"There are two prescriptions for success — Faith and Industry"

John H. Murphy
1840-1922

Doug knows the score

As the two top teams in the NFL face off Sunday, a battle of another type will also be waged. It is an on-going battle, a fight which really has no victors, and no end.

Millions of blacks around the country will tune in to see the first black man in history lead a team in the Super Bowl. That man, Doug Willliams, knows full well the pressure which is placed upon him.

To his credit, he has wisely deferred from taking a stand as a 'Great Black Hope' of his race, and has done all he can to downplay the inordinate significance of the color of his skin.

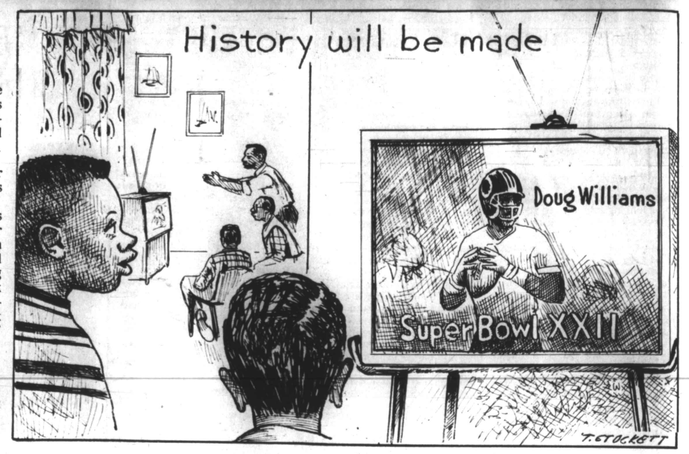
And rightly so.

Years ago, blacks would gather around their radio sets and cheer on Joe Louis, the 'Brown Bomber', as he sent white man after white man to the canvas. For many, Louis' victories represented part of an ongoing saga to win respect from the larger community. His prowess was seen by many blacks as an opportunity to prove to the larger world that they were as good as any man.

But more than 40 years after Louis' first victory, that lesson has still not taken root in America.

Williams knows this. He knows that to encourage blacks to pin their personal hopes of redemption upon him is foolish. If he wins, there will be little mention of his race among those who would deride the black community. We doubt if a special effort will be made to hire more black quarterbacks or black chief executives.

But if he loses, once more the claims of 'choke artist' will be heard from the racial boo birds; and yet another black champion will have to live with the unfair assumption that he let his people down.



Death penalty unfair

The desire for vengeance is a universal emotion, one which all of us have probably felt at one time or another.

Almost every ancient culture, cognizant of the deterrent effect of vengeance, instituted Draconian means of meting out punishments which fit the crime.

But as we progressed beyond primitivism, the right of the state to hand out harsh and severe punishments has come into question.

In a state where the inhabitants are of diverse backgrounds and influence, it becomes even more incumbent to question punishments as severe as the death penalty.

Del. Frank Boston of West Baltimore is to be commended for fighting against the state's death penalty. He offers convincing proof not only that the law is cruel, but that blacks are victimized by state-approved death more frequently than white.

We wish him luck in his effort to roll back the archaic law.

Seniority system

Before 1963, blacks had a hard time getting elected to more than one term in the Congress so that most of the chairman of committees were white. But times have changed.

Now there are seven members of the 23-member Congressional Black Caucus who are chairman of major committees and also chairman of subcommittees. The congressmen who head both types of committees and the name of their major committee are:

August F. Hawkins (Calif), Committee on Education and Labor; Louis Stokes (Ohio), Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Ronald V. Dellums (Calif.), Committee on District of Columbia; Charles B. Rangel (N.Y.),Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control; Julian C. Dixon (Calif.), Committee on Standards of Official Conduct; William H. Gray III (Pa.), Committee on the Budget Committee on Appropriations; and Mickey Leland (Texas), Select Committee on Hunger.

Kweisi Mfume (Md.) 1987; Edolphus Towns (NY) 1983; Charles A Hayes (Ill.) 1983; Mike Espy (Miss.) 1987; Floyd Flake (NY) 1987 and John Lewis (Ga.) 1987.

That's a pretty good record for a group of 23 black men and one woman, who have fought their way up to the top in a bare 24 years in spite of a system geared to keep them out. In fact, as Cong. Fauntroy put it "The longer we stay the longer we like the seniority system."

Our Readers Write

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication. Write
The AFRO-AMERICAN
628 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The dream is dying

The second anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday gospel television celebration was well overdue.

I was glad to see a show that finally indicated who really freed us. The first national television tribute was a secular celebration. I was appalled and frighten that it ignored totally, the power that set us free.

No human devise plan, or power could remove the yoke of overt oppression; and the spirit of slavery from our people. If it was not for divine intervention, we would have never gotten from under the foot of Pharoah and the Egyptians (America).

During the 1950's the United States was at the height of its economic and military power. The greatest single most powerful nation this earth has ever seen.

America went about its own will in the treatment of African Americans, until our creator brought correction. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an instrument that God used to free us.

—JERRY LIN DAVIS
Baltimore

News story wins praise

I am most grateful to Ms. Lillian Ezenagu, AFRO reporter, for the Jan. 5 article that explained my resignation from WWIN Radio.

Her story was factual and captured my words precisely.

Leaving was very difficult for me. I had made so many friends via WWIN over the past 19½ years. I could not possibly leave without saying Good-bye. I also felt that my friends and listeners deserved an explanation.

Thank you sincerely.

MARY C. CLAYBURN
Baltimore

Women have a choice

What the governor is saying, in his recent reversal on the Medicaid funding of abortions for the poor, is that because you are poor you must bear unwanted children, children who are more likely to be abused, unloved and neglected.

Those who are delighted with his change of mind will continue to value fetal life over the welfare of the woman, the family and society.

The governor's alternative to provide additional funds for adoption services, which is certainly worthwhile, hardly addresses the issue of access to abortion services.

Most women, no matter how difficult the circumstances, do not give up their babies. The governor may also not be mindful of the long-term trauma caused by giving up a child, a psychological pain far worse than any abortion.

It is obvious, from the intense lobbying by religious groups, that the theological philosophies differ widely on the morality of abortion.

The so called "pro-life" (more appropriately anti-choice groups) see women as victims of circumstances who must sacrifice for new life, while the pro-choice supporters see women as responsible decision makers who have the right of freedom of conscience.

The Religious Coalition For Abortion Rights speaks for those religious traditions that teach that we must have concern for women who face problem pregnancies . . . We work to protect against those who would impose their particular religious beliefs, legislatively, on those who believe differently.

It is hoped that those silent clergy, together with religious men and women who support religious liberty and the dignity of women's lives, will take courage and speak out in defense of these cherished principles whenever possible.

We have more to lose than abortion rights if we don't.

ELEANOR A. JOHNSON
State Coordinator
Maryland Religious Coalition
For Abortion Rights

Article gets great response

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Bettye Moss for letting AFRO readers know about my daughter's involvement with Maryland Public T.V.'s educational program and about the fine public school that she attends (Northeast Middle). I have received many calls re: same and the school is as proud of Tara as I am. It's nice to read something nice about our youth!

ROBERTA GILL
Executive Director

Thanks Mrs. Santa

Dear Mrs. Santa

Thank you for the gift certificates, for my family.Very Happy Christmas.

CATHERINE DICKERSON
and FAMILY
Baltimore

Truth Above All

By F. Gregory Newton

The famous black orator and anti-slavery activist, Frederick Douglass, once said: "The Negro who is whipped easiest is whipped oftenest." He discovered this through his own experiences; and it appears that Douglass' vision then is just as true in today's America.

For our history shows that black Americans have chosen a passive and peaceful route in their pursuit of freedom. In the face of lynchings, blacks have prayed, in the face of bigotry, they have marched; in the face of the "white" discrimination, they have gone to "white" courts- seeking "white" justice in the face of "white" injustice- an expression of faith in an adversary.

The result of this faith- this patience- this respect- in the American culture is the culture's continued disrespect for black Americans, and continued oppression. These are the results perhaps of the philosophy of "endurance" in the face of oppression, and "apathy" in the face of that pending black holocaust.

Then consider the Asian people who actually waged war against America. It is written that Japan taught America not only how to fight the war, but how to win it. North Korea nearly drove the American and allied forces into the Pacific Ocean during the Korean War, which led to the Korean Armistice Agreement. Vietnam led American down 10 bloody years of war, leaving in its wake the dead and broken bodies of hundreds of thousands American veterans, some of whom are still missing in action.

Yet, today it is not the faithful and patriotic American veterans and their relatives who are beloved and praised by the American government, and who are given unquestioned medical and economic assistance and business opportunities, especially among its black citizens.

Indeed, it is essentially the Asian Americans- the new Americans- the former American adversaries- who are now America's "chosen ones," it appears to many Americans.

To be sure, it is now the Asian Americans who are embraced and praised by the government of the United States. It is they who are provided with funds and licenses to run businesses, usually in black neighborhoods. It is they who are called ambitious and self-reliant. And it is they who are given **preferential treatment** in their pursuit of happiness.

Yet, it was **affirmative action** for black Americans which was assailed by white Americans as being **preferential treatment.** It does not matter that **affirmative action** means **equal opportunity** and not **preferentiality**. Yet, the Asian case of preferential treatment has gone unchallenged by white America. This selectivity should also be challenged.

It does not matter that it was black and white American patriots who sacrificed their limbs and lives fighting Asians simply because their country asked them to do so. It does not matter that those patriots or their families might be doing business with an Asian who shot at their father, son, uncle, or brother.

Today, in America, the Asian American— the new American— is given more business and educational opportunities than the black Americans who fought him only a few years ago.

This is not only unfair treatment, but is an insult as well to those who fought for this country.

Witness examples of this disparity: In 1982 a local newspaper stated that three Vietnamese applicants had been granted liquor licenses, despite the high cost for a franchise and the difficulty most Americans encounter when attempting to get such a franchise. Research shows that most blacks obtain such a license only through the intercession of white benefactors.

When visiting the local markets in Baltimore, but elsewhere as well, one can find Asians in stalls selling "soul food" to "soul brothers," but virtually no "soul brothers" selling "soul food" (or "Chinese food") in those stalls as owners.

Upon visiting a local veterans' office, I was informed by its director that the Asians were given preferential treatment in business because they helped America in the Korean and Vietnamese wars. Yet, it was not the Asians who were helping America in Asia; for it was the Americans who were on Asian soil, helping them fight their own war. Thus, this excuse for American's preferential treatment of its new Asians is suspect.

Upon researching the proof of these allegations of unfairness, I consulted the U.S. Department of Commerce's 1977 Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises. The finding might have proven the fallacy of going to the "white" court for the proof and redress of "white" discrimination;

For, according to the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, there are more black-owned business firms than there are Asian and American Indian business combined. According to that report, there are 231,203 black-owned businesses, and only 110,837 Asian and American Indian businesses combined.

Yet, this absurd claim only flies in a face of the on-the-spot observations in every day life, in which the store owners are the white and Asian business men; while the street vendors are the lone black business men.

This is why this investigator, in fairness, sought out the opinion of the man on the street- the black street vendor- on this matter. The result was astonishing. Most of them refused to make public statement on the matter.

Their fear was that they would not be allowed to continue selling their wares on the street if the power structure knew their names.

Thus, they complained of the unfairness of not being allowed to have stores and economic assistance in establishing their business; but would not allow their names to be published, out of fear of realization from a society that prefers its new immigrants to its old slaves.

The lessons to be learned here are simply that one can not rely on "white" courts (or Commerce Departments) for "white" justice against "white" injustice; and that the 'Negro' who is discriminated against easiest will be discriminated against oftenest.

So, white America disrespects black America because blacks appear to be fearful and submissive in the face of American oppression; while whites respect the Asians because these people were fearless and aggressive in the face of American aggression.

Thus, man does indeed choose his fate tomorrow by his choice of action today.

F. Gregory Newton is a biologist, sociologist, and public school teacher.

Kweisi
Mfume

Member of Congress
Seventh District
Maryland

Reagan offers distorted state of the union

On Monday, Jan. 25th, having spent the last seven years working relentlessly to turn back the clock on civil rights, requesting severe budget cuts for programs that benefit our neediest citizens, and demanding the largest peacetime military buildup in history; President Reagan delivered his final State of the Union Address to government officials and the nation. One had hoped that the President would have used the occasion to talk about the America that the average citizen sees and experiences. Instead, his speech was loaded with distortions that require us to focus more on what he did not say than what he did.

One of the great ironies about the annual State of the Union Address, is that it is usually given within days of two other reports that concerned Americans anxiously await: the National Urban League's (NUL) "State of Black America" and the Children's Defense Fund's (CDF) budget.

Not surprisingly, their findings are radically different than the America referred to as a "...shining city on a hill..." in the President's speech.

While boldly and inaccurately claiming that "...America's poor climbed out of poverty at the fastest rate in more than 10 years" and that "...family income has risen in four straight years,..." the President failed to mention some other important facts. NUL explains that a third of Americans of African descent still live in poverty.

According to the United States Conference on Mayors, poor families are now further below the poverty line than at any time since 1963. In addition, the "working poor"-those whose poverty results primarily from low wages- constitute the fastest growing portion of the poverty population.

The President talked about "vibrant neighborhoods." I wish that he had peered from the window of his limousine as he rode to the Capitol on Monday evening because he would have seen some of our Washington neighbors huddled in the cold and snow, seeking warmth atop a grate or shelter in a government building doorway. Maybe then he would have mentioned the tragedy of homelessness.

One of the most obvious and deliberate distortions of the facts articulated during the State of the Union Address was the contention that this Administration has been supportive of education. Apparently the President was too ashamed to tell the American people that his budget requests for fiscal year 1982 through 1988 would have slashed billions of dollars from many education programs while axing all federal funding for public libraries, vocational education, and certain programs for handicapped preschoolers.

President Reagan reiterated what he claimed to be his commitment to the war on drugs. In 1987, however, he had asked Congress to "just say no" to the $225 million appropriation in drug program grant monies to states and cities. This recommendation- which Congress rejected - followed an earlier ill-advised Administration plan to fund the anti-drug effort with money that had been targeted for health care programs for the disadvantaged and mentally ill.

I call attention to health care programs because the President never did during the State of the Union Address. This, despite CDF statistics showing that infant mortality, neonatal morality, and low birth weights in the Black community have sharply increased in recent years.

With regards to the federal deficit and the budget, President Reagan claimed that his Administration "...took $73 billion off last year's deficit compared to the year before." Not surprisingly, he didn't mention that the federal deficit was nearly $80 billion in fiscal year 1981 and is now $148 billion. Moreover, the national debt was $715 million when Ronald Reagan took office and is now approaching $2 trillion.

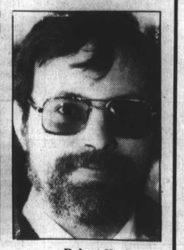
Early in his speech, the President said, "Let's make this the best of eight ... right to the finish line." I'm counting the weeks and months to the end of his presidency, too, but for strikingly different reasons.

AFRO SURVEY

David Shifflett

Eddie Diggs

Zachary Howard


Robert Hoak

—Broncos or Redskins?—

"Who is your favorite in this year's Super Bowl, the Denver broncos or the Washington Redskins?" was this week's question asked the man on the street at the Lexington Market.

David Shifflett, 21, realtor. "Denver. They deserve it for a change. Washington has been there too much."

Eddie Diggs, 29, merchant. "My heart belongs to Washington, but my pocket says Denver. I'm not going to bet too much money because I'll be happy if D.C. wins. I think it will be a good game."

Zachary Howard, 18, sales. "Doug Williams is going to do it! Doug Williams is a great quarterback. Washington has the line to protect him."

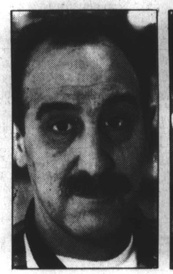
Robert Hoak, 34, bookkeeper. "If it isn't the Skins, I'm going to lose some money. Plus, we're having a Super Bowl party at a friend's house. And it will be a waste of a good party if they don't (win)."

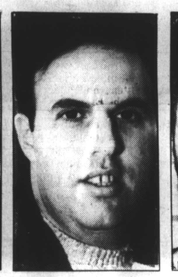
Sheldon Gimbel, 45, merchant. "I like the Redskins. The Redskins' defense will stop (John) Elway. If it's a three-point game, they'll have a problem with their kicker."

Roland Finkelman, 31, merchant. "Redskins, because it's the year of the black quarterback. The Skins won on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. The Jimmy "the Greek" incident all points to the Skins winning. It's in the stars."

Michael Pappastomakis, 27, entrepreneur. "I favor Denver. I think they're due from last year. They're going to have a better game than last time."

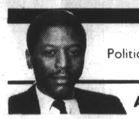
Bradley Alston, 37, social worker. "I would like to see Washington win the game. They're right here in the region. Doug Williams' at quarterback, plus I believe they've the better team."


Sheldon Gimbel


Roland Finkelman

Michael Pappastomakis

Bradley Alston



Anthony
Armstrong

Political Consultant

Integration revisited

Part One

If this were a U.S. courtroom and the central theme of legally mandated integration was on trial, what verdict would be rendered by the jury of black American public opinion?

Those in favor of integration and those who oppose it have both put forth vigorous arguments in defense of their respective positions, much the same way the defense and the prosecution do in a landmark civil case.

On trial is black America's last thirty years. Neither side wants to be a defendant; and yet, neither side can claim enough certitude to convincingly support being the plaintiff.

Events of the last three decades fuel the outcome of this struggle of competing ideas; and the final pieces of evidence are starting to crystallize into a decision that will continue unchanged or dramatically alter the attitudes and actions of black America, well into the next century.

One thing is coming clear: instead of the continuing frustrations, and the persistently apparent group and individually defeating strategies of integration, the jury of black opinion is shifting and starting an inward look for answers.

This is a significant change for a race of people who cast their economic lot almost entirely with black-to-white, and not black-to-black, commerce; and their social ranking on how much whites accepted them.

Integration was the easiest, the cheapest, and the least disruptive of all the alternatives of the 60's, because it didn't require us, or whites, to do much.

Whites didn't lose money and we didn't act to gain any, neither us or whites had to make really wrenching social changes, and, except for some short lived riots that hurt us far more than those, very little violence had to be quelled.

The single biggest factor underlying this change had been the regurgitation of the bitter pill of integration, that we, nevertheless, rather eagerly swallowed back then. You recall what the medicine was supposed to do.

It was going to cure our "cultural deprivations", provide us an education, help us get good jobs, and move us out of the slums and into mixed neighborhoods, far from the ugliness of our urban experiences. Eventually, eyebrows wouldn't even raise anymore, at the sight of black men with white women; and white men would be free to openly do more than take our women to private dinners, and even more private hotel rooms. Integration was supposed to do all this, and more. To one degree or another, depending on who's judging, it has.

White America didn't take the medicine. But, the increased contacts - at work, at school, etc - and the resulting familiarity, it was theorized, would soften their hearts. Black and white, together, would surely come to live in a state of near nirvanna, in a paradise called America.

No doubt about it, we blacks have been involved in a thirty year love affair with integration. For blacks, however, those same thirty years have seen our fortunes move like the needle on an applauds meter, sometime up, most times, down.

A growing minority of mainstream black America's jury of public opinion is arriving at the verdict that we've loved integration so much that we've jumped into its seductive waters, only to drown ourselves.

With the opening of previously closed education opportunities, we traded off the quality of black colleges.

With our growing entry into the labor market (fueled mostly by black women), even faster growth has occurred in the numbers of us who comprise the "new" poor.

The uneven growth in opportunities of all kinds for blacks, and particularly our women, is contrasted with the steady rise of personal discontent, characterized by breakdown and singleness in more than fifty percent of black homes - our homes!

We now have the chance to vote for practically whomever we choose; yet, the concept of black leadership and the quality of many black leaders is being reexamined anew by blacks, and under darkening shadows that now are starting to obscure our confidence in the individuals, if not in the concept itself. Purely social relationships between blacks and whites, always a set of fickled factors are at their all time low; over the same thirty year period.

Perhaps we've invested a first class effort in what was never more than a second rate cause. Maybe the problem has never been integration. Maybe the problem has been what blacks expected integration to do for us.

We understood integration to be a social construct; but beyond this reasonably legitimate understanding, we dreamed ourselves into wanting and then attempting to make integration two additional things it could never be. Blacks thought integration would become an affective economic lever - a way to enter American commerce without making an equity contribution. Then, we began to practice a form of pyschiatric avoidance - denying the truth of all the other social, historical, and racial facts that integration would not change - in order to believe that white hearts had finally and truly warmed-up to us. In our minds' what we wanted so badly was to feel equal, was to feel that whites, finally, wanted us around. We had begun to define our personal worth and our cultural values by the measuring rod of white indicators.

Thirty years later, as we approach the 90's, it's becoming more and more chic for blacks to find value and opportunity right inside the black community. Next week, we'll explore the changing forces that have brought this rethinking of social and economic attitudes that are helping America's blacks start to look to themselves, and away from integration.

Thirty years later we are well into the self denial but growing numbers of us have had to grudgingly concede; integration has not worked well for blacks at all. The spotty gains can be described as little more than a few high flying birds, perched on heaps of trash.

For many observers of the last three decades the unfulfilled promises of integration boil down to, "I told you so". These critics always offered that integration would neither open the hearts or the wallets of white America, that we shouldn't opt for such a fundamentally demeaning strategy, even that it was unfair to whites to ask them to perform such unnatural feats of individual and group magnanimity.

G. James
Fleming

We need uplifting programs

Where, oh where, are all those special "weeks" which, once upon a time, were dedicated to inspiring black young people to pull themselves up and pointing the way to their most constructive futures?

Long, long ago the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity sponsored "Go to High Schook, Go to College Week."

The organization held hundreds of mass meetings wherever Alpha chapters or Alphamen were located, literally took over high schools with programs of different kinds — accenting why it was important for black youth to enter and remain in high school and, later, to take the route to some college.

The Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity promoted its "Guide Right Movement" which every year sought — in a variety of programs — to inspire and orient black high school youth "in the direction they should go." This movement is still sponsored by the Kappas but scarcely with the vigor of past years.

The Omega Phi Psi Fraternity became notable for its "Negro Achievement Week," the centerpiece of which was a national essay contest held yearly in high schools across the country.

On both the high school and the college level, the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity pushed its annual "Better Business Week," through which it encouraged thousands of young people to choose business as their major interest.

Phi Beta Sigma is credited with carrying enlightenment to the essential role of buying and selling at a time when most blacks were thinking of entering only teaching, the ministry, medicine, or law as a profession.

* * *

These Greek-letter programs, where they still exist, do not have the gusto of their past years. No longer are black neighborhoods flooded with placards publicizing "Go to High School, Go to College," or "Guide Right," or "Negro Achievement Week" by whatever name called. No longer are the fraternities making the impact on high school youngsters that they once made.

Some say it is not necessary to urge teenagers to go to high school, since it is compulsory in all states. Overlooked, however, is the need for black youth to remain in high school until graduation (as against a 50 percent dropout rate in Baltimore).

Others blame integration. These argue that it is more difficult ("next to impossible") to reach black students to promote uplift programs.

But, these are explanations and excuses. The bottom line is that there is still a demanding need among blacks for a meaningful "Guide Right" program, a vigorous "Stay in High School, Stay in College" campaign, an aroused interest in "Black Achievement" and a continuing "Better Business Week," which probably may be re-tooled to "More and Better Business."

* * *

While the once-popular fraternity programs have been shelved, or have been de-emphasized, two organizations are partly (and happily) filling the gap. The United Negro College Fund, nationally, and the Greater Baltimore Committee, locally, are directing "Uplift" messages to both parents and young people.

The UNCF proclaims on all its printed material and via TV that "A Mind is a terrible thing to waste," while GBC, in a welcomed attempt to combat the dropout curse, is pleading with teenagers to "Finish high school, nobody wants a quitter."

Regardless of who sponsors what, that there is still a great need for such appeals, approaches and programs, no one can deny.

JAN 1988