PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Jerome (Brud) Holland

Dr. Jerome (Brud) Holland

As chairman of the Red Cross, Dr. Holland has the task of meshing all of the various components into a workable whole. Included is coordination of blood drive activities of more than 4,000 hospitals, making sure the disaster operation arm is in workable state at all times, and making sure the fund-raising of the Red Cross never ceases, so that all components have the money for their work.

By Antoinette deSilva

When the American Red Cross celebrates its 100th anniversary as this country's largest non-profit organization in May of this year, it will not be without the presence of Dr. Jerome Holland, who, in 1979, was appointed the organization's first black chairman by then President Jimmy Carter.

Holland, 64, has taken the job in stride, looking for ways to improve upon existing conditions, trying to expand upon others. Change is what he has been about, for as long as he can remember, and success has been the resuk of his changes, as well.

Born in 1916 in Auburn, New York, Holland managed to rise above some of his financial problems, at least, by securing odd jobs, all the while maintaining a high academic average and striving to go to the best college he possibly could.

His parents, who were laborers, were not educated, but immensely interested and concerned that their children should be, and thus demanded the best from them.

By the time Holland graduated from high school, he had managed to earn a high enough grade point average to get him into Cornell University, even if the scholarship he won was not quite enough to free him from having to work.

But with determination which had by that time become typical, Holland got the job he needed to pay for tuition and books, and took on a full academic load, knowing he could not afford to slack up on either in order to do the things he wanted to do and stay in school.

Allowing time for adjustment, he soon joined the football team, which for blacks was at best unfriendly. Prejudice did not get in his way and Holland became one of Cornell's greatest players, being named to the All-America team two years in a row.

Eventually he was elected to the National College Football Hall of Fame.

By the time he graduated, he had earned honors not only in football but in academics as well; his grades were so fine that he was accepted for graduate study at Cornell and later to the University of Pennsylvania for his Ph.D.

Obstacles were just part of life, he had always been told, which is why he decided to take them in stride and beat them out . . . eventually.

In 1961, Dr. Jerome Heartwell Holland (L) the ninth president of Hampton Institute. He is congratulated by Arthur Howe Jr. chairman of the board of trustees. Center is Dr. F. D. Patterson, vice president of the board, who presided at the proceedings on April 29, 1961.

In 1953, Holland became president of Delaware State College, and had, for the first time, a hurdle which set him back just a little.

Delaware State, a predominantly black college, was on the brink of extinction. Class size was down, the faculty was leaving by droves, and nobody seemed to be looking for a way to reverse the trend.

After sizing up the situation, Holland became determined to make a reversal happen, and, by the time he left in 1969, had converted the college into a fully-accredited, four-year institution, with a student body and faculty increased fourfold and a multi-million dollar building program underway.

He likewise began to innovate when he became president of Hampton Institute in 1969, where he stayed until being appointed ambassador to Sweden by former President Nixon in 1970.

That appointment, he says, was in the heyday of protests against the United States by foreign countries for its involvement in the Vietnam War. And while he welcomed the position, he realized that there was only so much he could do.

In an interview conducted at that time, Holland talked about the anti-U.S. demonstrations in Sweden and how they affected him.

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MOST BLACK ALL-STARS AREN'T IN THE RECORD BOOKS.

Long before black Americans made headlines on the playing field, they were making history. Lots of it. In fields like medicine, exploration, industry, and on the field of battle.

The names of these early "all-stars" probably aren't on the tip of your tongue.

That's because they aren't in most history books either.

A black man was the first to reach the North Pole. Matthew Henson, a member of Commodore Perry's expedition, raised the flag there in 1909.

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, a black surgeon, performed the world's first successful heart operation almost one hundred years ago.

In 1761, Benjamin Banneker designed and built the first striking clock. It was also the first clock made entirely in America.

And, on a September morning in 1864, thirteen black soldiers earned Congressional Medals of Honor. They led the Union Army's successful assault on Chaffin's Farm, a Confederate stronghold on the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia.

There are thousands of stories like these.
Enough to fill a library.
And, thanks to efforts
like Black History Month, someday
they will.

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