The dawn of modern political development in Maryland

Local Civil Rights
By Simmona Simmons
Special to the AFRO

"Laws will not eliminate prejudice from the hearts of human beings, but that is no reason to allow prejudice to continue to be enshrined in our laws to perpetuate injustice through inaction."

This quote, made by Shirley Chisolm before the second session of the 91st Congress in 1970, captures the sentiment of the civil rights ovement of the 1950s.

The "Afro-American Encyclopedia," of which Harry A. Ploski is editor, asserts that the bulk of the Civil Rights struggle in the fifties was initiated by the NAACP which had begun chipping away at the roots of legalized segregation in a series of successful lawsuits.

One of the most successful cases was that of Brown versus Topeka Board of Education in 1954 when th Supreme Court ruled that discrimination in education was unconstitutional.

Ploski also points out that critics today argue that this case made little difference. He does believe, however, that without the Brown decision, the legal basis for segregation and discrimination would still be in place. This decision is important, in that it was a start.

In Maryland the scene was no different from the national as far as the activity for the Civil Rights movement. Many persons whose names are seldom or never mentioned, paved the way for others to follow.

Rev. Logan Kearse, who was a close friend of Martin Luther King and who travelled with him all over America and was with him when he received his Nobel Peace Prize, reminisces about the Civil Rights movement in Baltimore in the sixtis. Kearse stated that Juanita Mitchell, Stokey Carmichael and he were part of a team, "suicide squad," of ten to 15 people who planned to go to jail.

The plan was to have someone to go to jail every Saturday. This strategy was to fight inequities of the public accommodations law. The continued for months.

Kearse pointed out even though King spoke at many places in Baltiore, he only preached at his church, "Corner Stone Baptist Church."

As a result of the Civil Rights movement, blacks have achieved firsts in numerous arenas. In Maryland, recently we had the first black female fire fighter, the first black mayor and the list goes on.

Dr. I. Logan Kearse and his mother, Mrs. Isadora C. Kearse

Kearse want to remind Baltimoreans that there was a black individual before Parren Mitchell who ran for Congress. It was he, Rev. Logan Kearse; he ws the first black democrat to contend for a seat in Congress in 1960.

The "The Afro-American Encyclopedia" notes that the Civil Rights movement mobilized blacks and sympathetic whites as nothing had done before.

Thousands of individuals were incarserated because they defied the Jim Crow laws.

The Civil Rights movement probably reached its zenith in 1963 when 300,000 people, a record number converged in Washington, DC for a massive "March for Jobs and Freedom."

The Civil Rights movement was one that was tumultous because of rampant discrimination and segregation in America. Nationally, Rosa Parks, a seamstress in Alabama, and Martin Luther King were the impetus for the movement. However, locally we cannot forget the contributions of people such as Juanita Mitchell, Stokey Carmichael, Rev. Logan Kearse, Tucker Deering and numerous other individuals whose consistency, perservance and valiance paved the way for us today.

Though this period of history is behind us, we should keep the reason for it before us and not forget the reason for the

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2. _____ Frank Yerby wrote this book in 1947.
3. _____ James Baldwin penned this best seller by Maya Angelo.
4. _____ 1970 was highlighted by this best seller by Maya Angelo.
5. _____ What black author and what title made headlines for best seller in 1976?
6. _____ This black author had nine best sellers.
7. _____ For the period 1945 to 1976 how many black authors appeared on the best seller list.
8. _____ Which black female became the first black female to appear on the best seller list.
9. _____ When did the first best seller by a black author appear?
10. _____ This black best seller sold over 195,000 copies before 1950.

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During Black History Month, The Giant Food Family would like to take this time to acknowledge the many courageous Black Americans who donated their time, energy and talents to help make a strong nation.

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