EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

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President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Black Caucus: good job

The Maryland State Legislature has completed its work for the 1989 session, and the work of the Black Caucus can unequivocably be classed as outstanding.

A controversial smoker's anti-discrimination bill which would have bypassed the Human Relations Commission in cases such as dismissal for smoking off-the-job, was brought to a crashing defeat.

The efforts of the Black Caucus, and the visible support by the AFRO combined to bring the matter to the attention of the public and the legislators, defeating the matter which at one point seemed destined for easy passage.

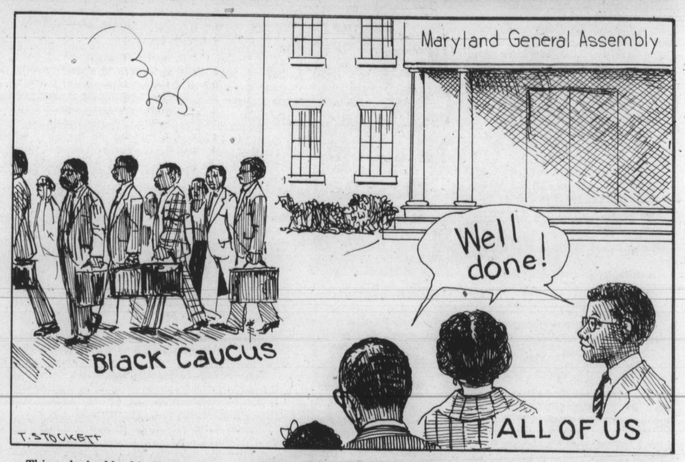
The Caucus was in the forefront of the battle to get help for Morgan State University in its quest for funds to make much-needed repairs to the school's facilities, especially the dormitories.

The Caucus was instrumental in helping Baltimore City get money for its education program, with an unexpected $970,000 for the Community College of Baltimore.

Two members of the Black Caucus were singled out by legislators representing districts across the state, as being among the most effective in the session in getting things done. Sen. Clarence Blount and Del. Howard (Pete) Rawlings were recipients of the plaudits of their peers.

We are justifiably proud of the Black Caucus who demonstrated that black Marylanders can rest assured the problems facing them will be addressed—and the issues followed through.

We salute the Black Caucus, and concurrent with the highest accolade for the naval forces, award them a heartfelt "well done!"



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Elva Edwards responds

In response to the article in your paper, dated March 25, written by Helen Glover Cook:

After much thought and a great deal of urging from your readers, I have decided not to ignore the contents of the article. I will not respond to the quotation from ex-employees regarding the transportation program because the fact that they are "ex-employees" speaks for itself, thus, explaining the negative comments.

However, for your information, when my letter from the mayor was received, I was in my office working, as I have been doing for many years, totally unaware of what was in store for me. Members of the Urban Services staff were preparing a surprise birthday luncheon for me in the agency conference room.

So, I was not "receiving guests" or "hosting a party in honor of my own birthday." As for "handing the letter to an assistant to read to me," that is, in my opinion, absurd. I read my own letter and informed top staff of its contents, which, of course, was my responsibility.

As for "garnering sympathy," staff, friends and even strangers could not have been more supportive. Again, while the method was, indeed, a shock to me, I was not disturbed otherwise; since I had already informed the executive director of my intent to retire as of July 2, 1989, which has been accepted.

Why not interview some of the competent employees, of which there are many, rather than to deliberately seek out the few dissenters who clearly have problems of their own?

On the positive side, I did appreciate the remarks of Councilwoman McLean and the fact that they were printed. Perhaps they will help the unhappy employees to understand that I did not make the decisions that caused their "unhappiness" as implied in your article. That was the responsibility of the executive director.

Who will they blame now?

ELVA J. EDWARDS

Sit-ins remembered

During the last months of 1954, your newspaper reported the activities of several dozen students from Morgan State College who were engaged in several sit-in actions motivated by the desire to desegregate some of the stores in a nearby shopping center. I was one of those students; and I remember your glorious coverage.

The day that the attorney for the Read Drug Stores visited the Morgan State campus to inform us that our sit-ins at the nearby Read Drug Store had persuaded the parent company to desegregate all 60-odd Read Drug Stores in the Baltimore metropolitan area, was a day of triumph for us.

And since that day in 1954, I have read at least a half dozen times in newspapers and magazines the erroneous report of "college students in Greensboro, N.C." starting the sit-in movement in America on Feb. 1, 1960.

How often (six times) have I rebelled at such report. And twice (the **San Francisco Examiner**, and **Newsweek** Magazine) I have written my protest to the guilty publication; but to no avail.

Now I see the same erroneous report in the 1989 issue of the World Almanac (page 434).

I want to protest again; but perhaps I need some documentation. I ask you, would you search through your old newspapers for the months of October and November, 1954, and check your articles on these events?

I hope you can empathize with one who feels that we students accomplished a great thing that semester at Morgan; and it is unfair for others to get the acclaim for what we did.

When you read those old articles you will agree that we were great — large numbers, well-organized, platoons of students relieving sitters so that they wouldn't miss classes, placards, marches, everything, from dawn to dusk, seven days a week.

DAN DILLINGHAM

The black agenda

Along with other concerned African Americans, I have been invited to take part in the African American Summit that is being held in New Orleans on the weekend of April 21.

I am very pleased to be taking part in the Summit and in particular to have the opportunity to address the issue of "Options for the African American Community" the panel on which I will be a speaker. My participation guarantees that the 220,000 Americans — mainly African Americans — who voted for me as an independent Presidential candidate last year, and the hundreds of thousands more who support a black led, multi-racial, independent party in America, will be represented in this next national dialogue on the black agenda,a dialogue that has been taking place in our community for nearly generation now.

Dr. Lenora Fulani is national chair of the New Alliance Party.

Kweisi **Mfume**
U.S. Congressman

Leave Coach Wade alone

Things looked bad in Dodge City. Outlaws, rustlers, carpetbaggers, horse-thieves, and the regular assortment of bad guys appeared to have the town all sewed up. The old sheriff had left town and the new sheriff was trying to put things right. It was an uphill battle.

But just as things were beginning to appear as if the new sheriff had put most of the historical problems behind him, and was rebuilding the town's integrity, the mayor wants him out of Dodge by sundown.

This "Golden-Age-of-Hollywood" script sounds vaguely familiar. This fictional scenario, and the situation that University of Maryland Basketball Coach, Bob Wade, finds himself in, have only a superficial similarity.

The similarity is in the conclusion the movie audience will arrive at — **let the sheriff finish his job.** It appears as if public opinion in this area as well is saying — **let Wade finish the job.**

Bob Wade was hired by the University of Maryland because of his successes at Dunbar High School and his mastery of the game. He had a proven winning record without blemish.

Following the death of Len Bias and the shake up of the University of Maryland Athletics Department he was widely perceived as a good coach who also had some familiarity with moral and ethical issues seemingly so elusive to others.

Wade was known as a man who had proven his commitment to students' academic and athletic growth.

His down-to-earth style and caring attitude were attractive attributes intended to counter-balance the historic failures of the previous regime to adequately deal with their drug problem and other NCAA regulations violations.

Wade is in the third year of a five-year contract. he should be allowed to complete his contract and finish the job he was hired for.

Those who want to get rid of Coach Wade can find a possible case in any one of several positions regarding, "The Wade Case."

Position one: "Wade is a loser." Let's get rid of Wade because he is not a winning coach. Let's find something wrong and cut short his five-year contract.

Position two: "Wade is transitional."

Wade knowingly came into a no-win situation. The previous athletics department believed winning was the only important thing. They then allegedly allowed rules abuses and drug abuse, but these were not sufficient reason to squander winning talent. The bubble burst when Bias overdosed. Wade was only ever considered as transitional and now his time is up.

Position three: "Wade doesn't fit the bill any longer."

Wade came into the coaching position with low expectations and minimal support. Now, a born-again athletics department wants to win again — no matter what the cost again. Wade has got to go now to allow the University to hire the next appropriate coach.

Position four: "Wade as victim."

Departmental infighting is squeezing Wade out. Racism is squeezing Wade out. Wade puts too much emphasis on academics and integrity and all the fans and University get out of it is a 9-20 season.

Wade is accused of an alleged misdemeanor NCAA infraction which a highly sensitive athletics department cannot tolerate. All are convenient reasons to dump Wade.

Where's the cavalry when you need them? Any of these positions could possibly be used as a reason, albeit a weak reason, to dump Wade. Any of these reasons could answer why Bob Wade is being investigated at all.

None of these are sufficient reasons to fire Wade. Support for Bob Wade to stay at the University of Maryland is just the kind of cavalry support that is needed right now. Now is the time to voice our support for the Coach.

Bob Wade should stay!

Anthony **Armstrong**
Political Consultant

Politics 101

"If the student doesn't learn, the teacher hasn't taught." That quote was true almost a century ago, and it's still true today. So read carefully students, and allow political fact to be the teacher.

For purposes of review let's go back to Chicago, that hotspot of street level politics. All that need be said is that after only six years, Chicago politics is back in the hands of the same power centers that controlled it for decades before.

It happened largely because Chicago's African-American citizens, joined by their white liberal allies, forgot that power is institutional not personal.

The same people who came out in droves six years ago, to vote for Harold Washington, stayed home this time. The obvious lesson, then, is people must go to the polls to vote.

Lesson number two perhaps is this; there is nothing wrong with like people voting for one of their own. This, contrary to the mental garbage "sold" so many of us, is not racism; it is, however, common sense. The only hair that need be split here is the one that deals with quality.

A recent conversation is instructive. A respected judge wisely commented, "We need to remember the importance of grooming extraordinarily capable people to take over the management, control, and strengthening of all our institutions." Nowhere is this more true than in politics.

The issue here isn't whether it will be one of us; instead it is which of us is the most capable of continuing the power gains that have already been made. This crucial point was lost to most of Chicago's African-American population.

In the case of Chicago, it has nothing to do with whether Daley The Younger is qualified or not be mayor; fact is, he is now. The real question was, and is, who should African-Americans have groomed to maintain the power they had recently won, keeping in mind that it is the institution of power, not any one individual, no matter how charismatic, that is truly important.

Well, the battle for Chicago is lost; and if my guess is correct it'll be a longer time regaining it than it was initially claiming it. However, Chicago's loss (for African-Americans that is) can be Baltimore's gain.

Anybody in Baltimore who is not dead must know by now that the current President of the City Council wants to be the next mayor. Why shouldn't she; she has as much right as anyone, and more political skill than most.

And the issue here, as in Chicago, is not whether you like Mrs. Clarke or not; again, that's personal. No, the issue is how do the African-American citizens of this city keep the political gains made, whether with the current chief executive or with another, as long as it's one of us. Already, the political mathematics isn't good.

Let's assume that Mayor Schmoke decides to run for reelection. Enter a second candidate: Mary Pat Clarke. So far so good. Then throw-in a third want-a-be; a second African-American. What happens? easy; the African-American vote is split. Ms. Clarke wins, simple as that.

In this scenario Schmoke is not the loser, he's only one individual. The losers, obviously, are this city's African-Americans. It's going to be tough enough for African-Americans to maintain the office of mayor even in a one-on-one match. Add another African-American and it's Chicago deja vu.

The point of all this is political power, something that for most African-American is still an alien concept and an even rarer fact. And while it all seems so simple, somehow or another we keep getting it wrong. Why?

Is it that we don't groom enough truly seasoned and qualified potential mayors — or anything else for that matter? Is it that we see elections as carnivals that only come to town once in a lifetime?

Or is it that we insist on viewing political power only from the vantage point of the most popular person at a given time? No matter what, we had better learn politics 101; I hope Chicago helps.

The Afro-American
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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Manning **Marable**
Along The Color Line

Minimum wage and politics

Since George Bush became president nearly three months ago, one of the most hotly debated domestic policy issues to surface in Congress has been the controversy over the minimum wage. Since Reagan's election in 1980, the minimum wage mandated by the federal government has remained at the paltry sum of $3.35 per hour.

Hardline conservatives are against any rise in the minimum wage, pointing out that the number of American workers who actually receive this wage have declined from nearly 8 million in 1981 down to 3.9 million today.

Moderate conservatives around Bush convinced him during last year's presidential campaign to embrace an increase in the minimum wage, as a political foil to undermine Dukakis with low income, white ethnic voters.

After getting elected on a promise of "no new taxes," Bush wanted to back out of his commitment to a higher minimum wage. His lukewarm compromise was to hike the minimum wage to $3.65 next year, $3.95 in 1991, and $4.25 in 1992.

However, there would also be a subminimum wage of $3.35 per hour for all new hires. This subminimum "training" wage would be required for six months, whether its a first job or not.

The Bush proposal sparked a new tug of war between conservatives and liberals over the benefits vs. cost of a minimum wage. Reactionaries like former President Reagan insist that the minimum wage "has caused more misery and unemployment than anything since the Great Depression."

They argue that whenever the minimum is raised, jobs are lost at the lowest pay levels. Small businesses which cannot afford to hike wages of semi-skilled and unskilled labor will layoff workers. The theory is that the market, not the government, should set wage rates.

Consequently, the conservative National Federation of Independent Business has taken a posture to the right of Bush, claiming that there is "no need" to raise the minimum wage.

Liberal economists and politicians correctly point out that the current minimum wage is not sufficient for survival, and that it creates an economic barrier which unfairly hits blacks, Hispanics and low income people the hardest.

Statistically, roughly two thirds of all workers who earn $3.35 an hour or less are women. Forty two percent never completed high school, and only 4 percent are college graduates.

Most are single, but those with families have an almost impossible challenge of feeding their families and paying rent on virtually no resources.

Since 1981, the minimum wage has lost 39 percent due to inflation. A minimum wage rate of $4.60 per hour would be necessary just to keep pace with the 1981 rate.

A higher minimum wage would destroy some jobs, but by increasing the wages of nearly four million low income workers, they would put more money into the economy through consumer spending. This in turn would create new jobs.

Moreover, by lifting millions a small step away from poverty, a higher wage could reduce welfare rolls and government expenditures for social services.

The liberal's arguments are correct, but as always, they don't go far enough in analyzing the real problems confronting poor people. A higher minimum wage, even at $5.00 or $6.00 per hour, won't begin to address the crisis of poverty in America.

In the eight years of the Reagan administration, low income people — blacks, Hispanics, native Americans, Asians, and whites — experienced a devastating assault.

Since 1981, more than one million people lost Aid to Families With Dependent Children benefits. Nearly one million people who would have been eligible for food stamps under the Carter Administration are now ineligible.

Government subsidies for the construction of a new low income housing have been almost eliminated during the past six years. And the program which provides an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to jobless workers who have used up their basic 26 weeks of unemployment compensation has been almost eliminated.

In short, the economic "safety net" for the working poor, those just above the government's poverty line, has been ripped to shreds.

The minimum wage should be increased well above $5 per hour, but that's only the beginning in addressing the problem of systematic poverty and unemployment. A job or guaranteed income for those who cannot work should be considered a human right.

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

Walter E. **Williams**
Minority Viewpoint

Diminishing trust

Things would come to a virtual halt if we couldn't trust each other, which is why breaches of trust must be taken seriously. Just think about it for a moment.

We pull in to a gas station, pump our 10 gallons of gas, and hand the attendant $11.00; go into the supermarket and pay $4.00 for a pound-and-a-half package of hamburger; put money into our account and accept the bank's word of our interest earnings.

Many of us don't even bother to count our change. How do we actually know we, in fact, got 10 gallons of gas, or a pound-and-a-half of hamburger, or earned $22.11 on our savings? For the most part we don't; we trust people.

Imagine an economy without trust. All transactions would be more costly. We'd have to carry around measuring instruments, learn to make on-the-spot interest-rate calculations; in a word, monitor everything.

Promises and gentlemen's agreements, which govern thousands of activities from returning merchandise to stock transactions, would have to be substituted by cash transactions and costly contracts.

In some institutions, such as the family, trust is the only glue. When I bring home money from teaching, royalties, and lectures, my wife and I have this agreement whereby we toss the money in the air. All that stays up is mine; and all that comes down is hers.

There's no effort to keep books and audit her spending. For all I know, she could have a secret Swiss bank account. Because of trust I don't have to undertake the costly job of monitoring inventories and auditing expenditures; we can spend the time we save by enjoying one another's company.

Whether it's family or employer / employee relationships, we have to be able to count on people not shirking their duty. Again, trust plays a vital role because monitoring is costly.

This factor may help explain why some ethnic groups, with strong cultural roots and intra-group trust, succeed under business conditions where others fail. Thanks to mutual trust, they avoid some business costs.

Trust relationships, taken for granted in the past, have been seriously eroded, and we're paying the price. Because of hustling lawyers and ignorant judges, doctors see their patients as potential plaintiffs.

The cost: Doctors order diagnostic tests not with the view of helping their patients, but with a view of what they might say on the witness stand.

Businesses must limit themselves to very short planning horizons, thus restraining national growth, because they can't trust Congress and the courts. In other words, when you start a project with a 10-year payoff period, you'd like to be able to count on stable tax and business laws.

Take, for example, Congress' recent tinkering wherein it prohibited adults-only housing projects on the grounds that they discriminate against families with children.

Here you've built a development for adults and, with a stroke of the congressional pen, the value of your investment is reduced.

And it's not just business that suffers from distrust. Years ago, preparation for retirement was no more complicated than simple opening a savings account.

You could trust that a dollar 10 to 20 years later would have roughly the same purchasing power. Congress, aided by the Federal Reserve bank, has virtually destroyed long-term trust in our currency.

As a result, preparation for retirement or for our children's needs is a riskier, more complicated proposition today.

Congress, through the Internal Revenue Service, requires taxpayers be notified in the case of underpayments, but IRS agents, under the threat of losing their jobs are not to notify taxpayers of overpayments — IRS just keeps the money.

That's a great boost for taxpayer trust, honesty, and confidence.

Once lost, trust, like virginity, cannot be regained. But all these attacks on trust can be halted. Let's do it.

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:

Baltimore Afro-American
628 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

GUS HAWKINS:

Minimum wage leaps first hurdle

The House of Representatives voted recently to restore a measure of fairness to America's working poor by approving a boost in the federal minimum wage. The bill which passed represented a compromise with some House republicans on the minimum wage issue.

The minimum wage would be raised from the current $3.35 an hour to $3.85 in October 1, 1989; $4.25 in October 1, 1990; and $4.55 in October 1, 1991.

In addition to the wage hikes, which are essentially the same as those in the original bill, a compromise was worked out on the so-called "training wage." For newly hired workers with no previous employment experience the compromise would establish a subminimum wage of $3.35 for 60 days.

The sub - minimum wage would also be adjusted each year the minimum wage is raised. This compromise is dramatically different than the Bush sub-minimum "training wage" which would have lasted six months, for all newly hired workers, despite their previous employment record.

While I would prefer no subminimum wage feature at all, it was an accommodation which we accepted to get a bill through the Congress.

Under current law a small business exception is in place whereby firms with annual sales less than $362,500 and firms in most other industries with sales less than $250,000 are exempt from minimum wage requirements. The new bill raises the threshold to $500,000 for most firms.

The American people, both Democrats and Republicans, overwhelmingly favor a minimum wage increase. I urge President Bush to reconsider the hard line he seems to have adopted in pledging a veto of this bill.

The working poor have waited more than eight years for a cost of living increase and should not be locked into a life of poverty because of political differences.

Since 1938 there has been no evidence that minimum wage increases have triggered increased unemployment or any of the other dire economic consequences the opponent's have consistently stated.

The increase would probably boost the economy because it would put more money into the hands of the working poor, who usually spend most of their disposable income on goods and services.

is a balanced measure that addresses the concerns of the business community and also provides economic justice to minimum wage earners. The raise was long overdue. We have cleared one major hurdle. On to the Senate!

'Most dangerous Negro in America'

The ironies of history are often sweet. Yesterday's judgment may be abandoned for tomorrow's verdict. The U.S. Postal Service's newest commemorative stamp proves the point.

A "Red Scare" gripped America in the summer in 1919. Bearded bomb-throwing Bolsheviks were thought to lurk in every dark alley. Black radicals urged armed self-defense against lynchers and rioters.

The leading voice of this "New Crowd Negro" militancy was young A. Philip Randolph. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, surveying the flood of "isms" allegedly threatening the country, labeled Randolph "the most dangerous Negro in America."

Today Randolph's dignified features grace a new stamp. And what of his erstwhile prosecutor? No stamp honors Palmer, nor is that a likelihood. He has been consigned to the dusty archives of history, keeping company, with the Joe McCarthys whose extremism served primarily their own narrow ambitions.

The Randolph stamp holds another irony. He was co-editor of a militant magazine called the **Messenger** which declared that World War I was being fought to benefit capitalists, while workers of all countries paid the human toll.

To Randolph, blacks' real grievance was not with the Huns of Germany, but the lynching Huns of Georgia. For such rhetoric the Postmaster General withdrew the **Messenger's** second class mailing permit for three years.

Does anyone recall that Postmaster General who ordered widespread press censorship? Don't expect to see Albert Sidney Burleson show up on a stamp.

If A. Philip Randolph's life comprised no more than youthful radicalism, he, too, would hardly deserve a stamp. But he is remembered today as the neglected hero of the modern movement for equality.

He spoke for many blacks of the World War I generation who saw hypocrisy in fighting to preserve freedom in Europe while their race enjoyed so little of it at home.

Randolph also knew that blacks were economically powerless, and workers.

Randolph organized a "March on Washington" to demand access to jobs, and when it appeared that up to 100,000 blacks would converge on the capital, Franklin D. Roosevelt reluctantly created the first Fair Employment Practices Committee.

Although the march was never held in 1941, its legacy was enduring. Many civil rights activists of the Fifties had been inspired by Randolph and his mass march concept.

When Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery in 1955, the initial organizer of the bus boycott was not Martin Luther King, but E. D. Nixon, a Pullman porter, protege of Randolph, and former March on Washington organizer.

Randolph's last great achievement is obscured by the prominence of others. As the elder statesman of the civil rights movement, he proposed and organized the great March on Washington in 1963.

The conscience of the nation was stirred to support open public accommodation after a third of a million citizens applauded Martin Luther King's dream for a more just society.

For half a century A. Philip Randolph represented the cutting edge of the struggle for black equality. When I interviewed him in 1972, a few years before his death, he identified his place in history.

The young student generation of the Sixties, he said, stood upon the shoulders of civil rights fighters of the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties.

The judgement of history may be prolonged, but it invariably replaces the popular acclaim of the moment. Rest in obscurity, Attorney General Palmer and Postmaster General Burleson, while we honor your onetime nemesis, "the most dangerous Negro in America."

Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., is professor of Afro-American Studies at San Diego State University and author of a book on A. Philip Randolph (No Crystal Stair, 1975).