# EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

## Role model in orbit

The necessity to identify role models for young Black males, has never been more needed at any point in history. While it is well that youngsters look up to the super athletes and the megabucks they are earning, choices for careers in other venues must be presented.

Marine Col. Charles F. Bolden, Jr., is the co-pilot aboard the shuttle Discovery which is on a mission to launch the Hubble Space Telescope, a multi-billion dollar package.

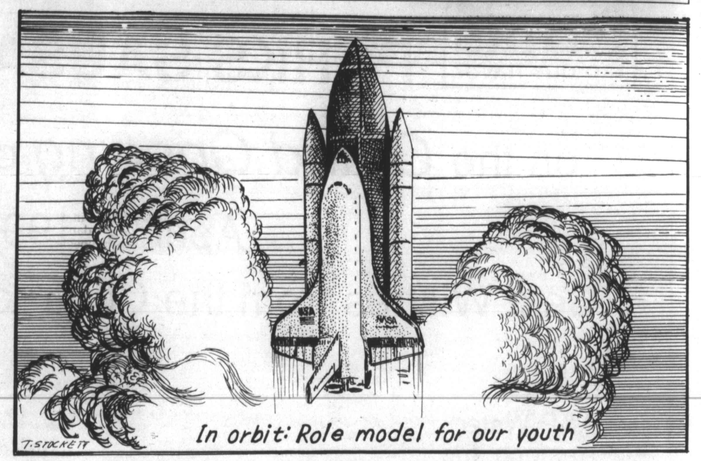
Bolden, born in Columbia, S.C., earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968, and a Masters degree in systems management from USC in 1978. He was designated a naval aviator in 1970, and flew more than 100 missions into North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

He was selected as a NASA astronaut in 1980 and flew aboard the shuttle Columbia just 16 days before the Challenger disaster. He has logged more than 4,800 hours flying time in a variety of aircraft.

Married to the former Alexis Walker of Columbia, S.C., the couple has two children: Anthony Che, 18, and Kelly M., 14.

This then, is a portrait of the kind of role model our youth should be attempting to pattern their lives after. Naturally, not every one can achieve the heights of Col. Bolden, but in trying, it is amazing the fields and avenues which open up.

We congratulate Col. Bolden and the rest of the astronauts. Their work provides an incentive for our youth.




In orbit: Role model for our youth

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

## Verda Welcome remembered

America will miss the Honorable Verda Freeman Welcome; the first African-American female in the United States to win a seat in a state Senate.

Not only should Marylanders in particular pay tribute to this distinguished American, but the citizens of this country should recognize the calibre of woman that she was.

In 1907, she was born high up in the Blue Ridge Mountains in the town of Uree, North Carolina, known commonly as Lake Lure. She was the third child of a family of 16 from John Freeman and Docia Freeman.

Upon the death of her mother early in Verda's childhood, she often found herself taking care of her younger brothers and sisters while attending classes at night to pursue her education.

Growing up in a period of economic and social unrest in this country, she overcame many obstacles and pursued her aspirations to become one of Maryland's most respected and leading citizens, while serving in both the Maryland House of Delegates and the Maryland State Senate.

After witnessing her father repeatedly denied from the voting polls, she resolved at an early age that "when I grow up, I'm going to vote," but it was her deep compassion to help those less fortunate, as she had done as a child, that propelled her into public life.

In 1929 Verda came to Baltimore and graduated three years later from the Coppin Normal School with a teaching certificate, and worked for 11 years as a teacher in the Baltimore City Schools. She went on to receive a bachelor's degree in history from my alma mater, Morgan State University in 1939, and in 1943 completed a masters degree in history from New York University.

The grandeur of Verda Welcome is that she lived her life by example and encouraged us all to stand up and fight for what is right. As early as the 1940's, she worked to register African-Americans to vote and encouraged participation in the political process.

During the 1950's, she led the way in efforts to remove the racial barriers at the White Coffee Pot, a Baltimore eatery and other businesses in the area. Her efforts led her to become an active leader in the civil rights struggle during the 1960's.

Verda decided to run for the Maryland House of Delegates and was elected in 1958. After serving in the House for four years, she went on to become the first African - American woman in the history of this nation to hold a seat in a state senate.

She quickly became a respected leader in the Senate and continued the fight to remove racial barriers and social inequality for the next 20 years.

While serving in the Maryland General Assembly, she authored legislation entitled the "Public Accommodations Bill," which upheld the personal and public dignity of all people to rent a room or enjoy their meal in an appropriate environment without regard to race.

As a state senator, she helped to eliminate the state's century old miscegenation law; and sponsored bills providing for equal pay for equal work, gun control, and voter registration by mail.

Senator Verda Welcome also led the initiative when Morgan State received university status, which elevated this historically Black institution of higher education to an even greater level of prestige and recognition.

These and other legislative initiatives that she pursued and achieved over the years demonstrates the sincerity of her commitment to public service.

It was the courage and conviction of Verda Welcome that inspired me and many others to public service. She was a pioneering force which encouraged and led the way for many African-Americans to enter politics.

The life of Verda Welcome has touched each and every one of our lives in some manner, and because she lived, we are all that much better off.

Verda Welcome was a very rare and special person whose compassion knew no boundaries, and her legacy will remain with us for all eternity.

Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

## After Easter thoughts

For years, I have attended Good Friday services at which time seven ministers speak on The Seven Last Words spoken by Jesus on the cross. Rev. Vernon Dobson, Pastor of Union Baptist Church in Baltimore, spoke on the word, "God, my god, why hast Thou forsaken me."

Rev. Dobson spoke to the meaning of, the feeling of, abandonment in our lives. Parents abandoned by the children they raised, how do they feel?

How do families cope with the feeling of abandonment caused by the death of a loved one? How do children feel when their parents, caught up in substance abuse literally deny them the nurturing; loving they need?

How does a race of people cope, when they in whole or part, are abandoned by their government, their nation?

I am forced to conclude that a large segment of Black America has been abandoned by the local; state and federal governments. Let me explain to you why I was forced to arrive at this conclusion.

During the period when affirmative action was really being implemented, we in this nation saw a dramatic increase in employment opportunities and promotions on the job for Black citizens.

At the federal, state and local levels of government, traditionally the highest administrative positions were the preserve of White males. Black citizens were held to civil service positions below grade five or seven.

Thanks to effective implementation of affirmative action, that GS-7 barrier was broken and now we are in the top echelons of government frequently heading bureaus and departments.

The savage onslaught against affirmative action waged by the Reagan Administration and savagely wounded by recent Supreme Court decisions has ended the upward mobility for us.

Save for cities with Black mayors, once again, promotions in state and federal civil service are being denied us simply because we are Black. Our cause has been abandoned by the powers that be.

All of us were astonished at the rapid growth in Black entrepreneurship that took place during the 1970s and part of the 1980s. We ventured into new business arenas; we built large, successful corporations; we secured government contracts and those businesses began to give back to the community.

But on January 23, 1989, the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of the City of Richmond vs. J. A. Croson Co., struck down the Richmond law, holding that it violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteen Amendment.

Since, then, 20 local and state governments have either terminated or suspended their minority business laws. Forty-six states or local jurisdictions have their minority business programs under re-evaluation.

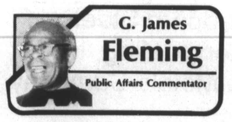
What does all of this mean? It simply means that our businesses have been hit by devastating blows, and they are beginning to fail all across the country, almost as if the domino effect will never end.

What does this mean? It means that Black entrepreneurship has been abandoned by city, county, state and federal governments.

On Easter Sunday, the churches in our communities throughout the nation were packed, and beautifully decorated with flowers. We wore our Easter finery with pride and we just felt good. That is, some of us felt good.

But the others of us did not attend church, and some of our children do not even know why we celebrate Easter. The homeless, the addicts, the imprisoned and the chronically unemployed continue to live out their lives of desperation.

Not just governments, we ourselves have abandoned them. How will you answer when they confront you with the question: "Friend, my friend, why have you forsaken me?"



G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

## A tribute to Verda Welcome

It is to the credit of Verda F. Welcome that she evolved from a social butterfly into a hard - working, hard - fighting and productive member of the Maryland General Assembly, serving most of 25 years in the State Senate.

Fortunately for us all, she is remembered most, or wholly, for her public service. These years, with the fullest support of her late husband, Dr. Henry C. Welcome, paid untold dividends to Baltimore and the state.

She started out as a public school teacher but, after a stint in the classroom, she withdrew to become a homemaker and a volunteer to neighborhood groups and to the larger community.

Increasingly, however, as the Welcomes saw the Black population grow in numbers but lose out in political influence, they talk, more and more, at the dinner table about "doing something."

Others had preceded them in breaking the first barriers (1954) and to these the Welcomes made substantial contributions. In another few years, however, it seemed "only natural" for Verda to be a regular, full-time candidate for the legislature.

This was in the mid-1950s, before the Civil Rights Acts and the surge of anti-discrimination sentiment.

* * *

This was also still the time of political "bosses" and their "machines." And, so far as African Americans were concerned, bosses meant "White bosses," overlording Black as well as White political precincts and districts.

There was also political clubs, "for White only," where the political fate of Black Baltimore was determined.

Verda had the time to be a politician and her husband was willing to be her banker.

She was first elected to the lower house (the Assembly) in 1959 and then to the State Senate in 1963, from the Fourth Democratic District (Baltimore) — a heavily Democratic enclave.

She weathered all the customs of rural Maryland at that time — public accommodation, untold "slights" from fellow members and loneliness.

These idiosyncrasies dwindled, however, as they usually do, with time, and the Maryland legislature became civilized.

* * *

Senator Welcome sponsored or co-sponsored most of the important civil rights and other laws in the state during her tenure in the upper house. She forged friendship and coalitions with fellow - members — always from the point of view of her constituents' interests.

Eventually, she was included in everything, but she never forgot her first obligation — to serve the people of Baltimore, especially the African - Americans who made up a substantial part of the population (now a majority).

Senator Welcome was a member of the National Order of Women Legislators, American Association of University Women, Task Force to Study Campaign Financing, Committee to Study Rape and Related Crime, and the Committee to Study Juvenile Crime.

She was also a member of the Fourth District Democratic Organization of Baltimore and the Valient Women Democratic Club.

The honorary degrees and other awards presented to Verda Freeman Welcome pay testimony to the full and serviceable life she lived.

### AFRO welcomes letters

**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**

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# COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Ron Daniels
Vantage Point

## Paltry U.S. aid to Africa insulting

No where is the racism, arrogance and hypocrisy of American foreign policy more clear than in the allocation of U.S. aid dollars to sub-Saharan Africa (Black Africa).

Black Africa with nearly 500 million people is at the bottom of the ladder every year when it comes to various forms of economic aid, technical assistance and military assistance.

No matter how grave the crisis of underdevelopment and famine in Africa, somehow this vast continent never seems to qualify for massive foreign aid assistance.

By contrast, the President and Congress have been scrambling to squeeze dollars from a "tight budget" to rush aid to Eastern Europe. Despite the fact that the United States is straddled with a sizeable budget deficit, somehow the President and Congress could find 900 million dollars in aid for Poland and Hungary in a hurry.

In 1989 Black Africa with a population of 500 million people received a mere 700 million in aid in total (slightly more than $1.00 per capita). The tiny nation of Israel alone receives about 3 billion annually (more than $600.00 per Israeli citizen).

Could this neglect of Africa be because Africa is the "dark continent?"

There is no question in my mind that race and racism play a major role in American foreign policy and the foreign policy of the west for that matter.

It is not by accident that the majority of the world's dominent economic powers are in Europe and America while the poor nations are almost exclusively among people of color in Africa and the Third World.

And the exceptions like Japan and Korea are increasingly the subject of racist Japan bashing and Asian bashing.

But perceptions of American economic and ideological interests are also vital factors which drive American foreign policy. The power elite of this nation is always obsessively seeking safe and profitable havens for U.S. corporate investments in the Third World and Africa.

This quest for profitable markets is generally translated ideologically in terms of the competition with the fight against communism.

Hence as soon as the "marxist" Sandinistas were dethroned in Nicaragua, (a nation of about 3 million people), the President and the Congress got busy on a 500 million dollar aid package to this newly "liberated" Central American nation.

Immediate aid to Panama (2.7 million people) was also forthcoming after the overthrow of Noriega.

Of course few people commented on the fact that U.S. economic sanctions and military pressure (in the case of Nicaragua)) was responsible for wrecking the economies of these nations in the first place.

Again it is interesting to note that the U.S. pressed sanctions against Nicaragua and Panama to the point of ruining their economies.

However in South Africa, the U.S. is anxious to relieve the pressure and reinitiate "constructive engagement" far before there is "democracy" for the Black majority in South Africa.

Indeed when a high powered delegation of African Americans recently asked Secretary of State Baker to provide a token 20 million in direct aid to the African National Congress (ANC) there was no money to be found for these "freedom fighters."

In that same vein "liberial" Illinois Senator Paul Simon was gung ho to provide massive aid for Eastern Europe.

But when asked about aid for the ANC, the Senator could not find the moral resolve to recommend that money be put behind the rhetoric of freedom and democracy for the 30 million Black South Africans who suffer under the dictatorship and terror of the apartheid system.

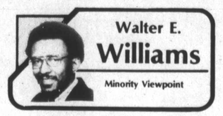
One might conclude that Senator Simon is more concerned about his Polish Americans and other Eastern European constituents than he is with his African American constituents.

The fact of the matter is that paltry aid to Africa is a blatant insult to African Americans. Our brothers and sisters in our African homeland are disrespected and disregarded because African Americans are disrespected and disregarded here in the United States. The descendants of Europe in America are respected.

They can demand and get substantial consideration in terms of various forms of aid and resources for their ancestral homelands while Africa languishes in poverty and disrepair because of a legacy of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism at the hands of Europe and the United States.

Africa is the victim of a lack of interest by the U.S. government in genuine development for Africa. Unfortunately Africa also suffers because there is an absence of a militant demand for aid to Africa from the "sleeping" African American giant.

If African Americans want to stop this insult to African Americans and Africa, we had better get busy.



Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

## Wonderful mysteries

Why does Williams rail against politicians fooling around with the market? The answer is simple; There are some things so wonderful that man-made attempts at improvement are bound to muff it up. Let's look at it.

Markets are spontaneously evolved systems for communication, control, and coordination. In that sense, it's much like the human body, not perfect but leaving only little scope for man-made improvements.

It's the complexity of both systems, far beyond the capacity of man to even comprehend, that puts a damper on improvement.

"Come on, Williams," you say, "my doctor understands the human body, and Ralph Nader understands the market!" Let's see.

While reading this column, there are literally billions of actions and reactions taking place in your body. Some of those are obvious to you like breathing, eye movement, sitting, and hearing, which alone employs billions of nerve responses.

Billions more involve decoding literal and contextual meanings of words and the images they evoke.

Then there's your continuous scanning system that might pick up the orange you asked your wife to peel, unexpectedly traveling in your direction along with the suggestion, "Peel it yourself!"

If you decide to catch it, you must estimate its speed, trajectory, and the interception point between your hand and the orange — an action involving billions of nerve and muscle responses.

We can appreciate its complexity if we remember that the Defense Department spends billions of dollars trying to perfect a much simpler task in order to intercept hostile missiles.

The late Dr. Leonard E. Read, director of the Foundation for Economic Education, demonstrated the complexity of markets in a story called "I, Pencil" which begins with the statement: "Not a single person knows how to make me."

The wood comes from trees in California and Oregon; the "lead" for the center, which is really graphite, is mined in Sri Lanka; a brass ferrule holds the eraser, which is fatice, a rubberlike product manufactured in Indonesia.

A pencil on the store shelf involves actions of millions of different people, inputs, and skills.

Fatice and graphite must get to pencil manufacturers which involves navigation, hiring, and managing a ship's crew, all the while providing them with food, clothing, and health care during the arduous journey.

People must produce the equipment, and have the know-how, to mine for zinc and copper to make brass, and to mine the iron ore to make the ships and railroad cars.

Someone else must know how to convert ore into useful products like stainless steel for saws and navigation instruments.

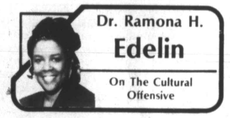
The direct and indirect activities of million upon millions of people must be coordinated in order to put that pencil on the shelf.

Moreover, that coordination must be achieved among people of different races, countries, and religions who may hate one another. Nonetheless, there's no pencil czar; yet we have plenty of pencils. In my book, that's wonderful.

Of course there are "imperfections" in markets and human systems. To maintain core temperature in severe weather, our bodies "foolishly" prematurely restrict the flow of blood to the extremities, causing discomfort and sometimes gangrene.

In market systems, those who cannot produce do not earn and hence have no legitimate claim on goods produced by their fellow man.

In both cases, we manage to cope with system "defects." For the body we use gloves; for the market we use charity.



Dr. Ramona H. Edelin
On The Cultural Offensive

## Afrocentric study

There is strong and growing interest in the role of Afrocentric study in the success of African American students, and in the clarity and effectiveness of our scholars in helping not only to define scholarship but also to inform public policy. What do we mean when we insist upon an Afrocentric curriculum?

We mean that each of the world's great races must see the world through its own eyes; must first of all obtain self-knowledge and engage in self-criticism and self-development; must develop itself culturally; and must seek a true understanding of the world, nature, and the other cultural groups in relation to themselves.

Permit me to give you an example of the kind of knowledge which all educated people on earth should know, and which African people should not only know, but build upon:

The Great Pyramid at Giza was built, even by the most conservative estimates, by 3500 BC, in Black African Kemet — now called Egypt. The Great Pyramid is composed of 2.5 million blocks of solid stone, none smaller than two tons, and none of which is cut exactly the same way.

It is constructed on the exact center of its landmass, by longitude and latitude, with such precision of the cardinal direction points that it challenges today's survey instruments.

It has lasted through more than five millennia because of its architecture, which not only rises gradually to an apex, but also is slightly concave — such that the sands of the desert simply roll up its sides in spirals.

But what is inside the Great Pyramid? Why was this architectural marvel built — for what purpose?

Unlike some other Pyramids, the Great Pyramid is not a tomb. It is more like a sculptured almanac of the planet earth — or a time capsule — containing knowledge that all humanity should always possess.

Inside the Great Pyramid where there would have been a sarcophagus, there was in fact an arc, or vessel, which contained physical objects which were the exact standards of weight, volume and length used by their society. Maintained in constant temperature and humidity, these standards were completely unaffected by the weather over thousands of years.

One of the standards in the arc is based upon the dimensions of the earth — it equals 1/50,000th of the circumference of the earth at the equator. The ratio of the weight of the arc to the weight of the Great Pyramid, is exactly the same as the ratio of the weight of the Great Pyramid to the weight of the earth.

Today, we do not have agreement on the weight of the earth, or even on how one would find out the weight of the earth — but if we take the five most persuasive theories and average the number they suggest, that average is the number that the ancients left us in the Great Pyramid.

The Great Pyramid gives us the length of the solar year — 365¼ days; the distance from the earth to the sun; the speed of light; and two highly significant mathematical concepts which the Greeks renamed Pi and Phi.

Pi, the conversion factor which enables us to get from the diameter to the circumference of a circle (the area of a circle equals Pi times the radius squared), makes possible at least two formulas for the use of the circle. If we measure the perimeter of the base of the Great Pyramid by its heights, we get Pi.

Even more mysterious is the golden mean or golden section, which the Greeks renamed Phi. Referred to as "The key to the evolution of the universe," the Phi ratio is seen by studying the cross section of the Great Pyramid.

And so we see how, by studying ourselves, we arrive at the essential and fundamental meaning of self-worth and self-esteem; and we also learn how critically important it is that all educated human beings share our knowledge.

### REP. AUGUSTUS HAWKINS

## Forging an American child care system

After months of often agonizing negotiations, the House of Representatives passed a comprehensive child care package by a vote of 265-145 on Thursday, March 29.

The House package would expand the earned-income tax credit for low-income working families, increase block grants to states for child care services, expand Head Start for disadvantaged preschoolers into an all-day, year-round program, and establish a school-based program for before-school and after-school care or early childhood development programs.

The Early Childhood Development and Education Act, H.R. 3, authorizes $1.3 billion for 1991 and is expected to cost approximately $27 billion over the next five years.

Though the President has threatened to veto this bill, it is a milestone in the efforts of national leadership to forge a comprehensive child care system for American children.

Among westernized countries, the only nation other than the United States that does not have such a plan is South Africa. H.R. 3 will provide needed child care services for America's low-income families, improve the quality of these services, and make them more accessible through a diverse network of providers.

The child care bill authorizes $429 million for 1991 to provide state grants to school districts to establish, expand, or operate early childhood development programs and/or before and after school programs for "latch-key" children.

This is a critical provision for parents who work or who are in education or training programs.

Each working day many parents face that critical hour between 3:00 and 4:00, when they wait anxiously for the telephone to ring and to hear their child's voice, assuring them of their child's safety.

The "latch-key"/early childhood development provisions of the bill would allow school districts to operate programs or contract with other public and/or eligible private nonprofit community-based organizations for such services.

The school district's services may be provided at no cost to four-year-olds from families with incomes less than the poverty level, and may include three-year-old children in the early childhood development program.

Children from families with incomes above the poverty level may participate on a sliding fee scale. Eligible children enrolled in private programs may also participate.

H.R. 3 also includes a provision that has raised controversy among many who are concerned about the constitutional issue of the separation of church and state. The bill requires states receiving child care assistance in the form of a voucher.

Such vouchers could be used in a religious, sectarian child care program if a parent so chooses. While the bill protects sectarian preferences in employment and admissions, it does not supersede any state constitution or state law that prohibits the use of public funds in or by sectarian institutions.

I recognize that church-based programs are a critical part of the existing system of child care in this country, providing approximately a third of the services, especially for families with low-income. However, I have always been a strong advocate of our constitutional provisions that separate church and state.

I also have serious concerns about the implementation of a mandated system of vouchers supported by public tax dollars, that may be used in sectarian settings that focus on religious instruction and worship, that may be contrary to one's own views.

Despite these reservations, I am deeply concerned about the need for a comprehensive system of child care in this country. As more parents must work, particularly single heads of families, this nation's critical need is to assist them in caring for their children.

The care of America's children is critical to our nation's future. Let us recognize the need to strengthen families by ensuring that parents are not forced to leave their children in unsafe or unhealthy child care arrangements, by promoting the availability and diversity of quality child care services to all families.