EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

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President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Birds' potent new look

After a miserable season last year, the Baltimore Orioles are flying high and the Monumental City is excited again about major league baseball.

Furthermore, the Birds also are winning plaudits for the Americanization of the team, from front office on down. And this too is a change which has been brought about in a short period of time after the late Edward Bennett Williams' attention was focused on the racial question by the former Dodgers biggie who didn't think blacks capable of successfully managing.

As a recent Sports Illustrated article pointed out, the fact that manager Frank Robinson, batting coach Tom McCraw, pitching coach Al Jackson, bullpen coach Elrod Hendricks and a team vice president, Calvin Hill are all black "is a repudiation to those in baseball who have dragged their heels on affirmative action.

"The Orioles have almost as many black managers and coaches in their minor league system — roving instructors Don Buford, Minnie Mendoza and Deacon Jones, Erie (Pa.) manager Bobby Tolan, Rochester (N.Y.) coach Curt Motton and Bluefield (W. Va.) coach Jose Soto — as some teams have had in their entire history."

Robinson has a lot to do with how the youthful Birds are playing on the field and with the new look of the team above the players' level. He and Roland Hemond, vice president and general manager, deserve a lot of credit no matter where the Orioles finish their high-flying season.

As the AFRO pointed out recently, Frank and Roland may richly deserve recognition as manager and executive of the year, respectively.

Even if we take it game by game, as the Orioles try to tell us they're doing, of the excitement the team and organization have created so far, there's likely to be some nail-biting showdowns before the Eastern Division title is decided. And last place finishers don't create that kind of reaction among their fans.

AFRO wins six awards

AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. came away with six merit awards at the National Newspaper Publishers Association's 49th annual convention last week in New Orleans.

More than 175 member-papers of the NNPA were eligible for the judging which resulted in the AFRO's winning two first place and four third place awards. In the hotly contested Best News Story category the AFRO snared two awards with Robyn-Denise Yourse of the Washington AFRO taking first place and Alisa Samuels of the Baltimore AFRO coming in third.

As pleased as we at the AFRO are over winning these awards, including others for general excellence, best youth section, best entertainment section and best business section, what really counts is that your newspapers are recognized as among the best in serving their communities. You can count on your AFROs in Baltimore, Washington and Richmond, Va. bringing you prize-winning coverage every week.

No time to let up

Two fund-raising projects close to our hearts because of their extremely beneficial roles in the Baltimore community can now be said to have been huge successes, and everyone who supported these worthwhile endeavors deserve a special salute.

The two are the fund-raiser on behalf of the United Negro College Fund and AIDSWALK '89. Thousands of people took part in these benefit efforts, and Baltimore will be better off because of it.

This newspaper was pleased to join the likes of Mayor Kurt Schmoke, AIDSWALK '89 chairperson Sondra Stafford, television Ch. 13, Dr. Levi Watkins, UNCF leadership committee chairman; Wendy Moore, UNCF fund drive coordinator, and many, many others in spearheading these efforts.

What has been accomplished will mean that some young men and women who need assistance with getting a college education at one of the UNCF-supported institutions, will get it; also, that many persons in the community will be sufficiently warned so that they avoid behavior that would put them at risk of being infected by the AIDS-causing HIV virus. It will mean that more persons with the fatal disease will have additional attention.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste; and so is a life.

What is essential now is that none of us permit complacency or satisfaction with past successes deter us from pressing forward in these and the many other important fund-raising challenges we must take on. These are all-year projects.

The threat of AIDS, for which there still is no cure, will be with us for years to come. Young people from disadvantaged circumstances will continue to need financial support in order to develop themselves to the point of being able to contribute to others.

We have experienced what can be done when together we make the effort. We cannot afford to rest on our laurels.

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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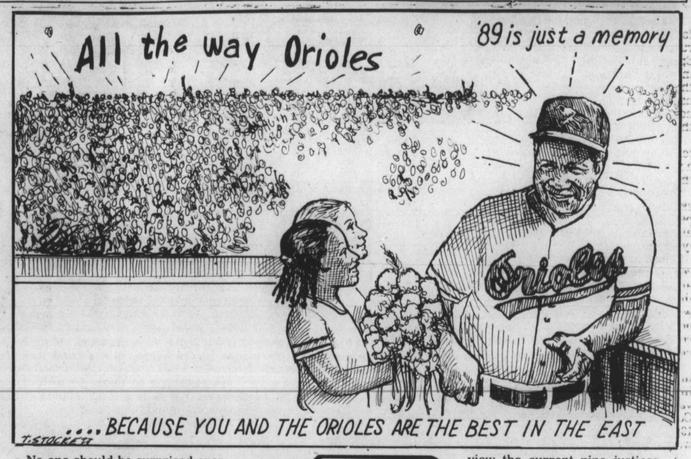

G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

New S. Court No surprise

No one should be surprised over the civil-rights-shattering decisions that have come from the U.S. Supreme Court in recent weeks.

As this column, and several others, have pointed out over the last eight years, the Supreme Court was becoming, little by degrees, a Reagan court. In fact, the entire federal judiciary will be tinged with the "strict constructionism" of Ronald Reagan well into the 21st century.

With the present membership consisting of a solid 5 to 4, in favor of the Reagan ideology, it should not be surprising that the Supreme Court seems to be structured against civil rights, more specifically against "affirmative action" in any form, whether covered by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, by certain Civil War legislation, or by state and city laws.

Some weeks ago, the court declared unconstitutional a Richmond (Va.) ordinance which provided that 25 percent of all public work contracts should be allotted to minority contractors.

A fortnight or so ago, the Reaganized court declared unconstitutional a Birmingham (Ala.) court-approved agreement which had been generally accepted eight years ago and had set the terms by which a certain number of black officers would be admitted into the fire department.

In a case of "racial harassment" coming from Winston-Salem (N.C.), the court rule that, while the 1866 Civil War law might be applicable in some other instances, it did not apply — or would not hereafter be applied — to conditions of employment, such as harassment.

Space does not permit going into the details of each case and each opinion, but it is clear as can be that the court, under President Bush, will, in temper and program, be the kind of court that Reagan strived for — Reagan with Edwin Meese and William Bradford Reynolds.

* * *

No wonder that the Civil Rights community and people of goodwill are up in arms, as they see the gains of more than a quarter century being wiped out.

Some employers should also be enraged as, at worst, the new legal requirements will increase the number of individual litigations each employer will have to contest in court.

The extreme right of the Republican Party, those who believe that blacks have gone far enough, and those who see America as a white male country, will all applaud the present court. They will view the current nine justices — especially the Conservative Five — as returning to "the good old days." Civil rights advocates, on the other hand, will fear that the clock is being turned backward.

* * *

This is not the first time in history that the Supreme Court has given evidence of turning against the interest of African Americans and other inarticulate minorities, starting with the historic Dred Scott Decision of 1857, and later, Plessy v. Ferguson of 1896. The court can be made to about face, however, as it has done from time to time, although scarcely with "deliberate speed."

It will not be easy, since Ronald Reagan named 370 federal judges in his time, and since the Reagan members of the Supreme Court are still relatively young. It took nearly 100 years to totally undo Dred Scott and nearly 60 more years to overturn Plessy v. Ferguson.

It is up to the people-centered Congress to restate its intent and the law and clarify — for the Supreme Court — the real feelings and desire of the American populace.

But, the Congress will not act of its own accord. It will need a groundswell of interest and concern to help it know what is expected of it. Representatives and Senators should be peppered with telephone calls, letters and telegrams from their constituents, to serve notice that a substantial body of their fellow-citizens want fair play, equal employment opportunity AND EQUALITY under the law.

Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

Fragmented effort

Large-scale social problems cannot be solved solely by elected and appointed officials or by government agencies. Such problems require maximum support and cooperation by the majority of citizens.

Across the county, people are getting involved; they are seeking solutions for problems and that is a good, healthy development. However, such efforts could well be blunted by a fragmentation of efforts.

All too often, once the social problem is highlighted, scores of groups are formed to address the problem. Every person has the right to form a legitimate organization, but very frequently, these independent organizations do not work in cooperation with the other groups and, indeed, at times, they work at cross purposes.

They often start with no clear-cut objectives; no specific strategies; and without the resources to do an effective job. Sadly, some are formed to project the founder(s) or for monetary gain.

I am convinced that the battle against drugs requires strong well organized efforts at the neighborhood level. I am further convinced that where we have a strong neighborhood organization, there is absolutely no need to create three or four new organizations to do war with drug traffic.

I have seen some things that border on the ludicrous: "Bake sale to fight drugs." "A rap session on drugs — Admission $5.00." "Disco against drugs $6.00 Admission at the door."

These are harsh words, but there are some who "pimp" on public interest in social problems.

Sloganeering; press releases; and media interviews will never create solutions unless they are matched by the hard work required to solve any large social problem.

Minority business development has been highlighted for the past twenty years, and there has occurred an amazing proliferation of organizations allegedly created to foster minority business.

Many of their meetings are nothing more than rhetoric meetings which individual experiences are shared and there is a great deal of bombast on the issue of "look what they have done to us." Long on talk, short on production or solutions.

At one point in time, in New York City, there were at least sixteen minority business organizations, each one operating independently, and zealously guarding their "turf." Most of them were short-lived and few did anything to help the cause of minority business.

That fragmented effort prevented the formation of a strong, cohesive force to bring about change. It would have been far, far better had there been two or three organizations working cooperatively.

Planning and execution! So many of these fragmented groups often announce objectives far beyond their capacity and try to give the impression that they are quite active. I was taught by the late Earl Moses, a brilliant scholar at Morgan State College (now University). He often made the distinction between "busyness" and "business."

During my tenure in Congress, I held several Black Economic Summits. These were held every five years. Perhaps we set our goals too low, but we achieved each goal save one, the goal to increase significantly Black businesses in the import-export industry.

We followed a very simple format. Where we are now in the franchise business, for example? Where should we be in five years? (How many Black franchisers?) How do we accomplish this? (Public pressure, litigation, legislation, etc.)

Do we have the resources to accomplish that particular goal? Do we have the capacity to measure yearly progress towards that five-year goal?

It was not a perfect plan, but it yielded good results.

I think that those who want to start yet another organization would think their way through that kind of format. Perhaps, if they do, we would reduce the fragmentation of effort that thwarts our effectiveness, leaving social problems still without solutions.

The Afro-American
MEMBER
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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

The Real Congressional Corruption

I really get tired of all the national focus on the cloud of sleaze and corruption surrounding former House Speaker Jim Wright. It's like fiddling while Rome burns. The harm that members of Congress do to the nation, operating in the shadows, is no match for what they do to us in the full light of day.

The Dallas-based National Center for Policy Analysis recently issued a report titled "The Elderly: People the Supply-Side Revolution Forgot."

While our nation has a shortage of skilled, experienced workers, 83 percent of all men and 92 percent of all women 65 and over are completely retired.

If just one-third of the male retirees reentered the labor force and earned as little as $5 per hour, the gross national product (GNP) would rise by $55 billion; and if just one-third of the women retirees accompanied them, the GNP would increase by $132 billion.

Social Security and our tax structure go a long way toward explaining this disgraceful waste of valuable human resources. When Congress created Social Security in 1935, only one-third of those over 60 were retired.

Beginning in 1956, people were allowed to opt for early retirement. By 1961, only 16 percent of all Social Security recipients were early retirees compared to 66 percent in 1985.

Congress has given the elderly a tax incentive to leave the workforce as well. As of 1988, Social Security recipients between the ages of 62 and 64 are counted as retired if they earn $6,480 or less; if they are 65 to 70, that number rises to $8,800.

If recipients earn more, they lose $1 in Social Security benefits for each $2 earned — a 50 percent marginal tax rate!

As if that's not bad enough, last year Congress expanded Medicare to include catastrophic benefits. Under this law, all income tax payers 65 and over will have to pay a 15 percent surcharge to Medicare next April. Congress is being "nice" this year.

The surcharge limit is $800 per retiree, or $1,600 per couple; but by 1993, the limit will be $1,050 per retiree, or $2,100 per couple.

That's on top of the $383 retirees now pay in Medicare premiums, which is also destined to increase in the future. Don't you want to regurgitate when congressmen preach about making America more competitive?

What Congress is doing to the elderly and our country is a disgrace, but we asked for it. French philosopher Frederick Bastiat reminds us that. "Government is the great fiction through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else."

Will the elderly have a moral response to what Congress has done? I seriously doubt it. Led by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), who got them into this mess in the first place by lobbying for the Catastrophic health Act, the elderly will demand all the benefits involved in Social Security while attempting to force somebody else to foot the bill.

The elderly fail to realize that their grandchildren, the very grandchildren they smother with love and generosity, will be the ultimate victims of the Social Security grab bag.

That grandchild being bounced on grandpa's knee will spend a large portion of his working life paying Social Security taxes that may well exceed $10,000 a year in today's dollars.

When these children eventually retire, Social Security benefits will either be nonexistent or taxed at confiscatory rates.

The only long-term solution to the Social Security mess is to privatize retirement so we will not renege on the government promise given today's retirees.

But in my estimation, that requires the kind of political courage, honesty, and wisdom that is in short supply today.

We'd rather focus our energies on the petty comings and goings.

I'm beginning to think we may deserve what we're getting — but do our children and their children?

Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

Do Blacks Deserve Reparations?

One central principle of international law is that people who have been the victims of systemic oppression over a period of time have the right to demand material compensation to redress their grievances.

West Germany extended compensation to the state of Israel for the crimes committed against the Jewish people by the regime of Adolph Hitler.

Thousands of Japanese Americans were unjustly interned in prison camps by the United States during World War II, and have recently won the right to demand compensation.

For many years, African Americans have argued that some type of economic compensation should be extended to blacks for the centuries of institutional racism and class exploitation.

Seven decades ago, writer Arthur Anderson called for the creation of an all-black state termed "Modern a," and demanded that the American government provide reparations totaling six hundred million dollars.

In the 1960s, many Power advocates agitated for compensation from white religious organizations and the government. Today, the call reparations has acquired new impetus by the actions of Massachusetts State Senator Bill Owens.

Owens has introduced Senate Bill 1621, calling upom the state "to provide for the payment of reparations for slavery, the slave trade and invidious discrimination against the people of African descent born or residing in the United States of America."

The bill would require Massachusetts to "establish an African reparations commission which shall negotiate with legitimate representation of African descendants born in the United States for the payment of reparations."

Owen's call for reparations has sparked a national debate among blacks. In his view, the call for reparations "is not new. It has been a political issue since the Reconstruction period following the Civil War, when we were promised 40 acres and a mule as a form of compensation for the free labor that helped to build this country."

In short, Blacks have been the victims of superexploitation, and compensation is only fair and just.

The Detroit City Council concurs with Owens, and recently approved a proposal for Congress to pay black Americans $40 billion in an education fund.

Economist Julianne Malveaux also declares: "African Americans are the only people who came to the USA in chains. Although our labor laid the foundation for this country's infrastructure, we were never paid wages for that labor."

But some blacks have gone to unusual lengths to deplore the talk about reparations. Newspaper columnist Lawrence Wade pleased millions of conservative whites by declaring: "The USA owes this black man nothing."

We own no huge corporations, and the total net assets of all black-owned corporations are smaller than a few multinationals.

We have the right to demand economic and social compensation until equality is a reality.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of Political Science of the University of Colorado.

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

Standing For Truth

In the early morning hours of August 31, 1988, Khotso House, the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in Johannesburg, was rocked by one of the most powerful bombs used in South African history against the freedom movement.

It was the supreme irony that the home of the ecumenical Christian movement in South Africa, whose name Khotso means peace in the Sesotho language, should be destroyed by violence.

The explosion at Khotso House marked yet another stage in the crisis that has engulfed South Africa since 1985.

In fact, just six weeks later an arson fire gutted two floors at the offices of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference in Pretoria.

Indeed, attempts on the lives of church leaders in South Africa have almost become commonplace and a number of church leaders have been detained and tortured.

Churches and their leaders, of course, are not the only ones suffering in South Africa. Since the imposition of a national "State of Emergency" in June, 1986 thousands have died in unrest-related disturbances.

More than 40,000 people have been detained, half of them children and women. It is conservatively estimated that over 1,000 South Africans have been convicted as political prisoners.

In 1988 alone, 32 organizations were banned and 55 popular leaders have been convicted as political prisoners.

Clearly, the peaceful paths to change are being closed off one by one as part of a two-pronged policy by the racist apartheid regime to clasp down hard on anti-apartheid activities at home while simultaneously convincing those outside South Africa that "things are changing.."

We in the United States can not afford to allow ourselves to be fooled by this smokescreen. We must join in solidarity with South African church leaders who launched a national campaign in South Africa called "Standing for the Truth."

It was shortly after this campaign began, calling for a boycott of the elections last fall in which South Africans were denied an opportunity to vote, that the bombing of Khotso House occurred.

As a result, a group of national church representatives in the United States began organizing a sustained ecumenical response to the plea for international support which came from South African church leaders.

Church leaders in the United States believe that Christians have a special responsibility to advocate for people whose oppression is due at least in part to the policies of our own government.

The National Council of Churches along with other church leaders also organized a national ecumenical campaign "Stand for Truth: Until South Africa is Free" in which they committed themselves to work until the people of South Africa are free.

June 16 is a special day of remembrance in the life of South Africa.

On that day in 1976 hundreds of brave young South Africans were killed as they peacefully marched to protest the unequal education they were receiving under the apartheid system and to stop the teaching in Afrikaans, the language of their oppressor, in their schools.

Thousands of bright, articulate young people were forced to flee South Africa as a result of their participation in what the government called the Soweto uprisings.

This June 16 the "Stand for Truth" campaign is sponsoring a special Lobby Day in Washington, D.C., where they hope thousands of Americans will be meeting with their Senators about the proposed sanctions legislation against South Africa.

REPRESENTATIVE GUS HAWKINS:

What is an 'Effective School?'

The term "effective schools" is sometimes confused as simply an adjective to describe a well performing school.

In fact, "effective schools" is actually a well defined concept, which has been put into practice in over 875 school districts and a number of states across the nation.

As a result, many of these school districts are today demonstrating positive results in terms of improved student achievement, student behavior, and teaching and learning practices.

The concept of "effective schools" comes from a group of scholars and school personnel who have been studying school effectiveness for the last two decades.

An early pioneer in this effort was George Weber, who examined four inner city schools — in this 1971 study — in which achievement in reading was clearly successful for poor children.

Weber found that all four schools evidenced five characteristics that made them effective:

— The principal is a strong, instructional leader, primarily interested in what and how children are being taught in the classroom;

— Teachers have high expectations for student success, and therefore expect students to succeed academically;

— The school's mission is clearly understood by students, teachers, parents and the community. A central feature of this mission is placing a strong emphasis on the student acquiring basic and higher order skills, such as reading, writing and problem solving;

— There is an orderly and safe school, atmosphere present. This air of stability is evidenced by students who are well behaved and motivated by home and school to listen and learn, and school, rules, standards and guidelines which are honored and obeyed; and

— Student academic progress is regularly and consistently evaluated.

Another giant in the effective schools movement was education researcher-reformer Ron Edmonds.

Dr. Edmonds disagreed with and challenged the accepted view, in the early seventies, that family background was a more important teacher than a child's school experience, and therefore "schools don't make a difference."

In his capacity as a New York City school administrator, Edmonds put his research into practice and concluded that schools do make a difference when they control the quality of those things they do best; leadership, expectations, and school climate.

Two additional characteristics to the "effective schools" concept which have been added as a result of research by educational scholars, include:

— Encouraging a higher degree of parental involvement; and

— Implementing an instructional strategy called "time on task," whereby designated teaching and learning time is strictly followed.

For example, if students are in a 50-minute math class, the full time is devoted to math instruction without any other subject matter distractions.

These seven "effective schools" factors are relatively basic to the concept. However, many school systems include additional effective schools characteristics, based on their needs and their unique experiences.

I continue to be impressed by the successful impact of "effective schools" programs across this nation in terms of improving educational climate and student test scores.

We must now attempt to get the word out about the merits of these effective schools, and duplicate their programs in school districts which have failed to serve poor children.

The "effective schools" concept is based on an underlying assumption that all children can be educated. Perhaps Ron Edmonds said it best when he stated,

"If we diminish the gross inequities in American society — one of which is the failure to teach even the most rudimentary skills to poor children — then we will observe changes in values and cultural perspectives that will make our society a far better place to live."