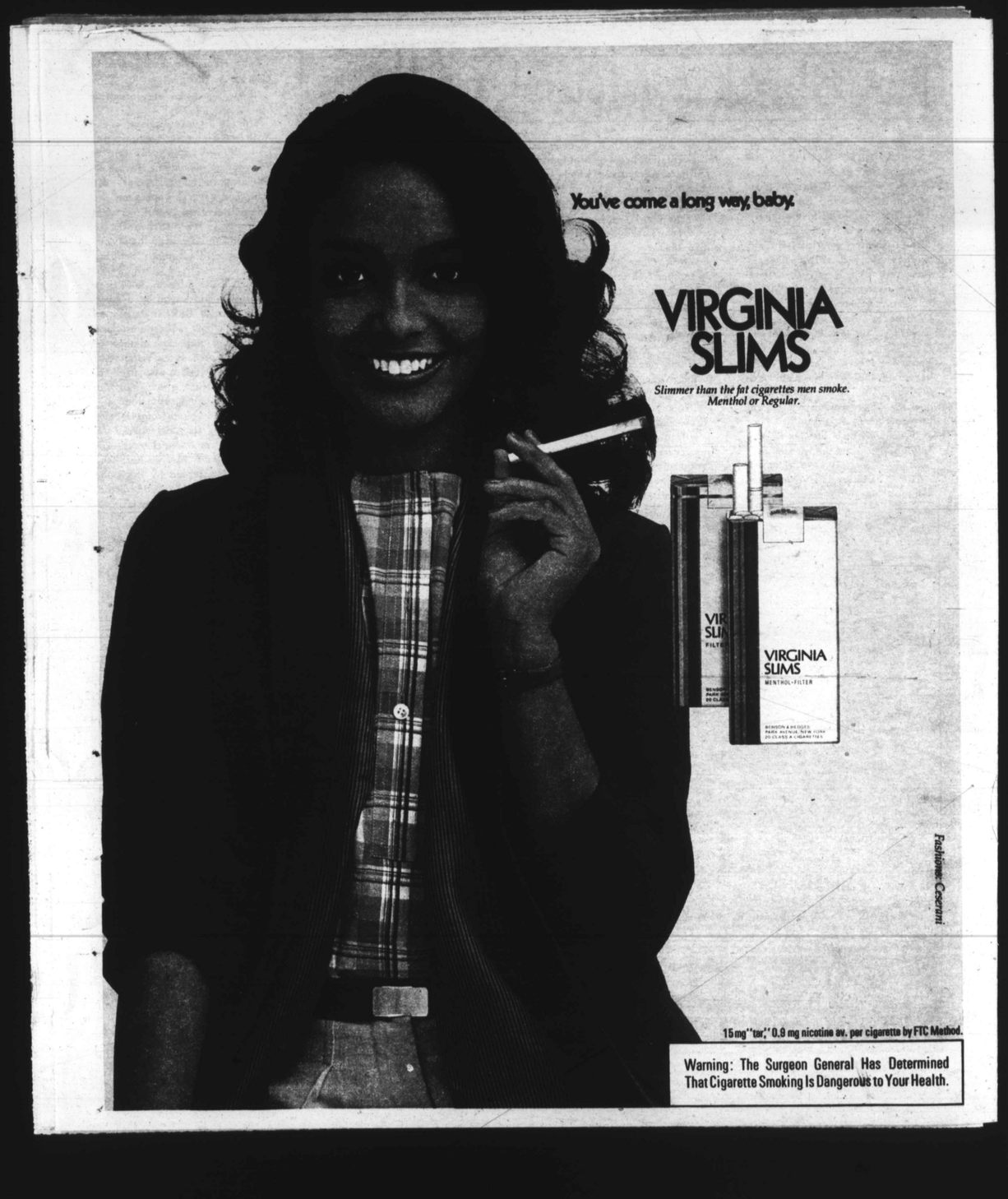

OPPORTUNITIES

The Afro American

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A college for the handicapped

The happy look on the faces of three graduating seniors, at left, is testament to the encouragement hearing impaired students are getting. Vocational and technical training for the deaf became a reality in 1966.

There are more than 13 million people in the United States today with hearing impairments. Historically, the nation's deaf population has been underemployed or unemployed.

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) was established on the Rochester (N.Y.) Institute of Technology campus more than 10 years ago to tackle this problem head - on.

In its brief but very successful history, NTID has quickly filled a disturbing void in technical training opportunities for the deaf.

By 1964, several influential groups had begun to urge Congress to provide for the establishment of vocational and technical training facilities for the deaf.

The following year, Congress passed a measure establishing NTID. President Lyndon Johnson signed NTID into law on June 8, 1965. The new school was given several basic responsibilities to provide semi - professional and professional technical programs for postsecondary deaf students; to give special support services to encourage personal, social and cultural development among deaf students;

To encourage qualified deaf students to pursue graduate studies; to conduct research into the occupational and employment - related aspects of deafness; to conduct training programs, seminars and short courses relating to deafness for RIT personnel and for graduate students preparing to work professionally with the deaf and other special groups;

And to disseminate information regarding the NTID curriculum, courses of study, special services, and research findings to those offering services to deaf children and to the RIT educational community.

RIT was among four universities chosen by NTID's National Advisory Group (NAG) as possible sites for the new school. In 1966, after on-site visits to the four universities, NAG unanimously chose the RIT campus as NTID's home.

NTID opened its doors in the fall of 1968 with 70 students. Now, 11 years later, NTID's roots are in place. Many programs have come to full blossom and are bearing fruit.

NTID has provided an educational experience for more than 2,300 deaf students from all parts of the country. Its graduates have found employment throughout the nation, or have moved on to advanced academic studies.

Of those who pursued employment, more than 90 percent have been placed in jobs, 97 percent in jobs commensurate with their educational preparation. And, of those employed, 80 percent work in business and industry, more than 11 percent in government, and the remainder in education.

These statistics stand in large contrast to the previous history of employment of deaf people. Since 1968, NTID has established itself as a national resource for deaf people, and its impact has begun to be felt throughout the United States and abroad.

In the 1978-79 academic year, more than 900

(Continued on page 2)