—Affirmative action

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to every aspect of Black life. The law required that Blacks attend separates school, ride in the back section of public buses, go to the back door of restaurants, use different bathrooms, and the like. Blacks were disenfranchised politically because they could not vote nor did they serve as judges and jurors. In fact, racial segregation denied Blacks due process of law. Jim Crow also shaped the economic life of the Black community. A Jim Crow workforce developed. There were "Black" and "White" jobs. Blacks became the sharecroppers, porters, janitors, cooks, maids, domestic servants, and unskilled laborers.

Thus, Blacks were crowded into the bottom of the American occupational structure where the pay was low and the work difficult and dirty. Such jobs did not lead to promotions or advancement. Blacks who wanted to burst out of these dead-in jobs could only aspire to become a Black preacher, teacher, undertaker, doctor, or lawyer. But even here only a few slots were available.

For over three hundred and fifty years, Blacks were crippled by a system that was separate and highly unequal. This oppression was backed by white domination consisting of both legal and violent repressions. Lynching was a favorite tool used to keep Blacks in "their place." Between 1882 and 1956 at least 3,440 Blacks were lynched. Moreover, the system of racial segregation was backed by the highest legal authority of the land — the Supreme Court. The Court, in 1896, ruled in the Plessy v Ferguson case that separate but equal did not violate the U.S. Constitution. Clearly the Supreme Court went on record backing a system of racial segregation that was in fact separate but unequal.

Past and continuing discrimination has had a devastating affect on the Black community. In the 1980s Blacks are still disproportionately crowded at the bottom of the occupational ladder. Black family income is still less than sixty percent of white family income. Blacks are still more than twice as likely to be unemployed as whites. Blacks are still grossly underrepresented at major colleges and universities at both the student and faculty levels.

Therefore, the future for Black America is uncertain at best. Affirmative Action was a measure implemented by the federal government to address Black inequality that resulted from tragic proportions of past discrimination and continuing racism deeply rooted in the very fabric of our institutions and daily habits. But why did "affirmative action" come into being in the first place?

Origins of Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action resulted from a powerful and creative struggle known as the civil rights movement. This mass movement attacked black inequality extraordinary Black people who decided to take a clear-cut stand for equality and dignity. These freedom fighters made countless sacrifices by confronting the Ku Klux Klan, White Citizens Council, local Southern governments, established laws, and the "Bull Connors." Childre, students, and adults, along with the elderly shook off apathy and caution as they became disciplined workers in a movement for freedom anchored on a solid rock—the Black Church.

The 1963 Birmingham, Alabama confrontation led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth was the key force that generated the 1964 Civil Rights Act from which the idea of Affirmative Action emerged. In the historic battle at Birmingham, demonstraators were attacked by viscous dogs, high pressure water hoses, billy club swinging policemen, and a legal system dedicated to maintaining racial segregation. Yet, on every day between April 3rd and May 10, Blacks demonstrated, sat-in, marched, and went to jail by the thousands while singing "We Shall Overcome" and other black spirituals. This movement generated such pressure that the racist power holders of Birmingham were forced to concede to the demands of the movement. But Dr. King and the Freedom Fighters were after more than concessions from local Birmingham authorities. They wanted a National Civil Rights Bill from President Kennedy and the federal government that would outlaw all forms of racial inequality.

The movement in Birmingham was so beautifully organized and effective that it generated protest movements throughout the nation. By the end of 1963, protest had spread from Birmingham to at least 800 cities. John Kennedy, shocked by widespread demonstrations, declared that it was a time to act. On June 19, 1963, Kennedy sent what was to become the 1964 Civil Rights Bill to Congress. President Johnson signed the bill into law on July 2, 1964. It is beyond a doubt, then, that Affirmative Action came as a result of political struggle and sacrifice

PATRICIA HARRIS
Ambassador, Cabinet officer

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM
Nominated for President

by the Black masses and concerned White citizens rather than descending from a benevolent government.

Intent of Affirmative Action

The 1964 Civil Rights Act banned all forms of discrimina-

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Oldest black church celebrates bicentennial

PHILADELPHIA (UPI) — America's oldest independent black church celebrated its bicentennial Friday, 200 years after founder Richard Allen, a former slave, was ordered to leave a white-only pew in the church where he was praying.

Mayor Wilson Goode, who joined 25 African Methodist Episcopal bishops in marking the anniversary of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, said Allen's break with the church created a place where blacks could worship freely.

"Richard Allen, in breaking with the St. George's Church and forming Mother Bethel Church, was setting forth freedom," Philadelphia's first black mayor told a crowd at the Liberty Bell, "freedom where he and other members could worship God freely as they saw fit."

Allen and six other black worshippers left Old St. George's Methodist Church, three blocks from Independence Hall, in 1787 because of restrictions placed on black worshippers.

Mother Bethel church historian Deborah Parks said after Allen left St. George's, he founded the Bethel African Church on the site where Mother Bethel currently stands. The African Methodist Episcopal ministry was founded on the same site in April 1816.

Prayer services Friday at Mother Bethel Church and the Liberty Bell were part of the "We The People 200" celebration marking the bicentennial to speak out against racism.

"We come back here today to rekindle the torch of justice. We know that as long as there is racism in America, there is work for us to do," Bishop Frank Cummings said.

"May we hold high the standards of Allen and live according to the principles and philosophies of self-help and doing for ourselves as he taught us to do," said Bishop Richard Allen Hillenbrand.

"We come to affirm the contribution of our founder, Richard Allen, whose ministry gave to the signers of the Constitution a challenge regarding the meaning of that Constitution and how it related to the lives of all humankind," he said.

There are about 1,000 Mother Bethel members, many whose ancestors go back five or six generations, Parks said. The African Methodist Episcopal Church has 1.5 million members in 6,500 churches in the United States, Canada, Africa, South America and the Caribbean.

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The fourth Sunday in February (at Sharon Baptist Church) every year recalls the memory of a beautiful girl, CONSTANCE H. MOORE. Connie had a dream to help the handicapped. Before her dream was fulfilled, she died in 1965 while she was a senior at Morgan State University.

Connie was the daughter of the late Dr. & Mrs. James L. Moore. He was former pastor of the Historic Sharon Baptist Church.

This year marks the 21st year that a Memorial Benefit Concert will be held which has become a Baltimore tradition. This 21st ANNUAL MUSICAL will be dedicated to the memory of our Executive Director, Founder and Organizer of the Fund, the late, DR. JAMES LEROY MOORE. The purpose of the occasion — scholarships for worthy students.

Awards have been given each year at Morgan State University's Commencement, to high school students at Sharon planning to enter college, and to college and university students the full time they are in college up until they graduate.

A capacity crowd is expected to attend this wonderful 21ST ANNUAL MUSICAL on SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1987 — 5 p.m. at Sharon Baptist Church.

This year we will be featuring the 'Shiloh Christian Community Church Chancel Choir' — Mrs. Lois Smith, Director and Mrs. Gloria Thompson at the Hammond Organ.

The Constance Moore Memorial Fund is incorporated.

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