

A bridge over troubled waters

On the surface, it might look like a genteel office—the role of college president—and maybe in the old days, it was a serene position.

But times have drastically changed, and the ivy on the academic towers is withering from strife within and without. The last 20 years have been a period of chaos for higher education and a time of torment for small private colleges, too many of which have gone out of business.

Those happen to be the years Dr. Isaac H. Miller Jr. has been fighting for the life of this college.

Now that the president has announced his retirement, it would do well for us to reflect on the hydra-headed opponents Miller has had to face and to congratulate him on battles nobly fought. For despite his calm, gentlemanly manner, Miller knows how to handle himself in the ring.

He inherited a college which had been called "The Black Vassar," but which by the mid-60s was losing hundreds of promising students to the accelerated recruitment of state universities.

Then national politics had predictably damaging effects on this institution. Recite the occupants of the White House during Miller's reign, and you get some idea of the difficulties he confronted. 1968-74 — Richard Nixon; 1974-76 — Gerald Ford; 1976-1980—Jimmy Carter; 1980-86—Ronald Reagan. Only one Democrat served a four-year term during Miller's time in office. Republicans, with their stress on private-sector solutions to economic problems, are notably cool toward academia and the needs of blacks. Under Reagan, the academy has met

the big chill, and blacks have suffered grievous reverses.

But this has been only part of Miller's ordeal. In terms of curriculum reform, more has occurred in the last two decades than in the history of American higher education. First, the demand for "relevant" courses, which often left students "turned on" but undereducated. Then the backlash, and the era of practicality, which often left students professionally equipped but spiritually bereft. Now the attempted balance. This is not to mention the impact and vestiges of the black power ethic, which created racial pride at the same time it encouraged isolation and which left us with the puzzling question "how black is black?"

Finally, the battles from within. Miller has had to deal with a flurry of conflicting demands. "Take the college back to the glory days," some say. "The past is strangling us," others insist. Some trustees have called for sexual desegregation. Ideas have abounded, but substantive proposals have been rare, and in many cases, a consensus has been impossible.

Miller has provided unifying leadership through this long period of unrest. Perhaps the hallmark of his administration has been its human dimension. The president has always been a good listener and a caring administrator. To follow his actions and speeches has been to witness a man who has shown his personal concern for everyone here, especially the students. In a good way, his attitude toward Belles has been paternal. Equally important, he has kept the college moving forward on the troubled waters.

President Miller's long, tireless devotion to Bennett deserves to be celebrated.

Battle of the sexes

Don't spoil men

Opinion

by Tricia Hairston

The black woman is now offered more advantages than ever before. The battle for equal opportunity, however, has not been easy. After fighting for equal rights, we still have another obstacle — the black man. It is a well-known fact that we outnumber our brothers two-to-one, thus creating problems in the job market, the social scene and marriage. The tension is mounting between us, and if it does not stop, we could prove to be our worst enemies.

Just think about how many times we are made to feel inferior if we have a better job than our male counterparts. If it is not the inferiority complex they put on us, then we are the "mother image." I am sure that we can all name a few brothers who are strongly attached to the apron strings of their girlfriends, sisters or wives.

Why do they do it? Because we let them. After hearing so much about how the white man has robbed him of his pride and employment opportunities, we are left feeling guilty. Sometimes we feel as though it is our fault that too many brothers are unemployed, imprisoned, hustling or just getting by. It is time for the black woman to wake up and realize that these allegations and excuses will no longer be accepted. Yes, there is a higher rate of unemployment and incarcerated black males compared to whites, but where did the idea come from that these problems are our fault? Who committed the crime? Who stopped looking for a job? Of course, there are two sides to every story, but life is hard and if we are to survive, we must keep pushing.

Do not let me point the finger solely on the brothers because we are also at fault. We patronize the very same men who disrespect us. So how do we expect gold when we will settle for silver? We have their babies and are not

married to them. We accept welfare as a retribution, yet we still associate with these men. We go out and work while they hang out.

The first of the month in any ghetto is often termed "mother's day," and the man we haven't seen in weeks suddenly turns up and we let him in. Who are we fooling? Who is being the fool? Whodini, a New York rap group, has this to say: "Some say it's an art; some say it's a shame — that you would give me your body before your name." The title of the song is "I'm a ho." Rick James calls us super freaks; Doug E. Fresh affectionately thinks of us as "bitches." The list could go on. We let this happen because some of us feel that a man with no respect is better than no man at all. Be honest: is it really?

Getting a little closer to home, how about the black man in college? If he can dress, is attractive and parties, then he is the one we seek. If he has a girlfriend, that's cool, too. We can sneak around. Then sooner or later, he will realize that we can give him more, and soon he will leave his girlfriend for us. Sometimes this works. But think about this: if he left her for you, what makes you think you can keep him?

Maybe we place too much emphasis on having a man. Contrary to popular belief, having a man does not make one's life complete. We need to reassess our priorities and get our heads on straight. Take time out and get to know yourself. Become a well-rounded individual and do not settle for less. The man you are seeking is not always Mr. Cool or Mr. Hip. He may be a "nerd," but nine times out of 10 he will respect you for the woman and the principles you stand for.

Not all black men are the negative examples I have written about. There are some good ones out there and they are single. We can find them once we find ourselves.

What are we waiting for?

Yerby touches emotions

an appreciation
by Laura Nelson

Frank Yerby takes words and shapes them into an adventure that will capture the reader and in the end leave one wanting to reread those words.

Author of over 26 novels, Frank Yerby is one of the master storytellers of our time. He penetrates the human condition and plays on the feelings we have all felt at one time. His characters are people who confront the struggle of doing what is right or relieving their own selfish desires.

Frank Yerby's heroes and heroines are portrayed as individuals who are good people with beliefs and principles that are the most important aspects of their lives. Yet at the same time they must deal with circumstances that hand these people experiences that sour their beliefs and principles. One of Yerby's novels,

"The Girl from Storyville," relays the message of lost hope that is still held to. This novel tells the story of a young woman who is condemned from childhood to be a "fallen woman." And though the heroine does live her life as a prostitute, she never loses her goodness and hope that life and people are not as bad as both seem.

A contrast to this novel is presented in "Hail the Conquering Hero." With this novel Yerby relates to his readers that having everything does not make up for a love that has been lost. Yerby creates a story and provides the path for his readers to find themselves and their feelings in the story. Yerby instinctively knows what will capture and hold readers until the last page.

Yerby explores the irony of life in "Tobias and the Angel." Readers will appreciate the opportunity to laugh at the twists and turns that

life can present. Reading this novel, one will feel that he or she has had the chance to communicate with his or her own guardian angel.

Yerby does not hinder the reader with pages full of eloquent words. Yerby's writing can give a reader the feeling that he was writing especially for him or her. Reading a novel by Yerby takes a reader into the mind and fantasies of the author; he has put himself down on paper with an invitation to open oneself and mix feelings with his. Yerby can bring a reader to laugh in the middle of an emotional passage by adding his touch of comedy.

By confronting the ambiguities and complexities of human life, Frank Yerby has succeeded in establishing a bridge between people and those ambiguities and complexities. Reading Frank Yerby, you will find that for once a story has ended the way you want it to end.

Letters to the editor:

Commitment is the key

To The Editor:

Every corporation, institution and organization has a group of people selected to guide them to higher levels of excellence. Whether the group is a Board of Directors or a fundraising committee, they all were selected to lead, guide, improve, advise and even protect.

The Bennett College "corporation" is no exception. Here at Bennett there exists a group of women who are taking their positions with the utmost of seriousness. This body of concerned, hard-working, dedicated and industrious leaders is formally and collectively known as the Student Government Association, informally known as the SGA.

Individually they are known as Vicky Dunn, the diligent, never-faltering president; Susan Hairston, the humble yet ambitious vice president; Regina Rhynehardt, the straight-forward, no-bones-about-it parliamentarian; Karen D. Jones, the spunky, conscientious corresponding secretary; the gracious and talented Tangee Stitt, recording secretary; Josefa Bethea, the outgoing and jovial treasurer; Alicia McCollum, the beautiful and knowledgeable Miss Bennett College and Lynda Keith, the lovely, sincere attendant.

These people are here to work for and with the students at Bennett. That is their job. It is taken seriously. Together, with help from the administration, faculty, staff and, most importantly, the students, they will not quit until

everyone has been cared for. Look for notices of SGA Speaks! which are bi-weekly student body meetings that will address concerns locally, nationally and campuswide. Also, look for monthly calendar of events to keep everyone informed. The SGA is here for you.

Susan Hairston

To the Editor:

Getting to know ourselves is a lifetime job; the first knowledge is knowledge of self. Every contact, every experience and every day should broaden our vision into our lives or ourselves. Unfortunately, many influences have been working against the process of self-discovery; therefore, we find ourselves in a society full of blind people.

Life would not be so difficult if we had not lost the keys to discovering who we are. The keys are so obvious that even people in the most simple societies don't have any problems with their identity.

They have not been blinded from the most basic natural processes that feed the human being knowledge. The human mind is equipped with a self-survival process that inspires us with urges to move in the direction of a constructive life.

My fellow sisters, we have been accustomed to listening to everything except ourselves. Now is the time to take every opportunity to listen and to listen to the inner movement of the world

around us. We should never accept easy answers as complete in discovering ourselves.

We should use the valid clues of life as steps toward knowing ourselves. The clues to self-knowledge are living and seeking to understand our lives. If we follow the steps of wise men and women from the past to generate our thoughts, self-discovery becomes simple.

Kathy Howell
Senior Class President

To all Belles:

Bennett College can be a challenging and rewarding school if you make the difference. At Bennett a student learns academic work, responsibility, personal insight concerning her major and developing her own personal style of thinking and working effectively.

There are three key points that I want you to keep in mind while you are here at Bennett. The first thing I want you to do is get actively involved with your studies. By going above and beyond your homework assignments, you can learn much more about different subjects and thus broaden your intellectual horizons. Bennett students should be able to talk intelligently about several subjects. You should be a well-rounded individual because you are a Bennett Belle. Remember you are doing this for yourself and not just to please the teachers. It is your education; your teacher al-

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The Bennett Banner

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