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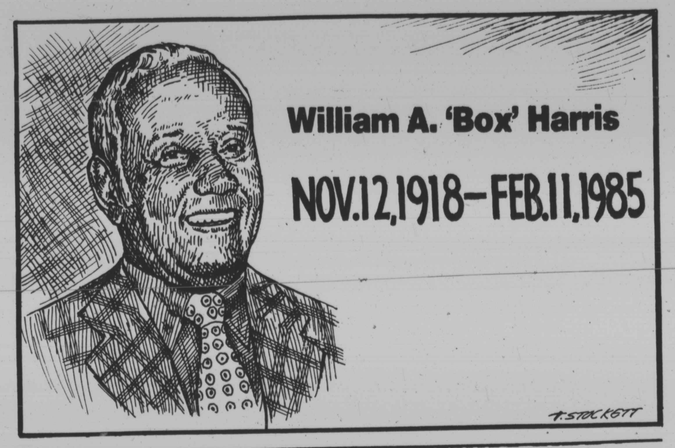

William 'Box' Harris

When young blacks hear about pioneers such as William "Box Harris" who died this week they don't fully appreciate the magnitude of their contributions. "Box" Harris was not only a pioneer in law enforcement and national guard matters he was also a mediator and peacemaker in an era characterized by anger and confrontation.

Harris served in both World War II and the Korean War and spoke out against the sickness of racism in the military. In between the two wars he managed to graduate from Morgan St.

He became Maryland's first black parole officer in 1952 and four years later he became the first black U.S. Deputy Marshal. During the bitter racial turmoil that struck Cambridge in 1964 Harris served with the National Guard as a captain.

He resigned from his marshal's job to remain in Cambridge as an economic development program officer helping the residents to bring about economic opportunity for blacks and heal the racial tensions that rocked the community.

Harris was appointed head of the city police department's community relations division by Gen. George Gelston, acting head of the department of 1966 and he is credited with helping to keep Baltimore cool during the long hot summers that plagued the nation during the 60s. In 1971 he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and made head of the traffic division.

Harris was also the first black law enforcement official to apply for membership in the Maryland Law Enforcement Officers Inc. His membership was accepted.

In 1971 he retired from the National Guard after 20 years service.

Governor Mandel appointed Harris special executive assistant for community affairs in 1973 and he served in that post until 1979 when he retired.

Harris was a man who fought injustice yet he was able to bring disputing factions together because of the respect he earned and because of his uncompromising stand against discrimination. He was a first and he was a giant among his contemporaries. He will be missed.

Letters

Mary McCloud Bethune

—early beginnings

On March 5th the face of a black woman will be unveiled on a new 22 cents first class stamp at U.S. Postal Service headquarters in Washington, D.C.

News came to a rural community in South Carolina that a prominent Negro educator from the North was to speak in one of the colored churches of a small town near by. This unusual notice aroused widespread curiosity because outstanding speakers of the race seldom came to this section. The older people were interested and the younger people were thrilled. It would be a great holiday!

Upon the appointed day the speaker arrived, but that day was cold, rainy, and gloomy. The pastor of the little church was deeply disappointed because he feared that his members would not be able to come from their farms through the continuous rain over bad roads without transportation.

He even told the speaker it would not be worth while to go to the church on such a stormy night, but the speaker urged him to go. They went and waited.

The good news had reached a thrifty family on a rice plantation five or more miles from the church. This, they thought was an opportunity which they should not miss. In spite of the continuous rain, their ox cart was made ready and off they went.

In the family was a young girl in her early teens—bright, alert, and ready for whatever this pleasure ride had in store for her. Among the dozen or so who reached the church that night was the party in the ox cart.

Much of the speaker's attention was given to the young people present. He urged them to prepare themselves for service. The world needed them as was waiting for them, but they must be prepared for the world's work. God could not use a lazy, stupid person in His work, the speaker declared.

As he pointed his finger at the group of young people, the little girl from the plantation felt that he was talking to her. She resolved then and there that she was going to fit herself for service.

At her bedside that night she knelt and asked God to show her the way—to open the door when she might enter and prepare herself for His service. Again at midnight she arose and prayed for an opportunity to prepare herself.

Little did the speaker realize that he had been the means of inspiring one who was destined to become one of the most highly respected educational leaders of her race, and a unique personality of national recognition.

The doors of Scotia Seminary, a young girls' school fostered by the Presbyterian Church, were opened to this future college president. Deeply appreciative of this opportunity, she worked hard and cheerfully. But of her excellent scholarship and attractive personality, she won the hearts of both her teachers and her schoolmates.

After graduation she was sent to Moody's Mission in Chicago. Among the interesting and creative activities there was her singing to prisoners on Sundays.

After completing her course at the mission, she went to Georgia, where her real service began as a teacher. However, she soon moved to Florida, where a lasting monument to her faith, ability, and energy was to be constructed.

When she arrived at Daytona, a voice seemed to say to her, "This is your field. Stay here." With only one dollar and fifty cents in her pocket, she began her work.

Immediately she went to the home of a colored minister and announced her mission in Daytona. She was eager to know where the center of the black community was located. Inspired by her faith and statement of purpose, the minister accompanied her. She located a vacant house and rented it at once.

She was told that the rent would amount to eight dollars a month, but the owner was favorably impressed and said, "You need not pay in advance."

Now came the task of selling her idea to the community. She must find some pupils. Parents were notified that it was to be a girls' industrial school and they should send their girls and any pieces of furniture or dishes they did not need at once.

The response was immediate because just such a school for their girls was what the eager parents wanted. At the end of the month the rent was paid. A new educational institution-the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute—had its beginning under the inspired leadership of Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune in 1904.

The idea was popular, the need great, so the school grew. Soon was purchased a lot on which to erect a building. The money was raised at first by selling pies, cookies, and ice cream, furnished by the cooking classes.

When the last payment was made on the lot it was necessary to have a board of trustees.

For the first time, then, were white friends called upon. The enthusiasm of Mrs. Bethune was contagious, and her practical educational program won confidence. Prominent citizens of Daytona responded by becoming members of the new board.

When James N. Gamble offered his services as president of the trustees, he jokingly asked Mrs. Bethune what he was to be trustee of. She replied, "Of the ideas in my head."

These experiences led to ever widening contacts. The young teacher was invited to the hotels to present her cause to various leaders. She frequently took some of her pupils with her as exhibits of musical talent and future well-trained citizens.

On one such occasion she met John D. Rockefeller, who congratulated

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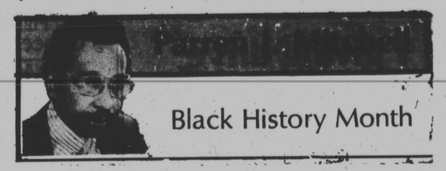


Black History Month

Black History Month is upon us. It is a time to reflect on past accomplishments and look ahead toward new challenges. It is also a time to remember Carter G. Woodson, known as the Father of Black History, and his efforts to establish a period of observance for our history.

Mr. Woodson articulated the fact that blacks have made a significant contribution in the development of this country and should be recognized for it. He feared that without a specific period of observance, our contributions would be obscured, belittled or forgotten.

Woodson understood the importance of teaching our children about the richness of our heritage, the foundation of our pride. Our heroes should be uplifted and thereby inspire new innovators, leaders and pioneers. But most of all, we should instill in our children a sense of pride.

Everyone cannot be a great scientist such as Charles Drew who pioneered research in blood transfusion or Percy Lavon Julian who was the first to synthesize synthetic cortisone.

Everyone may not be a great athlete such as Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics. However, everyone can strive to reach their full potential.

We have not been idle this past year; we have made significant accomplishments. After years of trying, through perseverance, a public law was passed which designates January 20, 1986 as the first observance of the Federal legal holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;

Colonel Guy Bluford became the first Black astronaut to travel in space; Blacks dominated the Olympic Games, highlighted by Carl Lewis tying Jesse Owens' record of winning four gold medals;

Jesse Jackson became a credible black Presidential candidate and a major force in the effort to involve blacks and other minorities in the political process, amassing support from a "rainbow coalition" and:

Bishop Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful struggle against the oppressive apartheid system in South Africa.

We have a lot to be proud of, however, there is much left undone. We have not yet reached social or economic parity. Last year, 9.9 million black Americans—nearly 36 percent of the black population—fell below the poverty level.

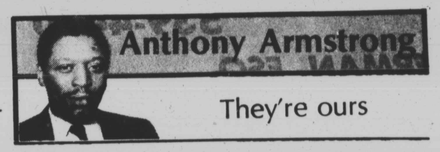
Black unemployment rose as high as 16 percent, two to three times that of white unemployment levels. Black higher educational institutions are continually struggling for financial security while bombarded with severe budget cuts.

The Supreme Court's unprecedented interpretation of Title IX of the 1972 Education Act Amendments in Grove City College v. Bell, which undermines Congress' original intention to prohibit discrimination in federally funded educational institutions has yet to be overturned.

So as we observe Black History Month, we should renew our pledge to meet the challenge of fighting racial injustices. We should also pledge to continue to make history and avail America of our knowledge and skills.

Ours is not an easy road, but it can be travelled. The wall placed before us is high, but it can be climbed. Although we have not been treated fairly, although discrimination is still existent today, even in the highest echelons of our society, we will not dwell on what is. Instead, we will dwell on what can be, what must be, what will be.

We will take heart in knowing that we will strive for social and economic parity until the battle is won.



Anthony Armstrong

They're ours

The most telling thing about our community today is the terrible trauma we are allowing our women to experience. The black woman in our city is being asked to confront and solve problems she has not had to face since the days of slavery.

You name it, our women, especially our young women, have it. Housing problems, health problems, drug problems, job problems, child abuse problems, sex problems, man problems. The list goes on and on.

What is shocking is the changing attitudes about women. Today people all over town are saying, "You want to be equal, O.K., we're going to treat you as an equal". This translates into "the hell with you."

To question the many changes that have occurred in our city, our nation, that directly effect women is a touchy subject.

The minute anyone examines historical concepts about women against the backdrop of today's attitudes, that person is quickly branded a male chauvinist pig. Like it or not, however, much has changed about our women - most of it not good.

I've heard more than a few people comment that black women made a major strategic mistake when they adopted the women's liberation philosophy.

I think just the perception of the kind of change associated with the "new fangled" woman has caused those women more harm than any "inequality", real or imagined, that women have ever suffered from.

The perception of women trying to "run" the world threatened a great many people — other women as well as men. The traditional women were threatened because they had visions of the new kind of women taking their men, or worse and; the men felt threatened because they had visions of women totally unlike "the girl that married dear ole dad".

Justified or not, these perceptions, based mostly on fear, have worked to produce a hostility toward women that is new in its character and its degree.

At one time the "weaker" sex was treated with a kind of specialness that grew out of our general respect for the mothers in our society. There were laws especially for women's protection. The courts would recognize the need to care for the women ever so much more than it attempted to protect men.

The whole idea was that "they're ours", we must take care of them. Not anymore. For black women what used to be "I can do bad by myself" has now become "if you're doing bad you're all by yourself".

Back in the late 60's, when women were really starting their current rise, the battle cry seemed to be "I don't need you anymore black man, I've got my own job, my own car, my own house".

Today, the average woman in this city is living below the poverty line and trying to share some other woman's man, because she needs the help to get from one month to the next. Back in the 60's the image of the modern woman was "me and my child".

Today, these same women are taking men to court for child support (rightly so I might add) like it's going out of style. Why? Very simple; the average woman in our city today can't make it my herself. She can't make it financially, she can't make it emotionally and, increasingly, she can't make it mentally.

Women, particularly black women, thought they could get out of the canoe, so to speak, and sail all by herself. She was so impressed that the white man "liked" her more than he liked us black men; that he would give her a job before he would give us one.

She forgot, however, that all the white man was doing was again playing the old divide and conquer game. And when he had got her just where he wanted her (out there all by herself) he would drop her like a hot potato—just like he did black men after the hey day of the 60's.

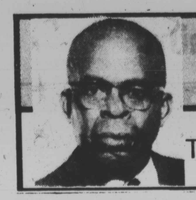
The difference between the black men and their female counterparts is a striking one: black men have always had to deal with the abnormal fear of whites toward them; our women, on the other hand, have largely been shielded from that kind of "white fear".

That is until now and, the average black woman isn't cutting the mustard in the face of the new competition.

The average black woman is a wonderful thing, even if she doesn't know it. They are honest, hard working, caring. Yet, nobody who has eyes can fail to see that too many black women are living in situations not fit for a dog.

These women are poorly clothed, they are poorly housed, they are lonely as hell and they are frightened. And all because someone told them they didn't need us men anymore.

Like it not, this country is not and never will be ready for singular women. This society is structured on the concept of man, woman and child. Despite their misjudgments fellows, they're ours. Reclaim one.



G. James Fleming

The State of Reagan

It is not easy to forget the State of the Union address last week as one of the best performances of Ronald Reagan — as theatre, oratory, speech-writing, and the conquest of man over time.

Even as viewed on a black and white television, it executed a tremendous wallop in all of those departments, and more.

Constitutionally, it was a message on the State of the Union; personally, it was a testament on "The State of Ronald Reagan"—in ways of health, control over the infirmities of age, mastery over communication, and premier utilization of the arts of the speech-writer and the make-up artist.

"The State of Reagan" was the President at his most magnificent, his best (He was given 28 applauding ovations). The White House physician, too, must have had a hand in the finished product, for in these days of the flu, there was not a sign that Mr. Reagan was bothered by even a passing cold; he did not resort to a handkerchief even once.

If he had not decided to turn to politics after his Hollywood years, Ronald Reagan might have become a celebrated made-in-California TV preacher!

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In the usual Reagan manner, the President appealed for much objectives as a spreading of opportunity rather than a spreading of dependence; for ownership of public housing units by occupying families; for Free Enterprise Zones, leading to a new generation of entrepreneurs; for a lower minimum wage for adolescents, to overcome youthful unemployment; and for higher pay for public school teachers and better schools in the inner city.

To his credit, notably, was his turning around of the American economy, for the better, and his upgrading of the nation's defense.

No quarrel with Mr. Reagan's words, no quarrel with his performance, and the President should find agreement and support among AFRO readers. But, as he spoke, the name of William Bradford Reynolds repeatedly came to mind. He is the assistant U.S. attorney general who heads the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.

Mr. Reynolds is the "hatchet man" of the Reagan administration in the field of civil rights. He has appeared personally in several courts on the side of putting an end to affirmative action and to school bessing. He finds a way to twist words and decisions to mean just opposite to what the Supreme Court held them to mean. He, representing the President, would slow down upward mobility.

Amicus Curiae" has become almost a household word," so often is it utilized to show that Mr. Reynolds chooses to enter a case as a "friend of the court", in order to add the prestige and strength of the Reagan administration against the interests and welfare of Blacks and other minorities.

Minorities stand to suffer also from budget proposals to freeze Medicare and Medicaid payments and from cuts and reductions in aid to needy college students, hot food for school children, and subsidies for mass transportation.

Constitutionally, however, the budget is now in the hands of the Congress. Those men and women will have the final word—almost the final word, this side of a veto and the threat of veto.

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Despite the pros and cons of the State of the Union address (really the State of Reagan), let's not forget or downgrade the impact it made, its high theatre (and its flowery rhetoric).

How heart-warming was the President's introduction of his two "heroes". Cadet Jean Nguyen, a Vietnamese refugee ten years ago, and who will graduate from the U.S. Military Academy next May; and Mrs. Clara Hale, the loveable 79-year-old "Mother Hale" of Harlem, who heroically restores normal health and life to drug-addicted babies of drug-addicted mothers.

The high drama did not escape Ronald Reagan, as best typified by his naming his second presidential term as "A Second American Revolution" (and he probably pictures himself as the new George Washington!).

—AFRO SURVEY—

Should seat belts be mandatory?

Patrice Emerson

Deborah Bowman

Regina Melton

Maurice Smith

This week the question to the man and woman in the street was, "Do you think the wearing of seat belts while driving should be made mandatory by law?"

Patrice Emerson, 20, beautician, "Yes, for safety precautions. If you do not wear seat belts, you go through the windshield. They may be uncomfortable sometimes. That's irrelevant right now. I think if it became a law, more people would wear seat belts."

Deborah Bowman, 22, machine operator, "No, people should not be forced to wear seat belts. It's a person's own choice. I wear mine all the time, but it is my choice to do so. I think it would be an invasion of privacy for someone to make me wear one."

Pat Silva, 36, nurse, "No. It is a personal choice. Some people just may not want the thing going cross their chest and neck. I do not doubt seat belts may be good, but let me decide on my own if I want to wear them. There are advantages and disadvantages to the whole thing."

Carolyn Trapp, 29, nurse, "I do not think people should be forced to wear them. They do indeed have a purpose. I do not wear them, but guess if there was a law, I would, but that would not be fair to me."

Maurice Smith, 28, state trooper, "Not really. It is kind of up to the individual. Grown folks have to make up their own minds. If they don't want to protect themselves, that's their problem. If the law takes over, that would be intrusion of privacy."

Ethel Faulcon, 50, office clerk, "Not really. Suppose seat belts were on, car caught on fire, something went wrong. You'd be in trouble. I am just trying to point out that there are two ways to look at the issue. What I'm saying is give me the choice to make my own decision."

Tony Garrus, 24, policeman, "No, it should not be enforced. I do think certain age groups should be made to wear them, like those under five-years of age, because they aren't capable of making proper decisions for themselves. Adults can and should do what they want."

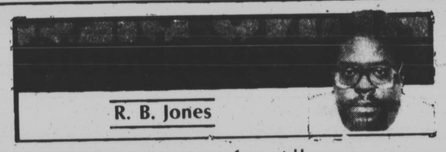
Regina Melton, 23, salesperson, "Yes, it is much safer to have seat belts put to use. They are safe and there is a less chance of crashing your head. They are just so much more protection in case of accidents."

Ethel Faulcon

Tony Garrus

Carolyn Trapp

Pat Silva



R. B. Jones

Justice for All

The telecast of the "Atlanta Child Murders" has provoked a great deal of discussion about the nature of criminal justice in this society. This coupled with the recent controversy about Bernard Goetz, the so-called "Subway Vigilante" has raised questions about who gets what sanction for what crime.

In America, three factors affect the treatment the accused gets from the judicial system, race class and political ideology.

Black people who are accused of crimes in America are at a distinct disadvantage. Historically, blacks have been convicted more easily with less evidence against them and they have consistently received harsher sentences than whites convicted of the same crime. If one looks at the historical patterns of incarceration and execution in America, it becomes evident that black people have borne injustice inside and outside the legal system.

Also, this society has traditionally given out lower sanctions against those convicted of committing crimes against black people than those who have transgressed against whites. After all the U.S. Constitution set the stage by saying that black people are only three - fifths of a human being.

The second major factor in determining how a defendant is treated in the American judicial system is the social class that he or she belongs to. Crimes committed by the ruling class rarely are punished even in a perfunctory manner. Richard Nixon has yet to pay for his crimes and has yet to really suffer the kind of social ostracism that the average ex-con receives on being released.

The government of the United States, under the direction of the late and unlamented J. Edgar Hoover systematically and with malice of forethought set out to destroy the black movement's leaders and institutions. The program was codenamed Cointelpro and it engaged in such "admirable" practices as attempt to break up marriages, trying to induce Martin Luther King to commit suicide, provoking shootouts between rival liberation groups and urging employers to fire "subversive" employees.

The program also involved harassing subversives as they were called with frivolous and trumped up charges to tie up their time and monetary resources so that they would be unable to advocate their causes.

In contrast, those same law enforcement agencies did nothing significant to organized crime during this time period that they were disrupting the black movement: Hoover even insisted that the Mafia did not exist at one point.

Crimes by these government agencies were not punished because they served the interests of the ruling class. One example of a convergence of the issues of race and class in the judicial system occurred when I was an elementary school child. A black woman who worked at the Lord Baltimore Hotel was beaten to death by a white Eastern Shore member of the tobacco farming gentry.

The woman was beaten on the head with a cane because her service as a waitress was not fast enough. The cane wielder was given a sentence of less than a year in jail because it was concluded that the woman died from a stroke caused by her emotional upset at being struck by a cane and not the beating itself.

The caneholder was attending a swank affair at the hotel and was politically connected so he was given time off from his sentence to supervise the harvesting of his tobacco crops. The message sent by that case was the death of a black woman at the hands of a prominent white man means little more in the 20th century than it did during slavery. After that incident, the words liberty and justice in the pledge of allegiance had no meaning to me whatsoever.

When one reviews the treatment received by the political left in this country, from the Haymarket Trial of the 1880s where four anarchists were sentenced to death without one shred of evidence against them proving that they threw a bomb that killed some policemen, through the Smith Act trials that led to the imprisonment of people for belonging to the Communist Party in the 1950s, one can conclude that holding the wrong political beliefs, regardless of their legality can land one in jail. The trend continues today.

Taking the factors of race, class and political belief into consideration, it is not surprising to see the difference in the treatment of Wayne Williams and Bernard Goetz. Williams was convicted of two murders on the most circumstantial evidence, while Goetz who shot four youths he thought were planning to rob him on the subway, has only been indicted for illegally carrying a gun. Two of the youths were shot running away from Goetz meaning that they were not shot in self-defense.

Of course the victims are black and poor and the shooter is white and middle-class and so those factors weigh more heavily than the fact that the self-defense rationale ends when the assailant or the victim is able to retreat. When Goetz shot the youths in the back he was exacting revenge and his actions were expressing a very popular political position in this country today, putting blacks in their place.

Unequal justice is no justice and that is a fact of life in America today. Justice is not only not blind in America it has 20-20 vision.

—Mary Bethune

Continued from Page 4

and encouraged her in her important work. When she described her educational dream and related her struggles, she aroused interest, inspired confidence, and secured generous response.

"Faith Hall," the first building, which was to serve for a generation, was started. The school merged with Cookman Institute, Jacksonville, Florida in 1923, becoming coeducational under the auspices of the former M.E. Church and gained the present name, Bethune-Cookman College.

This school grew gradually through the years, until it now is worth millions of dollars in property. It has a student body of nearly one thousand.

The career of this brilliant woman has few parallels in the nation. It reads more like fiction taken from between covers of a book, rather than from life. Death came during the summer of 1956.

NOTE: The speaker that night was the late Dr. J.W.E. Bowen, Sr. One time Gammon Theological Seminary President.

Mrs. Bethune was among the first black women to serve as Lay Delegate to General Conference. She was attacked by Senator Joseph McCarthy before the Committee on UnAmerican Activities in 1943, when she was accused of being a Communist sympathizer.

A resolution of confidence on her behalf was adopted by the 1952 General Conference. The vignette of Mary McCloud Bethune examines how a little girl of nine years of age, who could pick 250 pounds of cotton, a girl who could not read and write, grew up to become the most influential black woman in American history.

Besides being memorialized by the New U.S. stamp, Mrs. Bethune is the only Afro-American to have a memorial on federal parkland in the Nation's Capital. Etched on the base of the Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park are the following words from her Last Will and Testament:

"I Leave You Love...I Leave You Hope....I Leave You the Challenge of Developing Confidence in One Another....I Leave You a Respect for the Use of Power....I Leave You Faith....I Leave You Racial Dignity....I Leave You a Desire to Live Harmoniously With Your Fellow Man....I Leave You, Finally a Responsibility to our Young People."

Roscoe C. Williams
John Wesley United Methodist Church Glen Burnie, Md.

Why Black History Month

Blacks must await Black History Month to learn about black Americans' role in American society.

During this past summer as we were celebrating the 30th anniversary of the 1954 Supreme Court Decision of the Brown vs. The Board of Education case, I decided to begin a nationwide survey to determine whether black American citizens are still being depicted in public school history textbooks as slaves.

Furthermore, I wanted to find out if school history textbooks still omitted adequate, realistic pictures of black Americans role in American society.

After interviewing persons from the U.S. Department of Education, Social Studies Departments, college and high school teachers, as well as, college and high school students, I was convinced that there has been very little, if any, change in school history textbooks to change the image of blacks.

Where there are significant major minorities in a society, then, the contribution of each of those minorities must be fairly depicted. Insofar as blacks are concerned, regrettably, the situation is, and has been, since the inception of this country, totally inadequate.

Based upon these facts, I have concluded that the only viable way of rectifying this omission is by rewriting the history books presently being used in the nation's public schools

Such a rewrite must accurately and fairly depict, verbally, photographically and pictorially, the achievements of black Americans to American society.

Troy Brailey
State Senator, 40th Dist.