Baltimore American

OPINION

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Father Carcich- Was justice done?

The disturbing case of the Very Rev. Guido John Carcich, who misappropriated charity funds contributed on behalf of the poor to the Pallottine Fathers, seems to be another shocking example of the class bias President Carter pointed to in criticizing a justice system which jams its prisons with "the poor and powerless" while "big shot crooks" beat their raps with the help of high-priced lawyers and a cooperating judiciary.

Carter complained specifically that, "In many courts plea bargaining serves the convenience of the judge and lawyers, not the ends of justice."

Add to that the convenience of powerful and well-connected defendants and the Carcich case fits the mold of how obviously the justice system bends over backward to accommodate a special class of defendants who openly admit their guilt.

Carcich mishandled $2.2 million contributed to the Catholic charitable organization he headed, stashing much of it in secret accounts and giving some to relatives and friends — while relatively little went to the overseas missions for which the funds were intended.

Carcich invested in things he had no business putting the funds into, and millions reportedly went down the drain in bad deals. He favored political big shots and others with loans.

This man of the cloth who was entrusted with raising funds for the poor diverted to his secretary $10,000, $20,000 to a postal employee, $10,000 each to two Pallottine Fathers and built a house in New Jersey for a niece.

In addition to losing some of the money, some of that let out in the form of loans never was repaid.

Carcich, who at one point claimed "every citizen who believes in due process and the Constitution" would be shocked about the recklessness of the "unfounded charges" against him, ended up with a plea-bargained deal which permitted him to plead guilty to 1 of the 61 charges.

Supreme Bench Judge David Ross then completed the justice system's arrangement for one of its white-collar defendants by placing Carcich on probation for 18 months with the provision he work full-time a year at the prison during the day.

In another of those conclusions often reached in favor of white-collar defendants, Judge Ross proclaimed himself "persuaded that no useful purpose would be served by imprisonment . . . ."

He may be partly correct, in that relatively few inmates are rehabilitated in prison these days, but if putting people behind bars also is supposed to serve as a deterrent and punishment role, Judge Ross' comment is one sure to rub many the wrong way.

The church was able to salvage considerable of the mishandled funds. To close out this unhappy chapter, it would be worthwhile for the Pallottine Fathers to make public what percentage of the reclaimed funds has been, or will be, used to assist the poor.

What did he do? Stole a quart of milk

Alternatives to Swisher

State's Attorney William Swisher, a spawn of the old Jack Pollack fifth district political machine, is seeking reelection and thus far no challengers for his job have stepped forward.

The office of states attorney is not the best post for the politically ambitious to aim for, we recognize, because the job often requires that you prosecute fellow politicians who run afoul of the law.

Or if not prosecute, at least investigate from time to time, to see that the "bhoys" are keeping their noses clean.

It is a good office for a conscientious lawyer who believes in vigorous law enforcement and equitable administration of justice.

It is a good post for an attorney who believes corruption and cronyism must be rooted out of state and local government and let the chips fall where they may.

It is also the right office for someone who wants to make meaningful inroads into organized and street crime, who has some imaginative public safety programs as well as following aggressive prosecutory paths.

Swisher is a likeable enough chap but even his friends would not rate him up there with young Richard Ben-Veniste of Watergate prosecution fame or Barnett Skolnick.

He is too much a part of the way things are to be effective.

And, horror of horrors, he has let some of this staff go off on fishing expeditions in attempts to seek negative information about black leaders such as Rep. Parren J. Mitchell.

We would have to conclude from our continuing reports on the special grand jury's so-called probe of police involvement in narcotics trafficking, particularly the Elijah Davis assassination and surrounding circumstances, that Swisher was presided over a very loose investigation and prosecution of a very important area of criminal activity.

We have wondered, in print, whether the prosecutors heading special grand jury probe have really been zeroing in on major crime or just piddling around trying to get some political dirt on black leadership in time for the primary campaign.

Couple these facts with the evidence that Swisher has taken few steps to have a racially representative State's Attorney's prosecutory and investigative staff, that his operation is patently lily-white, and we have a situation which is deplorable in the extreme.

In any event, black political aspirants ought to think quite seriously about alternatives to Swisher and company in the upcoming election.

So dismal a record where our community is concerned cannot go unchallenged.

Pale Preakness

The Preakness Festival this year is under semi-public auspices and try as we might we simply do not see much of a role, except as spectators, for this city's majority black population.

In combing through the list of events which began May 11 and will continue through the Preakness weekend ending May 21 we see few opportunities for our community to gain anything from what has been billed as the city's crowning sporting and cultural event of this Spring.

Oh we can watch, spend money and possibly have a fun time but when it comes down to economic equity in this Festival we have been excluded.

From the outset of planning until now, though Festival officials say this has not been their intent, we have not been a part of the basic project and have been assimilated only as this newspaper raised the vital question of black participation.

The Preakness as a social and sporting event holds as much tradition and interest for significant numbers of us, Marylanders, and across the land as it does for any other group.

We do not say "stay home" but if you do join the Festival throngs do so with the resolve that this kind of exclusion must never happen again nor can an event for all the people, such as the Preakness has come to be, be white and exclusionary.

As is the case this year.

A LITTLE ABOUT A LOT: MADELINE MURPHY

Songs my mother taught me...

By Madeline W. Murphy

There was a song my mother used to sing, that was extra special when I heard it through my bedroom window early in a summer's morning. As she made breakfast, she would sing or whistle (when she had forgotten the words).

"Songs my mother taught me" — Anton Dvorak — that went like this:

"Songs my mother taught me — in the days long vanished — seldom from her eyelids were the teardrops vanished. Now I teach my children — each melodious measure — Oft the tears are flowing — oft they flow from my memories treasure."

The quality of her voice, made it sound so sad, yet writing on the eve of Mother's day, the memories evoked by the song give deeper meaning.

For "songs" is merely a code word for so many other things her mother taught her and then she taught me.

For despite the love, sentimental and poignant memories of childhood, one thing stood out above all the rest — discipline, order, guidance and example were the leaven that held the dough of rearing us together.

My mother was truthful to a fault, intoning when someone would be shocked by her candor, "You can lock up from a thief, but not from a liar."

(How strange that she would remark that I was brutally frank!)

No doubt the old saying that the apple doesn't fall very far from the tree is apropos here!

But no matter what kind of upbringing one has there are those good and bad impressions and traits that carry us all the way through life.

Like "make do."

If we didn't have it we made it. If we couldn't afford it, we'd substitute, without hamburger helper too!

Also there was always this nagging need to keep everything. Never throw away clothes — you might need them someday; nor old newspapers, for what reason we never learned, but as I have reported before, my married daughter does the same thing.

Perhaps it's like the old story of the ham: This young woman preparing for a family dinner, chopped off the end of the ham and her husband wanted to know why.

She replied that she didn't know — her mother always did it. When the mother-in-law arrived, the husband asked about the ham. Her only reply was, "I guess because my mother always did it."

And so not long after when they had occasion to visit the grandmother, the same question received the terse reply, "I did it because the roasting pan was too small!"

Habit makes robots of us all!

But then there are other enduring "songs" my mother taught me. One of which was sacrifice. For two long years she worked six days a week, sun up and past sundown, in a small department store, so that her pay check would support my transportation and lunch while I commuted to college.

Despite, however, the sacrifice my mother made for her children, our female teachers were really the unsung heroes in that time.

Many did not marry and were completely devoted to their vocation. And those who did had no children. Pregnancy was not discussed as freely as it is today. Eyes would be averted when in the rare presence of a woman who "showed," for during the period, she usually remained at home.

Against this Victorian kind of background, therefore, pregnancy among married teachers was not tolerated, for they would lose their jobs.

And so the phase "in loco parentis" — in place of parents — was doubly valued by those teachers who had had to sacrifice parenthood in order to teach other people's children.

I think now of all the excellent teachers I had respected, who became friends, who were very supportive, intuitive about our needs and helpful in our development.

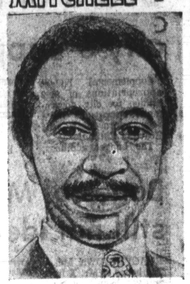
Some were so impressive that as I write this, I can visualize their faces, and remember their kindnesses and strict expectations.

Even today, there are those women who have chosen to devote their lives to this honorable vocation, many of whom are not only our best teachers, but are holding together, with dedication (sometimes desperation), a floundering school system sorely neglected by the parents of their charges.

So let us honor them, the ones who still serve in loco parentis, guiding, helping, sacrificing and forming long lasting relationships, their influence indelibly imprinted, upon our actions, success and traits that we had admired and now emulate.

Let us celebrate with them this Mother's Day; let us ease their loneliness, for they have been and continue to be the universal mothers of mankind.

WASHINGTON REPORT: PARREN J. MITCHELL



Mitchell represents Maryland's 7th District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

TransAfrica

In September of 1976, the Congressional Black Caucus held its first Black Leadership Conference on South Africa.

As a result of that meeting the idea originated of establishing a lobbying office to give black Americans a greater voice in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa.

After approximately two years of hard work to develop this idea into a working mechanism, the fruit of our efforts have finally blossomed. The office known as TransAfrica, is opening this month in Washington and has a cross-section of America's black leadership support.

TransAfrica's policy proposals and general principles were accepted in a statement on Sept. 30, 1977 in a report entitled, "Brief Status Report on United States Policy Affecting the Black World and Black Presence in Foreign Affairs."

The subjects presented and those that TransAfrica plans to address are the three areas which affect blacks in America, Africa and throughout the world. The areas are Southern Africa, the International Economic System and International Human Rights.

With regard to Southern Africa; the general objectives of TransAfrica in all the territories of Southern Africa where blacks are ruled by white minority regimes, but are in the overwhelming majority, is to contribute to the development of societies which are reflective of the actual racial populations of the respective countries and establish majority rule.

This objective would endow all the institutions of Southern Africa with a legitimacy they do not now possess, economically, socially and politically.

TransAfrica would therefore:

(1) Support the principle of majority rule in Zimbabwe;

(2) Oppose the current illegal and racist regime of Rhodesia;

(3) Support the U.S. policy of observing mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia;

(4) Oppose an internal settlement arranged by the present Rhodesian Government which does not have international agreement;

(5) Support the United Nations Five-Power initiatives to negotiate a settlement of the Namibia crisis within the frame work of majority rule; and,

(6) Oppose the Bantustan policy of separate development of the South African government, including recognition of, or economic investment by all three bantustans (Transkei and Boputhswana (newly created Bantustans).

In the area of international economic order, TransAfrica seeks to secure a standard of living for the peoples of Africa and the Caribbean which provides them with a quality of life on an equitable basis with other nations of the world.

TransAfrica would:

(1) Support increased U.S. economic assistance to Africa on a par with that provided to states in the Middle East, Asia and Latin America;

(2) Support increased contribution to the Sahel Development Fund; and

(3) Support decreased military assistance, especially politically sensitive areas such as the horn of Africa and Zaire.

The policy objectives of TransAfrica in the area of Human Rights is to support a concept of human rights which embraces principles such as those embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other such statements.

These declarations develop a claim for peoples in Africa and the Caribbean to the rights to enjoy their human potential to the fullest extent possible according to internationally accepted standards. TransAfrica will support the elimination of all forms of discrimination anywhere, but especially all forms of race discrimination in Africa, the Caribbean and the United States.

Other ethnetic groups have managed to influence legislation toward their homeland and there is no reason why black Americans shouldn't influence U.S. foreign policy towards Africa.

LETTERS

Funeral directors' prexy responds to criticism

Dear AFRO:

This letter is in response to your article entitled "3 days before family able to get help" in Tuesday's May 9, 1978 Baltimore AFRO - AMERICAN.

Members of the Funeral Directors and Morticians Association of Maryland Inc. are shocked at the recent violence in Baltimore. We believe that our commitment to the community extends beyond servicing our individual families during a time of bereavement.

As evidenced in the tragic burning deaths of a family on Laurens Street on July 17, 1975 when the Funeral Directors and Morticians Association Membership participated in and shared the expenses of funeral services.

However, in Tuesday's AFRO we are accused of not coming to the aid of the Bobette Harriett Sanders family. You rightly reported that originally another local mortician (unnamed) had picked the bodies up from the City Morgue but because of his price, relatives could not afford him.

The actions of this one unnamed funeral director reflects against all other funeral directors who try to live by the code of ethics of our association and those who fully recognize their individual and collective responsibilities to the public.

Ms. Peggy Williams is quoted as saying, "Some undertaking establishments had asked for as much as $2,000 in advance."

This particular quote does not give enough particulars to adequately respond to. But in my experience the cost of four grave sites could cost $1,000 or more and four caskets another $1,000.

We are all aware that certain cost must be paid. Services by a professional funeral director is the only cost that can be adjusted or can be awarded on a gratis basis.

Ms. Peggy Williams is also quoted as saying "The family does not have insurance and did not have any money." This is a classic case for a call from some responsible person in the news media for help.

Help has been available in the past and help was available then. Where was the leadership? Why did the call for help not go out?

Our association is commited to remain sensitive and responsive to the needs of the community and we stand ready, willing and able to carry our share of the social commitment.

MARSHALL W. JONES JR.
President,
Funeral Directors and Morticians Association of Maryland, Inc.

Don't be foolish

Dear AFRO:

I was appalled to read Frank Conaway's statement in the AFRO calling for the resignation of Randall Carroll, clerk of the Court of Common Pleas.

I think Mr. Conaway was just trying to get his name in the paper because he is a candidate for some office.

The black community is not going to penalize Mr. Carroll for telling the truth.

Paul Chester was convicted for pressuring his employee to contribute to his election.

I hope that the so-called black leader will not be foolish and cause us to lose the one clerk of a court.

WALTER SMITH

Nazis in America

Dear AFRO:

Anent TV "Holocaust" there are no doubt many who refuse to believe the horror of it all — those who say 6 million Jews were not slaughtered, who are "comfortable" in saying it was "only" 1 million.

Those should know non-Jews were also slaughtered.

The exact figure will never be known, but it is safe to say it was millions — some way it was 15 million.

But I don't think even that will melt their concrete hearts and open their eyes and minds to the Nazi evil the world should never forget.

They should be aware (and thus prepared) because it has been said influential Nazis fled to about 100 countries in the world, with about one billion dollars, to carry on the unfinished business.

This is why it is important the search for Nazis in America, especially, not be relaxed. This is not idle chatter. One is a New Jersey county official; another is a Detroit bishop; one is a bookkeeper in California; another is a carpenter in New York.

B.J. SMALL

CURRENT COMMENT

G. JAMES FLEMING

NOW AND THEN

ACT-SO — affirmative action

By G. James Fleming

"Visit any vacant sandlot or playground and you will see black youth playing basketball, making hook shots, catching a flyer or making a touchdown. They strive for athletic excellence.

"On the other hand, visit many classrooms in schools across the country and you will be shocked by the number of minority youth who think it is 'cool' to be a non-achiever."

These foregoing paragraphs are the thoughts and words behind a new program sponsored by the NAACP and its many branches. Popularly, the program is called "Academic Olympics;" formally, it is "Afro-Academic Cultural Technological Scientific Olympics" (ACT-SO).

To this column it is also a new kind of "affirmative action," whose objective is to stimulate black senior high school students into higher achievement in their school subjects (humanities, natural sciences and social sciences).

Like the world-famed Olympics in athletics, it is structured to have local and national winners. There are sponsors and coaches; the usual incentives to victory (T-shirts, buttons, and other gimmickry); and gold, silver and bronze medals.

These latter will be awarded both by local branches and by the national organization at its 1978 convention in Oregon, July 1-2.

The Baltimore NAACP is among the branches in 20 cities that have been invited to participate in the ACT-SO contest this pilot year.

This idea of Benjamin L. Hooks, national executive director of the NAACP, is another approach to affirmative action and says that, while the renowned and well-respected organization knows it must continue fighting for "rights," it also recognizes that there is the challenge to make young black men and women more ready for the opportunities now open to them.

Through the ACT-SO program, the NAACP hopes to stimulate high school students to remain in school and not become "dropouts"; to graduate on a level high enough to gain admission to college or technical school; and to remain in the institutions of higher learning after having been admitted.

While the "Talented Tenth" of black students achieve highly in both high school and college, and has always done so, every knowledgeable person knows that there is too much loss along the way.

ACT-SO deserves the support of the entire community. Several other efforts, with the same objectives, also deserve support, especially the tutorial programs conducted by a number of organizations.

The new program of the NAACP recalls the pioneering efforts of earlier years: The "Go-to-High-School, Go-to-College Week" of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the "Guide Right Week" sponsored by Kappa Alpha Psi.

When this writer was in school, and living in Harlem, he was touched and moved by both these programs. Other organizations sponsored other race-helping projects, such as Phi Beta Sigma's "Bigger and Better Business Week" and the annual oratorical contests of the Independent, Benevolent, Protective Order of Elks of the World.

It is often argued that Alpha Phi Alpha and Kappa Alpha Psi might have begun deemphasizing their two programs too soon, although the thrust has not been abandoned.

ACT-SO is a descendant of all similar programs of the past; but it is greatly needed today. As the fall to ACT-SO reminds, black young people achieve and excel in many areas — tinkering with cars, breaking records in sports, giving America its truly national contribution to music. There is no reason, therefore, why blacks should fail in academic motivation and achievement. There is no reason why young black men and women should do so poorly in national tests or in the tests they later take for passing the bar.

The home must be the beginning place for helping young people to "cope." The church can help and has helped in the past. The Greek-letter societies have done more than they are often given credit for.

The NAACP, because of its experience, fulltime professional staff, and many branches, can make a tremendous impact in promoting the idea of putting first things first and in making high achievement and excellence worth striving for. Our grandparents, often unlettered, stressed and extolled these goals, with hard work and a prayer.

Our best wishes to ACT-SO!

FOR ALL WE KNOW

ELIZABETH M. OLIVER

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

You Better Believe It

OVER 300 Omegas from all over the nation were in Baltimore last weekend for the pow-wow. Sorrowfully they found a local hotel with no clean linen and no maid service. An elevator stuck between floors with terrified folks gasping for an hour. All this despite the fact reservations were made in 1977.

JAMES ASKEW, the noted attorney, has a good group going for Ethiopian relief. We should support the 3,000-year old civilization of Ethiopia which is ours. Thanks to his expertise, natives are now cleared for travel.

SUSIE E. MURPHY, age 75, is honoree at a birthday party May 26 at Wayland Baptist. Salutes are coming from everywhere to recall her service especially to the NAACP over 30 years. All her relatives will be there.

DEL. ART MURPHY, one of the clan by the way, is one of the persons citizens are looking at to put in States Attorney Swisher's place. Also scanned are David Mitchell, Michael Mitchell, Billy Murphy and Dwight Pettit.

TONY ROBINSON, the lawyer, is running for City Council, 5th District.

KEEP AN EYE on Councilman Michael Mitchell for City Council president in 1979.

JUDGE JOE HOWARD is already endorsed by the Monumental City Bar for a Federal judgeship. Senator Sarbanes and The White House have been told.

PRESIDENT CARTER will be in Annapolis for the Naval Academy graduation. Sh-h-h Keep it quiet.

BILL BURCH, the No. 1 Maryland lawyer and Steny Hoyer, Senate president, are joining hands for the landslide into Annapolis. Burch, a Catholic and double Sagittarius, is a winner accordingto the stars.

MAYOR SCHAFFER has his eyes only in Baltimore's City Hall and nothing else.

BLACK LAWYERS are solid behind the Supreme Bench ticket and Orphans Court Judge Colgan, Foreman and Archie Williams.

ALL GOVERNOR'S seat candidates will meet with Monumental Bar late May and early June to plead their case.

MARIA BROOM, Saundra Banks and East Side's Mrs. Zatella Giles are sure to run. All have plenty votes in their apron pockets. Maria was on TV.Saundra, definitely eyeing Randy Carroll's spot, is WEAA's news reporter and broadcaster, a MSU 1974 grad in history and political science. Married and a native Baltimorean, she's getting more and more support from the Big Guns.

THE SPOTLIGHT TURNS on Assistant Sales Attorneys Denholm and Willen in a few days with both black and white citizens and elected officials cracking the whip from all sides.

DARK HORSE leaflets scattered around town announce a minister who is running for the Senate in the 45th District and rattling somebody's cage. Reverend is the Essex, Md. First Baptist Church bishop.

LAST WEEK we addressed over 3,000 AFRO readers at five affairs. Among them Otto Silva's steel workers, the U of Md. dental grads and Del. Troy Brailey's fans, all assembled at separate glamorous affairs.

THE AGENDA ahead includes Sunday (Mother's Day) at the First Baptist Church fete for Rev. C.C. Alexander. Martin's West will see over 1,000 praising him and marking the church's year as the town's oldest congregation.

CAHILL REC CENTER gives its awards tonight at the center at 7:30.

THE SATURDAY Matinee Ensemble affair is May 13 at 4 p.m. in the Memorial Dining Room, 301 McMechen.

DON'T FORGET, the Howard Cornish seminar and honors fete today, Friday, at MSU.

MAY 15 opens Preakness Festival Week with oodles of things all over town and visitors from the 23 counties.

SYLVIA COOPER, sister of Rachael Eaton and aunt of the AFRO's Clock Turner Backer, Herbie Eaton, is scheduled to be our first District Court Commissioner. She's also Orioles Al Bumbry's cousin.

VERONICA TYLER, the award-winning soprano whom the AFRO discovered many years ago, is in the Peabody Concert Series May 24-25. She is now with the New York City Opera and will appear here in Virgil Thomson's classic American Opera "Mother of US All."

'This Child is the Mother'

Dr. Gloria C. Oden is an assistant professor in the English Department, University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is currently on sabbatical doing resesearch on black women in Salem, Mass. between 1639 and 1819.

Dr. Oden was born in Yonkers,

Dr. Gloria Oden

N.Y., the daughter of Dr. R. S. Oden, a powerful man in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. She is the last child in a family of six children.

Her mother and sister Bertha were murdered in cold blood on the morning of Aug. 2, 1974 in the front Bedroom of their home in Washington, D.C. where they had lived for 19 years.

"Resurrections," a cycle of 49 poems, grew out of that tragedy.

Dr. Oden has two degrees from Howard University, a J.D. in law and a B.A. in history. She travels extensively giving poetry readings.

She is a member of the Washington Area Poetry Advisory Committee and The Poetry Society of America. She is listed in "Living Black American Authors" and "Directory of American Poets."

Black is; slavery was; I am.
Sometimes
when my mind idles
memory turns the subtle gears
of recollection and
I am locked into
my kindergarten years and
seated in that Methodist-simple,
stained glass bosom of
the Lord on a
shining Sunday morning.
Communion Day!
The altar railing drips white.
Behind it; housing the
plum-red blood of Christ,
stacked silver trays
burn in the gas
flashing their furnace-tried
love and redemption.
Raised above them
The pulpit whereon is
the wit and wisdom of
pastoral years, my father
marches for Jesus striding,
first left, then right;
falling on one knee then
the other as his voice
rises from shout to shout,
beseeching God's lost lambs
home. "Come!" he calls
from behind his lectern
standing. "Let whosoever will,
come!" he entreats, the
visible sign of The Cross,
his arms outstretching
Heaven's saving offer
of grace.
So is the scene
setting in:
Its mood revives
as a thin uncertain voice
unbosoms a sad
familiar fragment of
song that picks its way
forward from the rear,
urged from throat to throat
by its denomination of
common life experience.
The choir gives response.
At ease in its box
behind my father,
I observe their stiff-
robed bodies ignite and,
slowly, begin to stroke
their flooding fever as
rocking forward and back
they punctuate harmony.
I am no longer at ease.
It will happen soon,
I know; that birth
more terrible than all my
small fears recognize;
that blood-bathed irruption
which is but the beast
in reform of its labyrinth.
It begins in the corners.
On either side
the ministering pulpit
the Elders of the congregation
(sitting self-segregated
by sex and
splendid in their Sunday
formalism of Pilgrim black
and unblemished white)
unlock the piston valves of
their emotion in a
turbulence of heel upon
the hard wood floor.
Antiphonally,
they begin to shout,
to clap shaking hands
and weep.
"Glory be to God!"
comes forth the cry.
"Praise his Holy Name!"
the joyous response.
"My Strength and My Redeemer!"
is the rejoinder.
The church is awash
with sun and singing.
Antique dervishes
invade the aisles in
composite pavanne:
history is metamorphized
within the furlongs of
my vision.
Now it happens;
she moves,
That tall woman
immediately in front of me
who hatted and wreathed in
a tonnage of black veiling
has been sitting like
some megalith of
slowed time
mute and motionless,
unresponsive to the
joy in flux
about her. But,
now she moves.
Her center can no
longer hold against
the store of grace
wedded to her days.
With the lightning's thrust
it has cleaved her.
She jerks and twists
whiplashed by memories
that rip her headgear
from her and force her
arms up, overhead, in
tight-fisted supplication.
Pushing against some
unseen weight; slowly;
she raises her bowed head
until, bursting free
at last it falls
back upon her shoulders.
She opens her mouth.
Out of it,
rocketing upwards,
as if from her toes,
jets an explosive cry that
crashes and beats
against the ceiling
like some crazed bird
in a frenzy of wing
for distance.
This is that moment
to which I am frozen.
This, that awesome time
when, more profoundly
than my pigment, I am
informed of my
blood heritage and
when, as I burrow
into the protective folds
of my mother,
the outermost margins
of my mind begin
to struggle with
the unexplained metaphor
in color,
the mysterious verdures
in history,
the fierce physics of
that soothing fountain
outpouring
from her side.

"Resurrections," a cycle of 49 poems, grew out of that tragedy.

Dr. Oden has two degrees from Howard University, a J.D. in law and a B.A. in history. She travels extensively giving poetry readings.

She is a member of the Washington Area Poetry Advisory Committee and The Poetry Society of America. She is listed in "Living Black American Authors" and "Directory of American Poets."

AFRO invites letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication.

Action taken in 1978 General Assembly affecting blacks

By Del. Arthur G. Murphy Sr.

Del. Murphy represents the 41st District and is chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus

The Maryland Legislative Black Caucus this year operated under the committee system for the first time in memory, utilize better the expertise of its members and to avoid the necessity of having the entire caucus meet with individuals and organizations to discuss their concerns and problems.

The committees would have certain issues or problems assigned to them by the chairman of the caucus and then report back to the entire body its recommendations for a decision by the entire organization.

The following committees were established and will continue to function for the year 1978:

EDUCATION: L. Lee — chairperson, H. Harrison — vice - chairperson, W. Dean.

LEGISLATION: D. Trotter — chairman, W. Dean — vice - chairman, I. Dixon, K. Webster.

FUNDRAISING: T. Broadwater — chairman, T. Brailey — vice - chairman, L. Randolph, J. Douglass, C. Blount, L. Young.

MINORITY ENTERPRISE: R. Douglass — chairman, C. Mitchell — vice - chairman, T. Brailey, A. Murphy, D. Trotter.

INSURANCE: I. Dixon — chairman, K. Webster — vice - chairman, N. Exum.

FISCAL AND BUDGET: J. Douglass — chairman, C. Blount — vice - chairman, J. Chester, T. Broadwater.

HEALTH: L. Young — chairman, P. Howell.

CONSTITUTION LAW: L. Lee — chairperson, A. Murphy, K. Webster.

CHAPLAIN — Joseph Chester.

HISTORIANS — W. Dean, L. Randolph, V. Welcome.

PROTOCOL — H. Harrison.

The major area of priority was the passage of legislation affecting minority enterprise because it could have some impact on unemployment and involves blacks in the economic mainstream.

The following bills were paid as a result of caucus involvement:

1. HB 64 sponsored by Del. Decatur Trotter, D - 25th district, Prince Georges County provides and directs that certain state departments and entities attempt to purchase at least 10 percent of certain goods and services either directly or indirectly from minority businesses and that they report to the General Assembly by July 31 of each year beginning 1979 what has been done in that regard.

2. HB 361 sponsored by the Department of Economic and Community Development created an office of Minority Business Enterprise within that department to assist in planning and implementing the establishment and successful operation of minority business enterprise. This office formerly existed by Executive Order as the result of efforts by Sen. Clarence M. Mitchell III and the caucus but now exists by statute.

3. HB 348 sponsored by the Department of Economic and Community Development prohibits a state agency from requiring that bid, performance and payment bonds be posted where the contract price is less than $25,000 unless otherwide required by federal law or regulations.

4. HB 407 sponsored by the Department of Economic and Community Development authorizes the creation of a state debt in the amount of $2,000,000 to be made part of the Small Business Development Financing Fund of the Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority to be used to provide bonding for small businesses unable to obtain bonding from the private sector.

5. HB 438 sponsored by the Department of Economic and Community Development creates within that department the Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority to make and guarantee loans not exceeding $150,000 to certain economically and socially disadvantated businessmen.

In addition, the caucus was involved in the fight to preserve the use of Medicaid funds for abortions by those eligible who desired them.

A broad amendment to the Budget Bill (HB 810) was worked out in conference comitee by Senators Clarence W. Blount, D - 41st), and Tommie Broadwater Jr., D - 25th District, Prince Georges County.

It permits abortions: (1) where continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the death of the woman; or (2) where there is a risk that continuation of the pregnancy would have a detrimental effect on the health of the woman; or (3) where there is a risk of the birth of the child with permanent physical deformity, genetic defect or mental retardation; or (4) where medical procedures are necessary for a victim of rape, sexual offense or incest, when the rape, sexual offense or incest has been reported to a law enforcement agency or to a public or private health or social agency.

The battle in the House of Delegates resulted in defeating legislation prohibiting the use of funds for abortions and a resolution calling for a Constitutional Convention on that issue.

Caucus strategy and involvement also resulted in preserving the following amounts in the budgets of black colleges and universities:

1. Morgan State University — $822,169;
2. Coppin State College — $30,000;
3. Bowie State College — $179,000.

Legislation designed to close the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore was also defeated and a commitment was exacted that programs would be transferred to that institution to increase its enrollment and preserve its viability.

The caucus made history when its Education Committee conducted a public hearing on the College Park campus of the University of Maryland to deal with the problems of treatment of black students and faculty and the effect of that university's extension programs on blacks. When the transcripts have been prepared and reviewed, certain specific recommendations will be made to the new President for implementation.

The Minority Enterprise Committee of the Caucus was instrumental in bringing about a meeting between the officials of the Chesapeake Life Insurance Company and the Maryland Minority Contractors whereby the latter have been guaranteed a minimum of one -third participation in the $18,000,000 Chesapeake Life Center Project.

MORE LETTERS

Dear AFRO:

Thanks to consumer action, the citizens of Maryland are in large part responsible for the generic drug law going into effect in our state.

The stated goal of this law is to make available lower-cost prescription drugs. With your physician's permission, your pharmacist will dispense a lower cost drug (a generic drug) rather than a brand name drug. Both drugs are of equal quality.

Brand name drugs are better advertised, better known and therefore cost more than generic drugs. Patients in hospitals receive drugs as a matter of course.

Inquire about the less expensive generic drugs from your physician and your pharmacist. When you have a prescription filled, get specific information on cost savings.

As the law is written you do not have to be consulted for generic substitution to take place. You do, however, have the right to refuse substitution if you do not want it.

Do not make price the only consideration in purchasing drugs and deal with a pharmacist who will give you important information about the "do's" and "don'ts" and possible side effects of the drug you are taking.

Assume more responsibility for your own health care.

ESTELLE G. COHEN
public commissioner
Maryland Board of Pharmacy