EDITORIALS

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President

Prime candidates

The hoopla surrounding the establishing of a D.C. residence for the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who is not running for anything, has almost overshadowed two black candidates running for unprecedented firsts.

David Dinkins, currently Borough President of Manhattan, is running for mayor New York City. Lt. Gov. L. Douglas Wilder is a prime candidate in the governor's race in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Both men were leading in the polls at one point, but latest figures given incumbent New York Mayor Ed Koch a 41 to 34 percent lead. The Democratic primary election comes September 12.

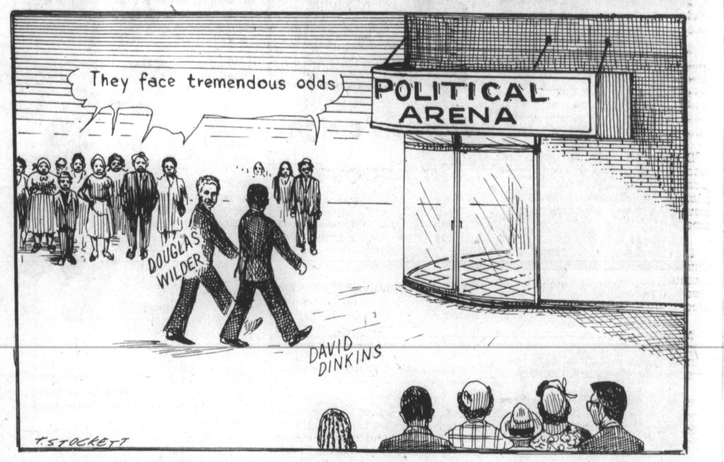
In the case of Wilder, a new poll indicates a 43 to 39 percent advantage for his Republican opponent, Marshall Coleman. The election in Virginia will be decided at the November general elections.

The campaign thus far, and the resulting polls indicate an alarmining trend which surfaced noticeably during the Jesse Jackson run for the Presidency. There is a large segment ot the population who will vote for any alternative to a black candidate.

While it is hopeful that these two black candidates will be able to corral enough votes to get elected, the hard fact is that in New York, blacks cast just about 30 percent of the vote, even in the enthusiastic turnout for Jesse Jackson.

In Virginia, a mere 20 percent is usually the total black votes cast — not enough to win statewide. So, it becomes a vital necessity that enough white voters support the candidacy of the blacks in the race, for them to succeed.

It will take some hard campaigning. As the saying goes, the opera isn't over until the fat lady sings, and she hasn't started warming up yet. We laud the efforts of Dinkins and Wilder, two candidates we feel are eminently qualified for the jobs they seek.



G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

When politics went to college

Long before there could be a Black Congressional Caucus, long before there could be a Maryland Black Legislative Caucus, Morgan State University established an Institute for Political Education, dedicated to producing "citizen politicians," steeped in practical politics, as smart as the professional politicians, but with no burning desire to run for public office.

That was 30 years ago this month, when there was only one African-American in the Baltimore City Council and when the first three Blacks in history had been elected to the state legislature just five years earlier.

The Institute for Political Education was the brainchild of Dr. Martin D. Jenkins, for 22 years the revered president of Morgan. He felt deeply that, with "the best people" fleeing from the city, there was the need for a coterie of "bright minds" who knew their way in politics, to replace those who had moved to the suburbs. These would be young people who, at least, could "keep watch over the politicians."

The 50 students enrolled each semester represented all disciplines of the university (then college) and were chosen because of their seeming interest in public matters and in people, although their major interest might have been psychology, pre-medicine, sociology or even physical education.

* * *

There were lots of involvement by the Institute Scholars, as they read and clipped politically, newspapers from all sections of the country; as they visited law-making bodies, state, local, and national; as they worked in primaries and general elections; as they studied how to win against political bosses; as they served as interns to elected officials; as they compared the impact of cartoons and cartoonists on political campaigns.

One notable event of the Institute was the sponsoring of a Mock Democratic National Convention, in 1960, with all the trimmings of the real thing. Keynoted by Paul Butler, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, it was covered by TV coast to coast.

Another headliner was the presentation of the very popular Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, to an overflow audience in the Student Union — one of many notable resource people, African - American and white, from far and near.

* * *

In addition to its undergraduate thrust, the Institute for Political Education also answered the call to set up mini-programs off campus. Such were held in Cherry Hill, at the Maryland Penitentiary and in Northwest Baltimore, and to adults who came to the campus in the evening.

Another outreach effort resulted in a documentary, **Politics Is Everybody's Business**, a professionally produced film which was presented in various places sometimes under the auspices of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Although most of the Scholars in the Institute did develop only into "citizens politicians," some became practicing politicians. One of the first enrollees, Augustin Doward, returned to the U.S. Virgin Islands and got himself elected to the legislature (the Senate), unseating a veteran of 20 years.

W. Wilson Goode, after some years as a public administrator, was elected mayor of Philadelphia, and is serving his second term.

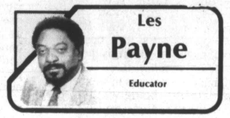
William Blakey, after eight years as chief counsel of the Senate Committee on Employment and Productivity, is now a partner in the Washington law firm of Cohan and Dean.

Sally Robinson and Evelyn McLeod, Baltimoreans, both became Peace Corps volunteers and have risen to supervisory positions in the U.S. Agency for International Development, respectively.

Then there are scholars like Walker L. Robinson, the eminent neurosurgeon of the University of Maryland Medical System; and Ralph L. Williams, president of Williams Scholarship group, which recently contributed $10,000 to Morgan.

Lack of space prevents a wider sampling of former enrollees of the Institute for Political Education, or to quote their testimonies. They all agree, however, that the Institute fulfilled its goal of making them "citizen politicians."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Fleming was the founding director of Morgan's Institute for Political Education, 1959-1966; he was succeeded by the late Dr. Augustus A. Adair.



Les Payne
Educator

Indifference to the moon walk

After the moon landing 20 years ago, I wrote the following essay for Uptight magazine about blacks' indifference to the national space feat that had so excluded them.

Black Americans are no more interested in Apollo's man on the moon than they are in the fact that Richard Nixon has wavy hair.

They feel that they yet have frontiers here on the planet Earth: They have to solve the problem of feeding their children at earth gravity in South Carolina; they have to overcome black weightlessness in Congress, the judiciary and the news media, and they feel that a soft landing must be made in neighborhoods that contain decent housing.

Time magazine called the moon landing "an accomplishment of 'middle America,'" meaning, of course, white Americans minus its dissidents concerned with national poverty, black oppression and the Vietnam slaughterhouse.

If Apollo is a triumph for "middle America," then so is Vietnam, the siege of Chicago and the occupation of Harlem, Watts, South Chicago, Detroit, Newark, etc.

With the white press cooing over "middle America's" triumph on the moon, the only thing extraordinary about blacks' lack of interest is the apparent surprise it causes.

Readers may recall the look of utter rejection on the face of CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite when one of his roving correspondents visited Harlem during the moon landing and discovered 50,000 blacks performing their own extravehicular activity at a musical festival in Mt. Morris Park.

Repeatedly black men spoke into the television cameras about the irrelevancy to them of Armstrong and Aldrin, and about the communication of the earthbound (psychedelic rock group the) Chambers Brothers.

Upon hearing of this ingratitude concerning middle America's triumph, Cronkite's face froze and cracked. Bill Plante, the CBS reporter who filed the story, had touched down in Harlem with a cordon of helmeted policemen.

No one bothered to monitor his heartbeat and pulse rate. Uneasily he picked his way through his own black Ocean of Storms. As is the dogged method of the press, Plante asked in Harlem the same questions his colleagues asked in Anaheim, Shaker Heights and Mystic, Conn.

"What do you think of the man on the moon?" they asked. Unlike those down to the sea in Mystic, Harlemites answered with the indifference of Sen. Storm Thurmond (D-S.C.) reacting to reports of black brothers in the space program where they can get into some of that big money."

With the aid of a battalion of German scientists, billions of dollars and a devout commitment, America has managed to put human footprints on the moon in less than a decade of trying. In almost two decades, America has been unable to desegregate its public schools, a task requiring no fewer dollars, half the commitment and no German scientists.

I hear the chorus chanting that the moon trip has nothing at all to do with domestic problems. How short the human memory on matters unpleasant!

President Lyndon Baines Johnson, that middle - American prototype, is credited with spearheading the space program in Congress. At the time of the Little Rock, Ark., school desegregation crisis, this same Johnson asked Congress, "Do you want to occupy the moon or Little Rock?"

The record will show they chose the moon.

Blacks are indifferent to the space program not because they feel it unnecessary, but because the middle - American space program is indifferent to them. In their push for liberation, they are exploring the republic's terrestrial vaccum pockets and its numerous spiritual "dry seas."

The oppressed considered the space program as yet another sleight of program to get blacks sowing gratitude. Alas, they seem not to be taken in. They are content, for now, to leave middle America to its space program, until they have put their footprint in the power trenches of such cities as San Francisco, Anaheim, Detroit and New York.

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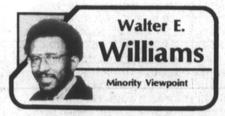

Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

Congressional special favors

Let's talk about the corrupt practices of Congress. But first we ought to lay out some framework. Liberty requires equality before the law, as well as establishment of the rule of law.

Philosopher John Locke, who inspired the ideas contained in our Declaration of Independence and Construction, put it this way: "Freedom of men under government is to have a standing rule to live by, common to everyone of that society . . ." and the legislative powers and courts are "bound to govern by established standing law promulgated and known to the people and not by extemporary decrees."

In other words, there must be rule of law (in Latin, leges) as opposed to rule by privileges (private law).

If you believe in equality before the law, and rule of law, you should be shocked and amazed by some behind-the-scenes actions by Congress that I recently discovered.

The Immigration and Naturalization Act requires a person to live continuously in the United States for five years before he can become a citizen. But not if you know a member of Congress.

One famous tennis player wanted to play in a U.S. citizens - only tennis tournament. So a congressman introduced a private piece of legislation waiving the residency requirement of the Immigration and Naturalization Act.

Then there was House Resolution (H.R.) 5436. If you and I wanted to bring in an organ from overseas, we'd have to pay a duty. But if you were a church in Ohio, in tight with a congressman, you could get him to introduce "A Bill to Provide for the Duty-Free Entry of Organs Imported for the Use of . . . ."

Suppose you're in business and don't like a particular tariff law. You hit up on your congressman and ask him to introduce something like H.R. 3645 which reads (leaving out the company's name), "A Bill to Provide Relief to XYZ Sportswear Co., with Respect to the Tariff Classification of Certain Wearing Apparel, and for Other Purposes."

These are but a few examples of the thousands of private bills congressmen introduce for the narrow benefit of particular citizens. In a society that professes to honor equality before the law and rule of law, these are despicable clandestine practices.

Given the power to write private laws, the only surprising thing about the recent revelations of congressional corruption is that there is not more of it. Creating special favors is flagrant abuse of the office and the trust we place in our congressmen.

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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

Woman's right to choose

The Supreme Court's ruling on abortion sparked a major political debate across the country in recent weeks.

As expected, the high court did not overturn the landmark **Roe v. Wade** decision which established legal abortions nearly two decades ago, but instead greatly curtailed the access of lower income and unemployed women to safe abortions.

By a five - to - four vote, the Court declared that states do not have to provide funds, facilities or employees for abortions, or to encourage or counsel women to have abortions.

If states adopt such restrictions, this decison could affect almost all hospital abortions, which comprise about 10 percent of the 1.5 million abortions done annually.

More ominously, however, the recent abortion decision indicated that four of the nine justices were fully prepared to overturn **Roe v. Wade.**

Three of the pro-choice justices are 80 years or older: William Brennan, Thurgood Marshall, and Harry Blackmun.

Even if Sandra Day O'Connor, a Reagan appointee to the Court who declined to outlaw **Roe** in the recent case doesn't join the so-called pro-life group, odds are that President Bush should soon appoint another member of the Supreme Court who holds equally reactionary views on the issue of abortion rights.

The battleground on abortion is rapidly shifting to individual states, as state legislators and governors in the 1990 elections will be examined closely by both prolife and prochoice groups on the abortion issue.

Although most prochoice groups are aligned with the Democrats, and the prolifers tend to be ideological conservatives and Republicans, the division on this controversy isn't strictly partisan.

There are millions of white, ethnic Catholics in urban areas, generally working class or blue collar, who are morally opposed to abortions and reject the use of government funds to provide abortions of anyone.

Conversely, millions of suburban, upper class whites who are nominal Republicans on fiscal issues also hold liberal views on abortions. They reject the prolife view that the state has the right to dictate a woman's individual decision regarding abortion.

Nationally, most Americans strongly favor a woman's right to a safe abortion, and oppose the arbitrary outlawing of abortions under all conditions.

The abortion issue needs to be addressed within the African American community, in part because pro life groups has consistently distorted the position of blacks as being strongly prolife.

African Americans has experienced a history of being victimized by forced sterilizations and other oppressive strategies to limit or cripple our population, so it is not surprising that most blacks have political reservations about any involvement of the state in health issues.

What's striking about the abortion debate from the vantage point of the black freedom struggle is the profound ideological inconsistency of the majority of prolife groups.

They demand full legal rights for an embryo, and are willing to set aside the wishes of the pregnant woman, regardless of such factors as poverty, unemployment, the absence of a male spouse or whether pregnancy resulted from rape.

Prolife conservatives frequently don't express any interest in how a nonwhite, pregnant young woman is going to be able to feed, clothe, educate and house a child once it comes into the world. Is it fair or just to impose teenage mothers with such a burden?

And given the reductions in federal expenditures for jobs, food stamps, housing and healthcare, the outlawing of legal abortions means the massive expansion of an underclass largely consisting of young, unemployed women of color and small children.

The black community has a direct interest in fighting for a woman's right to control her own body, and to preserve the option of safe, legal abortions as a matter of personal choice. To do less would compound the problems of poverty, powerlessness and sexism within our community.

Dr. Manning Marable is a professor of politics at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

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

In honor of the black child

Every day we read in newspapers and see on our television sets story after story about the problems of African American youth.

We are told about the crack epidemic and its impact on young people, about young people dropping out of school in large numbers, about gang wars and crime and violence.

We are told and warned that in particular racial and ethnic children in the United States are now being doomed for future hardships.

These are true stories and stories which should challenge all of us to find new and effective ways to save especially African American children, who are twice as likely to die in their first year of life.

Who are three times as likely to be poor and four times as likely to be incarcerated between the ages of fifteen and nineteen as white American children.

Indeed, the very future of an entire race is being challenged by all of these terrible facts which African American children must face.

But the reality is that all too often we are only told the negative stories about African American children.

All too often we do not hear the stories of the African American valedictorians who are graduating from high schools across this country, of the young people who volunteer with local civic and community groups; of the successful athletes, artists and scholars who are making significant contributions to their communities and, often, to their churches.

At a recent convocation of the Ministers for Racial and Social Justice and United Black Christians of the United Church of Christ held in Fort Worth, Texas, eight-year old Wiletra Burwell of Warrenton, N.C. spoke to nearly a thousand people who had gathered to hear Mayor Andrew Young at that important gathering.

Wiletra nearly brought the house down with her eloquent speech, which she wrote herself and delivered impeccably.

But rather than tell about Wiletra's speech, I decided to reprint it here because it gives hope and challenge to us all.

I AM THE BLACK CHILD

"I am the black child! All the world awaits my coming. All the earth watches with interest to see what I shall become. Civilization hangs in the balance, for what I am, the world of tomorrow will be.

"I am the black child! You have brought me into this world about which I know nothing. You hold in your hand my destiny.

"You determine whether I shall succeed or fail. Give me, I beg you, a world where I can walk tall and proud for "I am the black child. . . .

I feel I must say to you that all of us are not interested in drugs and vulgar rap music . . . I say to you adults this evening, pray for us.

"Forbid us not from participating and from being included. Know that our generation needs more love, more understanding, and we certainly need some more inspiration.

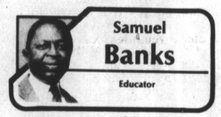
"We need the same kind of inspiration that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and many others gave to you.

"Many times, adults accuse us of being apathetic, but I say to you that for the most part we are not apathetic, that we are concerned about today's issues.

"We are concerned about education. We are concerned about apartheid and about our brothers and sisters in South Africa. No, we are not apathetic, but I must tell you some of us are uninspired.

"So, I challenge each of you adults to work a little harder at loving us more; work a little harder at understanding us better; and then, work a little harder at inspiring us, at providing us with good inspiration — for what we are the world of tomorrow will be."

We hear you Wiletra. We are touched by your eloquence and you render honor to African American children. Let us all get to work to live up to your challenge.



Samuel Banks
Educator

Strengthen historical roots — READ!

Now that our nation's public schools and institutions of higher education have, to an overwhelming degree, shut down, except for a small cadre of students involved in remediation and enrichment courses, the reading habit, too, has suffered.

I believe that the summer hiatus represents a marvelous time to catch up on books that have been deferred and to broaden your knowledge, in particular, about the daring and remarkable history of our people in Mother Africa and our nation.

Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke's accentuation of reading as a municipal priority provides a splendid framework for serious and constructive reading in a variety of areas.

I am often asked by readers of my column and professional colleagues and associates about books which have had a marked influence on me in terms of my growth and development.

There are many books which have had enormous appeal and value to me in terms of black history and culture. However, mindful of space limitations and time, I should like to suggest 16 books which have immense potency, pertinency and piguancy as regards black history and thought.

1. Richard Wright. *Black Boy*
2. William E. B. DuBois *Souls of Black Folk.*
3. Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery.*
4. John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom.*
5. Carter G. Woodson, *The Miseducation of the Negro.*
6. James Weldon Johnson, *Biography of an Ex-Colored Man.*
7. Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Thought The Nadir.*
8. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man.*
9. Mary Church Terrell, *Negro Women in A White World.*
10. Margaret Just Butcher, The Negro In American Culture.
11. Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait.
12. Malcolm X. Biography of Malcolm X.
13. Benjamin Quarles, Frederick Douglass.
14. Allison Davis and John Dollard. Children of Bondage.
15. Harold Cruse. The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual.
16. Ivan Sertima. They Came Before Columbus.

You, too, will find enormously challenging and rewarding Jackie Robinson's I Never Had It Made, Lerone Bennett's Before the Mayflower and John Johnson's Succeeding Against the Odds.

Finally, I believe that a reading of some of the books will provide intellectual stimulation, enhance your sense of pride and self-worth and serve to understand our specialness and distinctive strengths as black people, past and present, in the American social order.

Why not visit your local library and enliven and enhance the quality and depth of your summer reflections, varied activities and abundant travel?

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

Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

To protect civil rights—deterrence

Our traditional civil rights organizations continue to provide more than yeoman service to protect the rights of black citizens. These organizations are now in the struggle to have the damage done by recent Supreme Court decisions offset by federal legislation.

They are engaged in an important lobbying effort to prevent the appointment of William Lucas as Assistant Attorney General For Civil Rights. Lucas is clearly not the man for the job. These organizations are engaged in battles all over the country. Thank God we have them during this time of all-out war against civil rights and civil liberties.

However, it is abundantly clear that we must develop new policies and new strategies during this critical time, as well as continue to use time - tested strategies from past years.

This must be done because now we are fighting on the basis of predicting such actions and moving to prevent them from happening. Our enemies can put together new attacks on our civil rights faster, far faster, than we can respond to them.

Deterrence is just as much needed as is protection after attack.

Let me say, quite frankly, that I do not have a policy of deterrence formulated. But I think it is critical that such a formulation take place, and therefore, would recommend that the leaders of our foremost civil rights organizations convene immediately for the purpose of attempting to come up with a new policy or new strategies that would move us from the position in which we are forced to respond, required to react.

Let me attempt to illustrate what I think is needed. The Supreme Court decision in the Richmond minority business set-aside law made it clear that federal set-aside laws are constitutional, and therefore, such laws remain in full force and effect.

Despite that, you would be incredibly naive if you think that there will not be attempts to eliminate the federal government's minority business set-aside laws.

When will this take place? We don't know, but we do know that it will be tried.

Therefore, it would behoove our civil rights leaders to come together in an urgent session to craft a plan to prevent the attacks.

Let me give another illustration.

There is much discussion about a conspiracy to attack and destroy black political leadership. There is a long list of black officials who have been investigated (in the glare of the media); who have been indicted; and/or who have been imprisoned.

Accept as valid for now the conspiracy theory. Then it is clear that our best minds should come together to try to develop a plan to prevent the conspiracy from claiming other victims.

Judge Hastings, the Florida Federal Judge, is now under investigation by the Senate as a prelude to impeaching him. He was found not guilty by the Courts on the very same charges that are being examined by the Senate.

In this case, it is abundantly clear that double jeopardy is involved. I frankly did not know that the Congress had claimed the power to "retry" federal judges after they had been found not guilty by the courts. Should we not be planning a strategy to take that power from the Congress?

At some time in the future, attempts will be made to further weaken the **Brown v. Board of Education** decision. "Preposterous," you say, well now, not really, in these "anti - climate" times, it is quite possible for that to happen. Should not we anticipate this and start to develop a plan to prevent the attempts to turn back the clock in the field of public education?

It is my considered judgment that we will never gain full equality in this nation if we rely solely on a strategy of fighting back after the first wounds have been inflicted on us. We must also have the sagacity and the strength to prevent those first wounds.

It will be exceedingly difficult to put together such plans. Racism is unpredictable in one sense. Yet, is not our present situation so grim that it demands at least thinking about a deterrent strategy to protect our civil rights?