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Fair Morgan-Hidden Agenda?

Let's start with a definition of events and central characters in the current donnybrook about Morgan State University:

Audit—A formal examination and verification of financial records with recommendations for correcting problem areas.

Auditor—A person who makes financial records.

Regent—A member of a governing board, such as a state univers ity, whose duties include making policy, evaluation of and hiring and firing of the university president.

General Assembly—The 47 Senators and 141 delegates elected by the people to represent them in the state's law-making body, and whose duties include approval or disapproval of allocations in the Governor's budget for state colleges and universities.

Black Caucus—The 24 black members of the General Assembly from both houses whose duties include approval or allocations for state colleges, and who have established enhancement of black colleges , including Morgan State University, as a priority for 1984.

Governor—The state's chief executive officer, elected by the people, whose duties include appointment of members of boards of regents for state colleges and allocation of funds for the schools' operations.

College President—Chief executive officer of a college or university, who is hired and fired by the Board of Regents and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the institution and must report regularly to the Board of Regents.

As we stated last week, there is a tendency for all media to exploit news events about institutions of higher learning, particularly black institutions.

We have been treated this past week to television announcements and headlines which would lead the reader or listener to believe that the president of Morgan State University had committed a crime.

There was inference of mishandling of funds. But the facts are that an audit by the State Department of Fiscal Services gave Morgan a rating of "very poor" after examining its accounting records and procedures for the period Dec. 15, 1980 to April 3, 1983. Its report was dated December 13, 1983 and received by college officials during the Christmas holidays.

Word of the "bad" report had reached a reporter on this newspaper who broke the first story two weeks ago.

This week Morgan President Andrew Billingsley responded to the state auditors' report, noting that many improvements had been made, based on the nine-month-old findings, and emphasizing there had not been misuse of state funds.

There followed statements by individual members of the Black Caucus and suggestion that the future of Billingsley at Morgan was in jeopardy.

So if the reader is confused, he has a right to be. First of all, a president serves at the will of the board of regents. No public official has the power to fire a school administrator only his board.

It is natural to wonder what the latest furor is all about. What is the hidden agenda? For the record, the Black Caucus states it is concerned that Gov. Hughes' support of Morgan, at its request, by allocation of extra half million $ may be endangered if by a poor evaluation of Morgan's fiscal practices.

But President Billingsley contends that a followup of this audit, due in June, will reflect the rating does not apply to the current financial status of the university.

So what is the problem? Off the record, some lawmakers will admit the audit is a matter which can be ironed out and has been addressed.

Off the record, some will say that the real problem is a lack of communication between elected officials who must fight for greater state support of Morgan and the college board and administration.

Is then, the hidden agenda to get Morgan's Board of Regents and Morgan's president and administration to develop a greater understanding of the political process?

Are relations between Morgan officials and their brothers and sisters in the caucus so strained that they cry to oust the president becomes paramount to the future of the university?

Have members of the Black Caucus reached the end of the line because complaints about Morgan affect their ability to gain the support of other lawmakers for black institutions and other social welfare measures?

What do the plans for an engineering school or portions of an engineering program play in this scenario? Would Morgan's audit pos ture look better if it had not worked for a share of the engineering funding?

Are black lawmakers and other spokesmen in our community so disenchanted with the president at Morgan they feel his removal is the only answer? Are there selfish aspirations involved?

Are the members of the Morgan Board of Regents subject to the will of the President alone and insensitive to their public trust to oversee the university and insure that it continues as a first rate institution dedicated to excellence?

We don't know the answers to these questions. We think, however, the community is entitled to have the facts and not shroud them behind an audit rating.

Morgan was granted university status five years ago under the administration of Governor Harry Hughes. It is just now beginning to get some of the required funds to move in the direction of a true university.

Governor Hughes has indicated his commitment to Morgan with the extra monies included in his current budget. He has an opportunity to replace or reappoint four members of the Morgan board whose terms expire this spring.

We think the community would like to see the lawmakers, the governor, the board of regents and administrators at Morgan—use their expertise in resolving current differences so the university can pursue its goals for academic excellence.

For us, "Fair Morgan, we hail thee, so tried and so true", our hearts at thy name thrill with pride," are words we want to be singing for years to come. But the words of the school song will have empty meaning as long as some of its grads, now in public places, some of its grads, now in administrative posts, some of its grads now on the board of regents, get caught up in personality conflicts and other picayune matters.

Let them all get together and move Fair Morgan ahead.

Parren J. MITCHELL

Reagan versus Affirmative Action

Part II

Last week I wrote concerning the attempts of the Reagan Administration to destroy affirmative action and to render impotent the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. I gave you only a part of the story.

For more than a quarter of a century, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has stood as the major protector of civil rights.

Through a network of state advisory committees, the Commission has exposed violations of civil rights laws; brought to the public cases and patterns of racial discrimination; and, in short, through its studies and reports, been a vigilant watchdog.

It was an independent force. However, Reagan is determined to destroy the Commission and, failing that, destroy its independence.

The Reagan Administration has attempted to politicize the Commission by sending a stream of proposals to that body, urging that it do this or not do that to suppress reports or to prepare tainted reports.

The Commission undertook a study on how Reagan-inspired budget cuts in higher education assistance affected minority students. The White House contacted the Commission and advised that the study should be cancelled.

In another instance, the White House urged that the Commission undertake a study to show how affirmative action in higher education lowers academic standards.

The Justice Department, under Reagan's approval, opposed the affirmative action plan for the Detroit Police Department, in spite of the fact that the federal courts upheld the plan.

The White House satraps urged the Commission to cancel a study concerning the progress of opportunities for minorities and women in high tech industries and to oppose equal pay for women.

From my experience as executive secretary for the Maryland State Human Relations Commission, I know how extremely valuable the state advisory reports are. These reports provide much of the ammunition for the commission to monitor civil rights progress in America.

The Commission valued the work of the state advisory boards but Reagan's White House cronies requested the commission to eliminate all state advisory board reports.

A report was completed by the Commission showing discrimination against blacks in the state of Alabama. Sniffing the political winds, and anxious to cover up all discrimination, the White House urged the Commission to cancel the report.

This is the process by which a strong, independent Civil Rights Commission was made into a weak-kneed arm of the Reagan political strategy.

A Washington paper on January 13, 1984 quoted a White House official as saying, "Now that we have the Civil Rights Commission on our side, we can make use of them to run some interference for us."

It's shameful; it's disgusting; it's evil; and it's vicious.

There is only one cure, one surgery; one choice. Get Ronald Reagan out of the White House by using our voting power. It must be done.

Letters

Response to University Hospital

Dear AFRO:

A letter appeared in the January 14th edition of the AFRO-AMERICAN written by Jean S. Shnipper, a representative of the oppressive administration of the downtown medical complex-University of Maryland Hospital.

Shnipper wrote in response to a previous article in which a leading labor leader expressed his concerns that when Univ. of Md. hospital turns private long time black workers will suffer many losses. In her article Shnipper stated that the labor leader used "erroneous information."

We believe that it is Ms. Shnipper and her bosses who are being dishonest.

Her facts are distorted. Blacks who work for the state have already lost numerous jobs to outside, private contractors hired by the hospital. These contractors replace mainly black state workers with mostly black workers paid below state wage levels and who are not entitled to receive state benefits.

In 1982 alone six blacks lost their jobs as cashiers in the dietary department. Blacks lost their jobs when the respiratory therapy dept. was contracted-out. When the Housekeeping Department was contracted-out 70 percent of the black state employees lost their jobs and promotional opportunities were cut -off in this department run by out of state white managers.

Workfare and part-time workers and volunteers are used as clerical workers and as transport teams for patients. A phase out of LPN's and nurses aides has caused the loss of over 100 jobs traditionally held by blacks. Over the past five years the administration of Univ. of Md. Hospital has done everything possible to remove the black worker.

Shnipper says that when the hospital turns private "there are no lay-offs anticipated." Blacks in the lower class jobs are tired of being the whipping post. We want a guarantee of no lay-offs. If there are to be lay-offs then lay-off your top executives, administrators and department directors since University Hospital does not have any blacks in these positions.

Shnipper states that a major part of the hospital's mission, once it turns private, will be to provide health care for the "community surrounding the hospital." We don't want the hospital to serve its surrounding community.

The community now being created by the city and state is a community of the wealthy. We want a hospital that will provide health care to all north, south, east and west of Martin Luther King Boulevard, the boundary line that separates the uptown poor from the downtown rich.

Finally, Shnipper states that indigent care (treatment for those lacking medical insurance) "is available through all hospitals through a component in the rate structure of the Health Services Cost Review Commission.

All hospitals are allowed a percentage of their budget for uncompensated care." Shnipper fails to mention that this percentage of the budget is so small that the hospitals can usually use it up in one month.

University Hospital is the last public hospital in Baltimore. To allow it to turn private leaves hundreds of thousands of babies, women, men, children, the old and disabled to suffer and die.

Contact your state legislator and demand they defeat the bill allowing the hospital to turn private if all it will really mean is greater human rights violations on the part of the oppressive administration of University Hospital.

Clyde Weeds
Board Member
Operation Life

How To Make A Difference

National Urban League President John E. Jacob's State of Black America report issued last week, has some disquieting facts-the economic gap between black and white Americans is widening — the status of most black Americans is at a low ebb, black unemployment is at 17.3 percent, while overall unemployment has dropped to 8.4 percent.

But, these discouraging facts can be addressed through the ballot box. Hear Mr. Jacob, he says:

"All across America, growing importance is being placed on registering and voting. Blacks have seen what their votes can do in statewide, congressional and local elections and their desire to make use of this power, in the way that they choose, has been heightened.

"Part of this rising mood is of course attributable to the anger and resentment black people feel toward those they view as unsympathetic to their needs and aspirations. And part of it is due to the pragmatic realization that they can make a difference.

"Regardless of motivation, 1984 may well be a watershed in the history of black political involvement. Therefore, the most important task that the black community will face in 1984 is to see to it that every eligible person is registered to vote. There are 17 million blacks of voting age, but only ten million are registered to vote."

Baltimore residents can register to vote NOW for the May 8 Primary Election. Registration blanks are available at public libraries, and at the Supervisors of Elections, Fayette and Gay Sts.

Any person who has not registered to vote before, and who will be 18 by the General Election on Nov. 6, can register to vote NOW.

New voters should register Democrat or Republican, not Independent. Independent voters can NOT vote in a Primary, only in a General Election.

For further information about your registration status, call the Supervisors of Elections (396-5550), but register NOW if you have NOT voted before.

Black unity necessary in 1984

By Charles E. Belle

In 1984, Big Brother will be watching you. Every move you make.

Whoever controls politics controls the police. In no other year will black Americans individually have an opportunity to effect political and therefore economical, educational and social change as greatly as this election year.

Black America's increased voting strength of potentially 14 million votes (one out of five) indirectly and directly in support of a Black American Presidential candidate can barter for political convention. Common sense dictates unity in the face of a frightened opposition to opening the door for 30 million disenfranchised Black Americans.

A demand, not a plea, not a request, not a promise, but practical concessions from the majority is in order if the Black American house is in shape.

Sucess in achieving demands for greater participation in America's society starts with unity in the Black American community. Converting political power into economic power can only be accomplished with a commitment to the color of our race.

Racists and liberals alike will fight the core foundation of Black American liberation.

It's black American influx apparently is not aptly suited for these cutthroat liberals.

We must all come to our senses In 1983 all black America's social system money ran out. Our New Year's resolution must be to get back all that rightfully belongs to the Black American community.

First, we must take back all our black American brothers and sisters and then together use our obvious, when unified, political muscle to convert political power into economic power for equal social and justice change in the country.

Constitutional convention

Dear AFRO:

In the coming days and weeks the Maryland General Assembly could not to save the United States from a constitutional crisis.

To date, 32 state legislatures, including Maryland's, have passed resolutions requesting Congress to call a national constitutional convention. If just two more legislatures pass such resolutions, Congress will be required by the Constitution to call a convention, the first since our present Constitution was drafted in 1787.

The danger is that a new convention could not be prevented by Congress, the courts, the state legislatures, or anyone else from being a runaway convention and rewriting the whole Constitution and Bill of Rights.

A new convention, just like the one held in 1787, could not be compelled to consider only the proposed federal balanced budget amendment for which it is ostensibly being called.

A new convention dominated by special interests could seriously weaken the Constitution's religious liberty guarantees and other protections of the rights of citizens, reduce the powers of the courts to protect our rights, and change our government in unforeseen ways that could disrupt democratic government.

A new constitution or set of proposed amendments could then be ratified by the 38 smallest population states, representing only 40 percent of our country's people.

Playing Russian roulette with our Constitution is not a healthful sport. The Maryland General Assembly could pull the country back from a constitutional crisis by passing Senate Joint Resolution 6, which would repeal the convention resolution it mistakenly passed in 1975.

Edd Doerr
Executive Director
Americans for Religious Liberty

G. JAMES FLEMING

Suppose the $5 million was your winnings?

Suppose a favorite aunt died and left you or me $5 million, or suppose the millions came from winning a lawsuit or from "playing the lottery," what would we do? Better still, what are some of the things we should do?

First of all, we should learn the different ways of saying No! No! No! to all the friends, business people and sharpsters who will be around or on the phone offering all kinds of propositions. No, also to our children and other relatives with their endless demands for new cars and stereos, for trips and money.

When luck strikes one of us, our first reaction to all comers should be "No," or "Don't rush me," or "Give me time."

When that first check is actually in hand, the best advice says to bank it and forget it for at least 60 days, to insure that the winner does not do something hurriedly that is thoughtless or foolhardy.

The internationally known society editor, Gerri Major, once advised sudden widows and divorcees to "spend six months on a desert island before you do something silly or stupid." This is good counselling for others than divorcees and widows.

Most people who have never possessed big money or much money, need guidance when Lady Luck visits them — guidance from some trusted persons long known to the winner.

Such persons may be a lawyer, a banker, a minister or priest, an employer, or a knowledgeable relative or a knowledgeable friend.

The lucky man or woman should compare the different sets of advice he or she receives and make his or her own decision.

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This column turned to two professionals and asked what thoughts they had (in brief) for anyone coming suddenly into a substantial sum of money.

They are Joseph H. Thomas, Jr., a successful lawyer who also publishes "The Thomas Letter," a monthly newsletter on fiscal and investment matters with a multi-state circulation, and Winfred O. Bryson, Jr., for over 40 years a professor of economics at Morgan State University and a founder and since 1959, president of the Advance Federal Savings and Loan Association.

Dr. Bryson wrote:

"It is necessary to know what a person's needs and desires are before one can advise another person on how to invest or spend money. The sudden receipt of a large sum of money is likely to be accompanied by so many requests for funds that the recipient of the funds needs to have a few weeks, or even longer, to make a decision about the ultimate distribution of the money.

"During the period that the individual is waiting to determine how the funds should be invested, he or she might put a part of it in a Super N.O.W. checking account which would pay a floating money Market rate (7.22 percent as of Jan. 20) and be able to draw checks for immediate disbursement of funds for urgent needs."

Dr. Bryson continued:

"A very substantial portion of the money that is not put in a Super N.O.W. account might be put in a floating rate Money Market deposit account which pays a higher Money Market rate (8.82 percent as of Jan. 20). Money may be added to or withdrawn from Money Market deposit accounts at any time without penalty.

"It is possible that fixed rate certificates with varying maturity dates may be used for part of the money. Having the maturity dates of certificates staggered makes it possible for the investor to earn a high yield on his or her money and to avoid penalties on any substantial portion of it."

Atty. Thomas gave his "thoughts" in an outline addressed to any winner of a large sum of money:

1. Ask yourself what you want out of life. your goals.
2. Create a budget.
   Basic Budget includes:
   Home (buy with large mortgage to reduce taxes; Car (do not pay cash — interest reduces taxes); Clothing; Food; Insurance (major medical); Childrens education
   Luxury budget, includes such items as:
   Travel and entertainment; charities (not spur of moment giving)
   Saving and Investment;
   To maintain your life style when money stops; Professional help, but not from one who is selling a product; Have a will drawn up for you.
3. Do not lend anyone any money.
4. Take your time to complete 1 and 2 above, in the mean time, establish an IRA now, and place the balance in a tax-exempt money market fund.

Not incidentally, the Maryland Lottery Agency has set a good example in its decision on how to deal with 19 annual payments due Mrs. Eloise Singletary, the first $5 million winner of its weekly Lotto game.

The state has contracted with the Fidelity and Guaranty Life Insurance Co., of Baltimore, to invest and manage the balance due Mrs. Singletary, who has already received the first installment.

Each January she, or her estate, will receive one-nineteenth of her prize money, plus 10 percent interest, less taxes.

It will be up to Mrs. Singletary, now 58, as to how she will manage her nearly $300,000 per year.

AFRO SURVEY

How are you coping with the weather?

Jude Richardson — Mae Vaughn — Louis Colvin — Renee Smith

This week the question to the man and woman in the street was, "How are you coping with the weather changes?"

Jude Richardson, 22, security guard, "I dress for the cold weather. I know it's coming, so I dress for it. The ice doesn't bother me really; in fact, I don't know if anything can keep me in the house. I'll say I'm glad it's been getting warmer lately. I go out even more now."

Mae Vaughn, 50, toll sergeant, "I'm not having any problems with the weather so far. I have to come out in the weather no matter what kind it is. I must say I like this warmer weather we've been getting recently. Strange weather though, but I love it."

Louis Colvin, 24, warehouseman, "I love the weather change that's been happening. I'm getting a chance to come out. Usually, coming home from work, I go straight in the house out of the cold weather. So I'm coping with this weather change just fine. Now I hang out. I needed to get out."

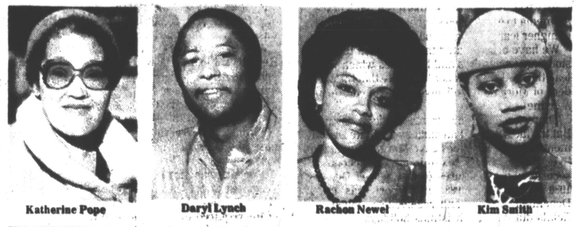
Renee Smith, 27, shredder, "Right now I have a cold from this weather. The temperature has affected me. I wish it would just stay warm and everything would be alright."

Katherine Pope, 49, housewife, "The weather isn't bothering me any. You can't do anything about it can you? I have so many things to do, I just do them, and I really do appreciate the warmer weather, however, whatever the weather is like I have to do what I have to do."

Daryl Lynch, 23, manager, "I haven't even noticed the weather. I just assume this is winter and expect it to be cold everyday. I like winter during the time it's suppose to be winter, so I wish it would snow and stop jiving around. Of course, when summer comes around, I want it to be summer."

Rachon Newel, 20, salesperson, "This is OK weather. I love cold weather. It allows me to get warm if you know what I mean. I happen to think this weather change is good, but I prefer it to be colder."

Kim Smith, 20, salesperson, "I've developed a sore throat from this weather, and the frequent changes in it do not help any. I have to dress warm whether its warmer or colder outside. Face it, I'm sick. I'm not coping well with this weather."



Katherine Pope — Daryl Lynch — Rachon Newel — Kim Smith

NAACP REPORT:

Morgan State Univ.: what is the way out?

By Magdalene Fennell

The adage that things get worse before they get better certainly seems to be true in the case of Morgan State University. In the midst of the struggle to secure adequate funding for the new engineering school, the State Department of Fiscal Services has questioned the fiscal management policies of the university.

After a two year period during which Morgan's management of finances was supposed to be improving, the university's "accountability and compliance" rating dropped from "Poor" to "Very poor."

This unfortunate development comes at a time when the General Assembly is in session and will soon be deciding on the budgets of state colleges and universities.

Consequently, before the complete text of the audit report was released, some people began to push the panic button; some adopted a nervous wait and see posture; some began calling for the resignation of the president of the school. All feared the impact of the negative audit on funding.

Some blame the state for Morgan's predicament; others, the Board of Regents, still others, the administration. In all probability , these three protagonists, along with many others, have contributed to the situation.

Many feel that the publicity given to Morgan's fiscal problems is yet another ploy in the ongoing conspiracy to discredit the school and eventually shut it down. But to try to fix blame at this critical time is counterproductive.

All friends of Morgan agree that the audit report must not be used as an excuse for continuing the historical underfunding of the university.

How bad is the situation anyway? At least two of the findings in the report do not appear to be all that abominable. We are not financial experts, but the more than $37,000 in delinquent student accounts is no big deal.

These debts may have to be written off, for to institute legal proceedings against offending students in the hope of collecting such debts would cost much more than $37,000.

The more than $51,000 spent in excess of the intercollegiate athletics budget is no big deal either. It could be wiped out by a single fundraiser or by an appeal to alumni.

On the other hand, the more than 2 million outstanding in National Direct Student Loans is a more serious matter. The failure of the university to turn these defaults over to the central collections arm of the state may cause Morgan to lose federal capital contributions. It also means that loans will be unavailable for many students deserving of a college education.

Let there be no misconceptions. The issues faced by Morgan are not unique. Most colleges, whether public, private, or parochial, have wrestled with the same problems and survived. In a racist environment, however, problems common to like schools become uncommon when related to predominantly black institutions.

What is the way out? The Board of Regents, with input from many sources—faculty administration, students, legislators, alumni , and all other interested parties—must take whatever action is necessary to save Morgan, even if that means succumbing to a solution frequently being mentioned by more and more people — namely, the firing of the president of the university.

Turning back the clock

By John W. Lewis, Jr.

The recent statements of Linda Chavez, President Reagan's newly appointed Staff Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, give us an amazingly clear opportunity to see the raw, unmasked racism of the Reagan administration.

In November President Reagan was prevented from dismantling the highly critical commission due to strong public and congressional pressure. He decided, therefore, to reconstitute the Commission in his image, and that image is best reflected in the views of Chavez.

In her interview last week with a reporter she put forth these views: First, that she would cancel the release of the Commission's study showing the economic and educational deprivation of Blacks in Alabama because she believed, discrimination was not adequately proven: Second, she would request a study to examine the correlation between increased affirmative action programs in colleges and the decrease of academic standards in those colleges; third she would begin a study to review the "radical" idea of equal pay for women because she fears it would "alter our existing....economy"; and last, but not least, she opposed a court ordered Detroit affirmative action plan for police officers because it would be unfair to white officers.

The Supreme Court, in the last few days, determined that this plan is, in fact, constitutional, much, I'm sure to Ms. Chavez's dismay.

She affirms that her goal is to further the idea of a "color blind nation!"—an extremely dangerous remark in the face of 50 percent Black youth unemployment, (triple the rate of white youth unemployment, and a Black infant mortality rate that is 95 percent higher than the white rate, and so on . . . the figures are endless. For the Commission's staff director to act as if this nation is color blind when all indicators point to a pervasively racist environment is not only dangerously naive — it is potentially life threatening for the minority communities which the Commission was formed to protect.

Many of President Reagan's reactionary policies thus far have been couched in terms of "fiscal responsibility" and "a balanced budget". But now, with Chavez' remarks there can be no mistake.

President Reagan does in fact, plan to take this country back to the "good old days" which he so often refers to with great nostalgia. Well, those of us who remember those good old days—the back of the bus, lily white unions, lynchings, and all-white voting rolls in majority Black counties—must c come together now to put a stop to his effort to turn back the clock.

The alarm has gone off and it's up to all of us to wake up now—our survival depends upon it.

Tony Brown's Comments

My Black History Month public television 4-part docudrama on the history of the NAACP is named "The Longest Struggle" (for a free issue of my Black History Month Special magazine—"The Longest Struggle"—for your organization send sixty cents (.60) in stamps to Tony Brown Productions, 1501 Broadway-Suite 2014, New York New York 10036).

It could have been just as easily called "The Unfinished Struggle." The unfinished business in the NAACP's long struggle to bring a measure of equality to Black people in this country is monumental. That included the most recent lynch-murder of an Afro-American which occurred during the early morning hours of March 22, 1981.

Persistent efforts, however, of the Mobile, Alabama NAACP President, Dr. Robert Gilliard, finally led to the reopening of the gruesome lynch-murder case of 19-year-old Michael Donald and the conviction of the local's Ku Klux Klan leader, Henry Francis Hays, 29, on December 10, 1983 by a jury of 11 Whites and one Black.

According to the testimony of a Klansman, they abducted Donald and took him to a wooded area where he was savagely beaten. "He fought like a crazed animal," before falling unconscious the witness confessed.

A "hangman's noose" was then tied around the victim's neck and he was strangled; then his battered body was hanged in a tree on a city street. James Knowles, the confessed accomplice, said he was "drenched in blood, soaked to the skin."

A district attorney called the lynching "the most atrocious crime committed in recent memory in this state, in this country." Knowles admitted that the youth had been randomly picked off the street and killed to "show Klan strength in Alabama."

The teenager was working his way through college at night in the mailroom of a Mobile newspaper, the Press Register, and was described by his Carver State Technical College instructor Walter Blunt as "one of the best students I ever taught."

The most grusome injustice of this unfinished business is the 1951 killings of Harriet and Harry T. Moore, two outstanding NAACP officials in Florida (he headed the statewide NAACP). Both were school teachers and were active in registering Blacks to vote when they were murder-bombed while asleep in a bedroom of their home on their 25th wedding anniversity (Christmas night).

A taped confession by the alleged bomber, a former Ku Klux Klan member, is reported to be in the possession of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. But the FBI refuses to release it to the NAACP, on the grounds that "there was not sufficient public interest" in the tapes to qualify under the federal Act.

There is also the fact that no one was ever convicted in the assassination of Mississippi NAACP Field Director Medgar Evers. This legendary leader's voter registration and economic boycott drives preceeded Martin Luther King's and the modern-day civil rights movement by 10 years.

The most recent example of the NAACP's victory over unfinished business is the case of Lenell Geter, 26. Geter, an engineer, was convicted of robbing a Texas fast food restaurant of $615 in 1982. Both co-workers and witnesses stated that Geter was not at the scene of the crime. Despite this, however, he was sentenced to life in prison. But pressure from the NAACP forced the Dallas County prosecutor to declare a new trial. On December 14, 1983, Geter was released on bail from the Dallas County Jail.

During 1916, 52 Black men and one Black woman were lynched;

Jeff Brown in Cedar Bluff, Mississippi for "accidentially brushing against" a White girl as he ran to catch a train. This was also the year of The Waco Horror where some children "pulled out the teeth" from the charred, dismembered torso " and sold them for $5 apiece."

It was this sanctioned violence and its move North, perilously close to precipitating a second Civil War, that led to the formation of the NAACP, following the riots in 1908 in Abraham Lincoln's hometown of Springfield, Illinois. It was the organized pressure of the NAACP from outside the South that eventually led to the great decline in lynchings after 1921.

Journalist Ida B. Wells, one of the NAACP founders is credited with starting the anti-lynching crusade and was driven from Memphis because of her editorial campaign in her newspaper, Free Speech, against lynching. She published the first statistical record of lynching in 1885 in Chicago called the Red Record.

Wells' research disproved the convenient myth that lynching was a necessary evil to protect White womanhood. Her records showed that less than 25 percent of those lynched were charged with rape.

The need for these bizarre acts of barbarism was the result of a deep-seated pathology and expressed an array of fears. Blacks were a convenient scapegoat in death as they had been as slaves in life. The belief that White womanhood was in sexual danger and the sadistic sexual dismemberment that was a part of the ritual reassured the mob that its prerogative to interracial sex justified random murder.

NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White began his firsthand investigations (narrowly escaping being lynched himself in Arkansas because of them) in 1918 and published his outspoken and detailed explanations in his 1929 book Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch. However, in spite of numerous NAACP-backed anti-lynching laws over a period of 40 years, Congress has stubbornly refused to enact a specific bill. House-passed bills in 1922, 1937 and 1940 were always "killed" in the Senate.

For 75 years now, the NAACP has dominated the protest movement that has saved Afro-Americans from a reign of lawlessness and terror. And America was saved from her basest instincts—by the NAACP's insistence on liberty and justice for all citizens.

Long may she live!

TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL, the television series, can be seen on public television in Washington on Thursday, Channel 32 at 10:30 p.m. ; Friday, Channel 26 at 10:30 p.m.; Monday, Channel 32 at 11 p.m. ; and on Saturday, Channel 32 at 6:30 p.m. Please consult listing.

Black Unfinished Business