Robert Woodson: controversial, innovative black leader

By Paula J. Wagner

Robert Woodson, president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) based in Washington, D.C. is a key example of a new thrust in black leadership and a opponent of what he thinks is the decadence of traditional civil rights oriented patronage.

Woodson's premise is simple: "Poor people have the capacity to address most of their problems if given the resources to do so," and his enterprise (NCNE) is dedicated to allotting financial and technical support to neighborhood community organizations throughout the nation, to ensure that poor people make their own decisions.

Robert Woodson addressed a community convention of activists in Baltimore last month.

Accused of being a conservative for his self-help advocacy and his anti-government stance for the redress of the poor, Woodson said he is an independent "concern with improving lives of poor people and will accept a solution in spite of its origin."

"Blacks spend too much time considering the author of an idea and the issue of the ideology," Woodson continued.

Contrary to many traditional black leaders, whom Woodson refers to as either civil rights or ministerial oriented, Woodson said fighting racial discrimination, alone, will not set black people free.

Although he agrees there is a need for such organizations because "racism in America is a reality," he said for such contrivances as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, do a disservice to blacks by advocating intergration. "The opposite of segregation is not integration," Woodson remarked, "it is desegregation."

Integration, according to Woodson's assessment, has alienated blacks from their own values and businesses. Through the process "blacks have lost faith in their own capacity to solve problems and have grown to look for solutions that are external," Woodson said.

Traditional civil rights leaders looked for government to end segregation, Woodson cited, and they assumed that that administration could handle the solution . . . "They (civil rights leaders) are not economically based . . . The rules are set and they don't seek to change them."

Woodson noted, in his recent interview with the AFRO, the billions of dollars put into public housing over the years by the federal government and its devastating results based on confusion and dependency.

His agency states that "policies based on local approaches, where the beneficiaries play a key role in the social and economic restitution of their own communities, can replace ineffective maintenance programs that produce dependency."

"Organizations that owe their origin to local initiative and spirit are much more likely to be successful in addressing the needs of low-income neighborhoods."

Criticizing the agenda of traditional leadership, Woodson said those leaders call upon doctors, councils and mayors to address the problems of the poor — those people who are divorced from the problem.

NCNE calls upon "grass roots" folks, he said, such as Kimi Gray, a Washingtonian who was abandoned by her husband and left to raise five children alone, all of whom are now college grads. Woodson said at his conferences he features such role models and includes the people who are most affected by the inner city blues.

Woodson said the "alleged black leaders" have abiding faith in government programs," intergratist tactics that do not benefit poor people, only friends of those leaders.

He was also particularly critical of the number of black college graduates who choose to work for the govenment (three out of six, compared with one out of six from the white middle class). "We will never get rich," Woodson said.

"Money and the creation of wealth will give us independence that will allow us to be free," he added.

"We (the black community) have money," Woodson continued. "We just don't spend it on ourselves, in our communities as the Jews and Asians."

Alluding to the Congressional Black Caucus Weekend held some two weekends ago, Woodson cried "$6 million spent at the Hilton Hotel and liquor was everywhere . . .

"At a atime when our people are looking for solutions we have time for this madness . . .

"Midnight fashion shows . . . Is this how we're going to be liberated?

Woodson said NCNE's current target is pointed toward the 570,000 black children held hostage in adoption agencies and institutions. Research shows that 70 percent of money raised in these institutions benefits professional salaries and administrative costs, while only 30 percent is spent on the children.

"Black children are the primary victims of this revolving door," his agency noted. "More than half the children in foster care are black." Woodson said he intends to challenge every segment of the black community to support the freeing of black children all over the country.

NCNE will be responsible for allocating those agencies around the country that are working for the true placement of these children in homes, and issue funding and technical assistance toward the recovery of the black family and the black community.

"We need to stop considering ourselves as victims," Woodson added. "We are vital resources."

Ainsworth Paint and Chemical Corp. is coming of age

Ainsworth Paint and Chemical Corporation is a rising star coming of age on the Baltimore economic scene. Located at 3200 E. Biddle St. in Baltimore City, Ainsworth was founded in 1980 under the direction of Peter A. Smith, the president. Ainsworth Paint and Chemical Corporation is a manufacturer of high technology paints and coatings specializing in industrial, marine, fire-retardant, steel structural, maintenance, and government coatings. Ainsworth is one of a few minority paint manufacturers in the country.

Presently the company ships its paints and coatings throughout the continental United States. The company is a prime contractor for a fire-retardant coating used in the interior of U.S. Navy ships and submarines. Ainsworth is also manufacturing marine coatings for an international firm that ships paints worldwide.

The present direction for Ainsworth Paint and Chemical Corporation is to become more firmly entrenched in the immediate Baltimore area. The company has decided to target to the industrial and corporate markets. Ainsworth is also indirectly involved in the retail markets in both the Washington and Baltimore areas.

Ainsworth Paints are presently found on the shelves of Any Paint Color Store at 5116 Liberty Heights Ave. in BAltimore and Byrds Paint Store at 7313 Georgia Ave. in the Washington area. Both retail outlets are minority-owned. Ainsworth, Any Color Paint Store, and Byrd Paints are attempting to create an up-to-now non-existing chain from "manufacturer to consumer" controlled totally by minorities. This in turn would generate turning the dollar several times within the black community.

As a member of the Baltimore business community, Ainsworth has a commitment to helping to develop and provide job opportunities and to become an integral part of the greater Baltimore black community. In this effort Ainsworth Paint and Chemical Corporation is attempting to develop a relationship with the church community via the ministerial alliance of Baltimore. Through effort Ainsworth feels that it can meet its goals of being able to develop more jobs as a result of increased patronage by the black community and also be a contributor to the needs of the community.

Through the past six years, Ainsworth has held true to its five founding principles namely:

1. To develop a minority corporation to the point where it can enter the mainstream of the free enterprise system and...through self-determination...prosper. To achieve this goal we will initiate, encourage and cement...Quality, Integrity, and Dependability...in our people, product, and facilities.

2. The promote a high level of

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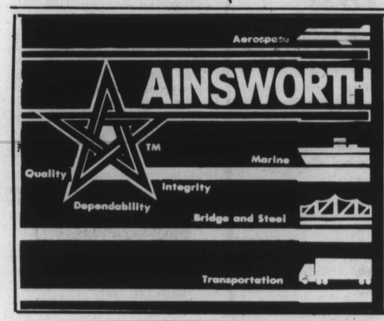
Job rights upheld for cancer victims

In a unamimous vote last week, the Senate passed a Resolution introduced by Senator John Heinz (R-PA) to prevent discrimination against cancer patients in the workplace.

"Over 5 million Americans who fought the battle for life against cancer and won, are reclaiming their places in communities and workplaces," Heinz said in comments from the Senate floor. "Yet one in five of these survivors will find it easier to beat the odds against cancer than to beat the prejudice they will find back at work."

A recent study completed at the University of Southern California found that more than 50 percent of cancer patients in white-collar jobs, and 84 percent of those in blue-collar occupations suffered some kind of employment discrimination when they returned to work, Heinz said.

"Workers are shunned, shuffled, demoted, demoralized — denied raises and respect — even forced to use disposable writing instruments such as pencils instead of pens," the Senator said.



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NAHRO board urging action to supply affordable housing

The Board of Governors of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, at the meeting at NAHRO's National Convention in Chicago last week unanimously adopted resolutions urging prompt leadership and action by the President and the Congress to stimulate an adequate, affordable and suitable supply of rental housing, and to enact an increase in federal taxes to reduce the deficit in order to eliminate its debilitating effects on the U.S. economy and on national policy.

NAHRO, a nonprofit association, represents more than 2,200 local public housing and community development agencies and more than 5,000 individual professionals working in the housing and community development field throughout the nation.

The association maintains its headquarters here in the District.

"NAHRO calls upon the Congress and the administration to recognize that essential programs to benefit low- and moderate-income persons can sustain no further cuts, and that the deficit cannot be eliminated through reduction in spending alone," the NAHRO board said. "NAHRO calls upon the Congress and the administration to enact an increase in federal taxes to reduce the deficit in order to eliminate its debilitating effects on the U.S. economy and on national policy."

Until the problem of the deficit is resolved, the Board said, "slow economic growth will worsen the already serious problems faced by low-and moderate-income households, further funding cuts will chip away at already inadequate levels of support, and national attention will continue to be diverted from critical housing and policy issues."

In a separate resolution, the NAHRO board urged that the association join with consumer groups, the housing and housing finance industries, elected officials and community groups in urging the President and Congress to "fairly and quickly recognize the rental housing crisis as a growing failure to meet our national goals."

The resolution went on to urge "prompt leadership and action by the President and the Congress to stimulate an adequate, affordable and suitable supply of rental housing."

The board noted that "almost 30 million households in America live in rental housing and 12 million renter households have incomes of $10,000 per year or less." Between 1974 and 1983, affordable rental housing for these low-income persons declined by 2 million units, the board pointed out.

"The federal government," it said, "has dramatically reduced (by 60 percent) its support for housing and proposes to sharply reduce the capacity of state and local governments to assist in financing lower-income housing and there is a growing shortage of affordable, decent rental housing for increasing numbers of Americans."

In urging enactment of a federal tax increase to reduce the deficit, the NAHRO board said it recognizes that the federal budget deficit is a major national problem and that the deficit contributes to slow economic growth, and that reducing the deficit must be a national priority.

At the same time, it pointed out that the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings process continues to mandate a balanced budget by 1990 by across-the-board cuts in funding for discretionary programs and the administration continues to propose reducing the deficit solely by further budget cuts, including cuts in already decimated social programs.

"Low-income housing programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have been cut by two-thirds since 1979, and the Urban Development Action Grant program has been cut by 50 percent while the Community Development Block Grant program has been cut by 30 percent," the board said. "The tax reform act will reduce tax incentives for private investment in low-income housing and redevelopment of distressed areas and restrict available bond capacity for state and local governments by 50 percent.

"The need for housing and redevelopment actions," the Board said, "continues to grow, with two-thirds of the 20 million low-income households living in substandard housing or paying excessive costs; with only 20 percent of eligible households receiving rental assistance; and 19 percent of owners and 24 percent of renters, living in neighborhoods plagued by abandoned buildings, crime, or other blighting influences."

Earlier the NAHRO board unanimously adopted another resolution which cited the need for an integrated long-term policy and program for homeless persons and committed the organization to actively urge each level of government and private and nonprofit organizations and institutions to pursue a series of actions set forth in the recommendations and statements of a NAHRO working group on the homeless.

To allow more cabinet space for canned goods, keep an extra bread box in the kitchen just for the baby's special foods.

—Minority business

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curement process. This followed the County Executive's proposal and the County Council's concurrence that the minority participation goal for the County should be increased from 10 to 30 percent.

The County set this goals, Glendening said "with the recognition that its attainment would be a long-term strategy." After the first full year of operation, minority participation has increased to 13.7 percent from 12.4 percent in 1985 and 10.2 percent in 1984.

"Definite progress has been made in opening the County procurement process to minority contractors," Glendening told the Council.

Business in the Black

MCI shells out $500,000 to sponsor jazz festival

By Charles E. Belle

MONTEREY COUNTY, CA — What do Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, MCI Telecommunications Corporation, Art Farmer and the "Godfather of the Blues," John Lee Hooker have in common? Considering the last three "made" the 29th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival a continued success, the answer is easy. They are all "great communicators."

MCI Telecommunications Corporation, the exclusive sponsor along with "Funky Farmer" and "The Hook" prove the genius of the venerable founder of the oldest, continuous jazz festival in the country, James (Jimmy) L. Lyons, to pull a "hat trick." Money for youth's future education. Music for our everlasting soul.

Magnificent performances for your earthly pleasure.

MCI Telecommunications Corporation, the other guys who want to be your long distance telephone company, came with the bag full of money for the nonprofit Educational Corporation created by Jimmy Lyons to let young people in high schools in California get involved in the studying, playing and performing of jazz music.

So far half-a-million dollars has been donated to music education and jazz education programs in schools. Berkeley High School's Big Band and Combo brought home the bacon in the 16th Annual California High School Jazz Competition.

Competition in audience appreciation is a foundation for jazz performers and opening night's piece in the person of Art Farmer and his fine trumpet humming and "I remember" melody made the musical evening memorable for jazz music enthusiasts. Even Benny Golson took a back seat gracefully as Art got going. Rare silk, Bob Florence and the Limited Edition were also on the bill, as well as George Shearing.

Joe Kennedy, Jr. and Claude Williams, on their respective violins confirmed the crowd's suspicions that classical compositions can come from "classical jazz performers." Perfection, pop and professional training were personified by these two "classically trained" musicians. One from the Yehudi Menuhim inspired marvels of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the other "Fiddler" out of the "rough, tough and loud" Kansas City sound.

Sensational in tandem.

The "gathering" as usual was on Saturday afternon in the main arena, a near 70-years young John Lee Hooker held court. "The Boogie Man" who can get a crowd on its feet by calling out "Ye-Ye-Ye" and various other non-printable words whipped up a salt and pepper crowd for a great afternoon of bottom barrel blues. Behind him was Etta James with her "stick hitting" son on drums. Doing it right she took us youngsters back some 30 years with "Something's Got A Hold On Me."

Me and everybody else went right on back with her to blow out an entire afternoon of fun filled blues numbers. Any place that offers that kind of show as one out of five for less than $75 is definitely worth a return trip next season.

Since Red Holloway, another ex-native of Chicago like myself was still on the Saturday evening show, seeing it was a must for me. My instincts were right. "Lester's Leap" for someone raised on a saxophone sound is the best you can get, especially when played by Red Holloway. Red is a happy man with a honey sound. And sounds are the only way to introduce the star of the 1986 Monterey Jazz Festival, Bobby McFerrin.

For all the sounds of musica. instruments you have ever heard, McFerrin has found a human note to duplicate and complement it in song. He brought the audience to its feet with a fine, heart-rendering version of the National Anthem, which few singers on earth have ever done a cappella with such a difficult song to sing.

Jimmy Lyons, may not be a saint, but he has the good sense and taste in music to select superstar jazz performers who provide every penny worth of your money at the Monterey Jazz Festival. Great bunch of communicators there.

AFSCME blasts government practice of 'contracting' out

The nation's largest public employee union has released a research report hitting the practice of "contracting out" professional services by state and local government.

The 1.1 million-member American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), representing 200,000 professional employees nationwide, said that the contracting out of professional services leads to "shortcoming in services, higher costs, lower quality of services, increased opportunities for corruption, less accountability to the public, and loss of flexibility by public agencies in the delivery of state and local government services."

Professional services being contracted out by state and local government include engineering and architectural services, computer services, medical and social services, research and planning, and the operation of prisons, libraries, and hospitals.

The report titled "Private Profit, Public Risk," details numerous case studies in New York City, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Arizona and elsewhere where the contracting out of professional services has led to higher costs or significant management problems.

"The public and private sectors each have both good and bad managers, and there is no reason a public agency can't have good

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