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FOCUS

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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Blacks and Jews Must Stand Together

The black and Jewish communities are challenged by these unsettling times. A mere 25 years after the nation ascended the mountaintop of a great moral crusade for civil rights and human decency, we are confronted by a resurgence of racism and anti-Semitism. Specters of bigotry have recently shown themselves in the political rise of David Duke, barely out of the sheets of the KKK and the paraphernalia of Nazism, and in the presidential candidacy of Patrick Buchanan, whose campaign has engendered racial and ethnic distrust. Distinguished historian Arthur Schlesinger recently wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* about the widespread resurgence of hate in the politics of Western Europe and in Eastern Europe as well.

The suffering and discontent of communities like Crown Heights have erupted in anger, reflecting not only black-Jewish tensions but also the intemperance of some personalities who are attempting to polarize our communities. Indeed, the rhetoric of some of today's youth, in both black and Jewish communities, reflects little of the beliefs that once guided our collaboration.

Blacks and Jews share similarly painful histories. Both have been scattered across the globe and have a sense of diaspora—yet we remain conscious of our origins. We have long been aware of our vulnerability, and thus share a strong commitment to the struggle against bigotry and the promotion of brotherhood, both of which are vital to our survival. Twenty-five years ago, blacks and Jews understood the power of coalition politics and we locked arms in pursuit of Martin Luther King's vision of racial harmony. We celebrated victory and dreamed of a unified society, proud of its diversity yet clear about a shared identity as Americans. However, it is not enough that we have credentials shaped in the crucible of history. We must also continue to practice our beliefs and lead by example.

Blacks and Jews must reaffirm their belief in the value of a strong special relationship, in spite of periodic expressions and behaviors that would tend to discourage us. We have shared mutually beneficial ties for over a century. In the early post-slavery years, Jews worked with black leaders to address segregation and Jim Crow laws. And blacks and Jews marched arm-in-arm in the modern struggle for civil rights and social justice. Black and Jewish members of Congress have been close allies in supporting the State of Israel, funding for social programs, civil rights measures, and hate crimes legislation.

We must expand efforts to jointly tackle urgent social problems. This can only be accomplished by narrowing the distance between our two communities through a patient investment of our time, energy, and resources.

The Joint Center and the American Jewish Committee have been firm partners for some time now. Thus far, our two organizations have cosponsored three productive meetings, one to discuss black-Jewish relations, another to discuss the tragic Crown Heights incident of last summer, and a third to explore prospects for joint efforts to launch new programs for economic opportunity. And we are now producing a monograph exploring the past, present, and future of black-Jewish relations.

We believe that these are important steps toward rebuilding bonds that will enable us to weather these unsettling times and, indeed, to build a foundation on which to develop future efforts. ■



PRESIDENT

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A Letter on Constitutional Justice

Federal Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Calls Upon Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas to Defend the Weak, the Poor, Minorities, and Women

This article was excerpted from an open letter written to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas on November 29, 1991 by Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., Chief Judge Emeritus, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The full text of this letter was published in the January 1992 issue of the University of Pennsylvania Law Review. *Reprints of the full text may be obtained by writing:* University of Pennsylvania Law Review, *3400 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19104.*

Dear Justice Thomas:

It has been a long time since we talked. I believe it was in 1980 during your first year as a Trustee at Holy Cross College. I was there to receive an honorary degree. You were 31 years old and on the staff of Senator John Danforth. You had not started your meteoric climb through the government and federal judicial hierarchy. Much has changed since then.

At first I thought that I should write you privately--the way one normally corresponds with a colleague or friend. I still feel ambivalent about making this letter public but I do so because your appointment is profoundly important to this country and the world, and because all Americans need to understand the issues you will face on the Supreme Court. In short, Justice Thomas, I write this letter as a public record so that this generation can understand the challenges you face as an Associate Justice to the Supreme Court, and the next can evaluate the choices you have made or will make.

The Supreme Court can be a lonely and insular environment. Eight of the present Justices' lives would not have been very different if the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* case had never been decided as it was. Four attended Harvard Law School which did not accept women law students until 1950. Two attended Stanford Law School prior to the time when the first black matriculated there. None have been called a "nigger" or suffered the acute deprivations of poverty. Justice O'Connor is the only other Justice on the Court that at one time was adversely affected by a white male dominated system that often excluded both women and minorities from equal access to the rewards of hard work and talent.

By nominating you to the Supreme Court, President Bush has suddenly vested in you the option to preserve or dilute the gains this country has made in the struggle for equality. This is a grave responsibility indeed. In order to discharge it you will need to recognize what James Baldwin called the *force of history* within you. You will need to recognize that both your public life and your private life reflect this country's history in the area of racial discrimination and civil rights. And, while much has been said about your admirable determination to overcome terrible obstacles, it is also important to remember how you arrived where you are now, because you did not get there by yourself.

When I think of your appointment to the Supreme Court, I see not only the result of your own ambition, but also the culmination of years of heartbreaking work by thousands who preceded you. I know you may not want to be burdened by the memory of their sacrifices. But I also know that you have no right to forget that history. Your life is very different from what it would have been had these men and women never lived.

The Impact of Civil Rights Organizations and Lawyers on Your Life

During the time when the civil rights organizations were challenging the Reagan administration, I was frankly dismayed by some of your responses and your denigrations of civil rights organizations. In 1984, the *Washington Post* reported you as criticizing traditional civil rights leaders because instead of trying to reshape the Reagan administration policies they had gone to the news media to "bitch, bitch, bitch, moan and moan, whine and whine." If that is still your assessment of these civil rights organizations or their leaders, I suggest, Justice Thomas, that you should ask yourself every day what would have happened to you if there had never been a Charles Hamilton Houston, a William Henry Hastie, a Thurgood Marshall, and that small cadre of other lawyers associated with them, who set the groundwork for success in the twentieth century racial civil rights cases?....If there had never been an effective NAACP, isn't it highly probable that you might still be in Pin Point, Georgia, working as a laborer as some of your relatives did for decades?

If the NAACP had not been picketing, protesting, and politicking for a 1964 Civil Rights Act, would Monsanto Chemical Company have opened their doors to you in 1977? If Title VII had not been enacted, might not American companies still continue to discriminate on the basis of race, gender and national origin?

The struggles of civil rights organizations and civil rights lawyers have been both moral and physical, and their victories have been neither easy nor sudden. Though the *Brown* decision was issued only six years after your birth, the road to *Brown* started more than a century earlier. It started when Prudence Crandall was arrested in

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Connecticut in 1833 for attempting to provide schooling for colored girls. It was continued in 1849 when Charles Sumner, a white lawyer and abolitionist, and Benjamin Roberts, a black lawyer, challenged segregated schools in Boston. It continued in *Sweatt* v. *Texas* when in 1946 Heman Sweatt filed suit for admission to the Law School of the University of Texas and his application was rejected solely because he was black. Rather than admit him, the university postponed the matter for years and put up a separate and unaccredited law school for blacks. The road to *Brown* continued further in a series of cases against the University of Oklahoma, when in 1950 in *McLaurin* v. *Oklahoma*, G. W. McLaurin, a 68-year-old man, applied to the University of Oklahoma to obtain a doctorate in education. He was "required to sit apart at a designated desk in an anteroom adjoining the classroom, to sit at a designated desk on the mezzanine floor of the library...and to sit at a designated table and to eat at a different time from the other students in the school cafeteria."

The significance of the victory in the *Brown* case cannot be overstated. *Brown* changed the moral tone of America; by eliminating the legitimization of state-imposed racism it implicitly questioned racism wherever it was used. It created a milieu in which private colleges were forced to recognize their failures in excluding or not welcoming minority students. I submit that even Holy Cross, your distinguished undergraduate college, and Yale University were influenced by the milieu created by *Brown* and thus became more sensitive to creating programs for the recruitment of competent minority students. In short, isn't it possible that you might not have gone to Holy Cross if the NAACP and other civil rights organizations, Martin Luther King and the Supreme Court, had not recast the racial mores of America? And if you had not gone to Holy Cross, and instead had gone to some underfunded state college for Negroes in Georgia, would you have been admitted to Yale Law School and would you have met the alumni who played such a prominent role in maximizing your professional options?

What Have Conservatives Ever Contributed to African-Americans?

During the last ten years, you have often described yourself as a black conservative. I must confess that, other than their own self-advancement, I am at a loss to understand what it is that the so-called black conservatives are so anxious to conserve. Now that you no longer have to be outspoken on their behalf, perhaps you will recognize that in the past it was the white "conservatives" who screamed "segregation now, segregation forever!"

It was primarily the conservatives who attacked the Warren Court relentlessly because of *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and who stood in the way of almost every measure to ensure gender and racial advancement. For example, on March 11, 1956, ninety-six members of Congress, representing eleven southern states, issued the "Southern Manifesto" in which they declared that the decision was an "unwarranted exercise of power by the Court, contrary to the Constitution." Ironically, those members of Congress reasoned that the *Brown* decision was "destroying the amicable relations between the white and negro races".... They then pledged to use all lawful means to bring about the reversal of the decision, and praised those states which had declared the intention to resist implementation of the *Brown* decision....Where were the conservatives in the 1950s when the cause of equal rights needed every fair-minded voice it could find?

In the 1960s, it was the conservatives, including the then senatorial candidate from Texas, George Bush, the then governor from California, Ronald Reagan, and the omnipresent Senator Strom Thurmond, who argued that the 1964 Civil Rights Act was unconstitutional. In fact Senator Thurmond's 24-hour-18-minute filibuster during Senate deliberations on the 1957 Civil Rights Act set an all-time record. He argued on the floor of the Senate that the provisions of the Act guaranteeing equal access to public accommodations amounted to an enslavement of white people. If 27 years ago George Bush, Ronald Reagan and Strom Thurmond had succeeded, there would have been no position for you to fill as Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in the Department of Education. There would have been no agency such as the Equal Employment Commission for you to chair.

If, in 1954, the United States Supreme Court had accepted the traditional rationale that so many conservatives then espoused, would the 1896 *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* case, which announced the nefarious doctrine of "separate but equal" but which allowed massive inequalities, still be the law of the land?

Housing and Privacy

If you are willing, Justice Thomas, to consider how the history of civil rights in this country has shaped your public life, then imagine for a moment how it has affected your private life....In1912, Virginia enacted a statute giving cities and towns the right to pass ordinances that would divide their municipalities into segregated districts for black and white residents. Segregated districts were designated white or black depending on the race of the majority of the residents. It became a crime for any black person to move into and occupy residence in an area known as a white district. Similarly it was a crime for any white person to move into a black district.

If Virginia's law of 1912 still prevailed, and if your community passed laws similar to the former ordinances of Richmond and Ashland, you would not be able to live in your own house in Virginia. Fortunately, the Virginia ordinances and statutes were in effect nullified by a case brought by the NAACP in 1915 where a similar statute of the City of Louisville was declared unconstitutional.

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

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- Former U.S. envoy to South Africa Edward Perkins is appointed ambassador to United Nations.
- A New York Assemblywoman introduces bill calling for Black History Year in 1993.
- Sixteen Democratic presidential primaries and caucuses remain.
- **Across the Nation** looks at elections in new majority-black Congressional districts in North Carolina and Virginia, Dallas State Senator Eddie Bernice Johnson is headed for Washington.

Supreme Court Ruling Eases Court-Ordered Desegregation

On March 31 the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling easing judicial supervision of court-ordered desegregation. While the decision does not require lower courts to release schools from desegregation plans, it grants them wider latitude to do so. Some court watchers believe the decision signals an imminent return to segregated schools.

In *Freeman* v. *Pitts*, the Dekalb County (Georgia) school system sought relief from its 1969 desegregation court order, claiming that demographic changes and shifts in housing patterns, rather than intentional discrimination, accounted for any remaining racial imbalance in its student population. More than 70 percent of the pupils in the suburban Atlanta school system are minority, compared to six percent when it first came under desegregation orders. More than half of the black students, who live in mainly black neighborhoods in southern Dekalb County, attend predominantly black schools. Similarly, over half of the white students, most of whom live in northern Dekalb County, attend predominantly white schools.

In an 8-0 ruling in favor of the school system (Justice **CLARENCE THOMAS** did not vote because he had not been confirmed when the case was heard), the High Court decided that because the schools are not responsible for the demographic changes and housing patterns that have led to racially segregated student populations, they could not be held responsible for correcting such racial imbalances.

The ruling reversed and remanded to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals a 1989 decision of that court. That decision had refused to release the school system from any portion of its 1969 desegregation order until integration had been achieved in six areas: student assignment, transportation, teacher and administration allotment, allocation of resources, quality of facilities, and extracurricular activities.

The majority opinion, written by Justice **ANTHONY KENNEDY** and joined by Chief Justice **WILLIAM REHNQUIST** and justices **ANTONIN SCALIA**, **DAVID SOUTER**, and **BYRON WHITE**, permits district courts to withdraw judicial supervision piecemeal as compliance with a court-imposed desegregation plan is achieved in each area. In the case of Dekalb county, this means the school system can discontinue busing if the lower court determines that desegregation with respect to student assignment has been achieved, while continuing to adhere to court mandates in other areas.

Five concurrences were filed that suggest there is "disagreement among the justices on the issue," according to **GARY ORFIELD**, professor of education and social policy at Harvard University and an authority on school desegregation. Justices Scalia and Souter concurred in the majority opinion and Justice **HARRY BLACKMUN**, in what sounds like a dissent, filed a concurring opinion that was signed by justices **SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR** and

JOHN PAUL STEVENS. The Blackmun concurrence questioned whether the school board might not have "created or contributed to" the racially identifiable schools, saying that "what might seem to be purely private preferences in housing may in fact have been created in part by actions of the school districts." With that in mind Blackmun said the district court should more closely examine the school district's actions and influence on residential segregation.

Justice Souter's concurrence suggested that he recognized a link between school desegregation and housing patterns and that the relationship should be taken into account when considering desegregation supervision. Pointing to the use of portable classrooms (trailers) in southern Dekalb County schools, which are predominantly black, Souter noted that discriminatory factors in the provisions of neighborhood schools may cause parents to make residential choices. He wrote that the "vestige of discrimination in one factor may serve as incubator for resegregation in others."

JANELL BYRD, an attorney in the Washington, D.C., office of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, is cautious in her reaction to the ruling. She points out that the decision does not totally eliminate desegregation because "the concept of school desegregation is still intact; school systems are still required to adhere to other factors of court ordered mandates." However, she adds, the high Court's second conservative ruling in as many years on court-supervised desegregation is reason for concern. (In January 1991, the court outlined conditions for an end to such supervision in *Board of Education of Oklahoma City* v. *Dowell*. See February 1991 *FOCUS*.)

Orfield says the Freeman decision is not a clarion call for rapid resegregation, but he predicts that it will spur more school systems to seek release from their court orders. He says although the Court made it easier to opt out, lawyers may not be eager to pursue release because the decision does not force district judges to dismantle desegregation plans. Orfield believes the presence of conservative judges appointed by former President **RONALD REAGAN** and President **GEORGE BUSH** will determine the future, because the decision gives a tremendous amount of power to lower district court judges. "This is taking the issue of integration back into politics," said Orfield. He offered this prognosis: "There will eventually be resegregation. It won't happen fast; but it will happen."

Former Envoy to South Africa Tapped for U.N. Ambassadorship

EDWARD JOSEPH PERKINS, the first black person to serve as United States ambassador to South Africa, was nominated by President Bush in February and confirmed by the U.S. Senate on April 2 as the United States representative to the United Nations. Perkins will replace **THOMAS PICKERING** who was named ambassador to India.

Perkins' nomination as ambassador to South Africa in 1986 by president Reagan came at a time when the U.S. government was divided over what direction its policy on South Africa should take. Congress adopted a don't-do-business-with-them stance against the apartheid government, and backed that up with stiff economic sanctions legislation passed over Reagan's veto. The Administration, on the other hand, not only vetoed sanctions legislation, but also advocated "constructive engagement" to encourage change in South Africa through continued trade and polite persuasion.

Perkins' appointment was viewed warily in some circles where it was argued that because of South Africa's racial history, a black person could not be effective in the role. Former U.S. ambassador to Senegal **WALTER CARRINGTON** says Perkins' performance in the post, which he held from 1986 to 1989, won over his harshest critics and the nay-sayers. Perkins established productive relationships with white South Africans and broke new diplomatic ground in reaching out to South Africa's black community, cultivating meaningful relationships, and even attending the trials of some South African dissidents.

A 64-year-old Louisiana native, Perkins holds a Ph.D. in public policy from the University of Southern California. He began his diplomatic career in 1966 as an intern with the Agency for International Development. From there he moved on to hold several distinguished positions, including counselor for political affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Ghana, 1978-1981; deputy chief of missions at the U.S. Embassy in Liberia, 1981-1983; director of the Office of West African Affairs in the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs, 1983-1985; ambassador to

Liberia, 1985-1986; and director general of the Foreign Service and director of personnel at the State Department since 1989. Perkins is scheduled to assume his office on May 13.

Bill Seeks to Proclaim 1993 Black History Year

New York state assemblywoman **GERALDINE L. DANIELS**, a Democrat representing Harlem's 70th assembly district, is spearheading a drive to declare 1993 "Black History Year," commemorating 130 years since the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Daniels, who chairs the assembly's majority Democratic conference, has introduced legislation to that effect in the state assembly and is urging black elected officials at the federal, state and municipal levels to do likewise. A commemorative measure supported by the state's black caucus, the legislation does not require any outlay of government funds.

Daniels says her proposal would enable black Americans to reflect on their past and current achievements and "chart a course for the survival and progress of black Americans for the next 130 years....We must face the future with a plan that will benefit our African-American children." The assemblywoman hopes that black churches and organizations will adopt similar resolutions and plan year-long events for their communities. She will be encouraging corporations and advertising agencies to work with the black print media and broadcast outlets in planning special editions and programs during the year.

Schedule of Remaining Democratic Presidential Primaries

Date	State	Caucus/Primary	# of Delegates*
April 28	Pennsylvania	Primary	169
May 3	Guam	Caucus	3
May 5	District of Columbia	Primary	17
	Indiana	Primary	77
	North Carolina	Primary	84
May 12	Nebraska	Primary	25
	West Virginia	Primary	31
May 19	Oregon	Primary	47
May 26	Arkansas	Primary	36
	Kentucky	Primary	52
June 2	Alabama	Primary	55
	California	Primary	348
	Montana	Primary	16
	New Jersey	Primary	105
	New Mexico	Primary	25
	Ohio	Primary	151
TOTAL			1,241

As of April 20, the standings in the delegate race were as follows:

Bill Clinton	1,269
Paul Tsongas	535
Jerry Brown	288

* 2,145 delegates are needed to win the Democratic nomination.

Across The Nation

NORTH CAROLINA: Congressional redistricting in the Tarheel state has created two majority-black districts. The 12th congressional district, dubbed I-85, represents a stretch of territory along that interstate from Durham to Charlotte. In this race, Greensboro city council member **EARL JONES**, former Winston-Salem alderman **LARRY D. LITTLE**, Durham state representative **HENRY M. "MICKEY" MICHAUX, JR.**, and former Charlotte state senator **MELVIN WATT** make up the slate for the Democratic nomination in the May 5 primary. Michaux and Watt enjoy the strongest name recognition and many analysts see this contest as a two-way race between them. Michaux, a senior partner in his own law firm, is serving his seventh term in the state house. He is a former U.S. attorney for the middle district of North Carolina, a position to which he was appointed in 1977 by President **JIMMY CARTER**.

Watt, also an attorney, served two years as a state senator (1984-1986), completing the unexpired term of black state senator **PHIL BERRY**, who died in office. He opted not to run for a full term in 1986 in order to spend more time with his family. Watt served as campaign manager for Charlotte architect and former mayor **HARVEY GANTT**'s successful bids for city council, mayor, and his unsuccessful U.S. Senate race against incumbent **JESSE HELMS**.

The Republican field for the 12th district includes three black candidates: former Guildford County clerk of the court **BARBARA GORE WASHINGTON** of Greensboro; assistant secretary of state of human resources **GEORGE JONES, SR.** of Raleigh; and **O.C. STAFFORD**, a computer analyst and real estate agent from Greensboro. According to a spokesperson with the National Republican Committee, the GOP is "pushing" Washington's candidacy, but no Republican nominee is expected to fare well in this Democratic district in the general election.

Seven Democratic hopefuls are vying for the state's other majority-black seat representing the 1st congressional district. The black contestants seeking the new Fayetteville and Wilmington area seat are: former Warren County commissioner **EVA CLAYTON** of Littleton; attorney and three-term state representative **THOMAS HARDAWAY** of Enfield; **STACCATO POWELL**, a Methodist minister from Wilson; and **WILLIE RIDDICK**, a former staffer in the district office of retiring incumbent congressman **WALTER JONES, SR.** The white contenders are Stokes businessman **DON SMITH**; Windsor mayor **TOM BRANDON III**; and **WALTER B. JONES, JR.**, of Farmville, a five-term state representative and son of the congressman. Among the black candidates, Clayton and Riddick have the highest name recognition and both have been active in local politics for several years. Clayton was a county commissioner for eight years and assistant secretary of the state's Department of Natural Resources and Community Development for four years. Riddick served in Congressman Jones' office for more than 10 years, and he is a former member of the state's Democratic Executive Council and Executive Committee.

Blacks in the district are concerned that low black voter turnout, together with the possibility of splitting the black vote in the large field of candidates, may jeopardize the chances for a black contender to win. Those two factors could work to the benefit of Jones, the most experienced and best known of the white candidates, who only needs 40 percent of the vote to win. The anticipated scenario is a runoff between Jones and Riddick or Clayton. Should that occur, black residents would have to defy their low-turnout history to deliver the victory to a black candidate.

TEXAS: Democratic state senator **EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON** sailed to an expected victory in the March 10 Democratic Congressional primary for the newly created majority black 30th district seat (Dallas). Johnson received 91 percent of the vote over her opponent, black businessman **ADOLPH HAUNTZ**. In the general election in November she will face black Republican **LUCY CAIN**, a 44-year-old salesperson for AT&T, who defeated photographer **KEVIN MALONE** for her party's nomination. Johnson is expected to win in November in the heavily Democratic district.

VIRGINIA: Black candidates are seeking both the Democratic and the Republican nominations for the state's new 64 percent black 3rd congressional district seat, which stretches from Richmond to portions of the state's Tidewater cities of Norfolk, Petersburg, Newport News, Portsmouth, and Hampton. The four Democratic hopefuls are **ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT**, an attorney from Newport News who entered the general assembly in 1978 as a delegate and has been a state senator since 1982; four-term state delegate **JEAN CUNNINGHAM**; **JACQUELYN EPPS**, a Richmond attorney and past chair of the old 3rd district Democratic party; and **JOE FLEMMING**, a Portsmouth Baptist minister.

The Republican contenders are **FREEMAN McCULLERS**, a Richmond bail bondsman, and Richmond businessman **DAN JENKINS**. Jenkins has served as a Republican state central committeeman and is currently chairman of the Black Republican Caucus of Virginia; he is expected to win his party's nomination over McCullers, who has acknowledged voting for both parties through the years. The Republicans will choose their nominee at a May 16 convention, while the Democratic candidate will be chosen in the June 9 primary. According to a state Democratic official, there is no clear front-runner at this point since Cunningham, Epps, and Scott all enjoy high name recognition.

Training Tomorrow's Black Scientists

Philanthropist Supports a University of Maryland Program to Prepare Black Students for Graduate Study in the Sciences

by Wiley A. Hall, 3rd

For decades, historically black colleges and universities took the best and the brightest African-American students and nurtured them, molded them, and instilled in them an overwhelming sense of mission and pride. And for decades, this formula produced the best and the brightest African-American leaders. Now the University of Maryland at Baltimore (UMBC), a research institution in suburban Baltimore with a predominantly white faculty and student body, is using that same formula to improve its academic programs for black students.

UMBC is a 25-year-old, highly regarded public university with about 10,300 graduate and undergraduate students. The school has earned a national reputation in biotechnological research and biochemistry. Last year, a third of UMBC's undergraduate students went on to professional and graduate schools—the highest such percentage among public colleges and universities in Maryland.

In 1988, UMBC launched the Meyerhoff Scholarship program by providing full academic scholarships to 19 African-American men who had excelled in math and science in high school. The school's initial goal was threefold: to take successful young high school students and turn them into successful college students; to reverse the decline of black men in the sciences; and ultimately, to create a determined, talented crop of Ph.D.s in science and math who would be role models for generations to come.

The need for the program is clear. Currently, approximately 13 percent of UMBC's undergraduates and five percent of graduate school students are African-Americans. The overwhelming majority of both the graduate and undergraduate degrees awarded to African Americans during the 1980s were in either the humanities or business fields.

Creating Role Models

The scholarship program owes its origins and much of its success to the efforts of two men, Robert E. Meyerhoff, a wealthy developer and philanthropist who was trained as an engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski III, executive vice president of UMBC and the second-highest ranking administrator at the institution, the first African-American to hold that position. Meyerhoff is a member of a prominent Maryland family well known for supporting the arts in Baltimore, including principal funding for Meyerhoff Hall, the home of the Baltimore Symphony.

Mr. Hall is a columnist with the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper.

Initially, Meyerhoff wanted to find a way to boost the general achievement of African-American males whose overall academic performance had been poor to average. But Hrabowski and Meyerhoff looked at math and science majors at UMBC and on campuses across the country, and found that even the promising students—both black and white—were not doing well. Hrabowski noted, for instance, that his survey of the past performances of bright African-American students at UMBC with high school academic records similar to the Meyerhoff scholars revealed that many had "bled out" of the sciences. "Many black students entering UMBC couldn't handle the math," says Hrabowski. "They would get one poor grade, get discouraged, and change their majors to business or the social sciences."

"This is particularly true for black students on a majority white campus," Hrabowski says. "Black students have to deal with a heightened sense of alienation." Most campuses have few black faculty, and many black students come from school systems where the level of academic competition is low. They are so used to being the best and the brightest in their schools that in many cases they come unprepared for the academic rigor that is required.

According to Hrabowski, the challenges were: how many can we keep in math and the sciences; how many can we keep above a B average; and how many can we keep enthusiastic enough to want to pursue an advanced degree in graduate school?

Dramatic Results

"Frankly," said Hrabowski, "when I looked at all of that, I had hoped to see maybe half of the original 19 succeed." Not only are the original 19 still in the program, but after three years, there are now 70 Meyerhoff scholars, 25 of them women. All 70 students have remained in a math or science program and all have maintained at least a B average. Among the majors pursued by the scholars are chemistry, engineering, computer science, biotechnology, and pre-medicine. The top student, Ahmad Ridley, had maintained a 4.0 average as he entered his junior year. UMBC officials expect 12 of the first 19 scholars to go on to graduate school when they finish. The other seven either are undecided at this point or are leaning toward employment in science- or engineering-related fields.

The scholars come from a range of backgrounds. About half come from homes with college-educated parents, while the other half will be the first in their families to obtain a college degree. The students come from both the

Training

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suburbs and the inner city and from both single- and two-parent households. A significant number were either the oldest child in their family or the only child. They tended to have read more than average and they came from families that emphasized strong personal values.

The school works to get the students on track right from the start. Freshman scholars are brought onto campus for a six-week summer preparatory session where they get to know each other, the faculty, and their academic advisors. During this period, they are required to take an introductory course in African-American studies so that they are not made to feel that this aspect of their identity is unimportant. They also attend cultural events, such as plays and concerts, and meet with black community and political leaders. Throughout their academic career, the scholars meet to see how working as a team can help those with special needs. "Students who are successful have the responsibility of working with students who are having problems," notes Hrabowski. "The failure of one is seen as the failure of all."

> "Students who are successful have the responsibility of working with students who are having problems....The failure of one is seen as the failure of all."

One student admitted that she had become involved in too many extracurricular activities to the detriment of her grades. She and her group discussed which activities were important and which she could drop. Her grades improved markedly the following semester. Other students tend to underestimate the academic rigors they will face in planning their courses. Counselors note a tendency for students to prematurely enroll in advanced placement mathematics courses, or to overload their schedules with too many demanding courses. The emphasis on the group and on teamwork makes it easier for students to confront these issues, regroup, and improve.

"I like the fact that they introduced us to our professors and other people we could go to if we needed help," says Ahmad Ridley, who plans to pursue a Ph.D. in mathematics. "I think that made a difference. It made us feel more like a part of the campus."

Eric Brown, an interdisciplinary major in chemistry and history who attended a predominantly white high school in Pasadena, Maryland, says he was most excited and surprised by the prospect of working with other talented African-American males. "In high school," he says, "I got along with most people. I wasn't ostracized or anything, but I still felt alone, like I was struggling against the odds.... Then you go to this program and see a group of black men just like you, with the same energy level, the same sense of excitement, and you just say, 'Wow! There's still hope out there.' It was almost like spontaneous combustion."

While the initial support for the program came from Meyerhoff's personal fortune, corporations, such as American Telephone and Telegraph, Inc., and Apple Computers Inc., and government agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Security Agency, have rushed to support the Meyerhoff Scholarship program to such a degree that the university has been able to establish a $1 million endowment.

The program has even inspired the mother of sophomore Aliceson King to enter the program. Carolyn King, who has a masters degree in engineering from Loyola University, is now seeking a Ph.D. at UMBC in computer science. King says that although she had been thinking about going back for a doctorate for some time, her daughter's experiences at UMBC made her decide to choose that school. She's been dubbed the school's first "super-Meyerhoff" scholar. King, who is president of a newly formed parents' support group for the Meyerhoff scholars, says the program nurtures the students and cultivates a sense of togetherness and belonging to UMBC that other campuses don't provide.

A Critical Mass of Black Scientists

By next fall, there will be over 100 Meyerhoff scholars on campus. Before this program, the university graduated a total of seven black students in math and science over a 10-year period. "We are to the point where I can see this university taking a substantial step toward increasing the pool of black professionals in science and engineering," Hrabowski notes. In 1988, African-American men and women earned a total of 231 Ph.D.s in science and engineering nationwide (less than two percent of the total).

Hrabowski says the program has been useful for the other students and faculty at UMBC to see talented black students, especially black males, doing so well in chemistry and calculus. "If you haven't seen it before, you don't really believe on a gut level that it can happen." As for their success at UMBC, the scholars themselves say the most important factor was that they felt connected both to the university and to each other.

Other universities have adopted features of the Meyerhoff program. But some educators note that the kind of intense commitment needed to duplicate the program in full is missing on most campuses. Few schools can boast of an African-American administrator who has a position as high as Hrabowski's. And few enjoy a wealthy benefactor with the kind of interest in the issue that Meyerhoff has shown.

But Hrabowski dismisses the notion that the success of UMBC's program is personality-driven. "It is an institutional commitment," he says. "The needs of the nation's work force in which white males are expected to become the minority through the early part of the next century leave universities no other choice but to make this kind of commitment now." ■

Black Philanthropy: Centuries of Self-Help

A Forthcoming Joint Center Book Illustrates How Black Institutions Have Been on the Cutting Edge of Social Progress in America

This article was adapted from portions of A Hand Up: Black Philanthropy and Self-Help in America *by Emmett D. Carson, former research associate at the Joint Center and now program officer at the Ford Foundation. The publication will be released this summer.*

Black philanthropy in America is a rich tradition that dates back to colonial days, yet much of that tradition remains unseen and unheralded. Ignorance about this history has prompted accusations from some quarters that the black community is not doing its fair share and exhortations to African Americans to "help their own." Yet, humanitarian activity by blacks on behalf of their own has remained central to African-American culture—and to its survival—for more than two centuries.

The foundations for black philanthropy were laid during the colonial period with the establishment of black churches. These churches often built mutual aid societies or fraternal organizations to address the social and material needs of parishioners and the larger community.

Such aid societies operated out of view of the white society—for good reason. By 1723, Maryland laws restricted independent religious meetings by blacks. This situation did not change when our nation won independence. By 1835, slave states including Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina banned black social and fraternal organizations.

Education, denied to slaves by law, was a special concern. The New York African Society for Mutual Relief, founded in 1808, established New York City's first black grammar school. Black literary societies became widespread by the beginning of the nineteenth century, making books and libraries available to the black reader.

The Underground Railroad

The 1860 U.S. Census recorded that more than 90 percent of the four million blacks in the South were slaves. Slavery and the response of blacks and whites to it defined a new direction for black philanthropy: social change. Initiated around 1804 and operating until the outbreak of the Civil War, the Underground Railroad helped about 100,000 slaves to escape from the South and then to cope with the hostile conditions they met elsewhere. It carried out national and international fund-raising campaigns, and black business people were among those who regularly contributed time and money. Both blacks and whites served as volunteer "conductors" on this railroad of escape, and offered their homes as stations.

In the late 1800s, black churches established a large number of elementary schools, high schools, and colleges. Between 1800 and 1900, the African Methodist Episcopal church alone allocated over one million dollars to help maintain its 20 colleges and universities. In 1908, the American Baptist Home Missionary Society established 23 black institutions of higher education.

A Debate About Directions

At the turn of the century two powerful thinkers, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, engaged in a national debate on achieveing black progress. Washington, an ex-slave and the president of Tuskegee Institute, saw self-improvement and vocational training as primary avenues. Numerous organizations were formed to put his philosophy into practice. The Farmer's Improvement Society of Texas, for example, was founded to help rural blacks obtain housing as well as health and life insurance and to help extricate themselves from sharecropping.

Du Bois, a Harvard Ph.D., focused his appeal for action on the "talented tenth," the growing cadre of educated blacks, urging them to wage a direct assault on the segregation and peonage blacks then faced, including their nearly total disenfranchisement from the political process. Out of the new commitment to social change emerged the NAACP, which Du Bois helped to found in 1909, and what is today the National Urban League, first organized in 1910.

The overriding goal of black philanthropy, through these organizations, came to be seen as the elimination of segregation. In 1941, as the nation entered the Second World War, black Americans decried segregation in the defense industry. A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, informed President Roosevelt that unless the he outlawed discrimination in defense industries and the federal government, Randolph would lead a march of 100,000 blacks on Washington. Roosevelt responded by issuing Executive Order 8802.

After the 1960s, blacks developed more institutional mechanisms for charitable giving, including black foundations and private philanthropy by wealthy blacks. Black-oriented federated fundraising organizations opened new opportunities for individual giving by non-wealthy blacks. In 1973, the four-year-old United Black Fund of Washington became the first black charitable federation included in Washington's Combined Federal Campaign, an annual fund drive held at federal government worksites. Several similar federations are located around the country.

Black philanthropy is a tapestry of compassion, self-help, and hard work that is still being woven today. With crossthreads formed of centuries of tradition and creative responses to emerging needs, black philanthropy reflects a longstanding commitment by black Americans to improving the lives of their brothers, sisters, and selves. ■

Higginbotham

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Had you overcome all of those barriers to housing and if you and your present wife decided that you wanted to reside in Virginia, you would nonetheless have been violating the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which the Virginia Supreme Court as late as 1966 said was consistent with the federal constitution, because of the overriding state interest in the institution of marriage. Although it was four years after the *Brown* case, Richard Perry Loving and his wife, Mildred Jeter Loving, were convicted in 1958 and originally sentenced to one year in jail because of their interracial marriage. As an act of magnanimity the trial court later suspended the sentences with the provision that the couple leave the state not to return for 25 years.

If the Virginia courts had been sustained by the United States Supreme Court in 1966 and if, after your marriage, you and your wife had, like the Lovings, defied the Virginia statute by continuing to live in your present residence, you could have been in the penitentiary today rather than serving as a Justice on the United States Supreme Court.

Conclusion

This Letter may imply that I am somewhat skeptical as to what your performance will be as a Supreme court Justice. Candidly, I and many other thoughtful Americans are very concerned about your appointment to the Supreme Court.

I am sixty-three years old. In my lifetime I have seen African-Americans denied the right to vote, the opportunities to a proper education, to work and to live where they choose. I have seen and *known* segregation. But I have also seen the decision in *Brown* rendered. I have seen the first African-American sit on the Supreme Court. And I have seen brave and courageous people, black and white, give their lives for the civil rights cause. My memory of them has always been without bitterness or nostalgia. But today it is sometimes without hope; for I wonder whether their magnificent achievements are in jeopardy. I wonder whether (and how far) the majority of the Supreme Court will continue to retreat from protecting the rights of the poor, women, the disadvantaged, minorities and the powerless. And if, tragically, it does continue, I wonder whether you Justice Thomas, an African-American, will be part of that majority.

No one would be happier than I if the record you will establish on the Supreme Court in years to come demonstrates that my apprehensions were unfounded. You were born into injustice tempered by the hard reality of what it means to be poor and black in America, and especially to be poor because you are black. You have found a door newly cracked open and you have escaped. I trust you shall not forget that many who preceded you and many who follow you have found, and will find, the door of equal opportunity slammed in their faces through no fault of their own. And I also know that time and the tides of history often call out of men and women qualities that even they did not know lay within them. And so, with hope to balance my apprehensions, I wish you well as a thoughtful and worthy successor to Justice Marshall in the ever ongoing struggle to assure equal justice under law for all persons.

Sincerely

A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.
Chief Judge Emeritus, U.S. Court of Appeals
for the Third Circuit

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