MADELINE MURPHY RABB

Young, black children only salvation is the teacher

By MADELINE MURPHY RABB

To me, an artist and mother, the subject for a cover for the 1970 Teacher Recruitment Magazine Supplement could only be about black children in a public elementary school in Chicago's inner city.

The decision was that simple because it is at the elementary school level that I find children the most appealing.

They are perpetual motion, excitable, curious and most of all "for real." Their young faces are still pretty and their manner is still unaffected.

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For several weeks I sat in a crowded, musty, windowless (they were all broken and boarded, and the shades were drawn) room and watched, listened and drew.

I became enchanted by their facial expressions — sometimes serious, sometimes bored and frequently mischievous.

I was fascinated by their hair: early in the day neatly braided, pulled or twisted and later windblown, bushy and natural.

The most overpowering impression I experienced during my visits was the feeling that there were too many children in the classroom, too many intelligence levels and too much work for one teacher to be responsible for imparting.

I felt that if this teacher had had fewer students, she would have had fewer disciplinary problems, more enthusiasm and been able to cover more material.

By original intention had been to do a study of one or two children in a classroom, but the more I visited the class the harder it became to isolate one or two children.

Each face became too important not to be included, hence my study of faces.

The faces on the cover belong to Chicago black children. But these same faces, expressing the same emotions are to be seen all over the country, and frequently in the same crowded dingy classrooms.

And I direct all those young black faces to their only salvation — strong, enthusiastic teachers.

I hope these faces reach you.

School Crisis Faces Nation: McCoy

By RHODY A. McCOY

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rhody A. McCoy is unit administrator of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Public School District of Brooklyn, N.Y.

• • •

Public schools across the nation are faced with a spectrum of crises.

This spectrum includes teacher unrest, student unrest, parent and community unrest, financial difficulties and federal apathy.

The inner city schools face a compounded crisis.

For too long statistics which both clouded and emotionalized the total human spectrum have created in the public schools a seething unrest.

Rather than moving positively to resolve the variety of human problems, the various institutions have created myths or paper dragons for the people to use as catharses.

Across the nation there exist severe housing problems in all the socio-economic levels.

The federal, state and local employment problems are more acute than in previous years. The need for adequate programs of service for the aged is a national issue.

• • •

Parallel to these broad issues, racism, ethnic politics and poverty are the national myths.

The educational process suffers from these myths and thus an illusion, a cop-out if you will, has been promulgated whereby people believe that when the war is over funds will be diverted to solve the socio-economic ills of the nation.

This is criminal and fraudulent. I suggest war is not the problem; rather, our attitude is the problem.

This country survives on ethnic politics, that is, second class citizenship, power and/or money.

• • •

I suggest that white America and all of its institutions are determined to maintain the myth of white supremacy or to maintain blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans and to a lesser degree poor whites in second class roles.

To this end there is a callow strategy to maintain this attitude which permeates from the national level to the community level itself.

Just a few examples. It has been stated that 63 percent of the school bond issues were defeated on a national level. Wasn't there a mid-western school system that closed because of lack of funds attitude? Aren't minority members of the labor force still in the greatest percentage?

• • •

In New York City the schools were bordering on the tip of chaos. The black and Puerto Rican communities were escalating their demands for better education for their children.

As community groups threatened to take over schools, the "establishment" co-opted this move and created a fraudulent illusion — decentralization.

This was in response to the people's demands for control.

• • •

At this point I want to remind you of a statement, "an ongoing strategy to keep minorities in second class roles."

Sometimes it is advantageous to believe that white America does not understand black folk or, I prefer to believe that white America fool itself when it believes in white supremacy.

In New York the establishments were confronted with their own creations:

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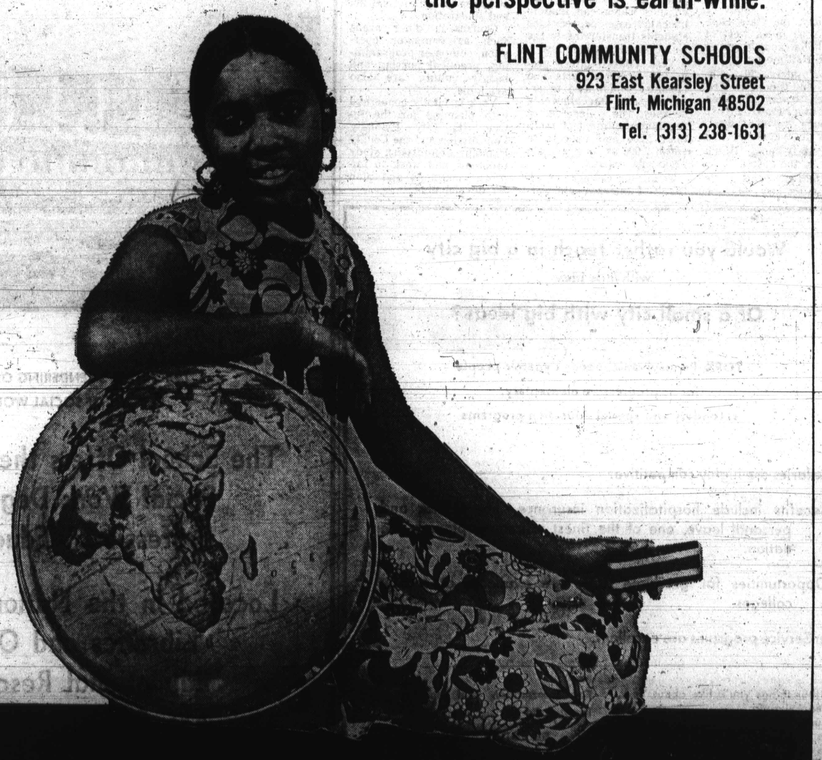

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