Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing

Words by JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

Music by J. ROSAMOND JOHNSON

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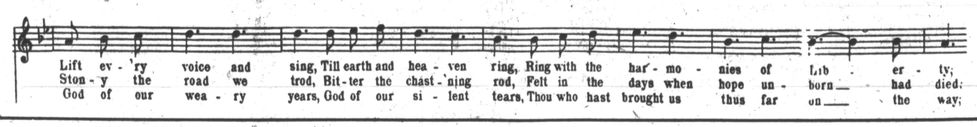


SPEAKING OF BLACK HISTORY

Here is the real James Weldon Johnson story and how our National Anthem was born

By Elizabeth M. Oliver, City Editor

(Clip and Save)

"Lift Every Voice and Sing," our national anthem, (sometimes called the "National Negro Anthem") has been at the top of the music list for over 60 years.

Today it is sung everywhere in the U.S. and abroad.

Sadly, it is frequently listed on programs without the author's names. Thus an important part of the history of the soulful song is lost.

James Weldon Johnson wrote the words and his brother, J. Rosemond Johnson, the music. The story is one of the most fascinating of all music history.

Also, few persons know that "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was intended by the brothers to be sung MASS since it was a poem in the last verse, "God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, etc." Usually, heads are bowed.

I was a student at Fisk University in Nashville, TN when James Weldon Johnson taught Creative Literature. I shall never forget his revelation that words with a Southern accent are like music and he inspired our respect as he said, "Listen to the black woman in the marketplace when she says Good mawnin'". . .the sound of music.

Among others who sat at his feet were Dr. John Hope Franklin, the noted historian and Judge L. Howard Bennett.

Both men sang on the Fisk University Choir which also rose to fame as it exalted the Negro Spiritual to world acclaim . . . accenting the musical words of the slave.

IMMORTAL STORY

You can hardly recall James Weldon Johnson or sing "Lift Every Voice and Sing" without knowing the story of the song.

The music was first published by Edward Marks Music Co. of New York. The composition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," came later quite by accident.

FOR LINCOLN CELEBRATION

James was a teacher-in the Jacksonville (FL.) schools, and wanted something extra for a Lincoln Day celebration on Feb. 12. He tried a verse on Lincoln, but could not make it go.

The brothers talked it over and agreed to write a song for the exercises and to have it sung by a chorus of 500 school children.

James got his first line, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and then worked along grinding out the next five lines.

When near the end of his first stanza there came to him the words —

"Sing a song, full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song, full of the hope
That the present has brought us . . ."

The spirit of the poem possessed him then. He finished the stanza and turned it over to Rosamond.

In composing the two other stanzas, he didn't use pen and paper.

While Rosamond worked out the music, James paced back and forth on the front porch repeating the lines over and over to himself, going over all the agony and ectasy of creating.

COULDN'T CONTROL TEARS

As he worked through the opening and middle lines of the last stanza,

"God of our weary years;
God of our silent tears;
Thou who hast brought us thus far on our way,
Thou who hast by thy might led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path we pray,"

James said he could not keep back the tears and made no effort to do so.

When Rosamond finished the music, the manuscript was sent to Marks in NY, requesting mimeographing a sufficient number of copies for use by the chorus.

The song was taught to the children and sung very effectively at the celebration and the Johnson Brothers went on with their work.

KEPT ALIVE BY CHILDREN

After they had moved away from Jacksonville permanently, both the song and the occasion passed out of their minds. But, the school children of Jacksonville kept singing the song.

Some of them went to other schools and kept singing it. Some even became school teachers and taught it to their pupils.

Within twenty years, the song was being sung in schools and churches and on special occasions throughout the country.

Later it was adopted by the NAACP.

The Johnson brothers in traveling around the country, regularly found printed and typewritten copies of the words pasted in the back of hymnals and song books, used in Sunday schools and YMCA's. That is the method by which it gets its widest circulation.

James spoke before a summer labor school at Bryn Mawr (PA) College some years ago and was surprised to hear it fervently sung by white students there and to see it mimeographed in their folio of songs.

In later years, the Johnson brothers marveled at the results that followed what was considered an incidental effort originally made with no intention other than to meet the needs of a particular moment.

From 1900 - 1906, the Johnson brothers were the top - ranking U.S. song writers. Along with Bob Cole, they wrote "The Maiden With the Dreamy Eyes," for Anna Held.

For Lillian Russell, they composed, "The Maid of Timbuctoo"; for Marie Cahill, "Congo Love Song"; for Bud Williams, "My Castle On the River Nile." Most popular of all their songs was "Didn't We Ramble?"

LIBERTY SHIP

The seventh Liberty Ship named for an outstanding black American, the S. S. James Weldon Johnson was launched at the Wilmington yards of the California Shipbuilding Corp. in December, 1943.

The vessel paid tribute to the noted poet, essayist, lawyer and diplomat who was killed in an automobile - train collision near his summer home at Dark Harbor, ME., on June 26, 1938.

Mr. Johnson also achieved note as a song - writer and a professor of literature at Fisk and New York Universities, received B.A. and M.A. degrees from Atlanta University and graduate study at Columbia University.

APPOINTED CONSUL

His career began as a teacher in the Jacksonville public school. In 1901 he went to NYC and with his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and Bob Cole, collaborated in the successful writing of popular songs and light operas.

Later he was appointed U.S. Consul, first to Venezuela and later to Nicaragua.

In 1910, he married Grace Nail and two years later his first book, the fictional "Autobiography of an Ex - Colored Man," appeared anonymously.

He edited a book of American poetry and two spirituals; and also wrote the English libretto for the opera "Goyescas."

OTHER SHIPS

Other Liberty ships named: the Harriett Tubman, the S.S. Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Frederick Douglass, John Merrick and Robert L. Vann.

He wrote the song that makes the whole world sing

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

The Navy named a Naval vessel, the Destroyer Escort Leonard Roy Harmon, in honor of a messman who received the Navy Cross posthumously for heroic conduct at Guadalcanal.

The John H. Murphy Sr. Liberty Vessel was named for the AFRO founder who established the newspaper in Baltimore 90 years ago.

CONSTANCE HELOISE MOORE
Feb. 12, 1945-June 27, 1965

For All We Know

By Elizabeth M. Oiver

Save Fisk U Fund Raiser set for Feb. 29

State Sen. Clarence W. Blount and Masons Grand Master Samuel T. Daniels have sent out an urgent letter asking for contributions for Fisk University now in financial distress.

Joining with the "Citizens to Save Fisk U" they announce a Fund Raiser set for Wednesday, Feb. 29, 5 p.m. at the Masonic Temple, 1307 Eutaw Place.

Donations should be made to Donald Millard, 2701 Hanson Ave., Baltimore, 21209. Make checks payable to Fisk University.

The letter notes: "Fisk University is one of our oldest private black institutions. Many prominent black Americans have come from Fisk over the years. It is truly a part of our black heritage and we as Baltimoreans would like to do our part in saving this school of higher education."

All clubs and churches are asked to contribute.

College Fund Drive Gala, banquet March 18

The Women's Committee of the United Negro College Fund Drive is asking that the public give large support so that the goal can be reached to help support not only the 40 institutions but also Coppin State College in Baltimore.

Consequently the group is asking that the community take part in the Gala and Banquet set for Sunday, March 18, 6 p.m. at $20 per person. The event is scheduled for the Tawes Center at Coppin.

Helping this urgent cause may be accomplished by:

1. Purchasing a ticket to the Gala.

2. Becoming a patron at $3 or honorary patron at $5 or contributor at $50 or more.

For information call Mrs. Johnny Mae Stevenson, chair, tickets, 944-8359.

Officers are Mesdames A. Bernice S. Hunley, program chair; Elnora B. Fullwood, vice-chair; Ruby Taylor, financial secretary; Ruby Bass, corresponding secretary; Buenevista Prettyman, treasurer; Program Committee chair, Flossie Dedmond and members Chessie Brailey, Ruth Daniels, Vivian Gardner.

Important Dates

FEB. 11 — NAACP 75th Diamond Jubilee Celebration and Awards Program, James Weldon Johnson Auditorium; Coppin State College, 2500 W. North Ave., 6 p.m. Drama, Music, Awards, Freedom Workers, Supporters, Celebrities. Call 366-3300.

FEB. 16 — Coppin State College Kick Off of the 1984 Campaign A Commitment to Excellence, Tawes Center, on the campus, 6 p.m. George L. Russell, chairman.

FEB. 21 — National Conference of Christians and Jews 1984 Brotherhood-Sisterhood Week Awards, Hyatt Regency Hotel Ballroom, 12 noon luncheon.

ENOCH PRATT LIBRARY exhibits - Black Family Ties - Feb. 11-19, second floor, Cathedral Street; Famous Black Americans in the Armed Forces, Ryales poster exhibit; SUNDAYS, Feb. 19, 26, 8 p.m. Storytelling Festival; Feb. 15-John Lewis Bey, fashion show 6 p.m. Pennsylvania Ave. Branch; Feb. 22, 6 p.m. Edmondson Ave. Branch, Gospel Concert, St. Bernadine's Choir.

LILLIE CARROLL JACKSON MUSEUM - FEB. 16 - Black History through Music, Mrs. Marion Smith, 3 p.m.; Feb. 23 - Black History through Stories, Mary Carter Smith, Poems and Folk Tales, 3 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEB. 18 — The Forum, Annual dinner and Sweetheart Dance, National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees. Open Bar, Soul Explosion Band, a Fabulous Affair. Call 732-5700.

SUMMER JOBS AVAILABLE

The Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks is looking for certified pool managers, pool operators, water safety instructors, advanced life savers and pool attendants for its 1984 summer pool program. For additional information call 396-7807 or 396-7810.

CCB has distinguished new library director

Community College of Baltimore with Charkes G. Tildon Jr. announces the appointment of a new library director, Lloyd Dalton Mayfield, who ranks high among the nation's librarians.

A BA graduate of Prairie View A and M University and MLS, Library Science graduate of Syracuse University, Md. Mayfield comes to the Baltimore campus from the A.C. Bilbrew Library, Los Angeles County Public Library System where he was senior librarian in charge.

During a 10-year career there he was Project Life director; head of reference, Carson Regional Library and librarian in charge of the Enterprise and East Compton Libraries.

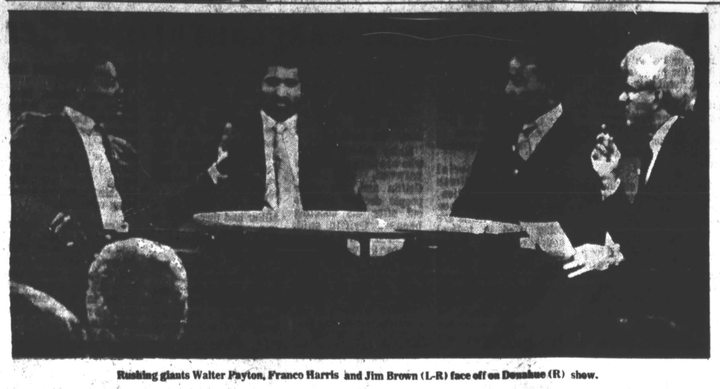
Other career highlights include Lecturer of Ethnic Studies, University of Southern Calif.; English and Black Studies, California State University; Afro-American Studies, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio and Professor of Humanities, Federal City College now the University of the District of Columbia.

Mr. Mayfield has charge of the CCB libraries both at the Liberty Heights and Harbor Campuses. His honors include: Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society; Fellowship, Syracuse University; Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, alternate; National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer Fellow; (Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.).

President Tildon notes that the addition of Mr. Mayfield is in line with the CCB on excellence.

CCB PRESIDENT CHARLES G. TILDON JR. and new library director, Lloyd Dalton Mayfield — Ryales photo

MSU GRAD BRIGADIER GENERAL JACKSON E. ROZIER JR., who received the BS degree in Educational Administration from Morgan, is now stationed at the Pentagon, Washington, as director of Plans and Operations, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics. A ROTC Second Lieutenant in 1960, he rose rapidly to become a general officer in 1982 and has been awarded the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Parachutist Badge and Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. He and Mrs. Rozier reside in Washington. — Ryales Photo



Rushing giants Walter Payton, Franco Harris and Jim Brown (L-R) face off on Donahue (R) show.

Footrace with Franco Harris will influence Jim Brown's decision on comeback try

By Gary Silverman

CHICAGO (UPI) — Hall of Famer Jim Brown, admitting he is not as smart as Franco Harris, Monday reiterated his decision to come out of retirement at the age of 43 to protect his career rushing record.

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Brown appeared Monday on the Phil Donahue show with the two running backs closest to his all-time NFL record of 12,312 yards — Harris and Walter Payton of the Chicago Bears.

Brown, who turns 48 next Friday (17th) said he would seek a tryout with the Los Angeles Raiders if he was able to defeat Harris in a 40 - yard dash and the former Penn State star indicated he would be willing to accept the challenge.

"I believe right now I could beat you in the 40," Brown told Harris.

"There are probably 17, 18-year-old kids who could beat me," Harris replied, "but Jim Brown can't."

After the show, Brown said he was encouraged by Harris' response.

"This is the first time I realized Franco would race me," he said.

"If he beats me, I will forget about coming back."

During the program, Brown maintained over the protestations of Harris and Payton that professional football has become corrupted by drugs, television and athletes who resemble businessmen and entertainers more than "gladiators."

"They (football players of today) do so many things that remind me of my movie days," said Brown, who left football after nine seasons for a career in films. "Sports to me is sport. It's not about money. It's about performance."

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And Brown said he is not always impressed by Harris' performance — particularly when the fullback runs out of bounds to avoid contact and thereby prolongs his career.

"The only reason to run out of bounds is to stop the clock," said Brown, who praised Payton for sharing his philosophy of running. "(The only way to play) is like there is no next game."

But Harris, who is in second place on the career rushing list, defended his style, saying a player is most susceptible to injury when he tries to turn near the sideline.

"Most of the time you're running to the sidelines, you're running sideways which is the worst possible way to run," he said. "When you play you don't use just your athletic ability — you use your head."

"He's telling the truth," said Brown. "He's smarter than Walter and I."

Jabbar sets field goal mark, eyes Wilt's points

BOSTON (UPI) — The shot was a reverse layup from under the board that hesitated on the rim before falling, and Kareen Abdul - Jabbar knew its number as soon as the ball dropped through.

It was field goal No. 12,682 for the Los Angeles Lakers' center, surpassing the record held by Wilt Chamberlain. Abdul - Jabbar's historic basket, which came at 7:22 of the third period Wednesday night, helped highlight the Lakers' 111 - 109 victory over the Boston Celtics.

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The sell - out crowd of 14,890 at Boston Garden gave Abdul - Jabbar a standing ovation. As he stood at the foul line with his arms held high, acknowledging the applause, Abdul - Jabbar was doing what he couldn't do for much of his career — smiling and enjoying the moment.

Laker coach Pat Riley said after the game that Abdul - Jabbar has, in the last few years, "grown up" and learned to take pleasure in his success.

"Kareem' realizing, the twilight of his career, what the NBA means to him. He can enjoy it now," said Riley.

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Barring injury, it is likely that Abdul - Jabbar will pass Chamberlain late in the season to become the NBA's all - time leading scorer, needing just 659 points to equal the record of 31,419.

Abdul - Jabbar agreed that he enjoys playing "because I can continue to play at my best," but said he is considering retirement at the end of next year.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar enjoying it now

College scores

BASKETBALL

UDC 59, Wright St. 84
Mt. St. Mary's 90, Morgan 80
Mt. St. Mary's 67, Va. Union 66 (women)
Md., E. Shore 67, Bethune 63
Howard 72, Fla. A-M 68
Fla. A-M 76, Howard 69 (women)
Norfolk St. 81, Fayetteville 75
W. Salem 57, Hampton 54 (OT)
Eliz. City 79, Bowie St. 54
J. C. Smith 93, Va. State 77
Bowie 91, Mt. St. Mary's 42 (women)
Norfolk St. 74, Shaw 53
Howard 74, American 61 (women)
N.C. Central 58, J. C. Smith 57
Columbus 84, Morris Brown 60
Ala. State 89, Southern 74
Ala. A-M 83, Miles 71
Ala. State 101, A and T 96
Morehead St. 73, Tenn. State 63
Ft. Valley 102, Morehouse 76
Grambling 53, Nicholls St. 51
Alcorn 76, Grambling 51
Langston 68, E. Central Okla. 60

Baltimorean scores in '84 karate debut

Willie "Bam" Johnson, edging his way into the national martial arts picture, reportedly made a significant advance last weekend in a karate tournament at Dundalk.

According to reporter Lisa Crum, Johnson scored grand championship in forms at the year's initial tournament.

Crum also reports that Johnson placed in every local and national tournament he entered during the 1983 campaign.

City says no to bid

BALTIMORE Mayor William Schaefer has rejected an offer for a six - year lease on Memorial Stadium made by the owner of the 1983 World Series champions.

Union's Bailey jumps to Norfolk

Virginia Union University has named Wilbert Talley acting Athletic Director following the resignation of Willard Bailey as Athletic Director and head football coach. Bailey resigned to accept the head coaching position at Norfolk State University.

Talley, a former dean of students at Virginia Union, is an instructor in the Sociology Department at the University and is a member of the school's Committee on Athletics. A graduate of the University, he joined the faculty in 1969.

In announcing Talley's appointment, Union's president David T. Shannon said, "It is crucial that the continuity of our athletic program be sustained. In Mr. Talley we have a man who is familiar with the University. Until permanent staffing can be developed, I have complete confidence in his ability to maintain the department during this transition period."

Dr. Shannon said a search for a successor to Bailey has begun, but there are no "leading candidates" who have surfaced. He said he hopes to be able to complete the process and have a successor named before the end of February. He added that no decision has been made on whether the University will seek one person to fill both the head coach and athletic director positions or whether those duties will be divided.

Bailey had been athletic director at Virginia Union since 1981 and had been head football coach since 1974.

Willard Bailey

In his 13 seasons at Virginia Union, Bailey compiled a 106-32-4 record, giving him the nation's best winning percentage among active coaches in Division II. Virginia Union is the only school in the country to have sent teams to five consecutive NCAA Division II tournaments.

At Norfolk State, Bailey will teach in the health and physical education department, but will not be athletic director. He is a 1962 graduate of Norfolk State, where he was a linebacker.

Defensive coordinator Tom Morris and offensive coordinator John Wright from the VUU staff will join Bailey at Norfolk State.

Dr. Shannon said Bailey had "continued the legacy of excellence in Virginia Union athletics." He added, "Coach Bailey has made an outstanding contribution to Virginia Union University, and we will fondly remember him and his record here. We are proud of the achievements our students made under his leadership. We wish him well in his new position."

"We would be less than honest if we wished him an undefeated season, however. After all, Virginia Union still plays Norfolk State every year," Dr. Shannon said.

AFRO SPORTS

Al Bumbry 'writes off' speed fine

Orioles' outfielder Al Bumbry — picked up for speeding in November — came away from a court appearance Tuesday with nothing worse than writer's cramp.

Judge Darrow Glaser sentenced the member of the 1983 World Series champions to 20 minutes of community service signing autographs.

"A fine would be negligible" Glaser said. "And he has already suffered embarrassment."

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So Glaser granted Bumbry probation before judgment and prescribed the autograph session in lieu of a fine.

In fact, the judge just happened to have a picture of Bumbry ready for an autograph for his son.

Bumbry went out to his car to get a stack of color photos for the autograph session in the court clerk's office.

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Bumbry was picked up by Maryland State police on radar traveling 48 MPH in a 55 - mile zone. Bumbry was also cited for not having his driver's license in his possession.

"I can't order you to win another World Series," Glaser said, noting that Washington County, site of the court appearance, is "Oriole Country."

ANOTHER FUGITIVE—Like most of his quarterback colleagues who despair at not getting a chance to play their position in the NFL because of their complexion, Nebraska All - American Turner Gill Monday signed a multi-year contract with the Montreal Concordes of the Canadian Football League.

Al Bumbry judge was a fan

Local fencer here to compete

Judy Gilbert, a native of this city who is involved in an unique sport, will be competing in the area this weekend.

The comely senior and her William and Mary College teammates will meet Navy at Annapolis today (Friday) at 4 p.m., and Johns Hopkins tomorrow (Saturday) at 11 a.m., at Homewood.

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