# EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Frances M. Draper
President
THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

## A timely protest

Howard University students have once again shown the nation that this 122-year-old institution knows how to train leaders.

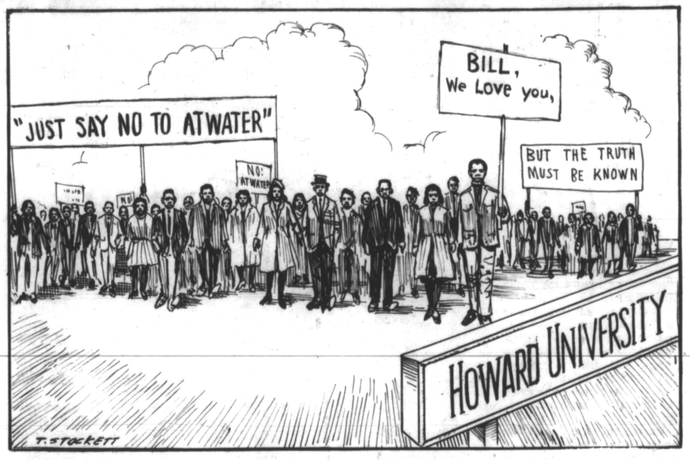
They formed picket lines, took over the auditorium set up for an anniversary celebration which included an address by the famous Bill Cosby, met with the administrators and then, not getting what they wanted, shut down the campus. And this is the way it should be.

This was not an unruly, boisterous mob that just acted on the spur of the moment, but clear-thinking young adults who pulled together five student organizations during almost a month of planning. They caught the administration by surprise at how quickly they took charge of things.

Campus leaders told the Afro they began their planning when they got the first word that Lee Atwater, the head of the Republican National Committee, had been elected to the Howard Board of Trustees. Atwater, the students said, did not reflect "what Howard stood for."

If thousands of students are demanding the immediate removal of a board member who is determined to hold tight to that position, one has to wonder what President Cheek and the board of trustees wish to accomplish.

Some 20 years from now, if finances and partisan politics rule, Howard may be deemed "The Mainstream Mecca" with a scheme of courses in Republican Ideology and the Magnetism of Money.




## Black Press Month

In the midst of the many holidays and special days during this season of the year, recognition of a specially designated month for the Black Press is not generally known or celebrated.

Black Press Month, however, is being accorded a special tribute this week, March 17 at a black tie affair to be held at the National Press Bldg. in Washington, D.C. Former Mayor Richard Hatcher is the guest speaker, with Freda Payne as the entertainment feature for this gala fete.

The National Newspapers Publishers Association celebrates its 49th year at this affair, and the Black Press Hall of Fame, presented in October headed up by the AFRO, will also be recognized. The black press is continuously in the forefront of the fight for equal rights. The month of March is dedicated to it.

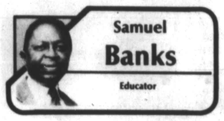
## NAACP Spring Breakfast

The annual spring breakfast of the Baltimore NAACP takes place Friday, March 17 at Martins West, and they have scored a definite coup in securing the new Secretary of HUD Jack Kemp as the keynote speaker.

This year's breakfast is geared toward helping the local NAACP chapter stay afloat so that it may continue to be alive and well in the struggle. Tickets for this event, which begins at 8 a.m., may be secured by calling 366-3300.

The AFRO is one of the supporters of this event, as well as Giant Foods, Citicorp, Maryland Minority Contractors Asso., First National Bank of Md., and the Baltimore Sun.

Your support is needed to make the effort complete.



Samuel **Banks**
Educator

## Lee Atwater and Howard U

It is totally inexplicable and incomprehensible to me as to why Dr. James Edward Cheek, president of Howard University, nominated Lee Atwater, chairman of the Republican National Committee, to serve as a member of the Howard University Board of Trustees.

Dr. Cheek must understand that it was his injudicious and imprudent nomination of Lee Atwater which has precipitated the student protests and caused national consternation, restiveness and pain among Howard's students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends and supporters of Howard University.

The fundamental reality, based upon a clear and incontrovertible track record, is that Atwater's political, educational and socio-economic ideology is patently antithetical to and non-supportive of Howard's long standing commitment to an egalitarian, just, caring and fair society for all persons.

In the light of Dr. Cheek's nomination of Atwater and the general acquiescence of Howard's Board of Trustees, chaired by John E. Jacob, the redoubtable and perceptive president of the National Urban League, and his fellow-trustees, several pivotal, urgent and overriding questions emerge which dictate public comment from President Cheek:

1. Why, given an abundance of highly able, influential and deserving persons Black and white, was it necessary to put Atwater's name forward?

2. To what extent did President Cheek, if at all, give thought to what might be the public reaction to Atwater's nomination?

3. What aspects of Atwater public career, past and present, provide assurance that Atwater embraces Howard's fierce and unwavering commitment and support of human and civil rights for all?

Dr. Cheek has done much since his arrival at Howard over two decades in moving forward the creative genius of Dr. Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, Howard's first black president chosen in 1926, through his brilliant advocacy of a "new humanism" and vigorous advocacy of academic-intellectual rigor and the expanded physical metamorphosis of the university.

However, in the instance of Lee Atwater's nomination, president Cheek is guilty of blatant and colossal misjudgment and an egregious wrong. In his heart of hearts, President Cheek must know this unsettling and unfortunate reality.

Whatever happens at Howard University has critical implications for the 114 historically black colleges throughout our nation which serve 200,000 black students and black America at large.

Simply stated: Howard University should not honor one who has contributed mightily to our people's woes, tribulations and institutional exclusion from American's socio-economic mainstream.

Cheek's nomination of one who, throughout his public career, is drastically at odds with Howard's historic mission of social justice and quality of opportunity. He has wrought the whirlwind on "The Hill" (i.e., Howard). It is to be sure, unsconiable and inexcusable.

Parren J. **Mitchell**
Former U.S. Rep.

## Beautiful interludes

At a time when political corruption seems to abound; when one has become accustomed to morning news reports about murders in our cities; when the American economy is threatened with deterioration; and at a time of daily reports on resurgent racism, we need some beautiful interludes in our lives.

Recently, in a five-day period, I experienced several such interludes.

The first occurred when I visited the Christian Cathedral Academy, a private school. It was a thrill to see those black children speaking well, behaving well and thirsting to learn. I saw the science exhibit they had prepared and it was excellent.

As a part of the Black History Month celebration, I had them play the roles of black heroines and heroes. One little fellow said in a loud clear voice, "I am Nat Turner, and before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave."

The young female student was convincing when she said, "My name is Marion Anderson and my voice is for all in the world who want to listen."

The young student stood straight and tall when he said, "My name is Paul Robeson, and I will not retreat one thousandth of an inch from my position.

Those gifted, eager inner city pupils were a joy. If we protect them, support them, encourage them and challenge them, they will make great contributions to our community. It was not just a beautiful interlude, it was an experience filled with promise.

The next day, I spoke at the Union Temple Baptist Church. The members of the church had prepared the banquet meal. There was food in abundance and it was delicious. We ate in the lower level of the church (the way it was done before churches started to rent banquet halls).

Their theme, "Christian Brothers and Sisters Acting in Love," was made manifest throughout the evening. Young people escorted seniors to the serving tables. Male members served their wives. It was the Black family at its best. Therefore, it was a beautiful, refreshing interlude in my hurried, hectic life.

The following day, Sunday, I heard a truly remarkable young man preach. His name is Dr. Luke Torian, he is under thirty and he is a compelling, inspiring preacher. He spoke of how Jesus looked down on the city and wept.

He asked, "Is God weeping when he looks down on this city and sees the senseless murders, the traffic in narcotics, the neglect of our children and our poor? Does God weep as he sees our Godlessness?"

I thought, if Dr. Luke Torian is typical of our new young black ministers, then our religious future is in good hands. I left the church feeling buoyant, hopeful and confident. It has been a meaningful interlude.

Monday, I spoke at the Polytechnic Institute, a public high school with a rigorous, demanding curriculum. I listened to the students who participated in the program. A perfectly beautiful young woman spoke about the contributions of and the meaningfulness of the black church.

She wishes to enter the field of medicine but is uncertain about the particular practice or specialty she will enter.

A young man spoke eloquently about the evil of racism, prejudice, discrimination and hatred. This young black man has been accepted by Harvard University where he will study astrophysics.

After my speech, dozens of students crowded around me. All said, "We want to be involved, we want to be a part of protecting our civil rights, we want to challenge this new racism." I felt so good! There is, on the part of our young people, commitment, hope and the desire to serve our people.

The following day, I attended a breakfast at the Howard Inn. As a part of the Howard University salute to minority business, I had occasion to speak directly to the Business Administration students in attendance.

When they talked to me after the speech, their commitment to the economic empowerment of our race was voiced time and time again.

Dear Reader, I cannot put into words the excitement generated by these young women and men. I know they will challenge this economic system and make it work for us. They inspired me to intensify my own efforts.

Anthony **Armstrong**
Political Consultant

## Voters giveth apathy taketh

A few years back one political commentator stated, "We don't elect our political leaders, we anoint them. The "we" are African-Americans.

What that commentator failed to say was shouted loud last week in Chicago. "Voters giveth, as in the case of the late Harold Washington, and by way of succession, Mayor Sawyer, but apathy taketh away."

Any examination of why we treat political matters so nonchalantly would require at least one volume, and more likely several.

As we go about treating votes like so many paper tickets to a carnival, others go about plotting to reclaim power once lost. Chicago, circa 1989, is only the beginning.

Something very telling occurred last week in Chicago. An African-American mayor was defeated by a white candidate.

Oh, don't get me wrong; people, African-Americans, orientals, whites, anyone, have the right to vote for whomever they choose (even, sadly, the David Duke types).

Yet, far more troubling than who people decide to vote for is the issue of how, once elected, African-Americans so easily allow their political champions to be defeated.

The question in Chicago was not whether Sawyer ought to have gained the nomination for mayor, but, instead, what African-Americans should have done to insure that whoever won it was another African-American.

"Throw the bums out." Disgruntled voters do it all the time; but what they replace the fallen with are others of their own kind.

It's not a person, like some preacher who has remained in his pulpit for ninety years, it's the power we need to keep intact. Individuals are too up and down, in and out, to place all the marbles on.

Systems, like those for getting and keeping power, are the things we need to protect, also, if you will, anount.

Perhaps it's because we have so few real institutions left that we place so much of our currency in people, and this from a group of folks who have been almost holy and sanctified in our verbal professions of our love, and fear, of the Almighty.

We can't go on excusing our political actions (more accurately reactions) under the worn covers of, "Oh, you know we African-Americans were once slaves and deprived of any future in America because of it."

We are a peculiar group which seems to feel that cold is hot, love is hate, and good is bad.

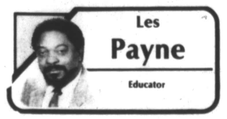
We are a group of people who neither police ourselves, support ourselves, or protect ourselves. If I were a white man, or a Japanese, or a Latino and made the statements I have in this commentary, I would be ridden out of town on a rail longer and harder than the one Al Campanus was obliged to mount.

Apathy not only lost Chicago, but the same apathy bought a train ticket to Baltimore; and it probably has travel plans for Los Angeles, Atlanta, and a host of other cities where we will not protect the political gains we've made.

Voters giveth, but they have to keep on giving. Apathy taketh away, and if African-Americans don't make some fundamental changes nothing good will ever come back.



# COMMENTARY & OPINIONS



Les **Payne**
Educator

## Toothless media gnaws on Winnie

The foreign press has been unshackled so that it can ride down on what the South African government clearly hopes is the final dismantling of anti-apartheid heroine Winnie Mandela.

The press is flooded with stories and hand-wringing editorials about the—unspecific—sins of Winnie Mandela. We are told that she has been rejected by the anti-apartheid movement.

Interestingly, these "activists," in their opposition to Ms. Mandela, have taken on an almost universal credibility from those on both sides of the apartheid question.

The troubles of Winnie Mandela appear to have a dual nature.

Those in the movement reportedly accuse her of high living, arrogance, personality marketing and disobedience.

As the long-suffering young wife of Nelson Mandela, she has apparently come into possession of a treasure chest donated by international well-wishers shocked by publicized police sackings of her home, violent abuse of her person and her exile to the remote area of Brandfort.

Winnie Mandela dresses well, changes wigs more often than the movement perhaps thinks politic and reportedly had constructed, but never moved into, a $200,000 mansion in Soweto.

Along the way, she got out of sync with movement leaders, once calling for "necklacing"—killing government informers by igniting gasoline-filled tires around their necks—after others had denounced it.

Increasingly, she took less counsel from the movement, withdrew from her Soweto neighbors and once got caught up with an American businessman seeking to make money on her husband's name.

In a movement of supersensitive, generally poor, media-conscious activists, such behavior was certain one day to cause envy and alienation and censure to rain down from her peers.

Such rejection played into the Boers' hands.

The state's pursuit of Ms. Mandela quite frankly has the odor of an intelligence operation. After 25 years of raising her children alone during her husband's martyred imprisonment, Ms. Mandela, coming into better days, gathered around her a youthful group called the Mandela United Football Club.

There were undisciplined rowdies in the group—and, in South Africa, it is inconceivable that there were not police-planted *agents provocateurs*. The gang got into trouble with other Soweto youths and attacks occasionally flared, one reportedly leading to the torching of Ms. Mandela's house.

Central to the police's dismantling of the Mandela symbol is the murder of 14-year-old Stompie Moeketsi, reportedly by two bodyguards.

The Boers, who have murdered African youths by the thousands and undercounted their victims by the hundreds, now say that they will pursue this particular black murder with all available manpower and science.

On this single story—and this story alone—the Boers have opened up Soweto to the foreign press who, like Dobermans too long pent up, are displaying a long-lost vigor in pursuit of a hot story.

Four years ago, during a massive crackdown on the press, the South African government backed the foreign media into a corner, plucked their claws and pulled out all their teeth.

Television cameras were not allowed into Soweto or any other black township. Nor were still news cameras or even artists with sketch pads.

Reporters were forbidden to write about head-knocking confrontations between police and Africans. Those few journalists who tested the limits of the restrictions and backed the government to the wall were thrown over it.

A few foreign reporters were expelled from the country as examples to the others. Dozens had their permits lifted. Many others had them denied.

Shaken from their four-year slumber, the foreign media are yelping after the Mandela story the Boers have dressed up to discredit the anti-apartheid movement.

It is certainly a story worth pursuing. However, journalists there should rearm themselves with the requisite care and skepticism needed to follow a police story in a closed society.

In gathering the facts for this and other stories in that racist penal colony, the media must shed their role as unwitting mouthpiece for the South African propaganda machine.

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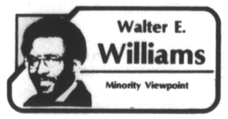


Walter E. **Williams**
Minority Viewpoint

## Mandated benefits

Stymied by the deficit and widening resistance to tax increases, Congress has invented a new form of deceit: mandated benefits.

Congress wants to require employers to provide health care coverage to 30 million currently non-covered employees. This is sleight-of-hand taxation. Look at it.

Suppose Congress wanted to give $100 to your neighbor. They could tax you, then send a check to the neighbor. They might just as easily decree that you walk across the street and personally hand over the neighbor's $100. Either way you're out of the $100.

The only difference is: With the mandate approach the federal spending appears to be $100 lower.

Mandated benefits will increase labor costs. If you think mandated benefits only mean lower profits, you might be a supporter. But let's pry deeper.

When labor costs rise, the long-run response is for employers to seek ways to get around the higher cost since you and I prefer lower prices, and stockholders like the resulting increased dividends from more profits.

Faced with higher employment costs, businesses will seek to hire more highly qualified employees whose productive output is worth the added cost. Thus, mandated benefits will have an adverse employment effect on the least-skilled employee.

Furthermore, since Congress cannot mandate employment benefits in the Republic of China (Taiwan), Hong Kong, and Singapore, American businessmen will have a greater inducement to locate all, or part, of their operations overseas.

All of this means America's economy will become more like the stagnant European economies where labor laws such as Congress is contemplating for us already are in place.

But let's not put all the blame on Congress. The medical profession supports mandated benefits since they earn more business from them. They can charge higher prices for medical services and reap a higher income.

But why do some big companies support mandated benefits? As it turns out many are already facing increased health care costs.

Larger businesses will be pleased to see their smaller competitors stuck with higher costs, since this will allow the big companies to raise their prices.

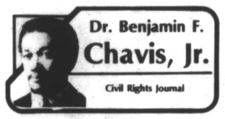
By the same token labor unions support mandated benefits because they up the costs in the non-union sector.

Despite what any of us might think, congressmen are not stupid; they know that nothing is free, that somebody pays the cost. Congress knows that the beneficiaries of mandated benefits are vocal and visible, while its victims are invisible.

In the hardball of the political arena, you pay attention to vocal "visibles."

Labor unions, the doctor's union, better known as the American Medical Association (AMA), and big businesses contribute mega-bucks to political campaigns. Low-skilled workers and small businesses contribute less.

Underhanded tax increases by Congress together with their sneaky attempted 50 percent pay raise, vindicates what my grandmother always said, "You can't lock up from a thief."



Dr. Benjamin F. **Chavis, Jr.**
Civil Rights Journal

## David Dinkins for NYC mayor

Manhattan Borough President David N. Dinkins has announced his candidacy for mayor of New York. Thus, the largest city in the United States is faced with an opportunity to make a progressive step forward in the struggle to make American politics more equitable and just.

Dinkins stated, "I am running because our city has become sharply polarized . . . we need a mayor who can transcend differences so we can work together to solve our problems."

David Dinkins has emerged as an accountable, effective and caring leader not only of the African American community but also for the millions of others who make up the diversity of New York City's population.

At a time when the forces of racial prejudice and discrimination are continuing to gain ground across the nation, Dinkins's candidacy indeed offers a welcomed ray of hope for New York and the entire country.

We all remember the positive reverberations in the aftermath of Harold Washington's heroic election in the city of Chicago, a city that had a long history of racial and ethnic strife and conflict.

Washington's tragic death has left a large void on the national political scene.

We have observed David Dinkins closely for many years and believe that he possesses a rare combination of intellectual and political ability along with a keen sensitivity for the dispossessed and downtrodden of the society.

Dinkins amply stated, "The question is not so much, is the city ready for a black mayor, but is the city ready to accept an African American who can persuade them that he cares about everybody in this town."

Already there are some in the established media who wish to make this year's contest for mayor in New York a question singularly based on race.

Given the prevailing racism that permeates this society, race has been used by the media to deny persons from the African American and other racial and ethnic communities from running successful campaigns.

We will be monitoring the manner in which Dinkins and the other candidates will be covered by the established media.

We believe that it is important for the church community to always support causes that render greater political and economic empowerment to the millions of those who have been marginalized by the powerful forces of society.

The outcome of the election will greatly depend upon the voter turnout and the degree to which African Americans and Hispanic Americans along with others in New York can unify around David Dinkins.

Racially motivated police violence, a drug epidemic, a dysfunctional school system, and the growing homeless crisis are all among the critical issues facing New York City.

If the city is to progress toward a more racially inclusive and productive society, then it should not allow racism and fear to prevent New York from choosing a new course.

Manning **Marable**
Along The Color Line

## Toward a Rainbow Coalition

The Rainbow Coalition which supported Jesse Jackson's presidential campaigns in 1984 and 1988 must move to the next logical stage of development in the struggle for power. We need to rethink our political strategy, and develop more effective methods to advance our agenda.

Part of the problem of black and progressive politics in recent years has been that too much emphasis has been placed on presidential politics.

To be sure, the presidency is a powerful position, dominating the government's agenda and determining the composition of the Supreme Court and the federal bureaucracy.

By contesting the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988, Jackson elevated the progressive agenda on foreign and domestic policies, while acting as an invaluable counterweight to the Democrats' ideological stampede to the right.

But a rerun of this strategy which places too much of our energies and resources in the presidential primaries in 1992 could be counterproductive.

We need to take a serious look at the strengths, contradictions, and possibilities of America's electoral system, and the next necessary steps for maximizing progressive empowerment.

At the federal level, it is difficult for progressives to mount serious challenges to incumbents in either party.

The turnover rate of the House of Representatives who have been reelected at least one time is much lower than the turnover rate of the Soviet Union's Communist Party Central Committee.

Similarly, despite the victories in presidential primaries and caucuses by Jackson last year, it is highly unlikely that anyone with Rainbow Coalition-type politics would emerge with the Democratic presidential nomination before the year 1996.

One probable electoral scenario three years from now will be the coalition of white conservative and centrist Democrats behind a "great white hope," possibly Virginia Senator Chuck Robb, New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley, or even ex-Vice Presidential hopeful Lloyd Bentsen.

The "trade-off" to the party's liberal wing could be the selection of an Hispanic or African-American vice presidential running mate, such as Congressperson Bill Gray of Philadelphia.

The party bosses will leave no stones unturned in order to defeat Jesse Jackson, no matter how "reasonable" or "moderate" he becomes.

White conservative Democrats continue to look for a scapegoat to explain the reason for their defeat in five of the six most recent presidential races. Jackson's trying to repackage himself as a more credible or "responsible" factor within the party.

But no amount of repositioning will permit Jackson or anyone else with progressive left politics, such as Texas's Jim Hightower or California Congressperson Ron Dellums, to assume the mantle of presidential leadership. This opposition has nothing to do with personality, but with power and ideology.

What the Rainbow represents is simply too threatening to the class interests which dominate the party.

Moreover, given the conservative electoral behavior of the bulk of the White upper to middle classes, the Republicans will have a tremendous advantage over any Democrat in the next two presidential general elections.

But if we shift the focus to local electoral politics, a more optimistic picture emerges for progressives. There are a total of 504,404 elective offices in the United States. This is an increase for more than 14,000 public offices since 1977.

Most of these offices are held by township officials, town clerks, members of school boards, and municipal officials. In many states, it takes relatively little money or organization to run successfully for a position as state representative, or for a town's school board.

These positions permit people who have an interest in political work to gain experience and to acquire necessary leadership skills to serve their constituencies. Progressives must think globally, but act locally.

We need to reemphasize the electoral struggle for empowerment at the neighborhood, school district, and community level. Keep in mind that although African-Americans represent 12.5 percent of the population, they hold only 3.3 percent of municipal positions;

They account for only 2.6 percent of the county officials, 2.4 percent of all school district office holders, 0.6 percent of the special district officials and only 0.4 percent in town offices.

Women represent about 26.5 percent of school board members, and only 18.5 percent of municipal officials. Only one percent of all office holders are Latinos, despite an Hispanic population of more than seven percent. In short, Blacks, Hispanics and women remain grossly underrepresented within the electoral arena.

A political vehicle outside of the Democratic Party is needed to engage in successful electoral competition. In some districts, progressives may be able to "take over" the Democratic organization and press forward with an effective, Rainbow agenda.

But in most cases, the Democratic regulars will attempt to block and to frustrate the progressive forces. What's required is a network or organization of activists who have personal histories of struggle inside civil rights, feminist, labor, peace movement, gay rights and community-based formations.

This network if connected with the Rainbow, must have a system of democratic accountability. The national leadership or spokespersons must be directly elected and accountable to the membership.

The struggle for democratic leadership must be waged inside the Rainbow.

Such a force could help to mobilize students on college campuses, who are now searching for leadership in their struggles against tuition hikes, racist and sexism with the curricula and cutbacks in minority recruitment.

It could link activists inside the labor movement who are struggling against plant shutdowns and union concessions to the corporations.

But to do so, it must develop a viable national presence and organizational structure.

At minimum, this means the funding of a national, monthly newspaper, which highlights the activism of local groups.