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FOCUS

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

Partners Against Youth Violence

In a FOCUS *Interview, Cheryl Head Discusses Plans to Make Public Broadcasting a Catalyst in the Struggle to Reduce Youth Violence*

It Starts With Paper Cars

A Public School Based Enrichment Program Is Turning Out Black Science Fair Winners and Building the Nation's Pool of Engineers

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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Black Youth Development—the Underreported Story

One can't pick up a newspaper without reading at least one account of a serious, often violent, crime committed by a young person. The news stories of armed robbery, drug-related shootings, and carjacking pervade the newspapers of big cities and small towns and parade through the 11 o'clock news on TV. Most polls confirm that crime is perceived by many Americans as the nation's most serious problem. But another perception, and a disturbing one, is that African American communities are doing nothing about it. Nothing could be further from the truth, however.

There's no denying that youth crime is a significant problem. But unfortunately, the press has let a big story about America's black youth escape its notice. Numerous organizations, many of them black led and operated, are succeeding at changing the lives of tens of thousands of young people through a myriad of programs ranging from traditional neighborhood YMCAs to less conventional African heritage and rites of passage programs. Most of these programs share the common goal of helping young people become healthy, productive adults. This is a grossly underreported story well worth covering.

A Joint Center study conducted in 1993, "Fulfilling the Promise: Community Programs for Young Black Males," identified 763 programs with varying approaches to youth development in just six cities. For example, the Boys to Men program in New Orleans instills self-esteem in children by teaching them about their African heritage. And the East End Neighborhood House in Cleveland has helped 23 inmates in the Grafton Correctional Institution earn bachelor's degrees.

In addition to the study, we have featured several exemplary programs in *FOCUS*, including the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program headed Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, the African American president of the University of Maryland-Baltimore County and a Joint Center board member. In 1988, with funds from the Baltimore-based Meyerhoff Foundation, Hrabowski launched the program that prepares minority high school students for academic careers in the sciences, engineering, and medicine and supports them with financial assistance (April 1992).

FOCUS also looked at the One to One mentoring program headed by black community leader William Payne in Newark, New Jersey, which matches students from ages seven to 18 with high-caliber adult mentors from a broad range of professions (February 1994). Cities in Schools, an international dropout prevention program, brings a variety of social services into schools that include health care, job counseling, and tutoring. The program was recently directed by Walter Leonard, who is also a former president of Fisk University (June 1992). In this issue, we're running a piece titled "Partners Against Youth Violence," a Corporation for Public Broadcasting campaign which is also directed by an African American.

These are but a few of many valuable youth development programs operating in black communities around the nation. Many of them get by on shoestring budgets and involve numerous dedicated black volunteers. Aside from our gratification at publishing articles about them, we are pleased that people interested in replicating these programs have called and written us from across the country for more information about them. I would not presume to tell our colleagues in journalism what stories they should write, but I do think it is a mistake to overlook the many laudable efforts of individuals and programs engaged in saving our youth. If editors can find space in their printed publications and their radio and TV shows for violence, they should also make room for more stories about healing and empowerment. Such stories make good copy and provide a public service. ■



PRESIDENT

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Partners Against Youth Violence

In a FOCUS Interview, Cheryl Head Discusses Plans to Make Public Broadcasting a Catalyst in the Struggle to Reduce Youth Violence

Cheryl Head is the project director of the National Campaign to Reduce Youth Violence, which is supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The campaign, to be launched in January, will be a nationwide effort to create partnerships that broadcasters form with community groups and national organizations to develop strategies to attack youth violence. Previously, Head had been a senior vice president for corporate and administrative services at the Washington-based public broadcasting station, WETA-TV, and vice president for production and community development at WTVS, a public television station in Detroit.

FOCUS: *What are the goals and objectives of the Campaign to Reduce Youth Violence?*

Head: There are three primary goals: first, to focus national attention on successful, local community-based problem solving around youth violence; secondly, to do that in a collaborative fashion and bring together as many partners as possible as resources to support community-based organizations that are doing good work; and thirdly, to involve young people in the problem solving and make sure their voices are heard and their faces are seen as we talk about what can effectively be done to minimize youth violence.

FOCUS: *Where did the idea for the campaign come from?*

Head: It started as a local initiative, which is where the real work is being done and where the real problems manifest themselves differently. The idea evolved from some local public television stations in Detroit and the Minneapolis/St. Paul area in 1992 and 1993. They were demonstrating that local stations could partner with community-based organizations to build effective strategies to counter the growth of youth violence.

The general manager of the Detroit public television station began to discuss the partnership model developed in his city, and managers of public television stations in other communities realized that this structure could be replicated elsewhere. Then the idea of a national campaign was conceived to focus attention not on the problems of youth violence, but rather on the effective measures being taken to counter youth violence. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting was approached by a coalition of stations to fund the planning phase of what was projected as a two-year campaign.

In the campaign, public television stations around the country and their local partners would begin to replicate this model of collaboration through programming, community outreach, and community development activities. The media portion of the campaign will put a spotlight on successful programs and counter what I think is the American perception from watching the news—that youth violence is a hopeless problem.

FOCUS: *How do you plan to implement the campaign?*

Head: There are three main components: programming [public and commercial television and radio programming], both at the national and local levels, that will keep the awareness level high; community development activities—training, workshops, seminars, and collaborative meetings; and finally, community outreach, which will support the national programming by distributing video, audio, and print materials that tell the story again. We know that some of the important target audiences who need to see and hear our messages are not going to be people who traditionally watch or listen to public broadcasting. So we have to have a non-broadcast means of getting the word out. We have to make sure that this programming is available in community viewing groups, schools, and churches so that the word really spreads.

FOCUS: *What kind of messages do you plan to deliver to these various audiences from urban and suburban communities?*

Head: We are starting off in a way that we think will strategically and deliberately increase public awareness on the issue of preventing violence. This isn't a problem that only affects urban populations. Our overall slogan is "Act Against Violence." We will develop a series of viewer action spots that show Americans who have made a difference in their communities in reducing youth violence.

One example is a bus driver in Omaha, Nebraska, who decided to start an athletic league when he saw how many kids didn't have anything to do after school. The league has grown from 25 kids to 700. There's also the story of the priest in Los Angeles who saw that what was needed in the East L.A. barrio was not more police officers, but jobs for young people who really want to learn how to be employees. So he started the Homeboy Bakery. These young men are now getting up at four o'clock in the morning to bake "Homeboy Tortillas" and marketing them in their communities.

Those are the kinds of stories that we hope will be inspiring to people—and, we hope, will say, "These are actions you can take." Some of the things people can do are big and require a lot of commitment. Others not so big—it could be volunteering in a school; or being a mentor to a young person; or supporting your church's efforts to convene recreation programs for young people; or writing a check to support an existing program. Numerous steps can be taken by just plain folks.

(Continued on page 4)

Youth Violence

(Continued from page 3)

FOCUS: *What is the campaign bringing to the table that will make a difference?*

Head: From the research we have done and the people we have talked to who are involved day-to-day in the youth violence reduction effort, the problem is their sense of isolation. They are doing their work in their localities and seeing the results of their work. But they have no idea what else is happening around them; whether anyone has figured out a different or more efficient way to do what they do. These groups have not been accustomed to collaborating, but all of them want to integrate their work with the efforts of others. So we see the campaign as a way to use public broadcasting stations as neutral conveners to bring groups together. It took a call from a public television station in Detroit to get local groups in that city to sit down at the table together. And we are hoping that a call from us will get groups to sit down at the table together at the national and local levels.

What also distinguishes this campaign from others is that it is more than a media campaign. It's not just public service announcements. But the engine that really drives this machine is the community development component including the technical assistance the campaign will provide to small- and medium-sized community-based organizations that perhaps have not thought about how to use telecommunications tools in support of their work. We are hoping that through technical assistance—training, workshops, seminars, on-line connections, and database information—we can develop what will be the beginning of a network that will allow information access to these groups that have previously felt isolated.

FOCUS: *How do you plan to deal with opposition to the campaign?*

Head: There are lots of different theories about what works. It's not so much that people would be against the work we are doing, but people might be against the means we employ to achieve our goals. I think the way to get at that is to say over and over, "There is no panacea. There is no one program that works best." And even if one approach works for five audiences, it might not work for this other group. Overall, I think we will have to be inclusive of almost everyone, understand their particular issues, do some evaluation, and tailor solutions to the various nuances of the problem.

FOCUS: *How are you getting young people involved?*

Head: It has always been my contention that young people have to be involved in the campaign governance committees. In addition, there needs to be a separate committee of young people who help us keep up with what's happening with their peers. It needs to be a fairly large committee but also representative of the many nuances of this problem. Every one of our functional committees will have a couple of young people who sit with a dozen adults. And then there will be a youth leadership and development committee.

I am hoping that our partners, the ones who have reach with young people like Children's Express, Children's Defense Fund, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and our school partners will help us identify systems to bring young people into committee structures. The young people should rotate off the committees so they have a good experience in leadership and developing new skills in working with adults and then give someone else a turn. We are also trying to figure out a way to support youth forums that will allow young people to talk directly to policymakers.

FOCUS: *How do you see policymakers getting involved in the campaign?*

Head: What we are hoping policymakers will do is to hear these messages, take them to heart, and begin to rethink the ways that they allocate resources and spend our money. At the same time, we want policymakers to empower communities by letting them set the agenda for solving the problem of violence. Let's have some "inreach." Let's not have a group of people in Washington or any state or local government decide what are the best applications for resources and then impose them. Let's go to the community and ask, "What are the things that you think would work"?

FOCUS: *What funding challenges do you anticipate?*

Head: One thing we don't want to do is "Rob Peter to pay Paul." We don't want to go to the traditional sources that fund the work that goes into the community. We also don't want to go to funders whose products, services, and business practices might be antithetical to the work we are trying to do. Some decisions on funding policy will have to be made on a case-by-case basis.

FOCUS: *You mentioned the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. What specifically is its role?*

Head: The Corporation is taking a leadership role by providing funding and support services for the planning phase of the campaign. We want to have on hand what is basically a business plan that will define the operations of this campaign over its two-year life.

FOCUS: *Can you tell me what you would consider a success for the national campaign?*

Head: We are hoping to be able to quantify success in the numbers of new programs that crop up as a result of this campaign's work. If the campaign can begin to help people think that youth violence is not a hopeless problem—that there is hope for redeeming young people who are both victims and perpetrators, we will be successful. We want people to see themselves in roles as problem solvers. If we can get people to first imagine themselves as acting against violence and then taking the step of following through, I think we will have succeeded. ■

The National Campaign to Reduce Youth Violence is headquartered at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 901 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004, (202) 879-9838.

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue:

- Addressing a joint meeting of Congress, South African President Nelson Mandela implores international organizations to support the creation of a world where democracy, peace, and prosperity reign.
- A group opposed to excessive sentencing laws will push for further reforms.
- A special edition of Across the Nation provides an update and analysis of the court challenges to newly created majority-black districts.

Mandela Urges Expansion of Democracy

On October 6, South African President Nelson Mandela addressed a joint meeting of Congress for the second time in five years and called on the nations of the world to commit themselves to the welfare of all the earth's inhabitants. He also appealed to the U.S. government to maintain its support for South Africa as it continues its transition to democracy. An excerpt of his address follows below.

"Along the uneasy road to the victory of the cause of democracy and fundamental human rights, we, like the great revolutionaries who were the founders of this republic [the United States], have had to test the capacity of our people to break new ground in the history of human evolution. Principal among these was, on the one hand, the willingness of the erstwhile minority rulers to concede political power without first resorting to such resistance as would reduce our country to a wasteland; on the other, was the ability of the oppressed majority to forgive and accept a shared destiny with those who had enslaved them. That both black and white in our country can today say we are to one another brother and sister, a united rainbow nation that derives its strength from the bonding of its many races and colors, constitutes a celebration of the oneness of the human race.

"In the end, it is all this that the ceremonial drums sought to salute as they throbbed to a rhythm both African and universal. But in the fullness of time, they too ceased to beat. Their powerful rhythms have been replaced by the great pulsations which represent and reflect a new society in formation. New challenges stand ahead of us. The flame of freedom, under whose light we danced in joyful abandon, has thrown an unrelenting glare on the great human tragedy on which was built the tarnished, tinsel glitter of an unjust society.

"As we look and look again at the reality that freedom brings, we see together...the pervasive poverty that afflicts our society; the despair of millions who are without jobs and without hope; the unborn whom we know will be born disabled and die before their maturity, because of poverty; the darkness that engulfs millions because they are illiterate; the many who will be victims of rape, robbery, and other violent crimes because hunger, want, and brutalization have warped and condemned many a human soul.

"As the images of life lived anywhere on our globe become available to all, so will the contrast between the rich and the poor within and across frontiers and within and across the continents become a motive force impelling the deprived to demand a better life from the powers that be, whatever their location. As the possibility of nations to become islands, sufficient unto themselves, diminishes and vanishes forever, so will it be that the suffering of the one shall, at the same time, inflict pain upon the other...What we speak of is the evolution of the objective world which inexorably says to all of us that we are human together or nothing at all.

"It will perhaps come to be that this interconnectedness will produce among you, the distinguished members of these Houses of Congress, as among other actors on the world stage, policies which will spring from a common recognition of the fact that success or failure in the conduct of human affairs can no longer be measured within the limited sphere defined by national boundaries that are the legacy of an ancient reality, away from which life itself has moved society a thousand leagues. If what we say is true, that manifestly the world is one stage and the actions

of all its inhabitants part of the same drama, does it not then follow that each one of us as nations, including yourselves, should begin to define the national interest to include the genuine happiness of others, however distant in time and space their domicile might be?...

"Is the time therefore not upon us when we should cease to treat tyranny, instability, and poverty anywhere on our globe as being peripheral to our interests and to our future?... We are deeply moved by the commitment which the great people you represent and which you yourselves and the President of the United States have made, that you will stay the course with us as we strengthen democracy in our country, ensure stability born of freedom, and banish poverty and deprivation.

"The great countries, such as this one, and great institutions such as the United Nations, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Union, must begin to put as a purpose central to their policies and actions the creation of a world of democracy, peace, and prosperity. For the very first time in the history of humanity, we have arrived at the point where it has become possible to pose this challenge. That possibility has arisen from the fact that, given the will, humanity does in fact have the means to begin the creation of the new world order whose central features we have sought to define...

"I do firmly believe that the people of this country, who have done so much to write the history of the world, have the vision, the wisdom, and the daring to strive so that what is good shines over the cities and villages of the world, enveloping man and land. Once you set out on this road, no one will need to be encouraged to follow.

"Surely, the order of the day is forward march! Thank you."

Crime Bill Limits Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

Advocates who believe the time should fit the crime won a partial victory in the defeat of federal provisions for mandatory minimum sentences when Congress signed the national crime bill in late August. Mandatory minimums were time-sentencing provisions required by federal law for certain first-time drug offenses. For example, the mandatory minimum sentence for a first-time conviction for the possession of five grams of crack cocaine, used most frequently by African Americans, was five years in prison without the possibility of parole. Critics of mandatory minimums charged that the federal provisions were inequitable and racially discriminatory. A first-time conviction for the possession of powder cocaine, a drug used most often by whites, did not require a comparable mandatory sentence, unless the offender was convicted of possessing at least 500 grams or 100 times the amount of the substance.

A provision of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 now allows judges to use U.S. Sentencing Guidelines when sentencing first-time drug offenders. Groups such as Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM) say these guidelines give appropriate consideration to a defendant's participation in the crime and the degree of the defendant's responsibility. FAMM is a nonprofit national organization in Washington, D.C., that works to eliminate excessive criminal sentencing for nonviolent offenses. Judges will be able to make sentencing more rational for nonviolent drug offenses under the provision called the "Limitation on Applicability of Mandatory Minimum Penalties in Certain Cases," also known as the "safety valve." According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, defendants in more than 1,000 cases will be tried under the "safety valve" provision each year. Most of these defendants will be low-level participants in the drug trade such as look-outs and couriers, many of whom are teenagers. FAMM hopes that judges will use the safety valve to reduce prison time for nonviolent drug offenders, a move that could save taxpayers more than $35 million a year in prison costs.

Advocates of limiting mandatory prison sentences assert that the nation's prison system would benefit greatly from a reduction in its inmate population. According to the U.S. Justice Department statistics, the number of inmates incarcerated in state and federal prisons topped one million this year, up from 360,930 in 1981. As the number of inmates has increased, so have the costs of operating prisons. The cost of jailing one inmate averages $25,000 a year in many prisons. According to Corrections Compendium, a national journal for corrections professionals, in the past 10 years, state governments have spent $34.6 billion building close to 1,000 prison facilities.

Unfortunately, judges' use of the safety valve may not benefit inmates who have already been sentenced under mandatory minimums. The safety valve provision is not retroactive and only applies to drug defendants who meet specific criteria, including those who did not use violence, guns, or other weapons; those whose crimes did not lead to the death or injury of another person; and those who are not identified as the leader or organizer of a criminal organization. Also, according to FAMM, defendants must truthfully give the government all information and

evidence regarding the offense. FAMM estimates that 5,000 inmates across the country will not be able to appeal their cases under the safety valve provision because it is not retroactive.

Federal mandatory minimum sentences were established in 1986 when Congress passed laws that required judges to give rigid sentences to defendants convicted for drug offenses. Two years later, Congress added certain gun offenses to the kind of crimes that required a minimum number of years of imprisonment without the possibility of parole. When sentencing a defendant, judges are only required to consider the weight of the drug(s) involved, or if a gun was used during the crime.

Many defendants who have committed nonviolent drug crimes have been sentenced to 10, 15, or more years in prison without parole. As a result, the federal prison population has more than doubled, from 44,000 in 1986 to the current 89,000. According to FAMM, 62 percent of the inmates sentenced to federal prisons during that time were arrested for drug offenses. Yet, convictions for crimes of violence increased by only 29.8 percent. In addition, African Americans are disproportionately jailed. In 1992, all the defendants sentenced in federal courts for possession of crack cocaine were African American. In 1995, FAMM intends to make retroactive safety valve legislation one of its top legislative priorities. The organization is considering filing a class-action law suit on behalf of inmates who might benefit from a retroactive provision. In addition, FAMM is working closely with Democratic and Republican members of Congress to push for further reforms of sentencing laws.

by Lisa Rhodes

Across the Nation:

This special edition of "Across the Nation," written by Joint Center senior political analyst David Bositis, is an update of legal challenges to some of the majority-black congressional districts which were created after the 1990 Census.

On June 28, 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in its *Shaw* v. *Reno* decision that the North Carolina legislature appeared to have engaged in "racial gerrymandering" by creating two majority-black congressional districts—the 1st and the 12th—following the 1990 Census. Much of the Court's decision turned on what it described as the "unusual" shapes of the districts. By elevating a concern for "regularly shaped" districts above principles of equitable representation, the decision opened the door to a welter of court challenges that threaten the 13 newly established congressional districts represented by African Americans. Most of these districts are in Southern states where blacks represent more than 20 percent of the population but have not had a black representative in Congress since Reconstruction in the 19th century.

In remanding the *Shaw* case back to the federal district court in North Carolina, the Supreme Court handed down a restrictive ruling that the state must prove that there is a "compelling state interest" in establishing the districts and that the districts were "narrowly tailored" to serve that interest. The Court added that, if North Carolina could not justify its congressional redistricting plan as "narrowly tailored," then it would be in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the district map would have to be redrawn.

Civil rights attorneys argued that by creating the districts, the state was complying with the Voting Rights Act as amended in 1982 and remedying past discrimination against black citizens. They reasoned that since no African American had represented North Carolina in Congress during this century, there is a compelling state interest in expanding black political participation in the electoral process.

Based on the *Shaw* ruling, a series of other challenges have been mounted against newly created majority-black congressional districts in Louisiana, Texas, Georgia, and Florida. In each state, federal district courts ruled that the way the districts were drawn resulted in racial gerrymandering. In some of these cases, lower courts have exceeded the Supreme Court's *Shaw* decision to justify overturning majority-black districts. Each district under challenge is represented by a black, first-term Democrat. The Court has permitted its narrow focus on the shapes of districts in *Shaw* to overshadow the larger issue of ensuring that opportunities exist for African Americans to fully participate in the political life of this country. The following are summaries of the challenges in those states.

NORTH CAROLINA: The *Shaw* case concentrated on the two majority-black districts created in 1991—the 1st district represented by **EVA CLAYTON** and the 12th district represented by **MEL WATT**. A remand hearing before a three-judge federal district court was held from March 28 to April 12, 1994, in which attorneys from the Charlotte-based civil rights law firm of Ferguson, Stein and from the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund successfully argued that the need to comply with the Voting Rights Act, combined with the racial history of the state and continuing racial bloc voting, amply established that the state had a compelling interest in creating congressional districts where African Americans had expanded opportunities for political participation.

On August 1, 1994, the judicial panel ruled 2 to 1 that, while the districts were racially gerrymandered, the state had a compelling interest in creating the districts and that they were narrowly tailored to address the state's past discrimination. Critical to the determination of narrow tailoring was the even balance between black and white voters in the two districts. Both districts have a black voting-age population of approximately 53.3 percent. Since white voter turnout in 1992 was 8.2 percentage points higher than that of black voters—rather than being an example of "apartheid" as Supreme Court Justice **SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR**'s *Shaw* opinion suggested, the districts represented by Watt and Clayton are among the most racially heterogeneous in the state.

LOUISIANA: On December 28, 1993, a three-judge panel of the federal district court struck down the 4th congressional district represented by Congressman **CLEO FIELDS** in the *Hays* v. *Louisiana* case. The 4th district had a voting-age population of 63.5 percent and black voter turnout that was 3.2 percentage points higher than the white turnout in 1992. In its decision, the court exceeded the Supreme Court's *Shaw* ruling by concluding that any district that was drawn with race as "an important factor" would be subject to strict scrutiny.

In response, Louisiana Governor **EDWIN EDWARDS** called a special session of the state legislature in April that redrew the state's congressional districts, and the new map was subsequently cleared by the U.S. Justice Department. Fields' new district was more compact and contained a greatly reduced black voting-age population of 54.4 percent.

In July, the same three-judge panel ruled against the legislature's map and appointed a special master who, acting as an agent of the court, drafted an alternative district plan which eliminated Fields' district and combined it with the 6th district now represented by Republican Congressman **RICHARD BAKER**. The new district had only a 27 percent black voting-age population. Edwards signed legislation establishing the new map on April 25. On August 11, however, the U.S. Supreme Court stayed the lower court's actions and ordered that the congressional district map that was redrawn by the state legislature be used for this fall's election. Cleo Fields was reelected on October 1, 1994, by winning 70 percent of the vote in Louisiana's open primary.

TEXAS: On August 17, a panel of three federal district court judges ruled that the 18th and 30th congressional districts represented by **CRAIG WASHINGTON** of Houston and **EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON** of Dallas were also racially gerrymandered. Civil rights attorneys argued that after adjusting for turnout differences among black, Hispanic, and white voters, these districts are racially heterogenous and clearly open to candidates of any race. The black-Hispanic-white percentages of the voting-age populations of these two districts are: 48.3%, 9%, and 42.7% in the 18th and 46.9%, 10%, and 43.1% in the 30th. The district court stayed its initial decision and the original congressional district map remained in effect for the November election, but the eventual fate of the districts will depend on further action by the state legislature and the courts.

CHALLENGES IN OTHER STATES: In Georgia, **CYNTHIA McKINNEY**'s 11th district, which includes parts of Augusta and Savannah, was ruled racially gerrymandered in a 2-to-1 decision by a federal district court on September 15. In another judicial excess, the lower court ruled in *Johnson* v. *Miller* that the state was required to prove that a violation of the Voting Rights Act had occurred to justify the creation of a black-opportunity district. That was an even more limited ruling than *Shaw* or other lower court decisions and would discourage voluntary compliance with the Act because states would have to confess to breaking the law before applying a remedy to it. But the Supreme Court issued a stay of the district court's ruling on September 30, leaving the matter to be decided later. McKinney's district is one of three majority-black districts among 11 in the state. (The other two are the 2nd and 5th represented by **SANFORD BISHOP** and **JOHN LEWIS**, respectively.) The lower court has not yet ruled in the Florida case, where **CORRINE BROWN**'s 3rd district is under challenge. Brown's northern Florida district has a comparatively small black voting-age population of 50.6 percent. The current district map was used in the November election, allowing Brown to run in the district as it was originally drawn.

As the courts consider further action on these cases, other decisions by the Supreme Court may provide ammunition to civil rights attorneys as they battle to preserve majority-black legislative districts. In the *Johnson* v. *De Grandy* case, the High Court decided on June 30 this year by a 7-to-2 vote that the use of race in redistricting was permissible. The plaintiffs in the case charged that the Florida state senate district map diluted the voting strength of black and Hispanic citizens. The Johnson decision was written by Justice **DAVID SOUTER**, one of the four dissenters in the *Shaw* case. Furthermore, the Court stayed the lower court's ruling in Louisiana, and later in Georgia, suggesting at minimum that the majority of the court may continue to uphold the Voting Rights Act which would have the effect of sustaining pluralism in the United States Congress.

It Starts With Paper Cars

A Public School Based Enrichment Program Is Turning Out Black Science Fair Winners and Building the Nation's Pool of Engineers

by Charles E. Simmons

"I've always been curious about how things are made," says Wayne Askew. "When I got involved in the after-school Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program (DAPCEP) in the tenth grade, I didn't really understand what engineering was all about. But through DAPCEP, I met black engineers who described the projects they were working on. We took field trips to the MichCon Gas Company, General Motors, and other manufacturers in the Detroit area. I was only in the program a little while before I knew that I didn't want to work on an assembly line, I wanted to help decide what was made on the line."

Currently an engineer at TRW, Askew has worked as a product design engineer at the Ford Motor Company's Plastic and Trim Products Division. The DAPCEP alumnus holds degrees in mechanical engineering and engineering management from the University of Detroit. Askew mentors junior high and high school students in the same program that sparked his interest in engineering. "While in college, I worked as a counselor to kids in the DAPCEP Summer program, and I've worked with Ford's Teacher Partners program, spending several hours each month with an adopted classroom which gives students a chance to see a real, live engineer and ask questions," Askew says. "Its exciting now to be able to give something back."

Started with a grant from the Sloan Foundation and 245 students, the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program was founded in 1983 as an academic math and science enrichment program for public school students in Detroit's inner city. Because of the program's success, two thousand of the city's public school students, nearly all African Americans, are very competitive with their suburban counterparts in math and science. The U.S. Department of Education has recognized DAPCEP as one of the top 10 pre-college academic programs in the nation. Over the past 18 years, the program has become an effective feeder system for colleges and universities searching for student applicants with strong backgrounds in chemistry, physics, biology, and calculus.

"Be part of the solution," is the motto of DAPCEP Executive Director Kenneth Hill, who holds a degree in civil engineering from Howard University and one in education from Wayne State University. Hill believes that the high rate of achievement among DAPCEP students stems from many factors. "Public school educators, volunteer mentors, and parents are driven by the old-fashioned belief that everyone can learn and a pit bull determination to inspire youth," he says. The program's enhanced curriculum is taught during weekends and in summer sessions at local universities, through field trips and college lectures as well as internships with major corporations.

Yvette Cloyd, a former DAPCEP participant who is now a project manager at Ford Motor Company's Plastic and Trim Products Division, says DAPCEP has opened many doors for her. "My first job out of high school was with a company that does engineering work and I got it through the DAPCEP Summer Bridge Program." The program has placed 500 college-bound DAPCEP students in summer engineering jobs since 1983. A 1988 graduate of the University of Detroit with a bachelor of science degree in mathematics, Cloyd is currently working on a masters degree in computer science and has been a mentor in the program for six years.

Building Paper Cars

Key to the program is its operation as a partnership that includes the public school system, corporations, foundations, universities, parents, and, of course, students. Corporate involvement offers a unique advantage, with many Detroit-based companies providing field experiences that supplement classroom learning. In addition to their financial support, corporations have provided essential hands-on training experiences by opening their plants to field trips, encouraging staff engineers to act as mentors and role models, and hiring DAPCEP participants for summer jobs. For example, in the Ford Partnership Program, 47 volunteer engineer mentors have developed a close relationship with public school teachers with whom they conduct field trips, assist with science fair projects, teach classes, and mentor students.

General Motors sponsors an annual Paper Vehicles Project. This project, now in its fourth year, allows teams of high school students working closely with GM engineers, mentors, and teachers, to design and build life-size model cars using only paper products. The concept of building paper vehicles originated with three young African American engineers at General Motors, Mark Thomas, Vincent Lyons, and Elliot Lyons, who developed the idea at Stanford University while they were graduate students. For 12 weeks, student team members learn principles of automotive engineering through classes and lectures. The project culminates in a period of "build days" during which

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Compiled by Glynda Featherstone

Enrichment Program

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the teams of engineers and students assemble the cars. Each school works with a different team of engineers, and each project group arrives at a different design solution.

In another example of how the big three U.S. automakers are involved in DAPCEP, the Chrysler Corporation recently teamed up with Michigan State University to provide six engineering seminars to 1,800 DAPCEP students from 35 middle schools and 14 high schools. Other corporations and institutions that have offered seminars are Dow Chemical, Michigan Bell, Detroit Edison, and five Detroit area universities.

The Hub of the Partnership

Teachers are the hub of the DAPCEP partnership. Many participate as mentors and hold special classes during and after school for participating students. Most of them consult with parents regularly on the students' progress and work with engineers to assist their pupils with science fair projects. They also attend ongoing DAPCEP teacher training classes. Sharon Lee is one example. Lee, an African American teacher who recently received an "Outstanding Teacher Award" from the Detroit Science Teachers Association, has been teaching science at Detroit's Grant Middle School for only three years, and already her students have won more gold ribbons at the science fairs than participants in other DAPCEP classes. DAPCEP's in-school administrator, James Buri, says Lee has been inventive at using feedback from the science fair judges to help her students improve the quality of their projects.

Lee believes that anything worth doing takes time and commitment. "These youngsters are used to fast food but the process of developing a science fair project helps them become self-directed. My students understand that if they are in DAPCEP, they are expected to behave and perform in a certain way. I don't accept excuses, I expect the very best from my students. Anything less is unacceptable.

"The conventional wisdom is that these students are overcome by a sense of helplessness," Lee continues, "but I discourage that attitude and build into them the idea that they can take control. If they can afford expensive gym shoes and candy, they can be committed to their education. There is no question that they have my commitment; I will stay with them day and night to help them finish their projects."

A measure of DAPCEP's success has been the student participants' increasingly high achievement record in the annual regional Metro Detroit Science and Engineering Fair, in which both urban and suburban students compete. Although when DAPCEP youth first competed 16 years ago, they received less than six per cent of the awards at the fair, they now take more than half the Grand Awards in the first place category, and nearly two-thirds of the second-place Gold Ribbons. More importantly, 70 percent of the DAPCEP secondary school graduates are pursuing engineering, math, or science majors in college, and 74 percent of DAPCEP college graduates have majored in science, math, or engineering.

With a national shortage of 700,000 engineers predicted for the year 2000, many corporations are scrambling to find ways to fill the projected gap. DAPCEP Executive Director Kenneth Hill says with confidence that some of the people who will fill that gap are eleventh graders in the DAPCEP programs: "Through our mentors, supportive teachers, weekend classes, and summer programs, we are working to ensure that our students have the best possible chance to succeed in university environments and go on to take their places in the professional world as engineers, physicians, and scientific researchers." *The Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program is located at 60 Farnsworth Street, Detroit, Michigan, 48202, (313) 831-3050.* ■

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