NAACP targets young voters

Enthusiastic young fans trekking to the Saturday, May 28th, concert by RUN-DMC at the Baltimore Arena gave the national voter registration campaign of the popular rap group and the NAACP a rousing send-off as more than 350 of them signed up as new voters at special registration tables set up at the concert site.

The event marked the first in a series of registration efforts that will be tied into the concerts RUN-DMC will present in more than 55 cities this summer.

Local NAACP representatives will be present at each concert site to register voters, and RUN-DMC will make a special appeal for their fans to sign up on the spot.

Each new voter will receive a colorful poster featuring Benjamin L. Hooks, Executive Director of the NAACP, and RUN-DMC. In addition, the popular group has recorded a public service announcement which will be played over the nation's radio stations urging young people to vote.

In Baltimore, commenting on the initial effort, Gerald Grimes, NAACP Voter Coordinator, said:

"The youth were very enthusiastic about registering to vote. It showed us, the older people, that our young black youth will register to vote if they are approached and asked to sign up.

"This cooperative venture between the NAACP and RUN-DMC will help the Association's overall voter registration efforts and will enable us to reach out to the young people we so desperately need," Grimes said.

Hooks, in commenting on the importance of more black youth registering to vote, said: "We must help our young people understand that they have the most powerful political weapon in their hands, their vote, and that all it takes is for them to use that power.

"We are extremely happy to work with RUN-DMC in setting up registration tables at their concerts," Hooks added. "Just imagine, if we could get every young fan of these young men to register and vote, the NAACP would have accomplished more this year in the area of voter registration than we have done in the past five years!"

According to Rush Artist Management, which manages the group, RUN-DMC is deeply committed to several social causes. "Our acts have always been distinguished by their social commitment, which is why they command so much respect from our fans," said Russell Simmons, President and founder of Rush Management.

"We would like to take advantage of this respect in this election year by working with the NAACP and registering tens of thousands of new voters," Simmons said.

At the NAACP's 1987 convention, RUN-DMC pledged to help the Association reach young people, and this venture with the civil rights organization helps them fulfill that pledge.

Three Bad Boys—Run DMC members share a tough moment.

Lou Rawls stumps for black colleges

By Helen Glover Cook
AFRO Correspondent

Lou Rawls was the guest of honor Sunday evening as the United Negro College Fund opened its 1988 season campaign.

The reception was held at the Belvedere Hotel to raise moneys for the financially troubled 42 Black private colleges which operate under the UNCF umbrella.

In his appeal for UNCF support Lou Rawls said "UNCF Colleges have traditionally educated generations of our Black professionals. They have graduated doctors, teachers, lawyers, ministers etc., our youth must have an opportunity to excell.

"The ones we see hanging around on the street corners do so because they have nothing else to do, and no guidance. We must furnish them with something to do as well as give them our support."

The campaign kick-off was hosted by the 1988 leadership committee, chaired by Dr. Levi Watkins. Other members include Ruth Daniels and J. Sydney King (co-chairs of the 1988 telethon), along with Allen Quille of the Maryland Advisory Committee.

Dr. Watkins led the recognition ceremony by presenting several dedicated UNCF workers with awards. Those who are aware of Lou Rawls tireless efforts on behalf of UNCF were not surprised when he entered the ballroom straight from his concert at the Myerhoff and immediately began serenading Wendy Moore (UNCF Regional chairperson) with, "A Red Rose For A Lady," as she was presented with an award for her work in support of UNCF.

Awards were also presented to members of the UNCF leadership committee, Victor Frankil (Belvedere Hotel owner), Marie Givens (UNCF publicity chairman) and Baltimores' first Black Investment house owner Nathan Chapman.

The audience was treated to an impromptu concert by Lou Rawls. The singer was accompanied by the instruments and singing of The Bill Cummings Trio, who perform at the Belvedere on Wednesday and Friday evenings.

Although Lou Rawls was in his usual top form, Bill Cummings displayed the remarkable talent that has earned his Trio the exceptional reputation that it so richly deserves. Guests who were standing in the rear of the ballroom at times found it hard to distinguish between the voice of Rawls and that of Bill Cummings.

This event drew many UNCF supporters who came from a wide cross-section of the community. City Council President Mary Pat Clarke not only was in attendance but took the podium to speak on behalf of the necessary job that the UNCF accomplishes in setting the groundwork for the future of America.

Dr. Watkins and Rawls reminded the audience that the UNCF "needs your moral support, but it needs your financial contributions as well."

Lou Rawls spoke to the audience about the behind the scenes battles that UNCF wages against those conditions that are capable of eliminating some UNCF colleges. Rawls said that although there were diverse reasons given for the closing of many UNCF colleges, the "bottom line" or real reason was always lack of funding.

Rawls recently returned from a fact finding and negotiating tour of Bishop College in Dallas, Texas. The school was slated for closure, just as Fisk University was one year ago (Fisk's gas and electricity service was at one time actually discontinued).

In both instances an administration reorganization, coupled with an intense fund raising effort under the auspices of UNCF, corrected the situation. The schools were once again operating, but doing so on a foundation that is less than financially secure or solid.

Rawls said "these schools have emerged scarred from these events and it is only through your support and contributions that they can continue to survive."

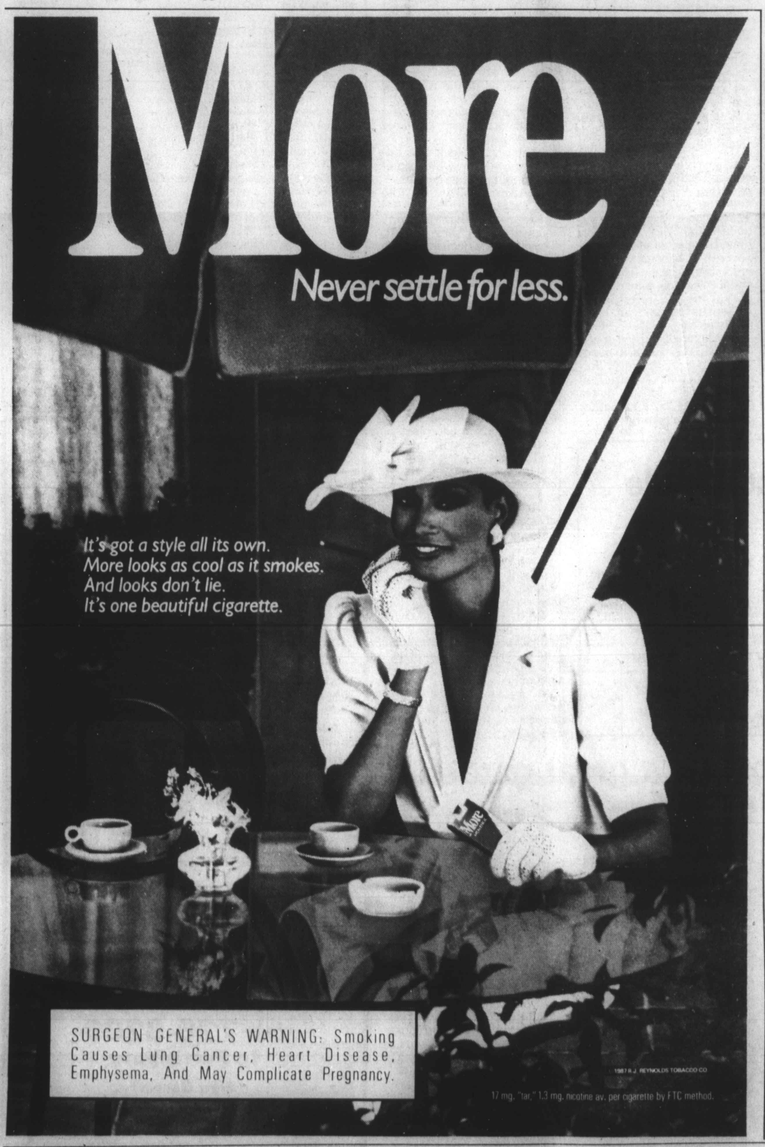
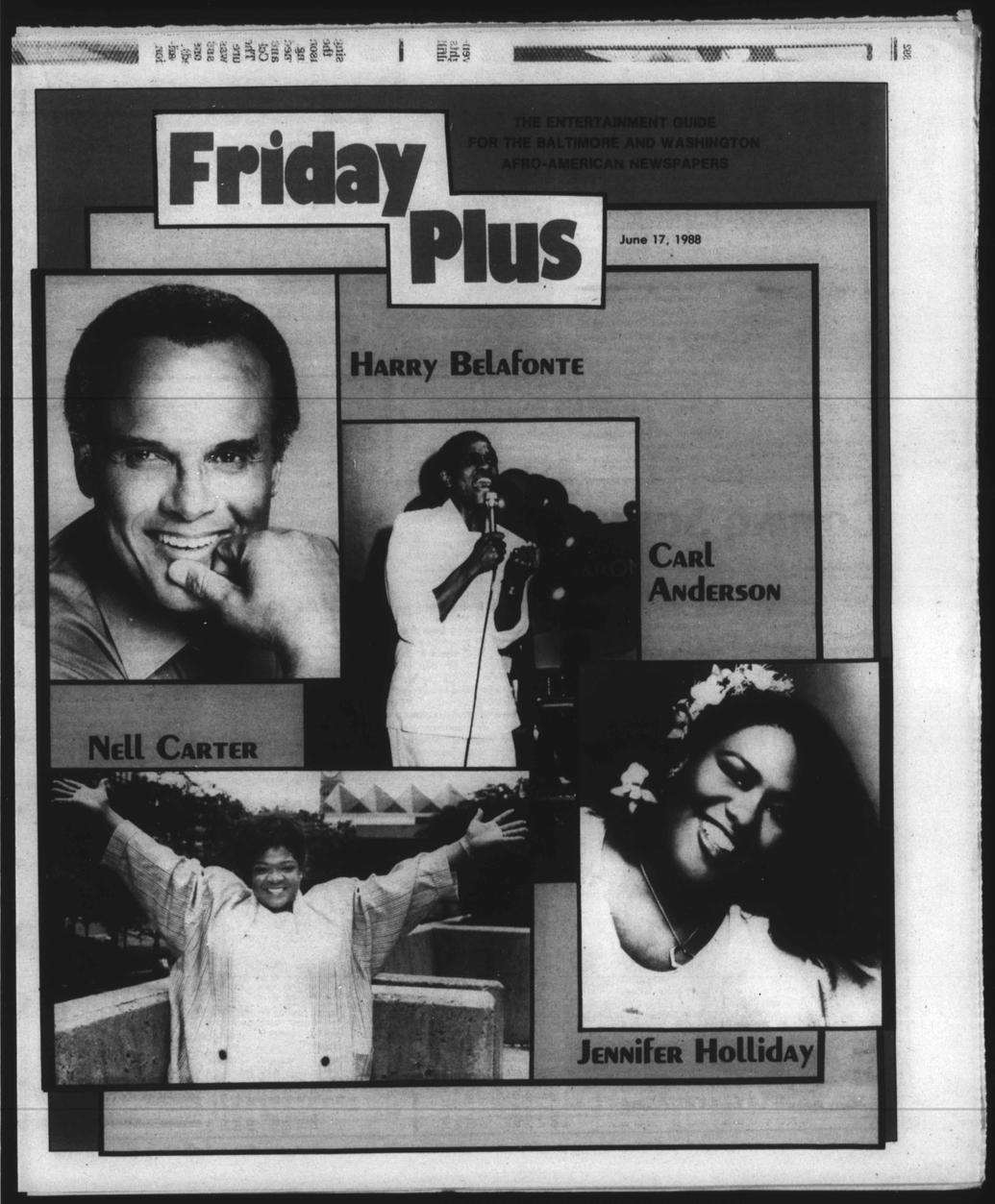
The disappointment Lou Rawls felt concerning the near closing of Bishop College was expressed in these words.

"Bishop College has trained generations of our finest professionals. It is sad that they came so very close to closing their doors after serving the nation after 107 years. This is an institution half the age of America itself. There is no reason why it should be in this shape."

In the ten years the UNCF telethon has been in it has raised over $55 million dollars in support of the 42 Black Private colleges that comprise UNCF.

The 1988 kick-off campaign hopes to top its yearly record of contributions when it is televised this year. There will be a star studded cast of performers including Gladys Knight, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., and many others all contributing their talents for the worthy cause of the UNCF.

Your tax deductible dollars are needed if our historically significant institutions are to continue to exist.

Photo by John Murphy

A CELEBRATION — Lou Rawls and Dr. Levi Watkins at the United Negro Fund Reception.