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20th Anniversary Issue

FOCUS

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political Studies®

On to the Next 20 Years

The Joint Center Will Continue to be a Critical Policy Resource to Decision Makers Addressing The Next Century's Challenges

An Agenda for Healing: Congressional Initiatives for 1990

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Louis Martin, the Godfather

As Its First Chairman, Martin Guided the Joint Center Through Difficult Beginnings; As a Board Member, His Counsel Has Been Invaluable Over the Last 20 Years

A History of the Joint Center 1970–1990

For 20 Years, the Joint Center Has Led the Way, Through Its Policy Research, to Make American Political, Economic, and Social Institutions More Responsive to the Concerns of African-Americans

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On to the Next 20 Years

The Joint Center Will Continue to be a Critical Policy Resource to Decision Makers Addressing The Next Century's Challenges

by Eddie N. Williams

Next month, the Joint Center celebrates its 20th anniversary. For us this is a dramatic and historic occasion, a time to reflect on beginnings and achievements and to express gratitude to individuals and enterprises that have made our work possible. It is also a time for rededication to our unique mission as a research and public policy institution: to contribute to the national interest by helping black Americans participate fully in the political and economic mainstreams of our society.

This issue of *Focus* includes a historical essay on the Joint Center's first 20 years by Dr. Darlene Clark Hine, the John A. Hannah Professor of History at Michigan State University. The essay has been adapted from her forthcoming book on the subject, to be published in the fall of 1990 by University Press of America.

While celebrating our past, we are also developing a strategic vision of the future. This vision is reflected in one important change we have made at this juncture. The Joint Center has undergone a slight name change. Our new name, Joint Center for Political *and Economic* Studies, conveys, with its two added words, a more accurate definition of who we are and what we do. The Joint Center's name change indicates our growing involvement in economic policy areas, in both national and international affairs. We believe that economic empowerment will be a major thrust of black aspirations well into the 21st century, and the Joint Center is committed to responding to these aspirations in the years ahead as it has to black political aspirations over the past 20 years.

The dramatic progress blacks have made since the end of World War II constitutes one of the major social revolutions in modern times. This fact is underscored—anecdotally and symbolically, to be sure—by blacks serving as justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, head of the Democratic Party, and chief executives of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of New York.

In the private sector, as well, blacks have broken old barriers to achievement. Media superstars now receive top billing alongside black athletes and, in a few cases, black coaches of major sports teams. In 1989 two black businessmen became the principal owners of a National Basketball Association franchise. Another owns an international business of the Fortune 500 variety, and more blacks are appearing at the apex of the corporate pyramid. Furthermore, the black middle class has grown substantially over the past two decades.

Research provides further evidence of improved well-being among blacks over the past five decades: in enhanced income and living standards; health and life expectancy; and educational, occupational, and residential opportunities. While different studies and analysts report different degrees of progress on these measures, there is virtually no serious disagreement about the basic direction of change.

FOCUS
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While progress may have been slow in coming and may still elude more than a third of all blacks, it nevertheless is tangible evidence of what is desirable and achievable and it establishes a framework for initiatives by blacks, whites, and governments at all levels in the future. One clear goal of the Joint Center's research and policy analyses for the '90s is to give impetus and support to the continuing process of positive change.

Building on past achievements will contribute significantly to future progress. So, too, will documentation and articulation of continuing problems, such as the current resurgence in overt racism, and of the political and public policy implications of those problems.

The resurgence of incidents of manifest racism coincides with social conditions that underscore the deep, longstanding consequences of a history of racial inequality. The still widening gap between blacks and whites in educational achievement, the rapidly growing population of urban blacks mired in poverty, the scourges of drugs and lifestyle-related diseases that ravage large segments of the black population, and the continued deterioration of family and other institutions, all fuel a sense of gloom and permanent handicap.

The changes we have all witnessed in race relations, both progress and retrogression, illustrate the complexity of the problems of race, the difficulty of identifying lasting solutions, and the need to keep searching for workable answers.

Looking toward the year 2000, the Joint Center's research and information programs will play a critical role as blacks and the nation confront a future in which racial differences will continue both to influence the public policy agenda and to create tensions that demand special attention. Consider these projections:

- Blacks will constitute a growing proportion of the labor pool, and many of them will be poorly prepared to compete in a complex global economy.
- Without greater private sector involvement and more vigorous government action, the overall economic condition of blacks will continue to lag behind that of whites.
- The black community faces increasing polarization into two disparate and growing groups: a middle class and a poverty population characterized by teenage pregnancy, crime, drug abuse, poor educational opportunities, and joblessness.
- Public policy is becoming less race-specific at all levels of government.
- The black community will play an increasingly aggressive role in the search for solutions to the problems it faces.

For two decades now, through its research, its unique access to black leaders, and its consensus-building activities, the Joint Center has met the need for objective, critical thinking about public policies that affect race relations in America and about the political process by which these policies are developed and implemented. This need is becoming ever more urgent.

In the years ahead, the Joint Center will continue to strive both to elucidate the issues of race in America and to anticipate their direction as we address the pressing political and economic needs of black Americans and of the nation. We pledge our best efforts to meet the challenges before us as a center of intellectual discovery and a wellspring of practical political knowledge; as an organization of unquestioned credibility; and as a forum in which scholars and political leaders with diverse interests and views can exchange ideas, interact on public policy issues, and search for consensus. ■

The Joint Center Changes Its Name

The Joint Center for Political Studies, the nation's preeminent black think tank, has adopted a new name: Joint Center for Political *and Economic* Studies. The name change reflects the institution's growing involvement in the economic policy issues that determine the quality of life for all Americans.

Announcing the name change, the Joint Center's president Eddie N. Williams, said: "Our new name reflects the emergence of economic issues as the key challenges for blacks in the decade of the nineties and signals our intention to help meet those challenges.

"Twenty years ago, when the Joint Center was established, the main challenge before us was to secure the power of the vote for black Americans and to provide useful information and training for newly elected black officials. It was this need that the Joint Center was created to fill. Today, more and more, the focus of black aspirations is economic advancement. While continuing to respond to black political strivings, the Joint Center will now be more responsive to the economic imperatives that we must confront in this decade and the next century. Trade and tax policies, business productivity, and a better trained work force are among the issues that will shape our future and our nation's future and determine our place in the world.

JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES

"The expansion of the Joint Center's program to encompass domestic and international economic issues is an evolutionary process that has been well underway for several years now. Joint Center research, publications, and special projects have been dedicated to such issues as schooling for minority students, employment, and poverty. Thus, our new name makes official a change that we have been growing toward over time, as we grapple with the public policy issues and challenges of the day. However, our mission remains the same: to promote full participation for blacks in the political and economic life of our nation."

An Agenda for Healing: Congressional Initiatives for 1990

As External Threats to National Security Decrease, the Congressional Black Caucus Is Pushing to Redirect Our National Priorities Toward Human Development

by David C. Ruffin

Members of Congress are seizing on the opportunity presented by the recent advent of non-socialist governments in Eastern Europe and Central America. As the rationale fades for increased defense spending, policy makers are calling for reinvestment in solutions to long deferred problems like the growth in illiteracy and infant mortality and the declining skill levels of the labor force. Nevertheless, these proposals must survive stiff opposition from congressional conservatives and the Bush administration who charge that the programs are too expensive. The following are some of the initiatives that the 101st Congress is considering in its second session.

Black Caucus Budget Alternative

In March, the Congressional Black Caucus introduced its "Quality of Life Budget" as an alternative federal budget proposal for fiscal year 1991. The Caucus challenges Congress and the Bush administration to reprogram tens of billions of dollars from armaments and reinvest them in the nation's human and physical resources. The CBC budget would reduce spending for military and space programs by $25.3 billion, raise $19.8 billion in additional revenues, and spend $46.5 billion more on social programs. The following figures show how the CBC budget differs from the administration's proposal for FY91 in major program areas (figures in billions):

Defense	-$23.711
General Science, Space and Technology	-1.409
Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services	+4.201
Health	+3.845
Medicare	+5.538
Income Security (includes subsidized housing)	+5.262
Social Security	+.938
Drug Programs	+.992
Transportation	+1.210
International Affairs (including foreign aid)	+1.714
Natural Resources and Environment	+.660

Mr. Ruffin is the editor of *Focus* magazine.

In presenting its budget, the CBC condemns the continued neglect of those in need—the young, the physically disadvantaged, and the jobless. The black legislators call for a federal fiscal policy that reaffirms a national concern for social and economic justice.

Head Start Reauthorization

Head Start, the successful early child development program now observing its 25th anniversary, is due to expire this year. Democrats and Republicans agree that the program is effective and should be reauthorized for another four years, but disagree on how much the government ought to pay for it. On March 1, Rep. Dale Kildee (D-Mich.), chair of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Human Resources, introduced H.R. 4150, his "full funding" proposal to authorize $2.7 billion for fiscal year 1991 ($1 billion more than in fiscal year 1990). Kildee's bill would fund Head Start for eligible three-, four-,and five-year-olds at an estimated cost of $3,500 per pupil.

The bill would expand the proportion of eligible children enrolled in Head Start from 18 percent (the official estimates of those now served) to 40 percent. The measure would also pay for program improvements and salary increases for teachers and staff. Overall, it would raise Head Start funding to $4.3 billion in fiscal year 1992, $5.9 billion in 1993, and $7.7 billion in 1994. A companion bill, S. 2229, has been introduced by Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.).

African and Caribbean Development

The Congressional Black Caucus plans to introduce the Mickey Leland African and Caribbean Development Act to double foreign aid to Africa and the Caribbean to nearly $1 billion. Funds for the expanded aid package would go toward economic development, long-term debt restructuring, and relief from the famine on the horn of Africa that threatens over five million people with starvation. The bill also earmarks $260 million for Caribbean development assistance. Caucus chair Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.) has warned that CBC members would vote against any omnibus foreign aid bill that did not include these provisions. ■

March 1990

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue:

- **Selma remains divided over the firing of Norward Roussell, the city's first black school superintendent; meanwhile, Boston removes Laval Wilson as its first black top school executive**
- **Small town mayors receive training on how to be better municipal administrators**
- **Across the Nation looks at Coy Payne's mayoral victory in Arizona; Maxine Waters in Los Angeles and former Bush administration official J. Kenneth Blackwell in Cincinnati are running for Congress; and former congressman Charles Diggs is running for a state legislative post in Maryland**

Firing of Selma's Black School Chief Angers Community

Selma, Alabama, where voting rights marchers were brutally beaten by police on the Edmund Pettus Bridge 25 years ago on "Bloody Sunday," is in the throes of a new battle that is once again pitting the black and white communities against one another. The issue is the December firing of Dr. NORWARD ROUSSELL, the city's first black school superintendent, by the Selma School Board. The dismissal spurred black students to boycott classes and moved black parents to protest the actions of the school board and the city administration. All the black members of the school board have resigned in reaction to the dismissal. Whether Roussell stays or goes is now in the hands of the federal courts, since he has filed a $10 million law suit against the school board for violating his civil rights.

In a decision that broke exactly along racial lines, the white-majority school board (with six white members and five black members) voted last December 21 to dismiss Roussell and to not renew his contract. Roussell, whose current contract expires on June 30, was hired in 1987 and earns an annual salary of $80,000. The board's official reason for firing him was that he had a "dictatorial" style of management. But according to blacks who are protesting the dismissal, Roussell was fired because he ended a tracking system whereby talented black students were routinely excluded from advanced classes that seemed to be reserved for whites. "Ninety percent of the white students were in the higher tracks and 90 percent of the black students were in the lower tracks," say attorney J. L. chestnut, who represents the Best Educational Support Team, a parents' protest organization. In this new form of segregation, many black students have been kept out of college preparatory courses like algebra and biology. "They only want to train black kids to be carpenters and mechanics," Chestnut says.

The five black school board members resigned in protest immediately after the vote. Their opposition was echoed by the black community when a quarter of the school system's 6,000 students, most of whom are black, walked out of classes. Parents have been demonstrating day and night against the administration of white Mayor **JOE SMITHERMAN** in front of City Hall. Tension mounted in February as about 150 black students occupied Selma High School for five days. Mayor Smitherman (who was also mayor in 1965 at the time of Bloody Sunday) sought a court order to forcibly remove the students, but federal district judge **CHARLES BUTLER** denied the request. The denial precipitated a decision by education and city officials to close the entire 11-school system.

Roussell, who disagreed with the boycott, eventually convinced the students to leave the Selma High voluntarily. The city's chools reopened on February 13, surrounded by state troopers and 200 National Guardsmen who had

been ordered to the scene by Republican Gov. **GUY HUNT.** Relenting to community pressure, the school board reinstated Roussell, but only to finish out this contract year. While the black students have returned to their classes, more than 300 white students have been withdrawn from the public schools by parents who feared for their safety, and they now swell the area's white private schools.

There were no blacks on either the city council or school board in 1965 when Selma made history as the violent starting point of the 54-mile peaceful march to the capital city of Montgomery to press for the passage of the Voting Rights Act. The issue for blacks then, as well as now, has been control. Blacks have little control over Selma's school system even though 70 percent of its students are black. And while Selma's black citizens comprise a 52 percent majority of the city's 27,000 population, they have never gained control of city hall. According to black Council-man **WILLIAM KING,** Selma is "still two separate and paranoid communities, even though the blatancy of racism has gone."

In 1988, mayor Smitherman was challenged by a black candidate, city councilman CLEO MANN and one other candidate but he won 54 percent of the vote. Whites have not only held on to the mayor's seat, but they have also maintained a five-to-four majority on the city council through the at-large election of the council president. Control of the council is crucial, because the council and the mayor appoint the school board.

Meanwhile, as blacks continue to demonstrate in front of city hall, the school board has been negotiating with Roussell to accept a financial settlement to leave his post—so far, he has resisted these offers. As far as our children are concerned," says Chestnut, "we are right back where we started from."

Like Selma, Like Boston

The racial tension that has grown out of the Boston School Committee's firing of that city's first black school superintendent, **LAVAL S. WILSON,** is nothing new in a city known for the violence that followed its implementation of court-ordered busing in 1974. The School Committee voted on February 13 to buy out the remaining 16 months of Superintendent Wilson's contract. The total cost of the buyout, in a financially-strapped system, is estimated to be $200,000. The vote was 7-1, with the four black members and one white member of the committee walking out before the vote. Wilson was hired to the Boston post in 1985. He attended a Rockefeller Foundation program in 1970 to train minority school superintendents, and became the first black superintendent in three cities before his Boston appointment: Berkeley, California; Hempstead, N.Y.; and Rochester, N.Y.

Wilson has been accused of having a confrontational style, of aggressively pursuing other jobs since 1987, and of failing to improve low test scores and high dropout rates. The committee voted 7-6 in Wilson's June 1989 professional review to place him under a recurring six-month review based on ten performance criteria. Boston schools have had eight superintendents in nineteen years.

Both Wilson and the committee members who boycotted the vote charge that the performance criteria weren't used in deciding on his dismissal. Boston NAACP President **LOUIS ELISHA** called the firing "a blatant act of racism." White school committee member **JOHN GRADY** called it a "lynching," and black committee member **JOHN O'BRYANT** said "there are those who can't deal with a strong black man as the leader of Boston's schools."

Of the 55,000 students in the city's schools, 75 percent are minority (black, Hispanic, and Asian). The four black members of the School Committee have demanded that, as representatives of the minority community, they should have a voice in selecting Wilson's interim replacement. Boston had an all-white, five-member board before installing a 13-member board in 1983. Four of the 13 members are elected at-large. Local observers speculate that Wilson's firing may become an issue in School Committee elections this year.

Southern Black Mayors Receiving Leadership Training

In an effort to provide technical assistance to black mayors and top administrative officials of small cities and towns, the Washington-based National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) has established the Leadership Institute for Small Municipalities. Since few resources are available to help black may-

ors untangle the problems of governing small municipalities, the institute's training program focuses on seven skill areas: grantsmanship; economic development skills; team building; negotiation; management and administration; leadership; and image building and the ethics of holding office.

The institute conducts its training at local universities in five weekend sessions spread over ten weeks. Typically, the participants are part-time and/or unpaid mayors with full-time jobs outside city hall. One such elected official is **GEORGE BARNES,** two-term mayor of Wabbaseka, Arkansas, population 428. Barnes, who is also on the town's school board, is a part-time Baptist minister and a full-time salesman at an automobile tire company in nearby Pine Bluff.

The median size of the communities in which these officials work is 1,200 people. With the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, a steady stream of blacks have come to occupy the city halls of small southern towns. **Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi, for example, now have 85 black mayors among them. Yet many of these officials are inexperienced. "It's unreasonable to expect a person to automatically know how to run a city after having no prior electoral experience," says QUENTIN LAWSON, executive director of NFBPA. "Our position is that if technical assistance is not provided, at the end of a four-year-term, a black mayor is likely to be no better than his white predecessor. As a result, the hopes and aspirations of his or her black constituents will be frustrated and they may revert to political apathy."**

The first set of training workshops began in October 1989, and the program is expected to continue for at least three years. Officials from Alabama and Mississippi were in the first group. These lower Delta Valley mayors face the same challenges: low educational levels, an unskilled work force, declining economies, and what has come to be known as the hourglass phenomenon—a declining population in which only the very young and very old remain. The first group of graduates (10 mayors and 14 administrators) completed their training in December 1989. Twenty-four additional mayors and administrative officials from Mississippi and Arkansas graduated March 25.

According to Dr. ARCHIE MORRIS III, project director of the Leadership Institute, economic development is one of the most pressing training needs because "most small towns are experiencing problems in raising sufficient revenues and providing jobs for their citizens." Dr. Morris also notes that the most recent participants showed a keen interest in the ethics of holding office and have recommended that the institute address conflict-of-interest situations.

Over the next three years, the Leadership Institute expects to train 90 black mayors and their top administrative staff in 10 additional states that have more than 10 black mayors apiece in: Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois. The Leadership Institute is funded under a $450,000 grant from the W.W. Kellogg Foundation. Established in 1983, NFBPA now has 2,300 members. Its stated mission is to "strengthen the capabilities of black public administrators and to promote the appointment of blacks to executive positions in local governments."

Updates on Recent TrendLetter Stories

• **CLARENCE THOMAS was confirmed March 6 by a voice vote of the Senate to a judgeship on the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit Court.** The only opposition expressed during the floor debate came from Democratic senators **HOWARD METZENBAUM** (Ohio) and **DAVID PRYOR** (Arkansas) who criticized Thomas's handling of age discrimination cases during his eight-year tenure as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Thomas's confirmation was expected to be controversial (see Trendletter, volume 17 nos. 8 & 9, 1989) because of objections arising from his expressed disapproval of affirmative action and perceived lack of vigilance as EEOC chief in processing age and race discrimination claims. However, the Judiciary Committee sent his nomination to the Senate floor with a 12-to-1 favorable vote. **A concern of some black and public interest groups opposed to his confirmation was that the appellate judgeship could pave the way for Thomas's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.**

• **JOHN DUNNE was confirmed as assistant attorney general for civil rights (see Political Trendletter, January 1990) on March 9.** The Senate Judiciary Committee approved the former New York state senator's nomination in a voice vote a day earlier. His Senate confirmation has been greeted with dismay by civil rights leaders who argue that President Bush should have appointed a black person with more civil rights experience rather than a white environmental lawyer.

Across the Nation

ARIZONA: COY PAYNE, sworn in on March 8 as mayor of Chandler (about 30 miles southeast of Phoenix), has become the first black executive of an Arizona city. Payne is a retired junior high school principal who previously served as vice-mayor and member of the Chandler City Council. He defeated white councilwoman JANE DuCOMB by a two-to-one margin on January 23, garnering 65 percent of the vote. What is unusual about Payne's victory is that it occurred in a city of approximately 81,000 residents with a black population of less than five percent.

The election became, in part, a referendum on development. DuComb ran as a pro-development candidate while Payne favors slow growth for Chandler, which has already expanded to almost three times its 1980 population of 29,673. Payne supports limiting airport expansion, for example.

That Payne won where he did is also surprising. Chandler is located in East Valley, a region with a large Mormon population that is perceived to be politically conservative. East Valley is also the home of architect JULIAN SANDERS, who led the successful movement last year to place the state's Martin Luther King holiday on hold until the matter is decided in a referendum in next November's election.

Including Payne, Arizona now has 12 black elected officials. They include three state legislators, three city council members, and five education officials.

CALIFORNIA: After serving 14 years in the California State Assembly, Los Angeles Democrat MAXINE WATERS is running for the 29th congressional district seat of retiring U.S. Rep. AUGUSTUS HAWKINS, a 14-term Democrat. At 82 years of age, Hawkins is the most senior black legislator in Congress. First elected in 1962, he rose through the ranks and by 1984 had become chairman of the important House Education and Labor Committee. Hawkins was the prime mover of the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act passed in 1977, and has been instrumental in the passage of numerous education and child development bills. **Following Hawkins' example, Waters, who worked in the Head Start program before being elected to the state assembly in 1976, has vowed in her campaign to make education "number one on our agenda."**

The 29th district, which gave presidential candidate MICHAEL DUKAKIS 80 percent of its vote in 1988, is considered the most heavily Democratic district in California. It includes part of the City of Los Angeles, whose Watts community was the scene of one of the most destructive riots of the 1960s. Living conditions for Watts residents have improved little since then, with continuing high rates of poverty, crime, and unemployment.

A forcefully articulate and aggressive leader, Waters has become a major political force in the state. She was the first woman elected to chair the Democratic Caucus, one of the highest leadership positions in the state assembly. Her legislative initiatives have resulted in the divestment of state funds from corporations doing business in South Africa and in the creation of the nation's first statewide child abuse prevention training program. And as chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Subcommittee on State Administration, Waters helped establish minority and women set-asides for state procurement contracts.

If elected, Waters should have little trouble adjusting to Washington politics. She is a member of the Democratic National Committee and the National Women's Political Caucus and was also an outspoken supporter of JESSE JACKSON in the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. In the June 5 primary, Waters will face three little known Democrats: LIONEL ALLEN, a naval veteran, TWAIN WILSON, a businessman, and TED ANDROMIDAS, a political consultant.

MARYLAND: Former Detroit Congressman CHARLES DIGGS has announced that he will enter the September 11 primary for a Prince Georges County seat in the Maryland House of Delegates. Black incumbent GLORIA LAWLAH is giving up her seat to run for the state senate. Diggs, a Democrat, was a founding member and first chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, having served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1955 until his resignation in 1980, when he was convicted for taking payroll kickbacks from his congressional employees. Following his conviction, he served seven months of a three-year prison sentence.

Diggs once presided over the House District Committee, and as chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa he was an ardent foe of South Africa's system of apartheid. He also helped found Trans-Africa, the black-American foreign affairs lobby. Before his tenure in Congress, where he represented an inner-city Detroit district, Diggs had served two terms as a Michigan state senator. A licenced mortician, since leaving Congress he has acquired four funeral homes in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Declaring that he only wants the seat for one term, Diggs says his main reason for running in what promises to be a crowded field, "is to be in a strategic position in Annapolis during the reapportionment process in 1991 and 1992." He urges black state legislators across the nation to prepare to participate fully in the upcoming redistricting struggle. Although Maryland is not expected to gain any congressional seats after reapportionment, state and local election districts will certainly be redrawn. Prince Georges County, whose black population has grown dramatically over the last decade, offers real opportunities for the creation of a majority black congressional district. The county lies in the 5th district, currently represented by five-term Democrat STENY HOYER, who is white. Hoyer chairs the House Democratic Caucus and ranks fourth in the House majority leadership.

OHIO: Black Republican J. KENNETH BLACKWELL has resigned his post in the Bush administration to run for Congress from Ohio's 1st district in Cincinnati. Blackwell, who was deputy undersecretary for intergovernmental relations at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, previously served as Cincinnati's mayor and for six terms as city council member. He is pursuing the seat of retiring Democratic Rep. THOMAS LUKEN, who has represented the district since 1976.

The 1st district, which encompasses western Cincinnati and suburban Hamilton County, is only 18 percent black. By appealing to a diverse cross-section of voters, Luken has been elected to seven terms in a district that has supported Republicans in presidential elections since 1980. In 1988, President GEORGE BUSH received 63 percent of the district's vote. Cincinnati's blacks (40 percent of the district's vote comes from Cincinnati), conservative suburban German Catholics, and whites from rural Appalachia have all contributed to Luken's victories.

Blackwell is likely to attract black voters as well as a large portion of the district's conservative white voters. Nevertheless, his opposition will be formidable. In the November general election, Blackwell will probably face Cincinnati's current Democratic Mayor CHARLES LUKEN, the son of the retiring congressman.

Louis Martin, the Godfather

As Its First Chairman, Martin Guided the Joint Center Through Difficult Beginnings, and for 20 Years His Counsel Has Proven Invaluable

by David C. Ruffin

While many were present at the Joint Center's birth, it was the hand of Louis Martin that guided the fledgling institution through its earliest years. Martin's stature as the nation's most politically experienced black leader at that time made him the natural choice to head the Joint Center's board of governors.

Born in Shelbyville, Tennessee, Martin graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in 1934. In 1944, he gained rare political experience as assistant publicity director for Franklin Roosevelt's reelection campaign. He took over, in 1947, as editor-in-chief of the *Chicago Defender,* a crusading black newspaper; it was a position he held for 12 years. Martin established close relationships with leading black scholars, activists, and political figures.

He returned to politics in 1960 as part of John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign team. Just a few weeks before the November election, Martin convinced Robert Kennedy, who was running his brother's campaign, to call Judge Oscar Mitchell and persuade him to release Martin Luther King from an Atlanta jail. King, who had been arrested for joining students during a sit-in at segregated shops and restaurants across the South, was freed a day later. This behind-the-scenes maneuvering was typical Louis Martin and reflected his negotiating skill.

The same year, Martin was appointed deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, a position he held until 1969. During his tenure he served as liaison between the black community and the White House. Both presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson relied heavily on his advice concerning issues affecting black Americans. By mid-decade, Martin had become known as the "Godfather of black politics."

To the Ballot Box—March!

It became clear to Martin that with the passage of the Voting Rights Act, black political participation would pass from the civil rights movement to electoral politics. The number of black elected officials had jumped from about 300 in 1964 to more than 1,200 in 1969. "Those were exciting days," Martin now reflects, "yet despite all the political activity, there was no institution that could provide factual data and political analysis. There wasn't a place in Washington that a black mayor from a small Southern town could call up to get the answer to the question: Where can I get some money to pave the streets?"

When noted black social psychologist Kenneth Clark and a core of leading black politicians, intellectuals, and activists created the Joint Center in 1970, Louis Martin was the obvious choice to chair the board of the new organization. With major funding from the Ford Foundation, the Joint Center became a non-partisan clearinghouse for political information and activities that could develop a clear blueprint for sustained political participation.

Two early items on the Joint Center's agenda were to promote black voter participation and to provide technical assistance to newly elected black office holders—both part of Martin's dream for the future. In his view, working for political progress "in the courts with judges and in the streets with marchers" had already become a conventional road. "After the Voting Rights Act," he recalls, "we learned that we could mobilize our own power through the electoral process and that the most successful march a person could take was to the ballot box."

With its focus on electoral politics, the Joint Center was "drawing a bigger circle," as Martin is fond of saying, to expand the possibilities for political participation. "Louis Martin is an includer," says Eleanor Farrar, who was one of the Joint Center's first board members. "His skills at bringing people together around ideas and issues were particularly important."

Lunch on the Mountaintop

In 1972, when the Joint Center was looking for a president to head the organization, it was decided to invite Eddie N. Williams, then vice president for public affairs at the University of Chicago, to take up the post. But Williams needed convincing. That was a job for Louis Martin—the great persuader. In the course of a lunch meeting, Martin remembers, "I told Eddie that he would have the freedom to use his creativity to shape a unique political institution, and we would support him." Martin informed him too of the considerable financial resources the Ford Foundation had already committed to the organization. The venue for the tete-a-tete was the Press Room high atop one of Chicago's finer hotels, the St. Clair. "I took him to the mountaintop and showed him the future," says Martin. That was enough. Williams was convinced, and he has been with the Joint Center ever since.

Martin takes great pride in the Joint Center's achievements and has remained a member of its board of governors. To this day he thrives on talking politics. More often than not, he ends conversations with the words that have become his own signature: "You are a great American." ■

Mr. Ruffin is the editor of *Focus* magazine.

A History of the Joint Center 1970–1990

For 20 Years, the Joint Center Has Led the Way, Through Its Policy Research, to Make American Political, Economic, and Social Institutions More Responsive to the Concerns of African-Americans

by Darlene Clark Hine

The twenty-year history of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is as much an overview of the transition blacks have made from protest to politics as a chronicle of the creation and evolution of a unique institution. Created by black intellectuals, professionals, and politicians with initial funding from the Ford Foundation, the Joint Center has eased blacks' transition from civil rights protesters to participants in mainstream politics. At a critical juncture in the quest for full participation in American society, the Joint Center helped devise strategies for changing political and economic realities.

The successes of the civil rights movement are indisputable. New laws, effective enforcement, Supreme Court decisions, and the growth of a national consensus against racial inequality helped to change the legal status of black Americans. Many members of the black community poised to take advantage of the new educational and employment opportunities soon became part of an expanding black middle class.

The political landscape, too, was changing, mainly because of passage in 1965 of the Voting Rights Act. Assured of federal protection, thousands of black citizens across the South voted for the first time. This upsurge of political activity gave rise to a new presence—the black elected official. In 1964, the year before the Voting Rights Act, only about 300 blacks held elective office. By September 1969 the figure had leaped to more than 1,200. Many of these freshly minted state and local officials, school board members, county commissioners, and their supporters were eager to develop networks and make contacts for professional and moral support, or simply to learn more about the political process and how to use it to benefit their constituencies. At the same time, other black leaders, intellectuals, activists, and foundation executives foresaw the need to forge a collective awareness of politics as the means of achieving black economic and social progress.

In 1969 Kenneth Clark, the distinguished black social psychologist who was president of the Metropolitan Applied Research Center (MARC) and one of the founders of the Joint Center, captured this increased emphasis on political participation. He declared, "Elected Negro officials are now the only civil rights leaders who are...elected by their people to speak for them."

The Doors Open

Two conferences—one in Chicago in 1967 and the other in Washington, D.C., in 1969—brought many of those officials together and laid the groundwork for a new institution responsive to the needs of that new cadre of black leaders. The Washington conference was attended by more than 250 elected officials representing all regions of the country and most levels of office.

Both conferences were successful, and by the end of the Washington meeting expectations among black elected officials ran high. They sensed that the time to move ahead had come, and were convinced that what they needed was a permanent organization to enhance their effectiveness as representatives of their constituents and leaders of their communities. On April 20, 1970, the Ford Foundation, which had funded both conferences and encouraged exploratory talks about creating an organization to support the new black leadership, agreed to provide a two-year grant of $820,000 to establish such an organization.

On July 1, 1970, the newly christened Joint Center for Political Studies opened its offices in downtown Washington, D.C., under the *joint* sponsorship of MARC and Howard University. MARC provided oversight on program activities and Howard was responsible for the Center's fiscal affairs. Frank D. Reeves, political activist, civil rights attorney, and professor at Howard Law School, was installed as executive director. The original board of governors consisted of two representatives of MARC, Kenneth Clark and Eleanor Farrar (vice president of MARC and director of its Washington office); two representatives of Howard University, President James Cheek and Vice President for Academic Affairs Andrew Billingsley; and Louis Martin, editor in chief of the *Chicago Defender,* who was elected board chairman. Best known for his years of behind-the-scenes political activities as a member of the Democratic National Committee and of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Martin was a critical link between white politicians and the black community.

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During the early years, fulfillment of the mission consisted of much hands-on training and customized technical assistance. By 1974, a multiyear grant from the U.S. Civil Service Commission enabled the Joint Center to conduct training sessions on administration, planning, and budgeting for black elected officials in various regions of the country. Frequently the sessions provided facts and figures about new—or not so new—federal programs for which local jurisdictions were eligible. "How to" sessions explained the mysteries of applying for federal grants, and many a council member discovered that understanding a city budget did not require a business school degree.

Another Joint Center activity aimed at informing, assisting, and supporting black elected officials in their search for influence and success was the compilation and publication of the *National Roster of Black Elected Officials*. The *Roster*, published first in 1970 and annually since then, lists the name, address, title of office, date of election, and term of office of every black elected official in the United States. A similar Joint Center publication that serves to keep black elected officials in touch is the *Guide to Black Politics*, a quadrennial handbook for delegates to the Democratic and Republican national conventions.

By early 1981, the Joint Center was on the road to a major transformation into a public policy institution to engage business and labor leaders, scholars, journalists, and public officials—black and white—in research and discussion of vital issues affecting the black population and the society as a whole.

From the beginning, the Joint Center encouraged black officeholders to participate actively in national organizations devoted to their levels of office and to form black caucuses where appropriate. The Congressional Black Caucus, consisting of all black members of the House of Representatives, came into existence at the same time as the Joint Center. The six other caucuses of black elected officials—covering local, county, state, and federal offices—came on the scene during the 1970s with the active support and assistance of the Joint Center and have remained in close contact ever since.

The history of the Joint Center's political publications mirrors the history of the ideologies, strategies, and informational needs of black politicians. Publications such as *The Making of a Black Mayor* by John Dean (1973) and *Municipal Budgeting: A Primer for Elected Officials* by Jesse Burkhead and Paul Bringewatt (1977) addressed the needs of black officials for basic information on political techniques and management. Some of the more recent publications, however, such as *Strategies for Mobilizing Black Voters*, edited by Thomas E. Cavanagh (1987), and *Tom Bradley's Campaigns for Governor*, by Thomas F. Pettigrew and Denise A. Alston (1988), pay considerable attention to the impact of the black electorate and to the kinds of political strategies that win support from both black and white voters.

While the Joint Center's chief executive, Frank Reeves (1970-1972), concentrated on making the Joint Center known within the black community, its second (and current) executive, Eddie Williams, has been committed to building a permanent institution. Williams, a past assistant to Senator Hubert H. Humphrey and a former State Department officer, came to the Joint Center from the University of Chicago where he was vice president for public affairs and director of the Center for Policy Studies. A former journalist with a keen interest in communications and media relations, Williams began his tenure by creating *Focus* magazine.

Free-Standing and Independent

Williams believed that the Joint Center's continued dependence on Howard University limited its development. He also realized that future expansion of the organization would require diversification of its funding base. He began to look more carefully at opportunities to secure contracts and grants from federal agencies, foundations, and major corporations. The board of governors agreed with Williams that the Joint Center should become an independent entity. In 1976 the Joint Center for Political Studies was incorporated in the District of Columbia as a free-standing, tax-exempt institution.

Williams strengthened the Joint Center in other ways as well. He enlarged the research and publications programs, recruited Eleanor Farrar from her position at MARC to become vice president of the Joint Center in 1974, and carefully cultivated a staff of highly trained researchers, analysts, and administrators. He engaged outside experts as fellows, authors, and advisors. He encouraged his colleagues to participate in professional meetings, present papers and lectures, respond to media requests, and develop new ideas and programs. The Joint Center's election coverage became more sophisticated, and its political analysis attracted national attention and respect.

By the late 1970s it had become evident that although the number and expertise of black elected officials had steadily increased, this did not translate easily into public policies that improved living conditions within the black community. As a result, black Americans showed a marked shift in their priorities and concerns. No longer were they troubled by lack of access to the ballot or to public accommodations. Now aspirations turned to achieving economic and social progress. Moreover, a host of social ills threatened to render illusory the gains made in the political arena. These changes in the perceptions and needs of black Americans, along with a more conservative national mood, convinced the Joint Center that it needed to reexamine its priorities and programs and, where appropriate, redirect its efforts. The Joint Center solicited the views

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A History of the Joint Center: 1970–1990

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and advice of many individuals inside and outside the organization.

A Full-Fledged Think-Tank

By early 1981, the Joint Center was on the road to a major transformation into a public policy institution. Williams described the changed emphasis as an attempt "to engage business and labor leaders, scholars, journalists, and public officials—black and white—in research and discussion of vital issues affecting the black population and the society as a whole; to provide a forum for appraising policy alternatives and for shaping public policies at all levels of government; and to disseminate findings and recommendations to a broad and diverse audience."

The transformation from a technical assistance organization to a public policy institution sparked some apprehensions among black elected officials. Some feared any de-emphasis of the assistance so long provided. But Williams reassured them that because of their special role in public policy, they would continue to be both a special constituency and a unique source of ideas for the Joint Center's research agenda.

Changes were taking place, meanwhile, among black elected officials themselves. The pragmatic black politicians of the 1980s, adept in the art and practice of cross-over politics, scarcely resembled their counterparts of the 1960s. They came from much stronger educational and career backgrounds and most were ready and able to appeal to voters across racial lines. The recent elections of David Dinkins as mayor of New York City and L. Douglas Wilder as governor of Virginia confirm this assessment.

What also helped to reassure black elected officials was the continuing close relationship between the Joint Center and their own caucuses. National Policy Institutes continued to be cosponsored by the Joint Center and those organizations. In fact, the national meetings have been regularized; they are now convened every four years in the winter preceding a presidential election. What has changed is the decreased emphasis at these meetings on skills training and the increased emphasis on public policy issues. This change is also reflected in the creation of the office of the National Policy Institute (NPI) at the Joint Center to provide assistance to black elected officials. NPI is the Joint Center's permanent link to black elected officials.

The Joint Center continues to enlarge its scope and vision. During the 1980s it greatly enhanced its research program in economic policy studies and in international affairs. Today the Joint Center's work is increasingly grounded in the belief that the fulcrum of black economic advancement is the distribution of resources and economic opportunities. The immutable connection in American society between political participation and the distribution of economic benefits is well established. Yet, as the Joint Center's research staff has documented, the widening gap in economic well-being between blacks and whites is among the more glaring evidences of society's unfulfilled commitment to equal opportunity.

As one looks back over the first twenty years of the Joint Center, what stands out are the contributions the organization has made in two important areas: the many different types of assistance it has provided to black elected officials, black leaders, and other members of its core constituency; and the perspective on public policy issues which it has introduced into the national dialogue. The Joint Center has demonstrated that blacks are a major force in American politics and that the society and its institutions must become more aware of and responsive to the concerns of African Americans. The Joint Center's past contributions and successes put it on a promising course for future distinguished service in the national interest. ■

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