



The Minority Voice

Serving Eastern North Carolina's Minority Communities Since 1988

Vol. 17 Issue 16 • Jan. 15 • 31, 2005

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HOUSE DEMOCRATS DEMAND IRAQ WITHDRAWAL

by Edward Epstein
WASHINGTON, DC — Sixteen House Democrats led by Rep. Lynn Woolsey of Petaluma called on President Bush on Wednesday to begin the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, just as some administration supporters are starting to question the wisdom of staying the course in the war.

So far, the Bush administration remains publicly unshakable in its position that the elections on Jan. 30 should proceed despite fears about safety for voters in parts of Iraq. The president and other administration officials have said U.S. forces will start withdrawing only once U.S.-trained Iraqi forces can take responsibility for more of the patrolling

and the fighting. And even then, the withdrawal would be much more phased than the departure envisioned by the House Democrats in a letter sent Wednesday to the president.

Privately, however, top administration officials are in deliberations about how to proceed in Iraq, where hopes are fading that the elections on Jan. 30 for a national assembly to write a constitution will improve security.

The anti-war Democrats' letter was sent as more voices are being raised across the political spectrum in Washington discussing how the United States can begin to remove its 150,000 troops from a country where almost 1,400 Americans have been killed.

Woolsey and the other House Democrats, including Reps. Sam Farr of Carmel, Pete Stark of Fremont and Barbara Lee of Oakland, urged the administration to move swiftly.

"While it may be logistically difficult to immediately remove every American soldier, we urge you to take immediate action to begin the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. This is the only way to truly support our troops," said the letter signed by Woolsey and her colleagues.

The House Democrats, all of them longtime critics of Bush's Iraq policies, said the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003 had stirred anti-American sentiments among Iraqis and other Arabs,

made Iraqis and foreigners in the country less safe and "intensified the rage of the extremist Muslim terrorists."

"By removing our troops from the country, we will remove the main focus of the insurgents' rage," the letter added.

Woolsey spokeswoman Susannah Cernojevich said only logistical factors prevented Woolsey from calling on Bush to immediately withdraw all the force.

"If she had her way, they would leave now," she said of Woolsey.


Secretary of State Colin Powell, in an interview aired Wednesday on National Public Radio, said the administration hoped the elections would make Iraqi security forces more willing to fight, which would allow U.S. forces to begin to leave. However, Powell wouldn't



Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) above, who is a 6th-term Democrat from California who calls the War in Iraq a "Journey into Madness" has in the led is signing a letter to President Bush insisting that he withdraw troops now. Among those who joined in the signing were Danny Davis (IL), Jesse Jackson, Jr. (IL) pictured above, Lane Evans (IL), Sam Farr (CA), Raul Grijalva (AZ), Alcee Hastings (FL), Maurice Hinchey (NY), Dennis Kucinich (OH), Barbara Lee (CA), John Lewis (GA), Jim McDermott (WA), Grace Napolitano (CA), Major Owens (NY), Jose Serrano (NY) and Pete Stark (CA).

Army Sergeant Refuses 2nd Iraq Deployment

SAVANNAH, GA — On Thursday, January 13, Sgt. Kevin Benderman, a Army mechanic with nine years in the service, including a role in the assault on Baghdad, has refused to return to Iraq, claiming "you just don't know how bad it is."



Sgt. Kevin Benderman and his wife, Monica, sit at their Hinesville, Georgia, home. Photo: Savannah Morning News

he faces a possible court-martial after failing to deploy Friday with his unit.

"I told them that I refused deployment because I just couldn't go back over there," Benderman said Wednesday. "If I'm going to sit up there and tell everyone that I do not believe in war, why would I go back to a war zone?"

Lt. Col. Cliff Kent, a Fort Stewart spokesman, said Benderman was being considered absent without leave because he had orders to deploy to Iraq while the Army processed his conscientious objector claim.

"He was AWOL from the unit's movement," Kent said. "Beginning the application process for conscientious objection does not preclude you from deploying."

Benderman has been reassigned to a rear detachment unit at Fort Stewart while his case is processed, Kent said. Kent said the Army has not decided whether to bring charges against him.

Gaining objector status is a time-consuming process for soldiers, requiring

meetings with counselors and a chaplain with lengthy paperwork reviewed far up the chain of command. Under military law, a person must be opposed to war in all forms to be considered a conscientious objector.

"If a person said, 'I'm not opposed to war, but I'm opposed to the Iraq war,' they would not qualify," said Louis Hiken, an attorney with the Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild.

Filing an objector claim does not prevent the Army from prosecuting soldiers for disobeying orders.

In May, a Fort Stewart court-martial sentenced Staff Sgt. Camilo Mejia of the Florida National Guard to a year in prison for desertion despite his pending objector application. Mejia filed his claim after refusing to return to his unit in Iraq while home on leave.

In December, a soldier who re-enlisted with the Marines after becoming a Seventh-Day Adventist was jailed for refusing to pick up a gun. Cpl. Joel D. Klimkewicz, 24, of Birch Run, Michi-

gan, told his superiors he was a conscientious objector and cited his new religious status. It was rejected in March 2004.

Benderman served in Iraq from March to September 2003 with the 4th Infantry Division based at Fort Hood, Texas. When he later transferred to the 3rd Infantry at Fort Stewart, Benderman said, he was already questioning the morality of the destruction he had witnessed.

"You can sit around your house and discuss this thing in abstract terms, but until you see and experience it for yourself, you just don't know how bad it is," he said. "How is it an honorable thing to teach a kid how to look through the sights of a rifle and kill another human being? War is the ultimate in violence and it is indiscriminate."

Asked why he waited until a week before his unit deployed to file notice of his objector claim, Benderman said, "It takes time for you to make sure that you 100 percent want to do things. This is not something you make a snap judgment on."

mention any numbers or give any timetable.

"It's not possible right now to say that by the end of 2005, we'll be down to such and such a number," Powell said. "It really is dependent upon the situation."

The Woolsey letter came just a week after Brent Scowcroft, who was national security adviser under Bush's father, President George H.W. Bush, said in a Washington speech that the continuing insurrection in Iraq meant it was time for a discussion of "whether we get out now."

And the Associated Press reported that conservative Rep. Howard Coble, R-N.C., who supported the decision to invade Iraq, also said last week it was

time to start pondering a phased withdrawal in light of the American casualties in Iraq.

"I got fed up with picking up the paper and reading 12 to 15 American soldiers killed," he was quoted as saying. "How many will we lose tomorrow?"

"I don't think anyone is seriously considering withdrawing at this juncture," Coble added. "The time has come for Iraqi people to assume more responsibility."

Coble's statement that Iraqis should assume more of the military burden reflects long-standing Bush administration policy aimed at training tens of thousands of Iraqis to serve in their country's

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NEWS IN REVIEW

Supreme Court Overturns Federal Sentencing Guidelines

WASHINGTON, DC - The Supreme Court ruled that federal sentencing guidelines put in place two decades ago were unconstitutional because they violated a defendant's Sixth Amendment right to be tried by a jury. The court ruled judges cannot increase sentences beyond the maximum that the jury's findings alone would support. [includes rush transcript]

The decisions — in a pair of 5-4 rulings — handed broader discretion to federal judges by telling them to consider the guidelines merely as a suggestion. Previously, the guidelines forced judges to boost sentences based on factors that a jury hadn't ruled on. Now judges are permitted, but not required to do so.

A few thousand defendants who have already been convicted but are appealing their sentences may have a chance to get less prison time, but for tens of thousands of federal prisoners serving time in cases that had reached final resolution, the decision will not apply retroactively.

Tsunami Death Toll Expected To Surpass 200,000

With Tsunami Death Toll in Indonesia Possibly Rising Over 200,000, Military Crackdown In Aceh Continues

The government has imposed restrictions on the movement of aid workers and journalists. Aid workers have been told to inform the government of their travel plans or face expulsion and to take army escorts to most areas outside of Banda Aceh. [includes rush transcript]

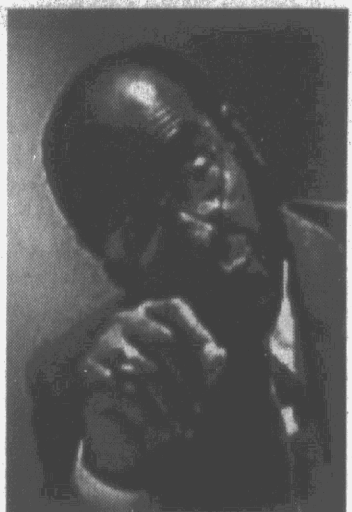
Indonesia has found nearly 4,000 more bodies of tsunami victims, taking the global death toll from last month's disaster to over 160,000. Indonesia was the hardest-hit country with at least 110,000 people dead and many thousands more are missing. And even that count may be an underestimate. Knight Ridder is now reporting that an official document posted by local officials in Aceh revises the casualty count to 210,000 people dead or missing. The paper adds that rescue workers think even that number may be low.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian military plans to send thousands more soldiers into Aceh bringing the total troop deployment there to almost 50,000.

In May 2003, the Indonesian government launched a massive offensive against the Free Aceh Movement and banned most foreigners from Aceh, but it was forced to scale back and re-open the area last month to allow

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Publisher Earl Graves: Essence Should have let Blacks Bid on the Magazine



Earl Graves (File Photo)
by Makebra M. Anderson
NNPA, National Correspondent
WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Earl G. Graves, publisher of Black Enterprise, says that before selling to Time Warner, the owners of Essence magazine should have allowed Blacks companies to make an offer to purchase the company.

Time Warner, the largest publishing company in the world, had previously purchased a 49 percent stake in Essence Communications, the parent company of the magazine. With Time Warner moving many of its people into key positions on the business side, it was expected that it would eventually make a move to acquire total ownership of the Black women-oriented publication.

"In selling their controlling interest to Time Warner, CEO Ed Lewis and the shareholders of Essence Communications have made the best deal they felt they could make. It is unfortunate, however, there wasn't an open bidding process in which Black entrepreneurs could have made an offer for the company and possibly preserve Essence as a Black-owned business and institution. There are a number of Black entrepreneurs—including those who own and operate BE 100s companies—who had the resources and management capability to acquire and run Essence Communications," Graves says in a statement.

The sale of Essence is part of an accelerated trend of major Black businesses being bought by White-owned companies. That list includes Johnson hair products, Motown, Black Entertainment Television and now Essence. With the U.S. population expected to grow by 50 percent over the next 50 years —, with 90 percent of that growth among people of color—major White companies are expected to increasingly seek of buy Black companies.

Robert L. Johnson, who sold BET to media giant Viacom, contends that's not necessarily bad.

In an interview with Richard Prince, author of the "Journal-isms"

column for the Maynard Institute, Johnson said, "Black businesses will have to realize that to be in business takes precedence over being Black, if you're going to grow your business."

He told Prince that other Black businesses, such as Radio One, will eventually follow suit.

"At the end of the day, they will sell to the highest bidder" who will likely be White," Johnson said. "It's just a question of when."

Time Warner Inc. agreed to buy the remaining 51 percent of Essence Communications, which publishes ESSENCE and Suede magazines, that it didn't already own in a non-binding agreement that would add the lifestyle publications to its magazine division. Time Inc. currently publishes Time, People, Entertainment Weekly, Sports Illustrated, InStyle, Real Simple and Fortune magazines among others. Time Inc. bought the other 49 percent of Essence Communications in 2000.

"Since I'm a proponent of Black entrepreneurship, it's sad that it's [Essence Communications] is no longer a Black-owned company, but in recent years there have been more partnerships between Black owned companies and general market companies to fulfill the goals that both sides have," says Yanick Rice-Lamb, former editor of Heart & Soul and BET WeekEnd magazines. "From everything I've heard, it has been a win/win situation for Essence and Time. Essence will be able to leverage some of Time's resources, which will ensure that it will last longer and even endure into the next millennium."

Some say that should not be the only consideration.

"It reminds me of when Bob Johnson sold BET to Viacom. You can't blame Bob for worrying about his bottom line and I don't have the right to demand of him to take losses, but I'm still upset that we lost some great magazines like Emerge and YSB in the process. Essence has always been a clear voice for Black women and you have to be concerned that the focus of the magazine will start to blur," said Joe Ritchie, professor of journalism and Florida A & M University. "When Time Inc. bought the first 49 percent, it was already a little worrisome. Essence has always been about the images of Black women in America and in the Black Diaspora. Having that image under total control of White media is troubling."

Ed Lewis, Chairman and CEO of Essence Communications and Publisher of Essence magazine said in a statement that the partnership with Time Inc. will strengthen Essence.

"Once the deal has been approved and we become and full-fledged member of the Time Inc. family, we're looking forward to aggressively broadening the scope of the

Essence brand and penetrating new markets around the world," he said. "It will give me great pride and comfort to know that Essence will be secure for generations to come and that its prospects for even greater success will be brighter than ever."

Lewis will remain on board as non-executive Chairman and Founder of Essence and current Group Publisher, Michelle Ebanks, will become President of Essence Communications.

Some of the most successful me-

Jesse Jackson Backs Off Boycott Over Georgia Police Shooting

by Louise Chu
ATLANTA (AP) — The Rev. Jesse Jackson backed off Monday January 10, from calling for a financial boycott of Columbus, Ga., over the handling of a deputy's fatal shooting of a black man.

The civil rights leader caught some local activists off guard last month when he asked that people across the country pull their money out of financial institutions based in the city until the deputy who shot Kenneth Walker is federally prosecuted and Georgia adopts anti-racial profiling legislation. He now says such a boycott would only be used as a last resort if negotiations fail.

"We would hope that that would not be necessary, but that burden is upon the officials, business and corporate executives who live in Columbus," Jackson said from New York in a conference call with reporters.

"Hopefully the citizens of goodwill and good judgment in Columbus can make that escalation unnecessary," he added.

Jackson, founder and president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, made the remarks as he discussed two marches he plans to lead Saturday.

The first will be held in his hometown of Greenville, S.C., urging county officials to honor Martin Luther King Jr. with a paid holiday for workers. The federal holiday is celebrated on the third Monday of January and Greenville is the only county in South Carolina without a King holiday.

Later Saturday, Jackson plans to be in Columbus, Ga., for a march calling for justice in the death of the 39-year-old Walker, who was shot by Muscogee County sheriff's Deputy David Glisson during a Dec. 10, 2003, traffic stop.

Walker and three friends were riding in a sport utility vehicle that was seen leaving an apartment that was under surveillance by Metro Narcotics Task Force agents for drug activity.

Officers ordered the four men from the vehicle, and during that time Walker was shot twice in the head. No drugs or weapons were found in the vehicle, on Walker or on the other men.

Glisson was fired after the shooting, but last November a grand jury opted not to bring charges.

"The citizens of that state must roundly renounce what did happen and

what is now becoming a pattern in Columbus," Jackson said. "I'm convinced that the political leadership and corporate leadership can join us in demanding that the man who killed Kenneth Walker face justice."

But some activists, including local Urban League President Reginald Pugh, still insist an economic boycott, or even the threat of one, is the wrong way to seek justice in the case.

"The people in Columbus haven't done anything wrong. Local officials, elected officials have done everything the community has asked them to do in the Kenny Walker case," Pugh said. "How

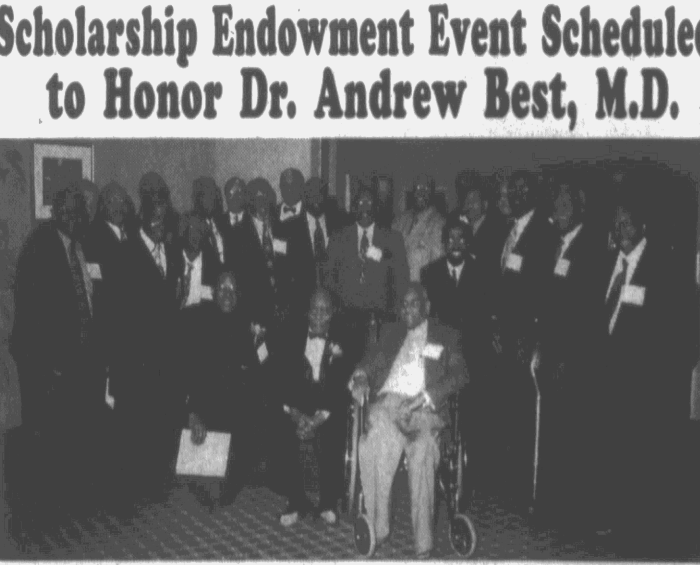
cause it takes a lot of money to run a magazine and it takes a long time to make a profit. Essence would have continued to remain strong, but since Time is so large and has so many successful publications there is no way they can't benefit from that," she said. "You're always going to get criticism anytime you merge with a larger corporation—whether it's Black-owned or not because people like to see Black-owned companies. We have the time-

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Scholarship Endowment Event Scheduled to Honor Dr. Andrew Best, M.D.

GREENVILLE, NC - Once again it is now time for our 22nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Senior Recognition Banquet which pays tribute to Dr. King and the senior minority medical students at the Brody School of Medicine. This tradition continues this year with the event being held at the Greenville Hilton on January 22nd at 7:00pm. Sponsors of the event expressed excitement in having Dr. Andrew Best, a retired family practitioner to help officiate at the event. Dr. Best, who practiced in Pitt County for almost 50 years, played a key role in the establishment of the School of Medicine at East Carolina University during his tenure as a member of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors and the ECU Board of Trustees. He has also worked tirelessly as a civil rights leader, helping to integrate ECU. Dr. Best has also contributed extensively to the development of young people in Greenville area. For the past several years, the main purpose of this event is to endow a medical scholarship to honor the work of Dr. Best and accordingly the Brody School of Medicine (BSOM) would like to present the endowed scholarship to honor Dr. Best on January 22, 2005. The goal for this year is an on going effort to raise \$25,000. According to officials endowment forms can be picked up in advance from Virginia Hardy, Ph.D at the Brody School Of Medicine, 600 Moye Blvd, 2N64 Brody Building in Greenville.

(FILE PHOTO: Pictured in the center is Dr. Best flanked by friends during a recent event.)



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(FILE PHOTO: Pictured in the center is Dr. Best flanked by friends during a recent event.)

Minority Voice OP/EDS

Because whatever happens to America happens to Black America first....



by Hazel Trice Edney

NNPA Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Retired Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.), the first Black woman elected to Congress and a 1972 presidential candidate, is being hailed in death as a die-hard heroine for justice and equality.

Chisholm, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., died at her home in Palm Coast, Fla., near Daytona Beach, on Saturday at the age of 80. She had suffered several strokes and was reported in deteriorating health, according to relatives.

But those who worked closely with one of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus remember her as healthy, feisty outspoken advocate for the voiceless in society.

"When you see somebody as feisty and as gutsy as Shirley, breaking a barrier, running for Congress and then having the guts to go for broke and run for president, the effect she had was to encourage struggle, encourage people who were down and out to understand that without struggle, you could break barriers," says D. C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Norton, who was Commissioner of Human Rights in New York when Chisholm first ran for Congress in 1972 against James Farmer, former chair of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), recalls how Chisholm was ridiculed simply for running.

"The contribution that Shirley Chisholm made to America really was her feminism," Norton says. "She had guts to spare and appealed directly to the people. She was an expert politician who kept her seat without any difficulty."

Chisholm spent 25 years in politics, including four years as a state assemblywoman in New York from the mid-1960s and in 1969 beginning the first of seven terms in Congress. The title of autobiography - Unbought and Unbossed - was perhaps the best description of her.

"Those of us who served with her in the New York State Assembly and watched her career in the House, to which she was elected in 1968, knew of her boldness and passionate commitment," recalls U. S. Rep. Charles Rangel, who served with Chisholm for 13 years.

But Rangel says even New Yorkers were awed when she refused her first Congressional assignment to the Agriculture Committee. As a newly-elected representative from an urban area, Chisholm saw no advantage in serving on a committee that focused on rural America. She ultimately won a seat on the Veteran Affairs Committee, a position that grew in prominence with the escalation of the Vietnam War.

It was not the first or last time she would buck the system. The political maverick from Bedford-Stuyvesant supported Hale Boggs, a White Congressman from Louisiana for House majority leader over John Conyers, an African-American from Detroit. When Boggs won, she was rewarded with a seat on the powerful Education and Labor Committee.

She would later set her sight on the White House. She lost the 1972 Democratic nomination to George McGovern, who was badly beaten in the general election by Richard Nixon.

"Challenging all accepted practices of politics, this very junior member of the

House, an African-American woman at that, by declaring for the presidency, single-handedly raised the profile and aspirations of all those newly empowered Blacks and women of that era," Rangel states. "Today, her visionary leadership in Congress and her quest for the presidency continue to inspire new generations of young minorities and women to higher aspirations in public service."

One of those women is U. S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), who calls Chisholm a friend and mentor.

"Shirley's courage, her determination and her commitment to justice were an inspiration to a generation," Lee states. "I would never have gotten involved with politics if she had not run for President in 1972."

Lee, elected in 1998, 15 years after Chisholm retired, has since earned her own reputation for courage. In 2001, she was the only member of Congress to vote against a resolution giving President Bush a free hand in reacting militarily to the September 11 terrorist attacks.

It's easy to see why Lee admired Chisholm.

"My greatest political asset, which professional politicians fear, is my mouth, out of which come all kinds of things one shouldn't always discuss for reasons of political expediency," Chisholm said.

A strong supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), she was an outspoken critic of gender bias.

"I've always met more discrimination being a woman than being Black," she told the Associated Press shortly before retiring from Congress. "When I ran for president, I met more discrimination as a woman than for being Black. Men are men."

Chisholm is being lavishly praised this week by men and women.

"She ran for the U.S. presidency," recalls Jesse Jackson, who has been both a political insider and outsider. "She had a vision for America. She was acutely aware of the role women had to play. She was from the Caribbean Islands, which gave her a sense of worldview. She fought for the Caribbean, for Africa, for those who did not have a voice."

Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.) called her "one of the founding mothers of the modern-day Black political movement."

He explains, "She made it possible, she created the climate for the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton and all those who will come - men and women from every walk of life - who will run for U.S. president. American politics will always be indebted to Shirley Chisholm for extending its reach beyond the mainstream to include the best and brightest minds among us in the important work of public

service."

One long-time public servant, National Urban League President Marc Morial, says: "The life work of Shirley Chisholm made America a better place for all Americans. She remains a beacon for all who believe in the American dream."

TransAfrica President and CEO Bill Fletcher issued a challenge based on her memory.

"Ms. Chisholm was an individual who viewed adversity as a challenge, rather than a road block," Fletcher states. "The task of those who admired her work is to emulate it."

In her life after politics, Chisholm was given an endowed teaching chair at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass. She taught there for four years before traveling extensively on speaking engagements. In 1993, President Clinton nominated her to become U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, but she declined because of health problems.

Outgoing Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Elijah Cummings also reflected on Chisholm's impact on the future. "We must remain vigilant in our efforts to remain true to her vision of creating an America that affords equality and just to all of its citizens."

Chisholm fought for unemployment insurance for domestic workers, increased educational assistance for poor students and programs for women and children.

The impact of Chisholm's 1972 run for the presidency extended beyond politics, says Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe.

"She inspired countless others to knock down the barriers to equality. Her roots were in education and the lessons from her life will resonate for generations to come."

Her life, captured in a television documentary titled, "Chisholm '72: Unbought and Unbossed," will be shown PBS stations in February.

Lee says, "Shirley's willingness to challenge the status quo changed Congress and the face of American politics," says Lee. "She fought 'the good fight' and she remained 'unbossed and unbought.'"

Looking forward to the time that she would no longer be on earth, Chisholm said she did not want to be remembered for being the "first Black woman congressman."

She said, "I'd like them to say that Shirley Chisholm had guts. That's how I'd like to be remembered."



Harold Ford, Jr. Point Man for the Right Wing

"You have to understand people like George Bush. He's a nice guy. We need to learn from him. Remember what Bill Clinton did: He figured out what Republicans were doing well, and instead of complaining about it, he figured out a way to do it better." - Rep. Harold Ford, Jr. (D-TN)

The Black body politic has been invaded by corporate money, which seeks through its media arms to select a "new" Black leadership from among a small group of compliant and corrupt Democrats. Memphis Congressman Harold Ford, Jr. is a principal vector of the disease, an eager acolyte of the corporate-funded Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), and now the point man among Black Democrats in the Republican mission to destroy Social Security.

Ford should also be known as the "Black Man Who Dances With Blue Dogs" - one of only two Black congressional members of the Blue Dog Democratic Coalition (the other Black and Blue Dog is Georgia Rep. Sanford Bishop). C-span congressional scholar Ilona Nickles aptly describes the Blue Dogs as "closer in purpose to a former coalition of southern Members of the House known as the 'Boll Weevils,' whose heyday was in the early 1980's. These Members defected as a group from the Democratic party to vote with Congressional Republicans on budgetary and tax bills."

Harold Ford is preparing to defect from the Democratic and Congressional Black caucuses in service to George Bush's Social Security privatization scheme, which he has embraced in principle. Blue Dog and DLC congresspersons form the core of the Democrats that Ford hopes will join Republicans, like South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, "to create an ownership society in a variety of creative ways, and move away from 'if you're for privatization, you're with the Republicans' and 'if you're against it, you're with the Democrats,'" in Ford's words.

"Ownership society" is, of course, the slogan George Bush has deployed in his campaign to transfer trillions of Social Security dollars to Wall Street.

White House guru Karl Rove must be giving Harold Ford copies of Bush's scripts. The 34-year-old congressman has been mimicking Bush on Social Security since at least April of last year, when Ford addressed a forum organized by Centrists.Org, the Concord Coalition, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget at the New America Foundation, and the Alliance for Worker Retirement Security. The latter is a front set up by the National Association of Manufacturers specifically to undermine Social Security. Centrists.Org is the Blue Dog Coalition's think tank, the Concord Coalition opposes "entitlements" of all kinds and spreads hysteria about the coming "bankruptcy" of Social Security, while the New America Foundation's Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget is a public policy factory for a mix of DLC Democrats and "moderate" Republicans. All are slaves of corporate funding.

What do these people have to do with Rep. Ford's mostly Black constituents in the 9th Congressional District in Memphis, Tennessee? Nothing. They are denizens of purely corporate constructs that share no constituencies on Ford's home turf or in any significant sector of Black America. The congressman has journeyed far afield to inhabit a Neverland much more dangerous and alien to Black interests than anything Michael Jackson could conjure or imagine. Harold Ford has crossed over to the corporate side of the world, beyond redemption. And he's not alone. As we wrote in our December 2, 2004 Cover Story, "Black Dems Must Clean Up Their Own Act."

"One-fifth of the CBC are members of the DLC. These include Harold Ford, Jr. (TN)...Artur Davis (AL), beneficiary of the 2002 corporate cash offensive that also ousted Cynthia McKinney in neighboring Georgia; David Scott (GA), possibly the most conservative-voting member of the CBC, also a 2002 Black "New Democrat"; Gregory Meeks (NY); Juanita Millender-McDonald (CA) and James E. Clyburn (SC), an otherwise decent man who nevertheless finds it useful to co-chair his

state's DLC; and Albert R. Wynn (MD), who is proud to have "represented the Congressional Black Caucus on the [House Democratic] Caucus Democratic Leadership Council."

Not all of these tainted Black politicians will abandon the historical Black Political Consensus to support privatization of Social Security - the founding program of the New Deal - but Harold Ford has already sprinted across the great divide. Ford's personal ambitions and utter lack of principle have propelled him beyond the boundaries of the Black Consensus and, therefore, outside of the African American conversation. The problem is: Black people don't control the terms of their own conversations. Corporate domination over media is just as endemic to the Black airwaves and print outlets as to general media, and these media corporations celebrate crossover dreams even when they are the product of treachery against historical and current Black aspirations.

More troubling, progressive Blacks, including the 18 members of the Congressional Black Caucus (out of 43) that belong to the Congressional Progressive Caucus, are loathe to confront treason in the ranks, and thus allow malefactors like Harold Ford to work their show for the rich white corporate folks, without political penalty. Ford's constituents in Memphis don't even know that he's stabbing them in the back. Yet Harold Ford cut the deepest cut of all: "I'm a Democrat because I think we are more often right," Ford told the Nashville Scene, back in March. "But there are some things some Democrats believe that I don't. I don't think government is an insurance program."

With that statement, the well-educated but ill-raised Harold Ford reveals that he either misunderstands or opposes the very premise of Social Security, which is an insurance program against the vicissitudes of the stock market.

On August 14, 1935, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt described his new Social Security Act to the U.S. Congress in these words:

"[It] represents a cornerstone in a

structure which is being built but is by no means completed - a structure intended to lessen the force of possible future depressions, to act as a protection to future administrations of the Government against the necessity of going deeply into debt to funding relief to the needy, a law to flatten out the peaks and valleys of deflation and of inflation - in other words, a law that will take care of human needs and at the same time provide for the United States an economic structure of vastly greater soundness."

Social Security was conceived as an insurance policy against the inevitable booms and busts of capitalism - economic tremors, and sometimes earthquakes, that wreak excessive damage among African Americans like Harold Ford's Memphis constituents. In his zeal to position himself to run for Bill Frist's Senate seat in 2006, Ford would destroy the last major government program that gives the United States any claim to civilization among industrial nations. He is already embarked on a crime of historic proportions.

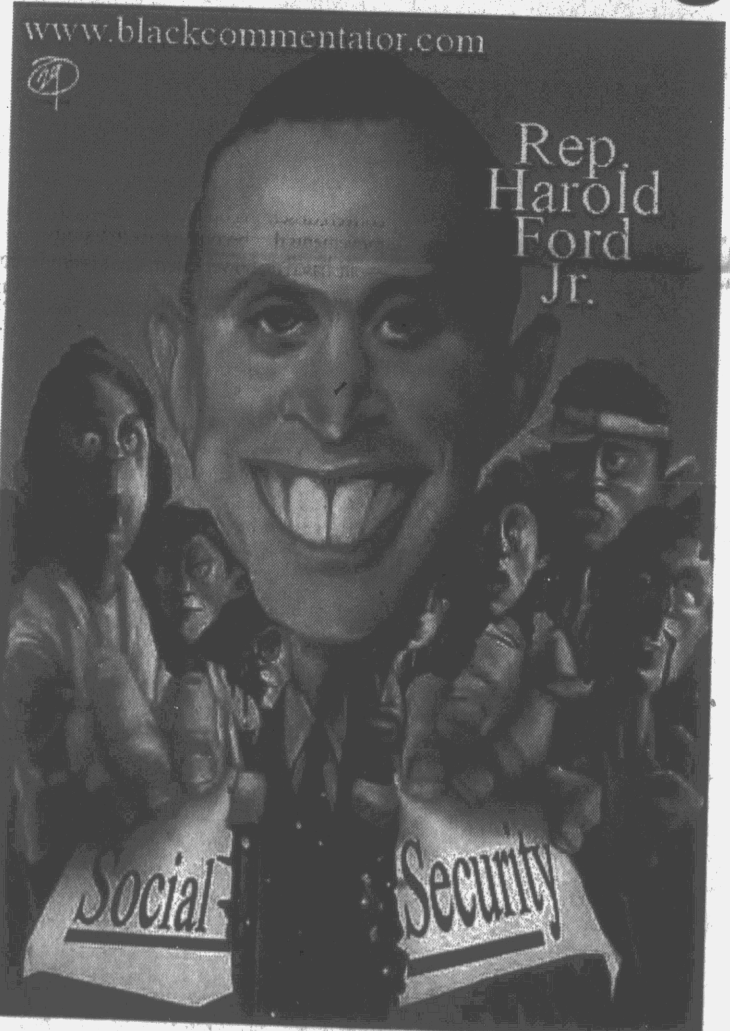
Ford has enlisted in a multi-trillion dollar scam, "a fake solution to a fake crisis," as Princeton University economist and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman puts it. There is no "crisis" in Social Security, but the Bush administration is determined to create one at the cost of trillions of dollars in order to destroy the last major vestige of Roosevelt's New Deal while filling the coffers of their Wall Street patrons. "The date at which the trust fund will run out, according to Social Security Administration [SSA] projections, has receded steadily into the future," writes Krugman in a special issue of the scholarly journal, *Economist's Voice*. "Ten years ago it was 2029, now it's 2042. As Kevin Drum, Brad DeLong, and others have pointed out, the SSA estimates are very conservative, and quite moderate projections of economic growth push the exhaustion date into the indefinite future."

The promise made to aging Americans (that is, all of us) under the Social Security program is the same one made to foreign holders of American debt: you will be paid. What George Bush and

often categorized as a criminal justice issue, gun violence is a public health crisis that has devastated Black neighborhoods throughout the nation.

As the 109th Congress convenes changes in the federal financial aid program for college students - the Pell Grant - will mean many young people will receive reduced assistance, and some will be excluded altogether, at a time when many colleges and universities, public and private, are increasing tuition and fees. At the secondary level the maddening push for higher test scores is producing a generation of test driven drones who are ill equipped to fully exercise their God given intellect. And many urban school districts, under pressure from Mr. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act and suburban controlled state legislatures, are seeing little light at the end of the tunnel.

Then there is the matter of Mr. Bush's war, courtesy of Rumsfeld Inc. Any sane assessment of what has transpired in the Persian Gulf region will call it for what it is - an unmitigated disaster. And an arrogance of power in the Oval Office and a complicit news media are to blame. Whatever hap-



surrogates like Harold Ford are threatening - and it is a monstrous threat - is to renege on Americans who have contributed heavily into payroll taxes for most of their lives, while maintaining obligations to the foreigners who finance chronic U.S. debt. Both Social Security and the offshore debt are secured by the "full faith and credit" of the American government. That means, in Krugman's analysis, "we can't have a Social Security crisis without a general fiscal crisis - unless Congress declares that debts to foreign bondholders must be honored, but that promises to older Americans, who

have spent most of their working lives paying extra payroll taxes to build up the trust fund, don't count."

Social Security is, in fact, the great scapegoat for the Bush Pirate regime's current and future corporate raids on the U.S. economy. "The long-term cost of the Bush tax cuts is five times the budget office's estimate of Social Security's deficit over the next 75 years," writes Krugman, in his New York Times column. "The botched prescription

Point Man

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from coming ashore in the nation's capital as George W. Bush, in the irony of ironies, places his hand on the Bible and is sworn in for a second term. Caught in the current are thousands of Black families, parents struggling to make ends meet, children trapped in failing schools, young men enticed by the underground economy because legitimate opportunities are few and far between, and young women who are fighting for survival. And there appears to be little relief on the way for Black Americans, many of whom are continually swimming against the tide and some who will be swept up in the undertow.

Walter Fields, Esq., the CEO of the North Star Network and former the Director of Public Affairs for the New York State Trial Lawyers Association. Mr. Fields is a frequent guest on national and local public affairs programs, including CNBC's "Hardball with Chris Matthews," MSNBC's "Equal Time," Fox News Channel's "The O'Reilly Factor," "America's Black Forum," and "Hannity & Colmes," "BET Tonight" and Court TV's "Pros & Cons."

So now the wave is just three weeks

Facing Our Own Tsunami

by Walter Fields, Esq.

Get Ready For the Wave of Destruction

Well it's here. After a tumultuous 2004 the New Year was ushered in with a natural disaster of Biblical proportion - an ocean borne earthquake that spawned a tidal wave, or tsunami, in the Indian Ocean that engulfed several nations along the Asian, Indian and African coastlines. With the death toll still mounting, the natural disaster quickly became the top story of last year and for all we know may be the leading news story of 2005.

In many ways the notion of being swept under by seemingly immovable forces seems apropos as a description of what many Black Americans are currently experiencing. Coming off a presidential election in which a majority of Americans took issue with the president's decision to wage war in Iraq, and began to question Mr. Bush's rationale for invading a country unprovoked by its government but still said moral

clarity was foremost in their choice of candidate, Blacks appear to be lost in the wilderness; a forty-year leaderless sojourn coming as it does sandwiched between two symbolic anniversaries - the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

So as the United States commits close to a half billion in aid for the relief effort in Asia, as they should, I cannot help but be somewhat distracted by the ideological tsunami that has overwhelmed many Blacks in the United States. Last year we learned once again of the horrific consequences of so-called "tough on crime" laws as statistics revealed the aftermath: more than a third of all state and federal prisoners are Blacks and some ten percent of all Black men between the ages of 25 and 29 are imprisoned. Compounding incarceration rates has been the relentlessness of the Bush economy on Blacks seeking entry into the labor market. Double-digit unemployment, at rates twice that of whites, and long periods out of the

workforce has come to be the experience of many Blacks under this administration. And there does not appear to be much good news on the horizon, not with the notion of a "jobless recovery" becoming widely accepted.

The undertow has also dredged up statistics that make clear the community's poor health. Research reported at the end of the year revealed that almost 900,000 African-Americans deaths during a ten-year period could have been avoided had people received the same quality of health care as whites. It was a striking reminder of how racism has life and death consequences. Meanwhile, AIDS is ravaging Black America and taking a particularly harsh toll on heterosexual African-American women, a fact that exposed the ignorance of Vice President Dick Cheney during the vice presidential debate when he claimed to be unaware of this crisis. Trailing HIV/AIDS, but still of great significance for Blacks, is asthma, diabetes, and heart disease. And though

M-Voice OP

Because whatever happens to America happens to Black America first....

Martin: His Dream, His Reality- Our Legacy

which all other visionaries of the World peace and equity movement have aspired. A twist of fate would have it, and not his intended speech of delivery which, by the way was scrapped at mid-point, give way to pause, contemplation and vision to a world beyond what eyes and minds could then conceive...

"I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the victims of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal..." (The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr., Warner Books, NY, 1998)

His Reality:

His was a self-proclaimed style of Social Gospel advocacy, defined as a liberal movement that attempted to apply Biblical teachings to problems associated with industrialization or changes in lifestyle, transportation, and other aspects of society (The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible, 1984 Parthenon Press, Nashville, TN).

Martin was also a student of the teachings of Walter Rauchenbush, whose philosophy focused on social progress and

the essential goodness of man; such thinking later became the blue print more or less - for Roosevelt's New Deal Policy- whereby social programs were set forth to assist the poor into economic efficiency.

From the philosophical pen of Plato, Locke, Hobbes, to the Sociological brilliance of Karl Marx, the Western Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr and especially the study of Ghandi's passive resistance/non-violent philosophies, King was an enormous figure who dared think outside the box.

Fearlessness of the unknown allowed Martin's genius to explore and reinterpret one-eyed views of

fundamentalist teaching. Riverside Webster's II Dictionary defines fundamentalism as the belief that religious or political doctrine should be implemented literally, not interpreted or adapted. For Martin was convinced that, "any religion professing concern for the souls of men and is not equally concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them and the social conditions that cripple them is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried." (The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr., Warner Books, NY, 1998)

Our Legacy:

Ours is his legacy rich with meaning, moral and ethical applications for good living and unending progress no matter

the mountains we must climb. Martin reminded us that they can be made low. Perception, mind you, is the key to all things. Ours is his legacy that implores us to search for the truth and to choose analysis over paralysis in all situations no matter the reactionary forum in which it rises.

It's been a long 40 years, but look at what progress we've made. To that Dick Gregory, who graced ECU Murphy's center Monday on January 10, 2005 in Celebration of King, adds "no other group of people on the face of this earth have come as far in as many years-what gains, what strides. Be proud! Martin is as great a man as there ever was, and 100 years from those people will be talking about him...and what he did for the world."

On that note, now that we're out

of the wilderness let's not party to revel, but plan a party to ensure that we pass our spirit of endurance and survival on to the masses. And for those who ask the question: They still here? Our little survivalist can respond resoundingly: YES- we still be in house that us folks built! Holla!

Yours in the struggle,
Susie Clemons

ERRATA: December 15, 2004

edition of M-Voice newspaper. The statistics on HIV/Aids for black women and girls, 5 paragraph, should have read: "Black women are diagnosed with 72% of all new HIV/Aids cases among women, and Black girls 76% of all teenage teens." Essence Magazine, December 2004, volume 35, number 8.

Susie Clemons His Dream

On August 28, 1963, in the nation's capitol before the Lincoln Memorial, and in particular facing the Washington Monument, better known as the Egyptian symbol of the Sun, the Obelisk, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered to a crowd of 250,000 by land and millions more by television the public decree: democracy and freedom belong, not to some, but to all men, women, boys and girls.

Need anyone remind the other that neither the spirit of confusion nor that or chaos was powerful enough to coup the planned celebration of our Almighty God in Heaven on that day. For on that day Martin stood on the top of the mountain and parted the Red Sea for our maiden voyage. In so doing he freed the spirit, body and mind of a people entrapped by an unrepentant suckling known by her name, trade and commerce.

The echoing phrase, "I Have a Dream", and its ensuing message became King's indelible mark of distinction, to

Black on Black crime is not about a lack of racial pride

For the past several years much ado has been made over statistics that show the overwhelming majority of crimes committed upon Black people are committed by Black people themselves. To that we say, so what?—That's not the problem! The same source of those statistics would reveal that the overwhelming majority of crimes committed upon White people are committed by White people. The same applies to Hispanics, Asians and virtually every other ethnic group. SO IT IS NOT ABOUT BLACK POLKS NOT HAVING RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER!

The problem that results in "Black on Black Crime" is that we still live in a segregated America for the most part. Most crimes are relatively spontaneous, particularly murder. That means that crimes are committed by persons whose places of residence, employment and recreation are generally in proximity to the victims. If Black people, then, live in the same

communities (and we do for the most part), the crimes against person and property that Blacks commit will most often be committed against other Blacks.

Now, we could debate the merits or problems associated with segregated communities until we're blue in the face but that's another issue. If you'll look back at our earlier statement we said the problem that "results" in Black on Black crime is segregated communities. Segregated communities are not the problem — an erosion of values is the problem. Black people steal, rob and kill because of an erosion of values. The same is the reason Whites, Asians and Hispanics commit these crimes.

Rather than "hating" on ourselves and concluding that "something must be wrong with us" let's get about the business of addressing the root causes of crime — and please don't blame it all on poverty and/or racism. The country is full of poor, discriminated against Black people who've never committed a crime — AND

NEVER WILL!

Now with all that being said, the fact that White people kill White people and that Hispanics kill Hispanics or that Asians kill Asians is no is no justification for anyone robbing, raping, harming or killing anyone. If, in segregated America, we want safe and peaceful communities we have to (from within our communities) insist upon that safety and peace. Greater police presence and sure and consistent applications of justice for breachers of the peace are certainly deterrents. Internal preventive initiatives to crime, however, are the measures that will bring about and maintain peace and tranquility within our neighborhoods. Crime, when it occurs, should be a departure from the norm — not the norm itself.

Get to know your neighbors. Share your interests with them and develop an understanding of their interests. Begin community projects to improve the quality of life in your

neighborhood and be sure to involve children. Don't spend more time doing things "for" children than with them. Then we must set a positive example for our children. Children who grow up in households where conflict is resolved through violence will typically resort to the same tactic to resolve conflict situations they face.

Rather than allowing our young people to develop the attitude that education is not important we should constantly point to examples where success has only been made possible through academic pursuit. We should make sure our young people understand, for example, that of the millions of kids playing high school basketball in America today, only about 500 of them will ever make it to the NBA. For those few who make it, their hard work and commitment pays wonderful rewards, but for the rest? —Without a decent education they'll likely wind up being some of the tallest busboys in town.

Beyond Elections: Dr. King's Teachings On Strategy And Tactics

by Paul Rockwell
A Strategy Beyond Elections

OAKLAND, CA - King Strategy Applies To Imperialism As Well As Segregation According to Arundhati Roy, "There is no discussion taking place in the world today that is more crucial than the debate about strategies of resistance."

There is no greater strategist in American history, no teacher more relevant to our post-election malaise, than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. King was more than a moral visionary; he was a creative tactician. All of us — especially leaders of the peace movement — have much to learn from King's teachings on strategy and tactics.

In the late 1950s a major change took place within the civil rights community, a shift from representative government to direct action democracy. When the young Black movement broke away from the confines of electoral politics, society began to change.

Before 1960, the NAACP was the most prestigious civil rights organization in the U.S. It handled legal cases, achieved an historic victory in Brown v Board of Education, and carried out valuable work within the normal channels of government — Congress and the courts. Its leaders were drawn primarily from the professional class, and its approach to segregation was institutional. While the NAACP was widely respected throughout the U.S., it did not have a mass base in the South.

The rise of mass-action strategy changed the course of history. It was a boycott — the Montgomery bus boy-

cott, led by Dr. King — that launched the modern civil rights movement. African Americans made up 70 percent of the passengers in Montgomery, and the boycott was based on the simple recognition that the local merchants were economically dependent on Black riders. "The oppressed have power." That was the ironic revelation on which the entire civil rights movement was based. All great social movements — movements that convert dissenting opinion into leverage, movements that become a force in history — are based on power, not mere communication of discontent.

It was during the Montgomery bus boycott, spontaneous in origin, that Dr. King, as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, developed a long-term strategy for desegregation. In his autobiography (replete with insights on tactics and strategy) King describes his debt to Gandhi and his strategic revelations about applied ethics and social movements. He raises the questions that all movements address: Do strikes and boycotts work? Are they fair? Are the hardships worth the gains? Where is the oppressor vulnerable? And where does the potential power of the oppressed reside? King gives an initial answer: "We would use this boycott method to give birth to justice and freedom.... I came to see that what we were really doing was withdrawing our cooperation from an evil system, rather than merely withdrawing our support from the bus company. The bus company, being an external expression of the system, would naturally suffer, but the basic aim was to refuse to cooperate with

evil. We were simply saying to the white community: We can no longer lend our cooperation to an evil system. From that moment on I conceived of our movement as an act of massive non-cooperation."

King always recognized the significance of spontaneous actions, but he also realized that, without organization and long-range strategy, spontaneous energy easily dissipates. Planned, well-organized boycotts played a major role throughout all phases of the civil rights movement.

On February 1st 1960, four Black college freshmen sat down at a whites-only lunch counter at Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina. The sit-in movement was born. Supported by Dr. King, SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) called for a boycott of Woolworth's, "a nation-wide campaign of selective buying." Pickets went up throughout the country.

White students in the North were eager to support the civil rights movement. The national boycott provided a vehicle for their pent-up energy and creativity. They put up posters, set up pickets, devised new chants, sang songs in front of stores, and turned shoppers into activists for civil rights. Some of the students who participated in the boycott later became founders of Students for a Democratic Society, a massive nation-wide student organization committed to participatory democracy.

Students are more easily aroused and energized by direct action than by electoral campaigns for pre-selected candidates. The vitality of the civil rights movement was due in part to its independence

from the confines and self-censorship of electoral politics. Under the leadership of Dr. King, the civil rights movement kept the initiative and put the supporters of the status quo on the defensive. The boy-

cotts enabled millions of supporters to participate in the movement on a weekly and daily basis. For King, the calendar of justice was not determined by the dates of Presidential and Congressional elections.

Civil rights leaders chose their own battlefields according to their own needs and strengths, and they set the deadlines for their adversaries. King did not wait to see
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Southeast Asia Disaster: This Could Happen Here

by Wilbert A. Tatum

There is no way that we can adequately describe the tragedy that occurred on two continents and seven countries in Southeast Asia. At last count, there were an estimated 150,000 people killed, at least 30% of them children. There is no way at this point that we can tell how high the toll will go. But certainly it will be as many as 200,000 and perhaps even 400,000 after the count for those who were killed by disease, accidents, and poor health after the tragedy occurred.

Some countries all over the world have responded to this cry by the United States and others for help. Many have responded. The United States - in spite of its being criticized for being stingy - as were other rich countries, provided most of the food, clothing, shelter, fresh water and money needed to prevent further death and provide relief from the maladies that occurred as a consequence of the tsunamis that came about as a result of an earthquake.

Tsunamis are something relatively new for this country. We have not experienced one for at least fifty years, and that occurred in Alaska, where the death toll was so low in comparison that our historical memory was thwarted. We can count now: we have already given you the numbers as we see them, and they are frightening.

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Continued from Page 2

drug bill passed in 2003 does more, all by itself, to increase the long-run budget deficit than the projected rise in Social Security expenses. "The prescription drug bill is a massive transfer of public funds to the pharmaceutical industry, without lowering prices for American consumers, the highest by far in the world - the job Republicans were put in office to perform.

Along with the fake Social Security crisis comes fake Black leadership, in the person of Harold Ford, vouched for by People magazine as one of the "50 most beautiful people in the world." Ford, the perfect example of bamboozlement, and armed with a total immunity to facts, is so dense that he believes his relative youth trumps reason and data. "I'm 33 years old, and many in my generation will tell you they're not expect-

You will recall that fewer than 2,000 Americans have been killed in the war now going on in Iraq and Afghanistan (plus ten times as many nationals of those countries), although we

A QUESTION WAS POSED AS TO WHETHER THIS KIND OF DISASTER CAN OCCUR ON THE SHORES OF NORTH AMERICA? THE ANSWER IS YES.

can get no accurate figures from their governments. Ten times as many would be a fair guess. But even at that, the death toll is only 20,000. And the toll of death attributed to the tsunamis will surely be 200,000, 300,000 or more.

Fortunately for us, we can see the death and devastation due to the miracle of television that began to come in immediately after the first tsunami hit the day after Christmas. In spite of the fact

that the United States and other (rich) countries such as Germany, Italy, England, France and Australia were being called stingy by the rest of the world, it was clear that the United States alone

had contributed more in goods and services than all of these countries combined. Yet, Herculean efforts were being made to bring water, medicine and food to the broadest reaches of these seven countries on two continents.

It has been estimated that there were at least 200,000 Europeans on the subcontinents when the earthquake struck, and their own countries are working valiantly to see to it that they, or their bodies, are recovered in a timely fashion.

Rep. Ford's dialogue with sworn enemies of Social Security has led him to devise schemes to "target benefit levels to those who actually work longer" - a dagger in the heart of Black Americans, who are forced to work under less reliable terms of employment and with less compensation than whites. Thus, Ford would exacerbate the institutional racist bias against Black workers - a population about which he appears to know nothing. But Dr. Rockey Moore, does:

"Because of historical patterns of discrimination in the U.S. education

A question was posed as to whether this kind of disaster can occur on the shores of North America? The answer is yes. It is only a matter of time when such a disaster does occur, but American scientists have put in place the kinds of warning signals that will eliminate the kind of massive death and destruction that we see going on now in Southeast Asia.

As days go on and we see more and more death, more and more destruction, we will probably begin to realize how futile it is for us to go to war with one another. There are enough natural disasters for the world to get along. There are enough disasters to fulfill any appetite that mankind may have for such atrocity. Where must we go, as a civilization, from here? We certainly must figure out what scientists from over the rest of the world ponder: how

an effective and early warning system can be devised, and whether there is any technical knowledge that we might gather in order to combat that which appears to be unchallengeable - a natural disaster without any form of relief.

Even as we sit and ponder, there is nothing that can be offered to those who suffer except death and luck. That is not a very friendly kind of persuasion. Let us close out where we are now with prayers for the living and prayers for the dead resulting from this freak of nature, and hope for those who survive that man can, in his wisdom, create something to counteract such maladies - or, if nothing else works, an assurance that prayer is the only answer.

Wilbert A. Tatum is Publisher Emeritus & Chairman of the Board of the Amsterdam News

system and labor market, African Americans are more likely to earn a modest living during the course of their working lives, more likely to have experienced spells of unemployment or underemployment, and more likely to retire with less income from private pensions, assets or personal savings."

The Bush administration's assault on the last bastion of the American social safety net can be repulsed, but only if we reject the Trojan Horses who have been positioned in Black ranks - most notably, Harold Ford. The deplorable state of Black media has set charlatans like Ford free to trot around the country, forging alliances with Republicans and Dixiecrats at will. Ford was among the "Four Eunuchs" of the Congressional Black Caucus who endorsed George Bush's Iraq War powers, in October 2002. He was re-elected the next month, and two years after that, as were the three other eunuchs.

There seems to be no accountability in Black politics, no incisive coverage of political figures on Black radio and effective print media (forget television), and no reliable campaign contributions except from the corporate sector and stingy labor unions. In this environment, media caricatures like Harold Ford thrive. The virus spreads, undermining the Black Political Consensus that nevertheless propels 90 percent of us in the same direction, every presidential election.

But we fail to exercise due diligence on the home front, in our own districts. That's why Harold Ford exists, as a political figure. We hope this article finds its way into as many Memphis households as possible, where it can do the most good.

Harold Ford styles himself as the candidate of youth. However, we know that greed and ambition are as old as dirt.

The Minority Voice Newspaper is Published by The Minority Voice, Inc. Jim Rouse Publisher/Founder Galus O. Sims, Sr. Operations Manager/Editor Home Office 405 Evans St. P.O. Box 8361 Greenville, NC 27835 Phone: (252) 757-0365 Fax: (252) 757-1793 EMAIL: mvoicepaper@aol.com

The Minority Voice is Owned & Operated by Jim Rouse Communications, also dba WOOW Radio Greenville NC. Wm. Clark: Gen. Mgr. and WTOW Radio, Washington, NC.

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Iraq and Haiti If Elections Can Happen In Iraq, Why Not Haiti

Having helped to bring about the horrendous mess that has been unfolding in Haiti following the overthrow of elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Bush administration faces a tremendous dilemma. There is no stability at all. The puppet government has proven totally incompetent in addressing anything ranging from natural disasters to the reign of terror by the thugs of the former Haitian military. The obvious hope of the Bush administration was for a smooth transition, but there is nothing smooth about the situation in Haiti.

In this setting of chaos, a peculiar proposal has begun to emerge. Sort of

like the emergence of a rash, with first one bump and then more, various individuals have started to suggest that the situation in Haiti is hopeless. Specifically, they suggest that it is impossible for Haiti to return to stability in the near future and, therefore, the elections that are scheduled to take place in the fall of 2005 will have to be put off. Actually, this line does not end there: the elections would need to be put off indefinitely while Haiti is placed under a United Nations protectorate to help the country recover from its current trauma.

On one level, this may sound quite reasonable. Killings continue to take

place, particularly targeting supporters of ousted President Aristide. Leaders from President Aristide's administration, along with ranking members of the Fanmi Lavalas political party, are underground or in exile. Unemployment is going through the roof. So, one may ask, why not just put the whole thing off?

The first answer is contained in one word: Iraq. As you may have noted, the Bush administration has been willing to push forward with an election in Iraq despite the fact that there is a full-scale guerrilla war underway, along with the activities of terrorists. There is no stability, yet the Bush administration and

many of their allies believe that an election needs to happen in order to send the right signal, whatever that signal happens to be.

So, what about Haiti? The violence is certainly not on the scale that is taking place in Iraq, but more importantly, the violence can be contained largely because it is being carried out by supporters of the government, otherwise known as allies of the USA. Thus, it does not take an Einstein to understand that should the Bush administration truly wish to end the killings in Haiti and provide the groundwork for elections, that it could do this with a bit of pressure on both the

puppet government and the thugs running around the countryside.

It is amazing that a situation that the Bush administration repeatedly described as being out of control under the leadership of President Aristide is now either ignored entirely or considered unredeemable short of a UN trusteeship.

Demonstrations are taking place in Haiti on a regular basis calling for the return of elected President Aristide. If there is any doubt as to who should be the legitimate leader of Haiti, then free and fair elections would be the most effective means of establishing an answer. In order for elections to take place, the

killings must stop and this demands that the Brazilian troops currently in Haiti under a UN mandate take a strong and unequivocal stand in favor of the rule of law and break the backs of the armed thugs. It is clear to most observers that the armed thugs allied with the puppet government could not withstand a crack down by the Brazilian military.

A crackdown must be accompanied by legitimate, independent assistance in paving the way for new elections. Unfortunately, assistance from the USA, with the possible exception of some financial assistance to an honest intermediary, seems much too risky for many to take seriously. The destabilization project undertaken against the Aristide administration by the USA, including a de facto blockade, makes any suggestion of US involvement a source of concern. The same can be said for France which played nothing short of a despicable role in the overthrow of Aristide. There are, however, countries in the Organization of American States and the African Union, along, perhaps with the Nordic countries, that might be willing and able to assist in the transition back to democracy.

We have to stop permitting our leaders to speak with forked tongue. There is nothing special about Iraq that permits it to have elections in a time of war—leaving aside the entire question of the legitimacy of their proposed elections—while Haiti remains under a cloud. There are some disturbing racial overtones to the notion that Haiti is an eternal basket case that can only be improved by being caged as a UN protectorate. The basket in which Haiti is encased is one that was woven by the USA and France a very long time ago. It is time for Haiti to regain its sovereignty and be permitted to follow its own path.

Bill Fletcher Jr. is president of TransAfrica Forum, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit educational and organizing center formed to raise awareness in the United States about issues facing the nations and peoples of Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. He also is co-chair of the anti-war coalition, United for Peace and Justice (www.unitedforpeace.org). He can be reached at bfletcher@transafricaforum.org.

Many Celebrants of the King National Holiday Miss The Point Recognizing the Real Legacy of MLK



By Ron Daniels

Once again we are in the season where we celebrate the life of an African Saint, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In his brief 39 years on this planet, he changed the course of history for Africans in America in terms of the struggle for democratic rights and economic justice. King was clearly centered in the radical democratic tradition of Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois. He was also a firm believer in the promise of the American creed who, through the power of his ideas, nonviolent resistance and powerful/persuasive oratory, challenged

America to live up to her professed ideals as articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Coupling the philosophy of the Hindu spiritual leader and social justice activist, Mahatma Gandhi, with the tenets of the social gospel of Christianity, King galvanized one of the most significant social movements in the history of this country, a movement that eventually inspired oppressed people in virtually every quarter of the world to believe that "we shall overcome."

But King's triumphs did not flow from merely postulating and presenting ideas about social justice and social change. In the spirit of Frederick Douglass, his triumphs were the result of serious struggle. Douglass taught that "power concedes nothing without a demand, it never has and it never will. Find out just what a people will submit to and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong that will be imposed upon them..." King understood this and hence his message was geared to inspiring the downtrodden to rise up, non-violently, to confront and overcome the injustices and wrongs that had been heaped upon them. The sons and daughters of former enslaved Africans rose up to confront, challenge and overcome the sons and daughters of former slave masters. We shattered the shackles of south-

ern apartheid and regained our sense of dignity as a people—because we stood, made demands and backed them with struggle!

April 4, 1967, they killed the dreamer with the intent of destroying the dream and the movement that had transformed America. And since King's tragic and untimely death, the power elite of this nation has attempted to render the dream impotent and passé by smothering it in meaningless celebration, ritual, pomp and circumstance. The National Holiday, though educational and informative, treats King's dream as if it is a fait accompli, as if the struggle for social justice and social change for Africans in America and other oppressed people is finished. Hence, the Holiday is generally devoid of the kinds of actions that reflect King's determination to continue the struggle until America has indeed lived up to its promise to ensure "life, liberty and happiness" for all her sons and daughters. The spirit of King no longer lives in the celebrations that adorn America in his name.

There is much work to be done to make America and the world the "promised land" King envisioned. 1965 witnessed one of the greatest triumphs in the ministry of Martin Luther King. He was called to Selma to lead a march to Montgomery to demand voter rights for

disfranchised Blacks after an initial attempt was brutally turned back on "Bloody Sunday" on the Edmund Pettis Bridge. Gathering up his disciples and devotees of the movement, with the eyes of the world watching, the second attempt succeeded. Out of this momentous triumph of the people was spawned the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965. But the meaning of that moment has been tarnished by the fact that forty years later we have experienced yet another election where Black voters were disenfranchised in Ohio and other states.

Two years from now the Voting Rights Act will come up for renewal and there is no certainty that the Congress, under the sway of the conservatives, will be in a mood to extend it. Moreover, election 2004 exposed once again that there is an urgent need for election reform to take private money out of politics and make it easier for people to permanently register and vote. There is also a need to open up the process to provide greater access to third parties and independent candidates. As we commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery March this year, it is clear that we must keep King's spirit alive.

However, protecting the right to vote is not the only issue on the unfinished civil rights/human rights agenda. There is a war in Iraq that is thwarting the process on turning "swords into ploughshares" to meet the human needs of poor and working people in this country and the world. Our civil liberties are

being snatched away under the guise of fighting a "war on terrorism" in a hostile world of America's making. Fifty percent of the Black men in New York City are unemployed. The numbers in other urban centers are not at the same level, but are still disastrously high. Inferior education is the order of the day in America's "dark ghettos," a fact that inevitably means that a disproportionate number of young Black men will end up populating America's jails and prisons. In the face of these stark realities, nowhere do we hear plans for a "domestic Marshall plan" to rebuild the urban ghettos and rescue the shattered lives of millions of people for whom King's dream is a mirage.

Therefore, ceremonies, celebration and rituals can be no substitute for the kind of righteous work that King did while he walked among us. We must keep King's spirit alive in words and deeds, marching, picketing, demonstrating, voting, engaging in civil disobedience, daring to courageously fight for social justice and social change until we can truly proclaim that all of God's children are "free at last." This is the lesson to be learned from reflecting on the life of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., our Black Saint!

Ron Daniels is an internationally recognized human rights activist and Executive Director of the New York City based Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)

Black Enterprise Announces List of 75 Most Powerful African Americans in Corporate America

18 CEOs HIGHLIGHT LIST, REPRESENTING A 300% INCREASE FROM 2000 TALLY (New York, NY) Jan. 11, 2005 — BLACK ENTERPRISE (BE) today announced its list of the 75 Most Powerful African Americans in Corporate America, as featured in the February 2005 cover story. The list, which includes 18 CEOs (15 men and three women), was culled from the 1,000 largest domestic and international corporations traded publicly on the U.S. equities markets. The top 75 include representatives from a total of 62 companies representing 12 industries. The full list includes 15 women—the most to appear on similar lists compiled by BE. Young & Rubicam Brands CEO Ann M. Fudge represents one of three female chief executives. "I think African American women have met the challenges of corporate America," she says, "and absolutely there is no doubt there will be an African American woman running a Fortune 500 company. It's going to happen." In 1988 when BE named the 25 Hottest Corporate Managers, the list was devoid of black chief executives. By 1993, there were 12 presidents and two CEOs among the 40 African Americans included in the top tier: Richard D. Parsons, the then-CEO of Dime Savings Bank of New York, and Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. CEO of TIAA-CREF. When BE selected the Top 50 Blacks in Corporate America in 2000, the number of CEOs had grown to six. This year, the number of African American CEOs rose to 18—a 300% increase Franklin D. Raines, former chairman and CEO of Fannie Mae resigned his post shortly after the list was compiled.

Has progress been made? "Well yes and no," says BE Founder and Publisher Earl G. Graves Sr. "While it is true that the corporate elite identified in our 2005 list represent a 300% increase over our 1988 list, it is also true that African Americans still hold less than 12 of the tens of thousands of senior-level, corporate posts at America's 1,000 largest public corporations."

The 13 African American executives who have attained the rank of CEO are: Kenneth I. Chenault, Chairman and CEO, American Express; Erroll B. Davis Jr., Chairman and CEO, Alliant Energy; Reginald E. Davis, CEO, Wachovia;

W.H. "Bill" Easter III, Chairman, CEO, and President, Duke Energy Field Services;

Ann M. Fudge, Chairman and CEO, Young & Rubicam Brands; Arthur "Art" R. Harper, CEO and President, GE Equipment Services;

Carl Horton, CEO and President, The Absolut Spirit Company Inc;

Aylin Lewis, President and CEO, Kmart;

Renetta McCann, CEO, Starcom Americas;

E. Stanley O'Neal, Chairman, CEO, and President, Merrill Lynch & Co.

Clarence Otis Jr., CEO, Darden Restaurants; Dan Packer, CEO and President, Entergy New Orleans;

Richard D. Parsons, Chairman and CEO, Time Warner;

Franklin D. Raines, former Chairman and CEO of Fannie Mae;

Pamela Thomas-Graham, CEO and President, CNBC;

John W. Thompson, Chairman and CEO, Symantec Corp.; Lloyd G. Trotter, CEO and President, GE Consumer and Industrial and R.L. "Bob" Wood, Chairman, CEO, and President, Crompton Corp.

Ten companies have multiple executives on the list. General Electric—the parent company of NEC—leads the way with four, followed by Xerox with three. Eight companies have two executives on the list: Duke Energy, Fannie Mae, FedEx Express Corp., Ford Motor Co., General Mills, McDonald's USA, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., and Wachovia.

In a corporate environment that is often inhospitable to black professionals, these top executives say the number of blacks who reside in corner offices

will continue to grow. I think it's extremely positive that we have a number of African American CEOs, presidents, and chief operating officers of major corporations as effective role models," says Ronald A. Williams, president of the \$17.9 billion Aetna Inc. "And it helps organizations focus on becoming more of a [meritocracy], where people can be judged on the basis of the value they create and not on the basis of their race or ethnicity."

Paula Madison, president and general manager of Los Angeles-based KNBC and regional manager for two Telemundo stations, sums up her philosophy of the advancement of blacks, particularly women, simply: "The important thing is to continue getting us into the pipeline and have us positioned so that as more executive positions become available, we're poised and ready

to take advantage of the opportunities." "The corporate leaders on our inaugural list of top black managers set a standard of excellence that many of the executives on our 2005 list were challenged to match—and exceed. We are confident that today's black corporate elite will do the same for future generations of African American corporate achievers," says Graves. The selection criteria and comprehensive profiles of the 75 Most Powerful African Americans in Corporate America is available in the February issue of BLACK ENTERPRISE, available on newsstands January 18th.

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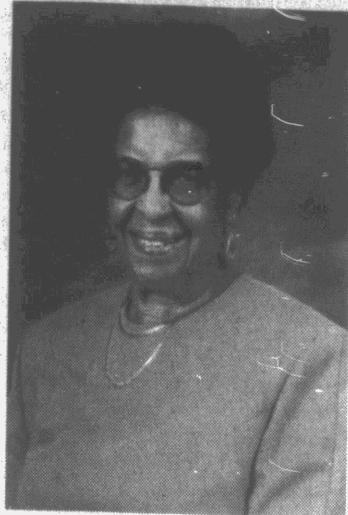
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Community Voices

From the Desk of Mrs. Beatrice Maye



Mrs. Beatrice Maye
A World Without Fathers

To The Editor -

A recent NEWSWEEK carried the face of a black boy about seven and the headline "A World Without Fathers." More than half of our black males are raised without fathers. A large percentage of these males become a risk in adolescence. More and more white males are being raised similarly, without fathers and thus at risk of undisciplined behavior, unclear responsibilities, anti-social behavior, and an inability to attach completely to adult women, thus continuing the cycle of divorce.

"Four of every ten children in America will go to bed tonight in a home where their father doesn't live. Sixty percent of rapists, seventy-two percent of

adolescents murderers and seventy percent of all long-term prison inmates are boys who grew up without their fathers in the home."

Crime statistics are only a very dramatic way of pointing out the common sense idea that if dad's not around, the son has a greater chance of acting out against society. Therefore, the father a boy needs.

Beatrice Maye

WHAT WE MUST DO: A MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE WHAT WE MUST TEACH OUR BOYS:

We must teach our boys to appreciate their African heritage. We must display before them our heroes, to let them know that many people have paved the way for our blessing and success.

We must tell our boys how to speak to people, look people in the eye, hold their heads high, and believe in their hearts that they are somebody. People who are confident make changes. People who are confident are the most likely to succeed.

We must remind our boys that they are loved and lovable. And we must start by teaching our boys that, too. A loved child can face anything. A loved child is better able to accept God's love, because he has experienced the beauty of the parent-child relationship.

We must teach our boys that real men don't just produce children—they/other them.

TEACHING OUR MEN, REACHING OUR FATHERS WHAT WE MUST TEACH OUR MEN

We must demonstrate to our men

by example that cheating, stealing, and abuse of their wives or children is not God's way.

We must teach our fathers that they will never help their sons become men unless they first become men. We must stress to them that their own failure to take responsibility will be the biggest barrier to their sons' emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sociological development.

We must teach our men what a real man is:

- a priest—one who leads the spiritual development of a family,
- a provider—one who is able to provide for a household's basic needs,
- a protector—one who knows how to keep bad influences, people, and circumstances away, and
- a lover (for husbands only)—one who loves his wife as his own flesh, and remains faithful to her in mind and spirit as well as in the body.

We must teach our men that the failures of their own fathers does not

mean that they are destined to fail their sons. We must not use our own dismal past as an excuse. At some point, we have to break these generational curses—why can't it be you?

We must teach our men that real men respect and cherish all women as special.

We must teach our men that real men call their wives if they're running late, and have no problem telling them why. They come home at a decent hour because they respect their wives and children. We must re-verse this macho psychology that "she doesn't need to know—I'll get there when I get there."

We must teach our men that real men never, never lift a hand to any woman.

We must teach that real men do not just talk to their parents (the obligatory once a week phone call); they take care of their aging parents and make sure they live lives of quality until God calls them home.

We must teach our men that real

men guard their tongues. James 3:6-8 says that the tongue, while a "little member," has the power to bless and to curse and can set on course the fires of hell if unbridled. That gives us reason to be sober about what we say.

We must teach our men that real men move from lust to love, from "shacking" to building a relationship that he can present before the very face of God without shame or embarrassment.

We must teach our men that real men seek to own rather than rent, to save rather than spend, to give rather than take. We must work toward the elimination of debt. The borrower serves the lender; an over-load of debt can even hinder your ability to serve God, your family, and your community.

WHAT WE MUST TELL OUR BOYS, OUR MEN AND OUR FATHERS

We must tell our boys, our men, and our fathers how special they are every day. They won't get that anywhere if they don't get it at home.

NEXT STOP LAW SCHOOL



Modupe Rouse

NCCU GRADUATE; Pictured above and all smiles after much hard work and dedication is Ms. Modupe Rouse, the daughter of Publisher/Broadcaster Jim Rouse of the Minority Voice/WOOW/WTOW Radio, posing with her degree in Mass Communications. Ms. Rouse who finished her bachelor studies Magna Cum Laude, plans to continue her education with her sights set on becoming a lawyer.



Above Historian John Hope Franklin and Educator Nell Lewis recently enjoyed lunch together in Durham, N.C. during an afternoon of discussions on Black issues. Mr. Franklin recently celebrated his 90th birthday this past January 2nd.

Conference For Black Journalists Coming to Morehouse College

ATLANTA, GA - World Journalism Institute invites professional and student journalists to attend the second annual Spring Conference for African-American Journalists of Faith at Morehouse College in Atlanta, April 29-30, 2005.

Award-winning reporters who will speak include Gracie Bonds Staples of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, John W. Fountain (formerly, New York Times), and Lisa Jones-Townsend from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The weekend is a unique opportunity for black journalists who are Christians to integrate their Christian faith and journalism practice through lectures, discussions, and fellowship.

The conference begins Friday, April 29, with dinner at Paschal's Restaurant and lecture and discussion with Anthony Bradley of the Acton Institute. The closing dinner Saturday will feature the Samuel Eli Cornish Memorial Lecture.

Other speakers for the weekend include Washington, D.C.-based freelance writer La Shawn Barber, Lawrence Smith of The Southern Baptist Seminary, and M'Ronald-Keith Tuck of Morehouse College and New Life International Family Church.

Housing and meals will be complimentary for accepted students. Books of interest will also be given to those attending. The registration fee is \$25. For more information and to apply online, go to www.worldji.com

World Journalism Institute also offers multi-week college-level journalism courses during the summer months in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Los Angeles. Students at these summer courses have the opportunity to study for three weeks with outstanding journalists who are Christians. The most promising students are awarded paid internships with newspapers across the country.

The mission of the World Journalism Institute is to recruit, equip, place, and encourage journalists who are Christians in the mainstream newsrooms of America. For more information, please visit www.worldji.com

Literacy Volunteers Tutor Training Workshops Scheduled

Literacy Volunteers is recruiting volunteer tutors for its adult Basic Literacy and English as a Second Language programs. Volunteers will learn proven teaching strategies at a 12-hour Literacy workshop or a 9-hr. English as a Second Language workshop in February. Knowledge of another language is not necessary to be an ESL tutor. A rewarding experience awaits you as you help an adult learn. For training dates and times contact Literacy Volunteers at 353-6578 or literacyvolunteers@jagnews.com.

All sessions are held at the LV-PC office located at 504-A Dexter St., Greenville (near the Beef Barn Restaurant and the Employment Security Commission.)

Pitt County NAACP Obtains Legal Counsel

Over the past two years the Pitt County NAACP has been at the forefront of controversy surrounding its advocacy in high profile cases such as the police custody death of 41 year old Eugene Allen Boleman, and the death of 23 year old Kenneth Grey Suggs, Jr. Each year hundreds of Greenville, and Pitt County, residents complain to the NAACP that their civil rights have been violated. The NAACP takes the complaint, conducts its investigation, and determines what action it should take.

Local President, Calvin Henderson, said, "the NAACP is being overwhelmed by residents complaining of civil rights violations. We have sought out help to screen cases so that we can focus our attention on cases that truly involve Constitutional and Civil Rights violations." According to Mr. Henderson, he has sought the help and support of Attorney Demyra R. McDonald. Henderson said, "Miss McDonald has agreed to serve on our Legal Redress Committee and as our local Counsel." He added that having the availability of a local Attorney will help us to become more effective in serving the needs of Greenville and Pitt County residents, and will give us an eye of expertise to assist us in the case screening process.

Attorney McDonald obtained her Juris Doctor Degree from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Texas Southern University, a historically black college, in 1995. McDonald was admitted to the North Carolina Bar in 1996. She was born in New York and grew up in Kinston, North Carolina from age 5 years old. She has an identical twin sister who is also a licensed attorney in the State of North Carolina. McDonald's mother is the Vice President of Nursing at Lenoir Memorial Hospital.

Attorney McDonald has a history of civil rights advocacy from an early age. McDonald served as President of the NAACP Youth Chapter while in junior high school in Kinston. After graduating from Kinston High School in 1987 McDonald attended Hampton University. She graduated Hampton in 1991 with a Bachelors Degree in Political Science. McDonald also holds an Associates Degree in Broadcast Technology from Lenoir Community College. McDonald

also holds an interest in Black History and served on the African Holocaust Memorial Committee in Greenville, North Carolina in 1991 that resulted in the historic event of an American city government acknowledging the African Holocaust.

After law school, McDonald practiced law in Kinston for approximately 3 years and in July of 1999 began to practice in Greenville in a local law firm. Her practice has included Criminal Defense, Traffic, Personal Injury, and Medical Malpractice.

In January of 2004 she opened McDonald Law Offices, P.C., located on the Northwest corner of 10th and Evans Streets in Greenville. McDonald Law Offices, P.C. presently focuses on Criminal Defense, Traffic, Personal Injury, and is expanding into the areas of Business and Civil Rights. Her practice currently serves Pitt, Greene, and Beaufort Counties. McDonald Law Offices, P.C. also works with a network of attorneys in other counties.

McDonald has served as a volunteer in the local community by presenting a Community Law Forums for low-income families and local residents to educate them about the law and to serve as a role model for youth. McDonald said, "I feel a great responsibility to give back to the community and help others. I have been blessed in my life. I do not take the opportunities I had to get an education and gain professional experience for granted. I feel a responsibility to help the community and improve the lives of all people."

NAACP President Henderson said that, "Attorney Demyra McDonald is a shining example and role model for our young people. She is both an excellent attorney and businesswoman. She is an asset to this community. Her willingness to volunteer with the NAACP speaks to her concern for others in this community."

McDonald said that she has supported the goals of the NAACP since junior high school and added that, "At a time when, once again, Americans of all races are giving their lives to fight for our liberty and freedom it is imperative that we protect our Constitutional and Civil Rights at home. It is unfortunate that in



Atty Demyra R. McDonald

spite of the sacrifices made by people of all races to assure the freedom of all Americans there are so many who continue to suffer the abuse of discrimination, racial profiling, and other abuses."

According to Henderson, some of the issues that we are concerned about include minority voting districts and voting rights violations, racially identifiable schools and discrimination against African American children in obtaining a sound basic education, discrimination in recruitment, hiring, and promoting within City and County Governments, racial profiling and police abuse of citizens, as well as the treatment of African American college students on campus.

McDonald said, "I am committed to working with the Pitt County NAACP assisting in the evaluation of complaints made by citizens and providing guidance to the organization for appropriate redress of grievances." Henderson added that, "we are inundated with complaints from citizens alleging civil rights violations."

Pitt County Health Department Offering Flu Shots By Appointment for Priority Populations

Effective immediately Pitt County Health Department will begin offering flu shots to members of the priority population by appointment only. Individuals who meet the criteria should call 902-2449 for an appointment. Appointments will be required.

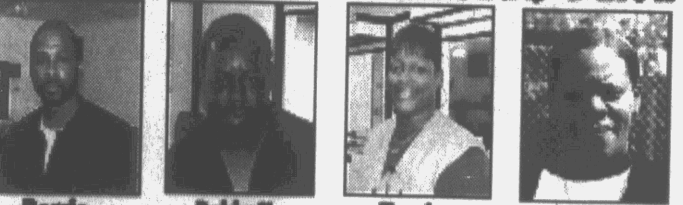
Priority Groups for Vaccination include the following high risk groups:

- All children age 6 - 23 months
- Adults age 65 and over
- Persons 2-64 years of age with chronic medical conditions including heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, suppressed immune system
- All women who are pregnant during the flu season
- Residents of nursing homes and long term care facilities
- Children 6 mos - 18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy.

Additional members of the priority population includes:

- Individuals age 50-64
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of persons in high risk groups
- Health Care workers with direct patient care [new group effective January 3, 2005]

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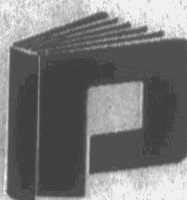
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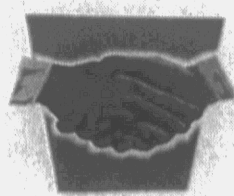


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January 17, 2005

DIASPORA DIGEST African Stability is Key to World Security

MINNEAPOLIS (NNPA) — International policymakers have often subordinated African issues to address problems in other parts of the world. It is an error that some experts say has direct implications for global security, which may prove costly in the global war on terrorism.

"There is no one strategy for how [U.S. policy] deals with African problems," said George Moose, former ambassador to Senegal and Benin.

He added that post-Cold War policy toward Africa has been characterized by a piecemeal approach to dealing with HIV/AIDS, development and security and that many policymakers have underestimated the importance of African security.

"During the Cold War, Africa was indeed perceived in hard security terms," but "when the Cold War ended, a false assumption was made [that] Africa no longer figured into the tension between the Soviet Union," Moose said.

But failure to prioritize African security has led to greater problems for the world.

The 1994 Rwandan genocide left a permanent stain on the conscience of the international community, when close to one million people were killed within one month. And it is in the aftermath of such destruction that many African countries struggle with weak institutions and failing governments.

"The same conditions that allow al-Qaeda to develop in Afghanistan exist in Africa," Moose said. "They present opportunities for criminal gangs and terrorists like al-Qaeda."

When al-Qaeda bombed the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, Osama bin Laden was living in Sudan. Now, the U.S. State Department has accused this same government that provided a training ground for al-Qaeda

of plotting an ethnic genocide on over 1.5 million Black Sudanese.

"What better place to go than somewhere that is failing?" said Wynfred Russell, instructor of Contemporary African Issues and West African History at the University of Minnesota. "It's an invitation — these guys are shopping around looking for another Afghanistan," he said.

Russell, who was born in Liberia, added that double standards in western policy toward Africa contribute to existing problems. He points to the relative inaction by U.S. officials to the situation in Darfur, [Sudan] to represent how the U.S. responds to a crisis in Africa.

"On the one hand they say it is genocide, but they haven't done anything," Russell said. "Some of these western countries have economic interests in Sudan, and that is why they are dragging their feet."

But why have international powers been excessively hesitant when dealing with African affairs? The answer is a combination of fear, racism and a general lack of interest.

"Africa is always a second thought on behalf of western powers and policymakers," Russell said. "The U.S. especially, is quick to wash its hands of Africa."

This ambivalence toward Africa is fueled by longstanding racial attitudes. "We still haven't shaken off all of the racist attitudes toward Africa," said Russell.

"Everything pertaining to Africa goes through that same racist system."

He added that a lack of interest in African affairs by African Americans feeds into the way that Africa is treated.

A poll taken during Liberia's civil conflict indicated that 82 percent of Blacks polled were against U.S. involvement. "That was very disappointing," Russell said. "I don't think people are going to take Africa seriously if the people of African descent don't take Africa seriously," he added.

But even when the U.S. has intervened in African affairs, the results were not always positive.

The movie "Blackhawk Down," based on the 1993 U.S. intervention in Somalia, remains a contemporary symbol of what is considered U.S. humanitarian intervention in Africa.

During this conflict, 18 U.S. soldiers died and two Blackhawk helicopters were shot down, prompting a removal of troops by then-U.S. President Clinton.

"Everybody looked at the experience in Somalia and became frightened," Moose said. "That experience caused some serious hesitation in getting involved in African conflicts — that is what conditioned the slow response to the Rwandan genocide," he added.

But Russell is not convinced that the defeat suffered in Somalia provides reason enough to disengage with Africa. "It's a shameless alibi for them to not get involved in Africa — to try and use the situation in Somalia to not get involved," Russell said.

"They always hide behind the national security interests" but, "there are humanitarian interests that could be used," he added.

Present conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as in Darfur threaten further destabilization in Africa.

The African Union has attempted to address these problems, but have failed to do so, for lack of resources and support from the international community. "There has to be recognition that these problems are major problems that exceed the ability of African nations themselves and require a partnership with the U.S. and others," Moose said.

He added that logistical support in transportation and communications should be provided to the African Union. "We haven't made that commitment. Nor has anyone else," he said.

However, the current approach to the war on terror may prove too difficult for the U.S. to address other conflicts around the world. "One of the reasons that we can't be more robust in what is happening in Sudan is that we are

stretched in Iraq and Afghanistan," Moose said.

The way in which the [Bush] administration has pursued this war has been incompetent, he added. Moose does, however, credit the Bush

administration's proposed initiatives to address HIV/AIDS in Africa. "This administration was the first to make a commitment to the global fund [for AIDS]. If it had not been for that commitment there never would have been a fund," he said.

Fifteen million dollars over the course of five years has been pledged toward HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention plans in Africa and the Caribbean. "What we need to judge them on is whether they are able to sustain it and put into place the effective disbursement," he added.

But implementation of the plan has drawn its share of critics. "There is a lot of conditionality on the money," such as abstinence based sexual education, Russell said. "My contacts on the ground tell me that the money has been caught up in the bureaucracy" which has made it very difficult to reach the intended audience," he added.

Russell said the money would be best spent on building clinics and hospitals that can deliver primary services to their communities. As it stands now, "only a fraction of it gets to the people who really need it," he said.

Yet, the only way for Africa to face its current problems is if more advanced countries extend commitments that will help promote democracy and human rights. International policymakers must take greater responsibility for creating conditions that would make African countries attractive for both trade and investment, Moose said.

Failure to do so could create a security challenge that permeates other world affairs. "If those countries are not given the resources to get out of their current state of affairs, that chaos and anarchy will serve as a breeding ground for terrorist cells and terrorist entities to set up shop," Russell said.

He added, "If the War on Terrorism is to be won, the war on terrorism needs to be taken seriously" and "if it is a global effort, then Africa should be looked at just as strongly as any other region."

See DEMOCRATS DEMAND Page 1

army, national guard and police force. So far, the training hasn't achieved the desired results, and the Iraqi forces, who have suffered heavy losses in terrorist attacks, have a mixed record in

standing up to the insurgents.

Back from a weekend trip to Jordan, where she met with women running for the Iraqi assembly, Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-Walnut Creek, said she opposed starting an immediate withdrawal because of the side effects it would cause.

"This is a mess, but it's our mess," Tauscher, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said of the situation in Iraq. "I'm not just for tossing a hot potato on Jan. 30 and leaving town."

"The last thing we can do is extricate ourselves and leave a failed state in the region ... that will come back to bite us in the short, medium and long term," added Tauscher, saying the country could fall apart in a civil war and become a haven for anti-U.S. terrorists.

Military analyst Michael O'Hanlon said the Democrats' call for an immediate withdrawal wouldn't influence the administration.

"The (complete) withdrawal option is a loser," O'Hanlon said. "Realistically speaking, you'll see a debate over a more gradual reduction strategy."

He said such a nuanced strategy might include a public announcement after the new Iraqi government

is in place that a large portion of the U.S. and coalition force would leave Iraq within a set period, perhaps 18 months. "That could show we aren't really occupiers," he said. "We'll start to hear more about such options."

Cliff May of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies said talk of a withdrawal without completing the job in Iraq would be dangerous for U.S. forces and for Americans at home.

"It says we're defeated, and we expect to be defeated. If anyone expects this to be our last defeat, they would be mistaken," said May, saying a sudden withdrawal would embolden the al Qaeda terrorist network and its allies to again attack the United States.

"If we don't want to fight them in Iraq, we should decide what is the proper battlefield," he added.

In Baghdad on Saturday, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., said there was no timetable for withdrawal.

"I'm not going to speak for the president of the United States, but we represent the legislative body, and there will be no pulling back until the job is done," Frist said.

America's Defenders Surviving War is Just the Beginning

(NAPSA)-American soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan are surviving what were once fatal injuries thanks to high-tech body armor and rapid medical care. Recovering from those wounds, however, can be a long process.

That's why the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working closely with the Department of Defense (DoD) to provide the best possible care for America's combat wounded.

Last year, VA authorized free health care for veterans who served in combat after Nov. 11, 1998, for any conditions they feel are related to their service. That eligibility extends for two years after separation from the military and includes National Guard and Reserve members coming off active duty.

More than half of the U.S. military personnel wounded in Iraq have been unable to immediately return to duty. Many have separated from military service and are receiving rehabilitation and specialty care in VA hospitals.

Combat injuries often result in limb loss. VA offers prosthetic services at medical facilities across the country. Physical therapists help amputees master the latest prosthetic devices, including computerized legs with programmable memories and myoelectric arms that respond to the body's nerve impulses. Behind the scenes, VA and DoD researchers are collaborating on the next generation of artificial limbs with embedded microprocessors, composite materials and neural feedback systems.

Spinal cord injury can change a veteran's life forever. VA's network of 23 spinal cord injury and disorder centers links with veterans' hospitals and clinics throughout the country to provide the specialized care and support these injuries require.

VA's comprehensive blind rehabilitation program incorporates multi-disciplinary visual impairment service



teams and blinded rehabilitation outpatient specialists at VA hospitals with 10 residential blind rehabilitation centers where blind and low-vision veterans learn how to regain their independence.

Following the 1991 Gulf War, VA and DoD established the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program to provide evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation services for veterans who suffer traumatic brain injuries. The program includes a brain injury registry and regional clinical network, as well as research support.

VA offers counseling for combat veterans who experience difficulties adjusting to civilian life at 206 Vet Centers located in communities across the country. These services include confidential sessions with an experienced counselor and group therapy with other combat veterans.

For more information on VA services for Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom veterans, contact the nearest VA medical center or clinic and ask for the combat veteran coordinator, or call toll free 1-877-222-8387 or visit

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honored tradition to much is given, much is expected", but a lot of business people are about the bottom line. At the end of the day, it has to be profitable and whatever it takes to make that happen they will do."

Ritchie is not impressed by that argument.

"It's a shame to see Essence go because the magazine was really about quality and maintaining its role as the defying entity of African-American culture as far as the image of Black women was concerned," he says. "It didn't matter what your socioeconomic status was, if you were a Black woman, you paid attention to Essence. I would much rather something that plays such a major cultural role in the African-American community be in the hands of Black people."

HEALTH MATTERS

All About Warts

(NAPSA)-Warts are tiny skin growths that have a rough, cauliflower-like appearance and often grow on hands (common warts) or on soles of the feet (plantar warts).

Contrary to a widespread belief, people do not get warts from toads. They are actually caused by a virus called HPV (human papillomavirus), which frequently lurks in moist

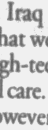
warm environments.

To prevent warts from spreading person to person, avoid being barefoot in public bathing facilities, locker rooms and swimming areas. Also, don't share shoes, socks and towels.

If you do get a wart, there are several over-the-counter medications available for self-treatment.

One popular product is Wart Stick(r). This solid-stick wart remover contains salicylic acid, which is the #1 doctor-recommended ingredient for safe wart removal. The maximum-strength (40 percent) formula is delivered through an innovative, wax-based applicator that glides on dry and odorless. The product has no messy drips, which can damage healthy tissue.

For more information, contact PediFix at 1-800-PediFix (733-4349) or visit pedifix.com. The product can be purchased from PediFix's catalog, in many drugstores and on amazon.com.



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See Dwight Smith

REMEMBERING... Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Above King and Dr. W.G. Anderson were prohibited from leading a demonstration in Albany, Georgia, by Police Chief Laurie Pritchett. The Albany Movement began when Charlie Ware a black field hand was shot in the neck by Baker County Sheriff L. Warren Johnson



Martin Luther King is congratulated by King Olav V of Norway (not shown) upon becoming the third black, twelfth American, and youngest person to ever win the Nobel Peace Prize. (1964)



On "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, some 600 civil rights marchers headed east out of Selma. They got only as far as the Edmund Pettus Bridge where state and local lawmen attacked them with billy clubs and tear gas and drove them back into Selma.



During the Meredith March, Stokely Carmichael first called for "Black Power!" King consistently disavowed the slogan



Police dogs along with fire hose were released on demonstrators by the order of Birmingham commissioner of public service, Eugene "Bull" Connor.



This was was the first Freedom bus. It was set on fire in Anniston, Alabama on May 15, 1961, after angry whites hurled incendiary bombs.

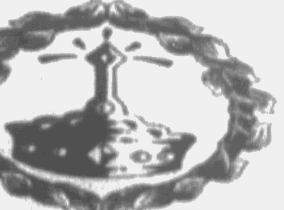
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Delta Theta Sigma is a Public service Sorority

Leaders of the New School: America's Young Civil Rights Heroes

By Monét Cooper,

Many of the surviving leaders of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement have turned to careers in public service, pursued other professions, retired or become ad hoc activists (as in Jesse Jackson's case). Now, a new generation of black young people is rising to the challenges of our time, sharing a deep commitment and desire to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods, communities and cities.

Here are 10 young, up-and-coming black leaders who, through their vocation and avocation, are positively impacting the economic, social and political life of African Americans.

Moya Bailey

Moya Bailey, a senior at Spelman College, is an advocate for eliminating inequality of any kind, but especially the discriminatory treatment of black women. She's passionate about ending the war in Iraq and politics, especially as it relates to women and

people of color. Last spring, as chair of Spelman's Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, Bailey spearheaded a protest against Nelly's "Tip Drill" video, in which a credit card is swiped between a woman's butt cheeks, when the rapper came to campus. Bailey is still working to make sure that people understand what the protest was really about: connecting struggles, in this case, the depictions of black women in the media. Black women have been talking about representa-

tions of themselves for a long time and it really just brought it to the nation's attention. Money isn't the answer," explains Bailey. "Just because Nelly's getting paid or women are getting paid, it's not the answer. What kind of damage is it doing to the community? What is it doing to the young women who are coming after us?"

Radcliffe Bailey

Artist Radcliffe Bailey calls his art "a quest to find out who I am." Certainly, Bailey's work is a portrait of his

life as much as that of his ancestors whose photos he uses as focal points in his mixed media pieces. The Atlanta resident plies his trade on building works of art out of canvas, paint, photos and the things he says reflect life as a black citizen of the world. Bailey uses the concept of remembrance to tell his stories. An anatomical drawing of a red heart, the aorta dripping blood, is his own broken heart. The steady gaze of a young man, looking at those who look at the painting, is the shape of his past. An ancestor whose stare he has scanned and blown up to the size of life. Bailey, an assistant professor of art at the University of Georgia in Athens, Ga., paints his civil disobedience one stroke at a time, telling his autobiography with a brush, some paint, objects and a photo.

Toni Blackman

When Toni Blackman was 8 years

old, she wasn't playing with dolls. She was writing poems—about striking garbage worker and their trucks. Today, as a hip-hop laureate, Blackman uses her rhyme scheme to help others figure out their place in the world. She co-founded Free Style Union in 1994, a New York-based nonprofit that organizes rappers, musicians and others involved in hip-hop culture to create work that raises awareness of different cultures and backgrounds while inspiring activism. Blackman has even gotten the U.S. government into the groove. The U.S. Department of State appointed her American Cultural Specialist and Hip-Hop ambassador. She is also a 1999 fellow of Echoing Green, an organization that guides emerging leaders as they shape their organizations.

Jamal-Harrison Bryant

In many ways, African-American houses of worship were the bedrock

Continues on Page 10

Following in the Steps of Madame CJ Walker, Warm Spirit Pours \$6.5 Million Back Into African American Communities

EXETER, NH - Nadine Thompson is not only the President, CEO and Co-Founder of WARM SPIRIT, she is the visionary and leader of a community of over 10,000 women and men who are empowered entrepreneurs and change agents. WARM SPIRIT is transforming the face of the direct sales and network marketing industry by providing an opportunity for wealth and financial freedom that has not always been accessible for women and even less so for African-American women.

It's been almost 100 years since Sarah Breedlove, better known as Madame CJ Walker started her hair care products company to become this country's first self-made Black female millionaire and she did it by pioneering what is now recognized as network marketing. In less

than 15 years, Madame CJ Walker built an empire of nearly 20,000 black women called Warm Agents, the Walker Manufacturing Co. and the Walker College of Hair Culture.

Only 6 years ago, in 1999, Thompson founded WARM SPIRIT with her friend and entrepreneur Daniel Wolf, excited about the possibilities of a business venture that incorporated her belief in enlightening and empowering women. Not only does WARM SPIRIT provide access to entrepreneurial opportunities and high quality natural products, most importantly, it creates wealth for the consultants and their communities. WARM SPIRIT's unique marketing plan is an empowering entrepreneurial opportunity that helps create wealth. Approximately 50 cents from each dol-

lar that is sold is returned back into the pockets of the consultants, therefore wealth and profits are recycled directly back into their communities.

In 2004, WARM SPIRIT paid out close to \$4 million in commission checks and our top 20 consultants had annual incomes between \$11,000 and \$150,000 through our compensation plan. WARM SPIRIT has been extremely successful in creating wealth through its empowering compensation plan. In 1999 they paid out \$12,000; in 2000, \$74,000; in 2001, \$172,000; in 2002, \$832,000 and in 2003, \$2.2 million. To date, WARM SPIRIT has paid out \$6.5 million in commission checks to its consultants!

WARM SPIRIT consultants start their own business for \$99.95 with a

supportive network and a product people love and want more of the first time they try it. Unlike any other black entrepreneur, Nadine Thompson is creating wealth in our communities and providing opportunities for people to live to their potential.

Thompson is also a wife and mother of two children, Camilla (11) and Isaiah (8). She lives in Exeter, NH at Phillips Exeter Academy with her husband Rev. Robert H. Thompson.

WARM SPIRIT can be found through a nearby consultant, at www.warmspirit.com or by calling 1-888-296-9854. For more information about WARM SPIRIT, interviews, prices or products, contact Keesha Abraham at 603-772-7508 or 1-888-388-9276 or keesha@warmspirit.com

Della Reese Offers Healthy Tips For Managing Type 2 Diabetes

(NAPSA)-Diabetes is an epidemic in the United States. Approximately 18 million people have diabetes and approximately 90 to 95 percent of those who are diagnosed have type 2 diabetes. Actress and singer Della Reese has type 2 diabetes and is dedicated to educating the public about how she manages the disease.

"When I found out I had type 2 diabetes, I was upset because I knew nothing about the condition and I had nothing to fight it with," said Reese. "Since my diagnosis I learned that I have the power to make meaningful changes in my life and that my diabetes management plan plays a big part in staying happy and healthy."

There is no cure for type 2 diabetes and ignoring the condition can lead to serious diabetes-related complications, such as heart attack, stroke, blindness, amputation, and kidney failure. While the cause is unknown,



there is hope for the millions of people who have type 2 diabetes. The condition can be managed through eating

right, regular physical activity and, when prescribed, taking diabetes medication every day.

Reese has found that education is the first step to managing diabetes and encourages those diagnosed with the disease to ask their health care provider for information about everything that could impact their diabetes. Her personal tips for managing type 2 diabetes include:

- Improve your meal plans; lose the extra pounds by reducing calorie intake and eating smaller portions to help lower blood sugar levels.

- Ask your health care providers about finding the right fitness program; physical activity is a significant factor in managing diabetes and achieving overall good health.

- Talk to your health care provider about which medication would be right for you; an oral medication may be needed if meal planning and physical activity are not doing enough to improve your blood sugar levels.

- Have your A1C level, blood

pressure and cholesterol checked on a regular basis by your health care provider.

Reese also suggests finding a support system to help create and implement the right diabetes management plan. A support system can include a health care team, family, and friends.

"I do everything I can to fight diabetes. I eat right, stay active and take my diabetes medication every day," said Reese. "If you take an active role in managing your disease, you can be stronger than diabetes. I'm living proof!"

People interested in learning more about type 2 diabetes can receive a one-of-a-kind copy of "Take Della's Challenge: Be Stronger Than Diabetes," a booklet filled with quick tips and true-life advice on managing type 2 diabetes, as well as Reese's favorite diabetes-friendly recipes. Also included is a free motivational music CD to encourage a more active lifestyle featuring one of Della Reese's songs. The free booklet and CD can be obtained by calling 1-866-463-6342 or by visiting www.delladiabetes.com.

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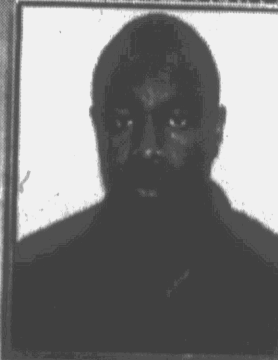
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Leaders of the New School

Continues from Page 9

of the Civil Rights Movement. And the Rev. Jamal-Harrison Bryant wants to return the movement to where it began. As the pastor of Empowerment Temple in Baltimore, Bryant has mobilized churchgoers to be mentors in their neighborhoods and the prisons. In its first 14 months, the church has reportedly grown from 43 members to 2,300. He's in the process of building an elementary school and adult learning facility that will open next fall and focusing his congregation on building wealth, by giving them the tools and advice they need through workshops and credit seminars. Some would say his message—part spiritual, part activist—is a nod to his previous job as the director of the NAACP's Youth and College Division where he made stopping the high rate of black-on-black violence at the top of his agenda. His pop culture sensibility and love of music (he is a member of the national board for the R&B Hall of Fame) pepper his talks with a message listeners of all ages are able to can relate to and understand.

Jessica Care Moore

Never one to relegate her trade of writing, acting, publishing and poetically prophesying to folk who pre-

fer their rhymes while quaffing coffee in austere galleries, Jessica Care Moore has plied her trade of word play to the tough crowds of Harlem's Apollo and international audiences in France, Berlin and London to return performances on "Russell Simmons' Def Poetry Jam" and with platinum-selling rapper Nas. The former journalist made a name for herself after winning "It's Showtime At the Apollo" five times back-to-back. She discusses everything from feminism, and hip-hop culture to humanism and the lives and souls of black folk. She's written two original one-woman shows and launched her own imprint, Moore Black Press, in 1997, which has published books by herself and other writers. In 2003, Moore started the Literacy Through Hip Hop Campaign, which uses rap lyrics as a way to push the importance of reading and the power of words.

Kendrick Meek

You could say that Kendrick Meek inherited the family business. His mother is Carrie P. Meek, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for almost a decade and an elder stateswoman of Florida politics. Meek remembers staying up with his mother, reading bills and other pieces of legislation into the early hours of the morning. That's why it's no surprise that, in 1994, he was elected to

the Florida state congress. Eight years later in 2002, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, winning the same seat his mother held for several terms. Now a member of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee and the Select Committee on Homeland Security, he is an avid supporter of Haitian causes, the voting rights of felons and other issues facing minorities.

Alisha Thomas Morgan

Alisha Thomas Morgan has grown accustomed to doing the unbelievable. In November 2002, Thomas Morgan, a Democrat, became the first black elected to the Georgia House of Representatives from the predominately white Cobb County, a county north of Atlanta that was the former stomping ground of stalwart conservative politicians like Newt Gingrich and Bobb Barr. But her election also marked another milestone, one not just colored by race, but also by age. Thomas Morgan became the youngest serving member of the Georgia General Assembly at the age of 24. Since her term began, she has opposed a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in Georgia, drawing criticism from fellow legislators and constituents. Thomas Morgan has been able to keep the confidence of her constituents, garnering 64 percent of the vote to beat a Republican opponent

who attacked her position on the gay marriage ban. During her time in office, she has focused largely on the issues of prison reform for juveniles, education and healthcare.

Alicia Reece

In her hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio, where turmoil between the police and its black residents have frequented national headlines in the past few years, Alicia Reece is as controversial as she is loved. In November 1999, Reece, 28 at the time, became the youngest woman in Cincinnati history to be elected to an at-large city council post. She later became the city's acting vice-mayor and was appointed vice-mayor in 2003 by Mayor Charlie Luken after placing second in the Cincinnati City Council elections. In 2002, she helped settle a racial profiling lawsuit filed against the city. The settlement provided a blueprint to improve the relationship between law enforcement and the community, including policies on the use of weapons, and a joint \$20 million commitment from the city and the Department of Justice to fund the new initiative. The daughter of entrepreneurs,

Reece has also made changes to help business owners and has been an advocate for healthcare, lobbying for additional funding that kept community clinics open for people with little or no health insurance.

Omar Wasow

When Omar Wasow clicks his mouse, everybody listens. It goes with the territory of being one of the leading voices in technology and the Internet. As executive director and founder of Blackplanet.com, an online community for African Americans, he helped to attract more blacks online. When Oprah needed help as she made her maiden voyage into cyberspace, she called Wasow, who guided her in the 12-part series "Oprah Goes Online." New York television station NBC-4 and MSNBC tapped him to explain Internet trends to their viewers. When he's not debunking myths about cutting-edge technology, Wasow remains vocal in education reform and serves as a co-chair of The Coalition for Independent Public Charter Schools. Programming since he was 11 and online at the age of 12, Wasow wants children to have access to the oppor-

tunities—and technology—he did at a young age.

B. Michael Young

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 281.4 million people living in the United States. Of that number, 36.4 million of those people were African American. B. Michael Young's greatest concern is for the ones 21 to 40 years old, which totals about 15 million people. As president of the National Urban League Young Professionals (NULYP), an auxiliary of the National Urban League, Young wants blacks to help themselves by building wealth, becoming politically active and aware, improving their health and rallying together for "racial justice." Young has served on the executive board of the Washington, D.C. chapter of the Urban League as treasurer, vice president and, from 1998 to 2000, two consecutive terms as president. Before becoming NULYP's president in September 2003, Young was a regional vice president for four consecutive years.

About the Author: Monet Cooper is a writer living in Atlanta.

The 2005 Independent Black Film Festival Announces Think Tank Sessions

ATLANTA, GA - With its unique combination of a strong technology base and a strong entertainment base, Atlanta stands poised to be the epicenter for this collision of art and science. This landmark convergence provides the backdrop for the 2005 Independent Black Film Festival (IBFF), to be held March 3-6, 2005, in various venues throughout Atlanta's Buckhead and Midtown areas, including the Woodruff Arts Center, the High Museum, and the Georgia Centers For Advanced Telecommunications Technology (GCATT). Now in its second year, the IBFF achieved great initial success in 2004 by bringing together great minds from technology, music videos, feature films and videogames for a week of panel discussions, hands-on workshops, cultural events, screenings and socializing.

Loosely modeled after other landmark festivals such as Sundance & Toronto, The Independent Black Film Festival goes a step further by bringing something that's lacking in the film, technology and music industries: the ability for individuals in these different businesses to come together in an official forum. Attendees will have the chance to hear, learn from, and interact with award-winning film and music producers and directors, screenwriters, high-profile ac-

tors, animators, interactive entertainment developers, film buyers and distributors, content providers, game publishers, studio executives and others.

The result is a fertile environment for the exchange of ideas and techniques that help continue the evolution of the industry. This goal also is achieved this year through the strategic partnership between IBFF and the Atlanta-based Dallas Austin Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase participation of urban youth in, and promote their understanding of, all aspects of the film, music and entertainment industry by providing the resources to support initiatives developed by urban primary/secondary school systems and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. "We want people of all experience levels across all of these industries to have the opportunity to talk with and learn from each other, so we've created a forum that should foster creative collaboration while allowing ample time to celebrate the creative thinkers behind these businesses," said Asante Addae, creator and CEO of the IBFF. "We're especially pleased to have a partner in the Dallas Austin Foundation, which shares our vision for the future of this industry and the possibilities it opens up to young people of all backgrounds."

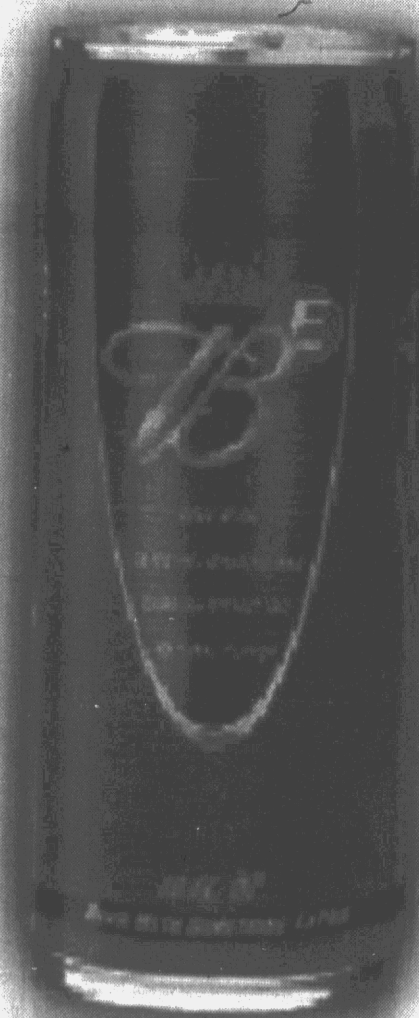
As part of the IBFF, a think tank called 'A Cinematic Tsunami' will be a useful session to guide the media towards change. We will provoke change from the stereotyped and negative portrayal of Black/African people in the media toward a more positive portrayal of people in the African Diaspora. The mass media has a great influence on our behavior and thinking. We need a tsunami-like agenda to change the landscape of the movie industry.

Too often, we hear that the media producers are only giving the audience what they want. We must change this motto to say, "Responsible media producers need to give the audience what they need." This think tank will formulate ways to educate both media producers on the importance of providing positive and uplifting information on a continual basis.

In the struggle for the hearts and minds of the lost souls in the Black/African Diaspora, power will need to be obtained with a powerful-like tsunami force. The power to define is the power to direct minds and conditions that will cause specific results in a struggle.

For more information about the upcoming event, call (877) 236-6975 or go online at www.indieblackfilm.org

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