EDITORIALS

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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Wade vs. 'Sources'

At Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, at Kentucky and Southern Methodist, at Kansas and Colorado State, at Virginia Tech and Minnesota, at Louisiana State and Clemson, at UNLV and Arkansas, and at a dozen or more other schools, investigations have been conducted by the NCAA concerning violations of ethical conduct over the last five years.

Charged with participating in these shenanigans are the likes of coaches Barry Switzer, Norm Sloan, Eddie Sutton, Dale Brown, Lefty Driesell and a host of others.

The investigations involved allegations of misdeeds ranging from recruit enticements to burglary and gang rapes. In only two cases did coaches of the teams that were implicated lose their jobs.

At Maryland, the former coach who was replaced by Bob Wade following a continuing run of delinquencies was not fired. He was not happy about being moved to a lateral position and quit.

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At the university now, there is growing evidence — collected from "sources" — that Bob Wade and his staff actually helped a young man in pursuit of his education. They provided transportation from his home in Baltimore to a community college where he hoped to upgrade his academic status for a return to Maryland.

No money was involved here. No cars were purchased in parents' names. No female "counseling" was promised. No grades were changed. No academic concessions of any kind occurred. Their actions were noble but in NCAA eyes they were wrong.

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But, because of who he is and what he is, this coach's breaking of a fingernail is equated to the feeding of a cancer.

Compared to what goes on at scores of other colleges, this violation by Wade's aides has all the importance of spitting on a sidewalk. Are you aware that in countless cities throughout the United States, it would cost $5 if "sources" reported your dastardly deed of expectorating on a sidewalk?

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Anyway, before we go any farther with this subject, let us look at what many refer to as "the bottom line." The worst thing that could — change that to *should* — happen is that Maryland be placed on a year's probation by the NCAA, meaning the Terps would be deprived of television money and legitimacy as a championship contender.

Considering the fact that TV exposure has been minimal over the last two years (since the change in coaches) and Maryland can well use a year to further its rebuilding, that sort of punishment could be ridden out with little difficulty. No sweat, as the saying goes.

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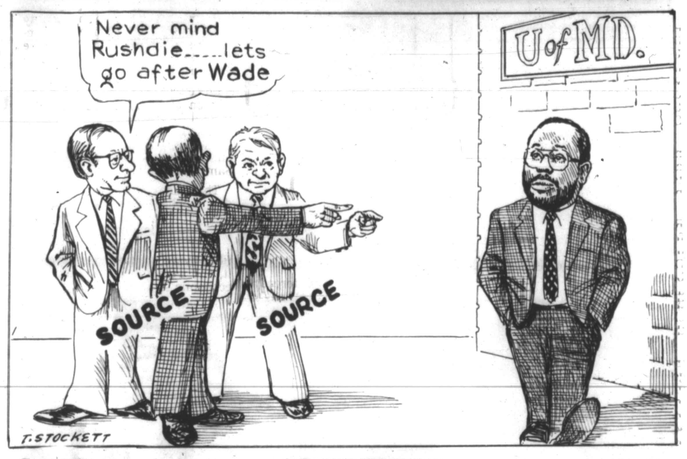
But somebody (or bodies) among those "sources" are not content with that probability. The target is the coach's throat . . . . The "sources" which provided the information that have led to the Maryland probe are quoted repeatedly, but never identified. It is like declaring that "So-and-So" said this and "Whatchacallim" said that.

And there are numerous references to basketball players who defected since the coaching change. One is a young man who attended four schools in five years and still was a freshman when he left College Park. Two others were kids recruited by the former coach, and who perhaps couldn't withstand the shock of seeing a who-cares-do-what-you-wish frat house disappear behind the strictures of discipline and fatherly guidance of the new coach.

Understanding all these cheap shots will make it obvious that the alleged "sources" are committed to the crucifixion of the Maryland coach. The nails are in the hands and the pegs are in the feet . . . . All that is needed now to make the impalement of Bob Wade total is the stake in the head.

— SAM LACY



Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

New politics more containment

Far too often we see clearly only the developments that impact on our lives immediately. Rarely are we able to discuss political, economic and social developments that have both an immediate and long-range negative impact on the black community.

The shift of political power is one such development. I have just finished reading, for the second time, a book by Thomas B. Edsall, entitled "The New Politics of Inequality."

Tom Edsall, a reporter for the Sunpapers, is a long-term Washington correspondent. All of us are aware of the fact that more and more wealth is being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands in America.

Edsall's major theme in the book is that money (wealth) means political power and that a new elite now dominates the political life of this country.

While those with the least amount of wealth are forgotten as national policies are formulated, thus occurs the loss of political power for blacks, the poor and middle class.

However, the middle class, mistakenly believing it is better off than ever, does not appear to be seriously concerned about this shift in power. But for blacks, the danger is inescapably clear.

For us, this shift in power has reduced our political power and has lowered our social, political and economic status. Some of us are, as we should be, gravely concerned. The harsh reality is this shift is integral to the continued containment of blacks.

How are we, as a people, contained by this power shift?

The major cuts in domestic programs during the Reagan years, which cuts were supported by many Democrats, hurt us immediately and will continue to have negative impact on us for the next 10 to 15 years.

During the Reagan years, 400,000 public service jobs were simply wiped out, thus adding to the painful black unemployment rate. The number of black males in institutions of higher education dropped significantly, mainly because of the draconian cuts in student loan and assistance programs.

The recent report showing an increase in the life expectancy of whites and a significant decrease in the life expectancy of blacks reflects the inability of many of our people to get adequate health care.

The mayors of many cities with a substantial number of blacks and minorities hit hard by the loss of federal funds, increasingly must rely on the business community for help, and the business community is a part of the elite to which political power has shifted.

Gross rates of black unemployment leave us dependent and struggling for survival. A people, any people, who must struggle for survival cannot be expected to be politically aware or politically aggressive. Is this not a part of containment?

Our future leaders, for the most part, will be found in the ranks of graduates from institutions of higher education. If that pool is reduced because of the inability of black males to attend colleges and universities, are we not reducing the number of future leaders?

Is this not containment?

When some mayors depend upon the business community which, indeed, calls the shots in the shift of political power, is it reasonable to assume they want to diminish their gained power in politics?

Is this not a form of containment?

In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt began to alter the political power game contest by shifting the focus of government, thus weakening the stranglehold the wealthy had on the process of governance.

Fifty-six years later, the wealthy have regained that power and we now, in this nation, practice "The New Politics of Inequality" and as a people, we are being contained.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Support local theatre

I went to the theater some time ago and watched what I thought was a very good stage production. The play was "In Splendid Error" an historical drama by William Branch, and was staged at the Arena Playhouse downtown.

The one problem that I had while leaving the theater was the inordinately small number of people who had come to share the enjoyment I felt from experiencing a dynamite black play put on by black players; with technical support from black light designers, a black director, a black stage manager, black makeup artists, and black costume designers.

Now, last but surely least, the show had little support from a majority black audience (there were several white theater goers in attendance).

The facility at the Arena is one that affords the audience a feeling of family. Everyone is so close that you can't help but develop a feeling of intimacy with your fellow theater goers as well as with the cast. They are so close that you almost feel that the actors are rightin your living room.

In the lobby there is an exhibit by a local Baltimore artist (the exhibit changes with each show) and soothing music piped thru for your entertainment while awaiting the opening curtain. One day perhaps I'll be able to drink a cocktail in that lobby.

My question after discovering all of this is, why aren't there more people in this theater being entertained? Are Afro-Americans so sophisticated that they can afford not to support the Arena?

We have become so caught up in integration and the token hand outs of white America until we have completely forgotten our own institutions.

Remember the Royal Theater? Before it fell into Jewish hands, it was a black owned house. Now it's gone forever. Remember Provident Hospital?

Go see many plays. Go to the Mechanic. Go to the Lyric. Go to New York. But by all means go to the Arena Playhouse on McCulloh St. You won't be sorry that you did.

BENJAMIN PRESTBURY

Samuel Banks
Educator

The necessity of struggle

I was exhilarated and buoyed by the marvelous witness of the students at Howard University in refusing to permit Lee Atwater, Chair of the Republican National Committee, to remain as a member of Howard's Board of Trustees.

The dazzling intrepidity, solidarity and meticulous and sagacious planning of the students demonstrated that there are persons, even in their tender years, who refuse to capitulate to business as usual and have the fortitude to struggle for moral and ethical principles.

The implications of the "Bisons'" triumph at Howard have enormous significance for 40 million black Americans now in a posture of malaise and indifference.

At at time of unprecedented economic prosperity in our nation, 20 million, or half the population of black people of our nation are reeling from the reactionary and meanspirited socio-economic policies of former President Ronald Wilson Reagan.

On all fronts, health care, education, employment, crime among other areas, black people are reeling and in distress.

In a perverse and painful manner, the chief benefit of the Reagan years for black people is that we must now, even more than in the past, become more self-reliant. Stated in very simple and direct terms: We must do more for ourselves.

As I address the matter of doing more for ourselves, I am fully mindful of the presence, past and present, of a iniquitous, debilitating and pervasive institutional racism which has encumbered, frustrated, sidetracked and prevented us from exercising our full manhood and womanhood rights in the American politic.

However, in the past, our remarkable, gallant courageous forebears endured the pain, ignominy, suffering and death of the middle passage from Mother Africa to the Western Hemisphere and Europe.

The shameful reality is that approximately 20 million of our forebears perished during the trafficking of our brothers and sisters from Mother Africa for over four centuries (1441-1863).

More Black people died during the Middle Passage than the six million Jews who died during the holocaust of Hitler's Third Reich. Over two to three million more would die during the period of the slavocracy in the Western Hemisphere.

The imposition of Jim Crow, discrimination, and segregation after the Civil War and Reconstruction would pave the way for the legal separation and sequestration of Black Americans in huge and sprawling urban ghettos.

In spite, in recent times of a plethora of civil rights legislation, judicial determination (i.e., **Brown** decisions, et al.) and other legislative initiatives the overwhelming number of 40 million black Americans are in separate and decidedly unequal status in the American social order.

At a time we have a Gross National Product of over two trillion dollars and well over 110 million people gainfully employed, Black Americans remain at the bottom of the totem pole.

In view of this clear and lugubrious fact, we must transcend the romance of empty rhetoric and whining and complaining about institutional racism, but must, through it all, muster the energy, resolve and drive to make our way, in spite of monumental societal odds, to do more for ourselves and to push forward.

The Howard students did not spend their time bemoaning the unacceptability of Lee Atwater as a member of Howard's Board of Trustees, but conceptualized, implemented and monitored a "game plan" which achieved success. In short, the students were willing to struggle for a goal of their choosing.

The challenge for all of us is to dare to care and to dare to struggle for a more humane, just, caring, and equal society.

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Ethel Payne
BEHIND THE SCENES

In praise of revolution

It was a revolution of rising unmet expectations. The spark that set off the student rebellion at Howard University was Willie Horton, the paroled Massachusetts murderer or who in a curious way can be credited for electing George Bush as the 42nd President of the United States.

It was Lee Atwater who masterminded the not-so-subtle TV imagery that stampeded whites to go to the polls last Night and vote their bigotry.

The strategy worked well for a Republican victory, but it backfired for Lee Atwater in his bid to siphon off solid black votes from the Democratic party. One man's meat became the same man's poison after student protestors took over the campus and forced the newly elected Atwater's resignation from the university trustee board.

Caught in the middle of the controversy was Bill Cosby, amiable godfather-philanthropist, who has turned the art of largesse for the finacially strapped black colleges of the nation in a challenge for blacks whose "whose boats have been lifted from the bottom."

Cosby who has already been generous to Howard, accepted the invitation of President James Cheek to be the annual Charter Day speaker and to receive an honorary doctorate.

Students who have been smoldering over long-ignored grievances saw the occasion as a chance to focus media attention on the problems.

Not even the planners of the demonstration realized the impact that it would have. The protest became a spontaneous combustion which took on a life of its own.

On the morning of the Charter Day which marks the founding of the university, students gathered outside Cramton Auditorium. By 9:30 a.m. The numbers were swelling and even the chill of dam, gray weather was not a deterrent to the half hour more until 10 a.m. when the doors opened.

Quickly the area in the back of the auditorium filled up and there was standing room only. At 10:30 the dikes gave way and there was a massive flood pouring over the hall.

As I watched an on rush of young men and women take over the floor and then mount the stage, I had a flashback in history to the French Revolution and the storming of the prison fortress called Bastille.

It was something I haven't seen since the early 60s, the plethora of signs were equally divided between denuciations of the administration and expressions of love and respect for Cosby.

There was a plea for the best known father on TV to come and address the protesters. Unfortunately, Cosby was holed up with Dr. Cheek and some frightened Washington elite, who slipped out from the commotion at Cramton and joined the trustees in the hide-away.

A luncheon had been scheduled to follow the convocation; instead Cosby was persuaded that it be dangerous for him to go and meet the students. Instead, a hasty ceremony took place.

Cosby was robed, the trustees and the president donned their academic garb and a pseudo replica of the formal ceremony took place with Dr. Cheek bestowing the honorary doctorate. "Dr." Cosby then left the campus, before the protesters learned of his departure.

It was then that the full-scale revolt took place with a three-day takeover of the administration building. The rebellion became a major media event. While some denounced the students, others hailed the determination of the students to right old wrongs.

The fault, like Brutus once declared, lies with the administration, the faculty and the alumni all of whom are to blame for turning their backs and allowing a dangerous situation of mounting neglect to get out of hand.

It is no secret that politics and cronyism have superseded the emphasis on academic excellence and the welfare of the student body. While Dr. Cheek was building new buildings, existing dormitories were decaying rapidly.

The overflow of enrollees forced a large segment of the student body to accept unfit and dangerous housing from the main campus. Student aid became mired in a hopless morass of incompetence.

When Lee Atwater, now chairman of the Republican National Committee, was nominated for board membership, the election was conducted by secret ballot with no known dissent. But when the protest broke out, at least the chairman of the board, John Jacob, head of the National Urban League joined with Thaddeus Garrett, a member in being quoted as saying that there was no intention of removing Atwater as the students demanded and that they might as well get used to having him.

This was the sentiment of President Cheek who has long had a cozy relationship with Republican occupants of the Oval office in the White House. Garrett, is a long-time adviser to Bush on black affairs.

Since the university gets a major portion of its financing from the federal government under a favored status, there are some who feel that the school should bow to the status quo and not bite the hand of Uncle Sam who feeds it.

That raises the question of how far does supplication go over freedom of speech and the First Amendment to the Constitution?

It should point out that the bowl is filled by we, the tax payers, who fill it, and we come in all shades and economic strata.

The arrogance of Thaddeus Garrett and John Jacob in rebuking the students was too heavy-handed. The trustees who rubber-stamped the section only showed that they care more about the prestige of seats on the board than for speaking out against expediency.

I came to the Charter Day ceremony with an invitation to attend the luncheon afterwards. I was barred from the mini-ceremony by a ring of security around the substitute site.

What I got, however, was a taste of the exercise in freedom of speech and the right of citizens to peacefully assemble as spelled out in the First Amendment to the Constitution. I went home and had a hot dog and I felt good.

Les Payne
Educator

Discovering Africa secrets

"It is extraordinary to think that of the leading 10 sculptors-carvers in the world perhaps five come from one single African tribe (the Shonas of Zimbabwe)." — Sunday Telegraph's 1983 review of a sculpture exhibit at London's Commomwealth Institute.

HARARE, Zimbabwe — He is broad of shoulders, and sturdy as the serpentine stone he chisels into what some European art critics say is among the best contemporary sculpture in the world.

"Big John" Takawira chisels daily against the very hard "Springstone" in the shade on his Zimbabwe farm, some 30 miles from here. He is one, most say the best, of a half-dozen Shona sculptors who have stormed onto the international art stage.

African art, of course, is not new as a major art influence in the world. It has long influenced the very best of the European artists, some of whom, like Picasso, admitted to mining its rich veins. The best museums are stocked with traditional masks and carvings, much of it pilfered or looted from the continent.

Shona art was reawakened in the descendants of the highly cultured Zimbabweans in the 1960s under the yoke of the racist colonialist regime led by Prime Minister Ian Smith.

Throughout the 1970s, the stone sculpture was one of the best kept of Africa's art secrets. But within the last few years, on the continent as well as in Europe, this Zimbabwe art has exploded upon the modern landscape like a percussion bomb.

It has drawn critics' raves at every exhibit stop in Europe — in London, Frankfurt, Paris, Vienna, Stockholm and The Hague — and even at shows in America. The art, which takes its name from the people who make up 80 percent of the population of Zimbabwe, is a free-form stone carving whose creators take their inspiration from the mountain spring, animals running free, humans at work, the wind rustling through leaves.

Most of Takawira's works are abstract figures, dazzling rendered, that reach for — and transcend — that special insight into African women, men and children.

Shaped in the gray, green, ocher and purple hues of the radiant Zimbabwe stone, Takawira's work unfolds, as one critic put it, "like a soft and peaceful song, ending in a feeling of pensive humanity . . . an outburst of lyrical feeling."

Unlike most of his contemporaries, Takawira leaves much of the natural stone, sometimes not even toughing up surface.

"I don't force the stone," he said. "I try to keep the nature of the stone which is good. Try to imagine getting a very mad man to rasp and sandpaper the rock formations of Nyanga Mountains. He would be spoiling nature that surrounds us.

That's how I see it with sculpture. If you bend the stone to man, It would be round, angular, regular. There is too much polishing. I leave a lot of nature . . . "

The modern Shona art movement sprang up here in the late 1950s, when Frank McEwen, Mexico-born and London-educated, established the National Gallery of Harare (then Salisbury, Rhodesia). He was heavily criticized by the minority white racist regime for neglecting European artists in favor of Africans.

But it was in the latter that McEwen saw — and had the courage to promote — the greatest potential for world-class art.

During his 13 years in Salisbury, it is said that McEwen, who studied at the Sorbonne and was the British Council of Fine Arts representative in Algiers and Paris, made more white enemies than anyone in the colony.

Rhodesians never came to share in the national pride that African sculptors, McEwen-promoted, won with their international art accomplishments. It was but another example of racism stifling human talent and potential. After discovering "an aesthetic gold mind," McEwen staged dozens of major world exhibits for the Shona carvers he had nutured from the novice stage.

"As the white artist stands fascinated by a source of ancient magic, to which his soul no longer responds," McEwen said, "The African is drawn from a once existing past by the drumbeats of a fabulous time machine."

Takawira, one of McEwen's key artists, sculpts out of the tradition of culture many centuries old. His first teacher, whose students carved works sold in airports, dismissed Takawira as hopeless. So he took his "rejects" to McEwen, who praised and encouraged him.

Commercialism is the threat to the Shona art explosion that Takawira most resents. "If you offer me $30,000 to do a piece like this one, to please you, I will say yes. But this yes will take 10 years. Then you will forget about it because I'm not good at those things. No, I don't take commissions. I only do things that I see and feel, that's what I do.

"Once you want money in your pocket, you are not an artist, you are obeying someone. I always follow my spiritual inspiration.

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Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

How black power was lost in Chicago

(Part Two of a Two Part Series)

The victory of Richard Daley in Chicago's Democratic mayoral race occurred for several reasons. The most obvious problem was that his opponent, incumbent Mayor Eugene Sawyer, lacked any viable strength within grassroots constituencies in black and Hispanic communities.

For example, Sawyer failed to establish a political organization which could reach voters in the projects and community centers.

He had no political agenda and worse, apparently no progressive vision which built upon the legacy of the late mayor Harold Washington.

Sawyer went after official endorsements and television advertisements, without trying to solicit the support of ordinary working class voters.

But Daley had other advantages as well. He was inarticulate and not too bright, to be sure. But his father had been boss of the city for more than two decades.

The junior Daley had run in city and county-wide elections seven times since 1980, whereas Sawyer had never run for public office outside of the sixth ward.

White conservative and liberal would-be challengers, such as 14th Ward Alderman Edward Burke, former Chicago Park District Superintendent Edmund Kelly and 5th Ward Alderman Lawrence Bloom, dropped out or stepped aside.

Erratic demagogue "Fast Eddie" Vrdolyak ran a successful write-in campaign for the Republican mayoral nomination.

Daley was also successful in raising funds, spending approximately $1.8 million on media alone. With sufficient fiscal resources, plus the advantage of a one-on-one race against an unpopular Black mayor, Daley should have trounced Sawyer.

Wisely, Daley also ran a campaign which minimized racial polemics. Although Daley had been defeated by Washington in the 1983 Democratic mayoral primary, coming in a poor third behind incumbent mayor Jane Byrne, he distanced himself from the acrimonious and confrontational style of Vrdolyak.

Speaking in black churches just before election day, Daley tried to blur the distinction between progressive and reactionary politics by focusing on elements of style.

"Harold Washington was a strong mayor who believed in open government and who talked about fairness," Daley declared.

Daley applauded the Washington legacy, stating only that he had "a different style, a different management style" from his former opponent.

Daley's only major gaffe was using the phrase "white mayor" at an appearance before an all-white crowd, in an effort to whip up a decent turnout among race-conscious voters.

There were also defections from the original Washington coalition to Daley. Many lakefront white liberals who had endorsed Washington returned to the fold by joining Daley.

Joan Peters, a former administrator under Jimmy Carter and a supporter of Washington, backed Daley.

One group of Jewish liberals, represented by a formation called the Jewish Committee for Responsible Government, refused to support Sawyer because of the mayor's "inability to act firmly and decisively in the face of overt anti-Semitism."

The major defection occurred in the Latino community, as 26th Ward Alderman Luis Gutierrez campaigned extensively for Daley.

Back in 1987, Washington carried the 26th ward, which has thousands of Hispanic voters, by a 4,300 vote margin over Jane Byrne. In this election, Daley defeated Sawyer by 4,300 votes in the 26th Ward.

In the middle class lakefront 49th ward, Washington had defeated Byrne by a narrow 400 vote margin; two years later, Daley defeated Sawyer in the same ward by 3,600 votes. Citywide, Sawyer won less than 8 percent of the white vote.

Embittered and disappointed, Sawyer now refuses to endorse Tim Evans's independent race for mayor against Daley in the general election. Sawyer thus places his own frustrated ambitions above the fundamental interests of the Black community preferring to return the political establishment to the corrupt status quo.

If black and progressive power is lost in Chicago as it was in Cleveland two decades ago with the demise of the administration of former mayor Carl Stokes, there is a very real possibility that no black or Latino mayor could emerge in that city for another ten years or more.

But there is one additional shadow cast by the fiasco of fragmented black power in Chicago. Jesse Jackson and his former campaign manager Ron Brown, now the Chairperson of the Democratic National Conference, played curious roles in the campaign.

After some moments of uncertainty, Jackson embraced Sawyer for reelection, calling upon blacks to "Keep the Keys" to City Hall.

Operation PUSH president Rev. Willie Barrow and other black leaders who had been close to Jackson over the years were key Sawyer supporters.

With Daley's victory, however, Brown pledged his "full support to the election of a Democratic mayor of the City of Chicago . . . The emphasis for all Democrats must now be on unity and conciliation."

Jackson challenged the party hierarchy by announcing his support for Evans's insurgent campaign in the general election. If Evans has any chance for victory, he must rebuild the Washington progressive coalition, and Jackson must assume a critical role in this process without overshadowing the local candidate.

At the most recent national meeting of the leaders of the Rainbow Coalition, Jackson's allies passed new requirements which would permit the appointment of state chairs, rather than their democratic election.

If progressive politics means anything, it must mean mass participation and activism from below, which empowers working class and low income people.

Black and progressive power was lost in Chicago because Sawyer failed to understand this fundamental reality.

Dr Manning Marable is Professor and Chairperson of the Black Studies Department, Ohio State University.

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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