between best friends, family members, lovers, spouses and community leaders. The young women whose boyfriend wouldn't bring her home to meet his mother because she was "too dark," and the first Black mayor of a Southern city who had to overcome not only White segregation but color and class discrimination in the Black community as well. There was Wiley, a light-skinned young man who admitted to preferring light-skinned women with long hair and "nice eyes," Kayin, a young dark-skinned boy of eleven, who wanted to lighten his skin "like Michael Jackson" so that girls, and White people would like him better; and Pat, a very light-complexioned

working-class woman whose tough girl image was designed to keep other Black people from messing with her.

At every turn I was confronting my own existential pain around color. This became particularly evident during the segment concerning two teenage boys—Keith and Keyonn. Keith is light-skinned, Keyonn is darker. While these best friends acknowledged that each was treated differently in the Black community, they had never discussed the reason for this difference. Ironically, Keith and Keyonn's experiences were analogous to the ways in which my sister (and associate producer) Eve and I were treated, something that we rarely discussed.

My own family was not immune to the issue of color and preference.