EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

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President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Another view on 42

Some debate lingers concerning the legitimacy of Georgetown Basketball Coach John Thompson's recent walkout protesting the NCAA's Proposition 42.

Thompson boycotted two recent games in public criticism of the NCAA move to impose greater restrictions on incoming freshman student-athletes.

The opposing view contends that colleges exist for "college-fit" students; that any youngster who fails to reach standards set by the NCAA should not be granted a scholarship or other aid to enter college.

Thompson and his supports admit that the requirements — 700 on Student Aptitude Test scores and a 2.2 grade-point average — are not, or should not be, insurmountable. But it is the denial of access to financial aid to deserving youngsters that is disturbing.

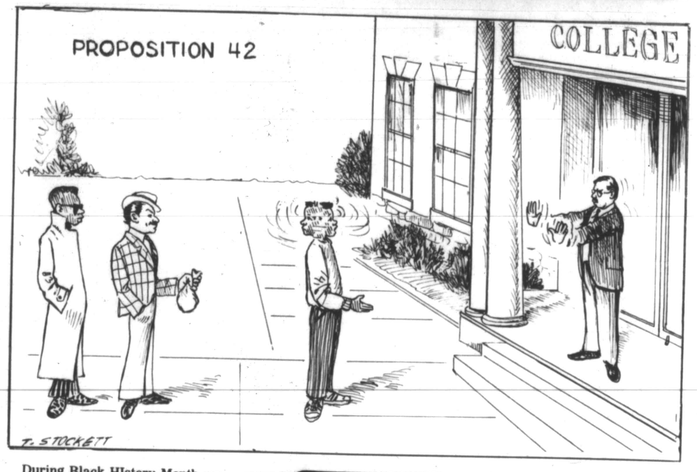
All young people are not born bright. Or to affluent parents. So, like their more fortunate classmates, they are inclined to use any athletic skills they possess to achieve the door to higher education.

Much as one dislikes acknowledging such a condition, it must be conceded that some inner-city youngsters do not receive the quality education that is dispensed elsewhere.

Is the more stringent "42" not, then, a message by the NCAA that young people who are under-achievers (through no fault of their own) should be "sentenced" to the "street force" where drug dealers, junkies and bums thrive?

In today's world, automation has choked off opportunities for summer employment at beach and mountain resorts; has reduced the job market for teenagers — especially black teenagers — and other former sources of fall semester money.

As a consequence, college for many youngsters can be attained only through athletics. But Proposition 42, says that method must no longer be valid.



Anthony Armstrong
Political Consultant

At one school

The young children are always interesting; how could they not be; they're kids, and kids are always interesting. One little guy who, incidentally, will receive two report cards — one for his academic classes, another for his music class; he's a drummer — acted as the master of ceremony.

Two little girls — Dierdra and Tiffany — were the mistresses of ceremony; and I had the real pleasure of being the guest speaker.

It's Black History Month, and like schools all over the city, Raynor Brown Elementary was having its student assembly, to celebrate the occasion.

Apparently Ellis, the little boy, Dierdra and Tiffany had been selected to lead the assembly because of the outstanding work each of them has done so far this school year.

Tiffany has shown herself to be an especially proficient reader, while Ellis and Dierdra have done very well in math.

The drummer, the math wizard, and the reader. Oops, did I say, the reader? Yes, that's right — the reader.

The mayor ought to be tickled pink; after all he is the one who gave Baltimore the title, "The City That Reads." At Raynor Brown someone has gotten the message, at least Tiffany has. Ellis and Dierdra didn't do so bad either.

Tiffany's mother was at the assembly too. She had brought one of her other children with her, no doubt to give him some encouragement from watching his academic star sister perform.

Before the assembly got started I had the chance to talk with each of the students. Although the conversation ranged from falling off monkey poles to violence in one of the children's homes, the overriding theme kept coming back to the joys and challenges of reading.

No matter what else the kids enjoyed doing, they all knew how to read.

The experience reminded me of just how much politics there is in the struggle for educational excellence. The voices, pro and con, about education, are as loud as ever, and now they have something to shout about.

The announced changes being implemented in our schools have fueled a brand new chapter in the saga known as "what to do about Baltimore's education system."

Well, after Raynor Brown Elementary School I can suggest what people ought to do.

First, they ought to come to Raynor Brown (and I suspect dozens of schools around the city) and see for themselves all the good things happening on the faces and in the voices of the young students.

Most of the positiveness has two sources: I saw little or no emphasis being placed on how the students were dressed; second, the students were reading, and reading rather well.

When the mayor first came up with the slogan, "The City That Reads," I bet a lot of people simply took it as another cute collection of words. Perhaps I did too.

However, Raynor Brown Elementary gave real substance to the words. Not only did my host and hostesses shine as readers, apparently a whole slew of students have caught the itch too.

More than a dozen students received trophies from a local supermarket chain for academic excellence, and the bulk of that excellence was the result of how well each of the students were doing in reading.

The point needs to be made over and over again: the city that reads is already reading increasingly well, especially at Raynor Brown.

There's always someone not happy with things, and I met one of those at Raynor Brown too. One mother said to me, "Hell, you don't see any parents here do you?"

She went on to say, "That's a symbol of what's wrong in the schools." I must admit I wasn't sure whether this mother was blaming the educators for the absence of the parents, or whether she was pointing the finger at parents themselves.

Any way you look at it, however, at Raynor Brown Elementary School the message was read loud and clear: Raynor Brown reads.

At one school Baltimore is a city that reads. I hope your school is lucky enough to be like Tiffany's, Dierdra's and Ellis'.

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

A. Philip Randolph labor leader

During Black History Month we will have the opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with the contributions of African-Americans. These contributions cover the widest possible range: from labor to art, from sports to politics.

It is important to remember that our leaders did not arise out of a vacuum but were nurtured by their cultural heritage and history.

The 100th Anniversary of the birth of Asa Philip Randolph will be April 15. On February 3rd, the A. Philip Randolph Postal Stamp was unveiled as the 12th in a series of Black Heritage Commemorative Stamps.

The reason Randolph has received such an honor is because his contributions to equal rights are without parallel.

A review of his personal history shows that the existence of "Negro" institutions were formative in Randolph's development.

For example, his under-graduate education at Cookman Institute in Florida, at the City College of New York and Howard University are either exclusively black or integrated; as in the case of CCNY which has been integrated since its founding in 1847.

Before Randolph there were others, like the founders of Cookman Institute and Howard University, who envisioned open and equal educational institutions.

When Randolph encountered barriers to the full participation of blacks in the trade unions he advocated and achieved full integration of black workers. One of his most ardent supporters was Maryland State Senator, Troy Brailey.

A closer look at Randolph's contributions shows clearly to us today not only what needs to be done but also how it can be achieved. Randolph's creativity arose out of his belief that the Negro can never be politically free until he is economically secure.

In 1925 he undertook to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP).

Their attempts to organize and receive certification met with fierce resistance from the Pullman Company. In 1937 Americans witnessed the first contract ever signed by a white employer with a black labor leader.

Randolph organized a mass march on Washington, D.C. in 1941 to protest the exclusion of black workers from defense industry jobs.

The idea of such a march so intimidated President Roosevelt that he issued the nation's first Fair Employment Practice (Executive Order 8802). Randolph agreed to call off the march if the President issued such an order.

President Truman was not immune from Randolph's power either. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in 1948 which integrated the Armed Forces after Randolph threatened to organize young black men to refuse induction unless segregation was abolished.

We see that public pressure, organization, and grass-roots support were effective instruments in accomplishing the major civil rights victories by the preceding generation.

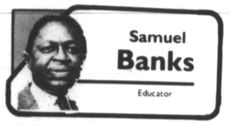
Randolph continued to organize and lead mass demonstrations: 1957 Youth March for Integrated Schools, 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom which brought one quarter of a million people to the nation's capital.

Each generation clears a path through the wilderness that is slavery's legacy. We clear a path that the next generation follows.

Today we stand at the edge of the wilderness and we continue to struggle to clear a path for each successive generation.

Someday, our children will stand on this path, and the greatest barriers they encounter will be those found within each person, and not the artificial barriers created by racism, fear and ignorance.

We cannot move ahead without knowing of the leadership of our ancestors. Black History Month is good and necessary, because it is important to know that we do not, and never have, struggled alone.



Samuel Banks
Educator

Black profiles in courage

Black History Month, once again, is upon us with a myriad of activities throughout the nation and much of the world.

Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, the venerable and remarkable originator of Negro History Week in 1926, expanded and changed Black History Month in 1976, would be very proud of the intense and continuing interest in the history, life and achievements of 40 million black Americans in the face of fearsome and formidable societal odds and institutional racism.

In terms of contemporary times, we know a great deal, thanks to the media, especially the electronic media, of the work of persons such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mesdames Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer;

The individual I have in reference to being "A Black Profile in Courage" is Lee Junious of Washington, D.C. I met Junious in 1971 when I was a doctoral student at George Washington University and attended the Walker Memorial Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. Reginald M. Geeen, at 202-13th Street, N.W.

Why have I selected Junious, as we celebrate national Black History Month, as "A Black Profile in Courage?" The answer is very simple: He is a profoundly caring, gentle, altruistic christian gentleman.

While others have talked about riding our nation of racism, bigotry, sexism and intolerance, Junious has been on the battlefront for over 51 years.

His first visible and forthright protest against segregation occurred in 1938 in Florence, South Carolina where he was jailed for drinking "white only" water.

Subsequently, Mr. Junious was jailed 23 times in the south and north for resisting policies of segregation and discrimination. He, too, was shot at 18 times in the course of his fight for an open, fair and equal society.

He was jailed in such places as Jacksonville, Florida, Nashville, Miami, Florida, Mississippi, Sumter, North Carolina, Alabama, North Carolina, Philadelphia and Detroit. He was jailed in Baltimore when he sought to desegregate downtown hotels in the 1950s.

Junious, a freedom-fighter-extraordinaire, is indeed, living history. One of the things that propels him forward at 75 years of age is his fierce passion for education and his utter disdain for racial inequality.

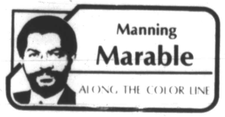
Although Junious only completed the fifth grade in the public schools of Sumter, South Carolina, he has seen to it that his four children completed high school with honors and matriculated at colleges (i.e., Howard and Xavier Universities) of their choosing.

Recently, in recognition of his splendid and towering work in the civil right movement, Junious was elected to the District of Columbia's Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People now led by the inventive and indefatigable William Cooke.

The extraordinary work, sacrifice and tenacity of a Lee Junious provide and anchor an beacon of hope for all who believe in human possibilities and the dream, even in the face of awesome and iniquitous odds, of better and more promising tomorrows.

Let us take heart in the sacrificial and peerless example of Lee Junious and join the struggle for a society at peace and harmony with itself.

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS



Manning Marable
ALONG THE COLOR LINE

Unequal medical care

To be black, Hispanic, poor or unemployed in America means, in part, an unequal access to basic resources. The poor and jobless don't have decent housing or quality education.

Our social policies are designed to perpetuate ecomomic inequality by preserving differences in the health, education and physical welfare of classes and racial groupings within the social order.

Part of the reason for this is simply racism.

For example, researchers at Harvard University recently found that a significantly higher proportion of whites who are treated at Massachusetts hospitals with heart problems undergo coronary bypass operations and cardiac catheterizations than do blacks suffering from identical health problems.

Similarly, blacks are less likely than whites to be given kidney transplants, even when they have the same incomes and insurance coverage.

Researchers disagree as to the reasons for differences between the races in patient care and treatment.

But they are convinced that "the differences were not merely a function of diminished physician contact and lower disease recognition for blacks," because the differences occured even among individuals hospitalized for severe heart problems.

Another recent study on medical care illustrates that despite advances in the facilities and treatment of many African-Americans in terms of health, that there are significant differences in the frequency of access to medical facilities between blacks and whites.

For instance, in 1986, 37 percent of all blacks surveyed had not visited a doctor in more than a year. The average number of visits to a doctor by whites is 4.4 per year, vs. only 3.4 per year for African-Americans.

Nearly five in six whites surveyed received regular blood pressure checks, while about one in three blacks surveyed had not had annual blood pressure checks.

Blacks are also less likely than whites to have health insurance; they have much more difficulty in getting to hospitals or clinics than whites; and they use emergency rooms far more than whites do.

Because we don't have a comprehensive, national healthcare policy, the United States fails to support concept of a medical "safety net" for millions of nonwhites, the poor and lower income people.

In the void of a national health insurance system, the demands of the marketplace dictate the medical treatment for millions of people even outside of the poverty level.

Doctors tend to go into subfields of medicine in which their financial compensation will be high, and the risks from being sued are reasonably low.

Rural areas have a difficult time attracting dentists and physicians, because medical professionals don't earn enough money to pay off their loans or live in a comfortable lifestyle.

In some instances, the increase of certain medical procedures reflects the desire for increased profits. Back in 1975, for example, the rate of Caesarean section operations among live births was 10.4 percent. Ten years later, the percentage of Caesareans rose 22.7 percent.

Today, it is 24.4 percent, nearly one out of four births. Medical doctors note that there is no medical reason why the number of Caesarians should have jumped so dramatically in so short a time.

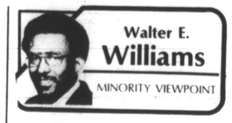
But Caesarians are more cost effective, hospitals state. They avoid the long hours of waiting involved in many vaginal births, and the inconvenience of night deliveries.

More to the point, vaginal births now cost about $2,900; Caesarean births cost anywhere from about $5,000 to $7,000.

This economic fact alone raises the question of whether the medical interests of women and children are being served when the market is the basis for health decisions.

The Department of Black Studies at Ohio State University is planning a national conference on "The Health Issues Crisis and the Black Community," to be held on May 5 and 6, 1989.

A central part of the agenda for Black political empowerment must be to promote greater awareness of healthcare issues, and strategies to reduce the medical inequality by race and class.



Walter E. Williams
MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Reagan's report card

How about a report card for Ronald Reagan? Was Reagan a good president? The answer depends on the chosen standard. He was much better than Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford but nowhere as good as Thomas Jefferson or James Madison.

Maybe it's unfair to compare a president to his predecessors. After all the demands of the job vary. Jefferson might have been a failure if he was elected in 1980.

How about evaluating Reagan in terms of expectations? Think back to 1981. Media experts and other know-it-alls said his confrontational posture towards the Russians would lead to World War III.

His proposed tax cuts would cause runaway inflation, drive interest rates up, and decimate the Treasury. They said his gas deregulation would drive prices to $2.50 or more per gallon, and his economic policy would destroy jobs.

In the light of those predictions, Reagan did quite well. Instead of war, we're playing kissy-kissy with the Russians. While high by historical standards, inflation and interest rates are fractions of what they were in 1980.

U.S. Treasury revenues are more than double what they were when Reagan assumed office. Gasoline prices fell following deregulation, and the economy has generated 17 million net new jobs with many begging to be filled.

So, let's give Reagan an A+ against the predictions, and—out of compassion—give the media and the know-it-alls an F+.

How about evaluating the president in terms of campaign promises fulfilled? Reagan promised he'd rid us of the departments of Energy and Education.

He not only failed to do that, he left us a new cabinet-level department of veterans affairs.

He also promised to get government off our backs, yet we're paying more total taxes and complying with more bureaucratic red tape. Reagan did fulfill his promise to restore America's confidence and respect.

We're no longer ashamed to be patriotic. We respect ourselves as Americans, and enjoy more respect around the world.

It's pretty hard to grade a president in terms of promises; he's not a monarch and the fulfillment of certain promises requires congressional approval. So let's give Reagan a C — mostly for effort — in making good on campaign promises.

Let's forget the media predictions and campaign promises and get down to the Williams Presidential Report Card.

In the international arena, Reagan would have earned an A for the strategic defense initiative (SDI) rearming America, the Grenada invasion;

The strike on Libyan tyrant Moammar Gadhafi, and aid to the Contras, but his average slipped to a C due to the F he got for signing the INF treaty with the Soviets. He forgot that the two decades leading to World War II were littered with treaties. Tyrants respect strength not treaties.

In domestic policy, he had some problems. He supported aid to dependent farmers which rose from $6 billion to $30 billion annually during his watch.

And, while Reagan doesn't have a racist bone in his body, he failed to get this across to America's minorities. He talked a lot about a balanced budget/spending limitation constitutional amendment but failed to put the full weight and prestige of the White House behind it.

On the plus side, he led the right to toll back marginal tax rates, promoted continued deregulation of the economy, stood in the way of efforts from Capitol Hill to tax us to death and push through a wish list of protectionist policies.

But most important, Reagan helped raise the moral debate over the legitimate role of government in a free society. On balance he earned a B in domestic policy.

Important holiday

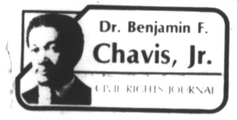
As I reflect on January 16, 1989, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday holiday, I thank God and rejoice! I rejoice because this is the first holiday that we, I, as black Americans can identify with.

It is the first living holiday which I feel is alive, like warm blood running through my veins. This is a day when I truly have something to celebrate, to reflect on, to stir up the ashes in my soul.

I sit my children down. I sit my family down. I sit myself down and listen to the quiet. Not worrying about the job, school, appointments, or any of the other busy things which invade our lives, and I listen to the "I Have A Dream" which lives inside each and every one of us.

As these thoughts resound inside of me I hear myself saying, "Dr. King, your living has not been in vain." Just like his role model Jesus who died that all men might live, Dr. King died that we might not forget the struggle, the freedom, the spirit, the unity, and the knowledge that we shall overcome whatever oppression and racism which tries to kill us daily.

REV. WILLIAM WINGO
Baltimore, MD



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Racism: Miami's vice

As millions of people in the United States and throughout the world celebrated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., another case of police brutality and misconduct in the city of Miami, Florida exposed the rampant, naked racism that continues to be all too prevalent in the nation where Dr. King's life was sacrificed for the cause of racial justice.

When Miami police officer William Lozano shot and killed 23 year old Clement Lloyd, an African American who was driving his motorcycle through an African American section of Miami known as Overtown on January 16, 1989 a full scale riot erupted.

The next day another African American, Allan Blanchard, 24, died from injuries he recived as he was thrown from Clement Lloyd's motorcycle after Lloyd had been shot in the temple by Lozano.

There has been much national attention that has focused on the riot that occurred in Miami. Yet, the causative factors of the riot have not been dealt with sufficiently.

This recent riot in Miami was not the first racial confrontation in Miami resulting from police brutality. We recall that back in 1982 a smaller case of police brutality where a Miami police officer shot and killed an African American which caused a riot.

Before that, in 1980 in the African American section of Miami, known as Liberty City, the unjust killing of an African American by the Miami police caused a racial riot that left 18 people dead and over one hundred million dollars in damage.

Although Miami Mayor, Xavier Squarez, has promised an investigation into these recent police killings. It is clear that the mayor's priority has been to protect Miami's image as a city for tourism and business trade at the expense of justice for the African American community.

In an interview published in the New York Amsterdam News, Leo Casino, a political activist in Miami stated "The cops' actions shows the contempt Miami's 1,000-man police has for the African American community."

Church leaders and civil rights leaders in Miami have all voiced their grievances to the power structures of Miami, but to no avail. Racism is a deadly evil.

The fact that police departments across the United States maintain the proclivity to use unnecessary deadly force against African Americans and other racial and ethnic persons is an indication of just how dangerous it is to live in a racist society.

All citizens of this nation are entitled to be free from this type of persecution, yet, history teaches us that these kinds of atrocities are only prevented by the organized and mobilized will of the victimized community.

We must not allow the African American community of Miami to stand alone in the face of this brutality. Miami's racist violence and vice must not go unchallanged.

Les Payne

Zimbabwe's struggle for independence

HARARE, Zimbabwe — "You have inherited a jewel in Africa," President Julius Nyere told Robert Mugabe upon first visiting newly independent Zimbabwe in 1981. "Don't tarnish it."

Mugabe, of course, didn't exactly *inherit* the country of which he became prime minister. During a seven-year struggle that toppled the racist government of Ian Smith's Rhodesia, Mugabe and his guerrilla army fought for and won every square millimeter they came to possess.

Along the way, the armed freedom fighters were careful not to damage unduly the jewel that became Zimbabwe.

The sparkle is more brilliant today.

Peace has broken out where war once raged. The 3 percent white-minority rulers have been replaced by a black majority. And the young nation that has achieved political independence is struggling now to gain economic independence. It's a more difficult climb made even tougher by greedy multinationals, racist Pretoria and its arch-supporters in Washington.

These and other reasons have ensured that no newly independent nation in sub-Sahara Africa has achieved economic freedom.

Under Smith, the old Rhodesia with its 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence severed its ties with England and went it alone. The tough international sanctions that followed eventually drove Rhodesia into the embrace of South Africa, its neighbor to the south.

Sanctions notwithstanding, Rhodesia under Smith was able to build a striving nation thanks to minerals, the richness of the land and the industriousness of its people — all its people. Post-independence, chrome and other minerals still abound, the land remains rich and the black majority is more industrious than ever before.

On the surface, Zimbabwe seems a lush and smiling success story.

Were Smith not so bloated with racism he might justly take pride in contributing a solid infrastructure for the evolution of what has become Zimbabwe. Instead he stews out on his large farm, having been expelled from Parliament by requisite vote for publicly denouncing a voting procedure that went against his party.

To his credit, Zimbabwe realizes that there is much yet to be done before the young nation begins to achieve economic stability, to say nothing of independence.

In a December report, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development outlined its major long-term economic constraints as: (a) unsustainable budget deficits, (b) insufficient imports, (c) low levels of (foreign) investments and (d) unsustainable unemployment levels.

A key factor in Zimbabwe's economic health is its agriculture sector, which employs 26.2 percent of its work force while accounting for only 13.2 percent of its gross domestic product. Both the large-scale, mainly white-owned farms as well as the smaller African village-level plots have fared much better this year than last, due mainly to the rains.

"The economy is very sensitive to changes in climate and natural factors over which we have little, if any, control," said the report. "GDP moves in response to agricultural performance."

This lack of internal control, which extends to Zimbabwe's overall productive sector, is a key to the country's economic vulnerability. Although the country is rich in chrome and other minerals, Western countries control the commodity markets feeding on these raw materials.

When prices are high, these developed nations conspire to drive them down either by dumping some of their stockpiles or finding substitutes.

Without offering any solutions, the financial report took serious note of the prospects for their minerals in the commodities market. "In the longer run," the report stated, "we are likely to see a steady fall in industrial countries' demand for raw materials."

"Their service sectors expand at the expense of growth in productive sectors — the main users of primary commodities. Technical development is towards ... less primary commodities."

In both agriculture and the marketing of its minerals, Zimbabwe sees its "growth rate to be externally determined."

Since independence in 1980, the nation has managed to increase its GDP 21 percent. Despite this, the increase has not been felt in real terms, which is to say the standard of living has not increased. In addition to inflation, the key problem has been the growth rate, which Zimbabwe has begun to discuss aggressively.

"The present population growth rate of 3 percent annually is unsustainable," the report stated. "Real improvement in standard of living can only be achieved if the growth of population declines at the same time as real GDP increases or maintains a level of growth higher than the population to achieve a higher per capita income."

Zimbabwe struggles to deal with its thorny, inherited economic problems even when times are good. Therein lies the hope that the jewel it has captured will not be tarnished.

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