

Women of past shine

DONNA WHITAKER
Columnist

In her book *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, feminist Michele Wallace explores the myth of black superwomen. She examines the myth that says black women are strong, rugged and durable, and explains that it isn't necessarily so.

The black woman has been falsely defined, according to Wallace's publishers. Instead of the powerful matriach that legend has made her out to be, "she is the most vulnerable figure in American society . . ." they say.

Although we as black people should toot our own horns all the time, Black History Month is a time to extoll the work of famous black Americans, females included. This is a time to dispell the myths or, at least, understand them. This is a time to discover what it meant and means to be black in America. The history of famous black women plays an important part in that discovery.

Reg Hildebrand, lecturer in the history department at UNC-CH, recently told his view of black women through history. Hildebrand, who teaches The History of Afro-Americans from 1865, said, "Since both sex and race imposed severe limits on the kinds of things that black women could do, it is almost incredible that so many of them excelled in areas that were traditionally reserved for men."

Hildebrand mentioned Harriet Tubman, who he said "was the most effective conductor of the Underground Railroad, even though most successful refugees from slavery were young males." Tubman also established an outstanding military record in the Civil War, at a time when it was uncertain whether black men were capable of being soldiers, he said.

Harriet had convictions that encouraged her to express on. She said.

There was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive. I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted, and when the time came for me to go, the Lord would let them take me. (from Harriet Tubman, *The Moses of Her People* by Sarah Bradford, written in 1896).

People by Sarah Bradford, written in 1896).

Sister's Corner

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, an early feminist who reached fame in the latter 19th century as a lecturer, talked about social and political affairs concerning blacks. She lectured in the North and South, "even though most males believed that it was not quite right for ladies to tax their delicate minds with such things," Hildebrand said.

A black female newspaper editor and owner, Ida B. Wells Barnett, lead the fight against the lynching of black men during the late 19th centuries. She exposed lynchings for their true causes, such as economic rivalry between black and white merchants for black patrons. Although her newspaper business in Memphis, Tenn., was destroyed, she continued to speak out for black people while in the North.

Other names come to mind when speaking of famous black women. Mary McLeod Bethune, who came to fame during the early part of the 20th century, served on the staffs of presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman. She also founded Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Daisy Bates, president of the Arkansas NAACP during the 1957 desegregation crisis in Little Rock, spearheaded the struggle for school desegregation there. She initiated the integration campaign, guided and supported the students in their long struggle, and braved bombings and threats.

These women are but a few of the many black women who have struggled to make our lives better. Michele Wallace says that the superwoman role black women have played has been detrimental to them and black people because it has lead to a deep distrust, and maybe hatred, between black men and women. But Reg Hildebrand offers another view. He says,

Historically, black women have been expected to be subordinated and supportive, strong and assertive, exemplars of an alien standard of beauty and the moral cement of their families and churches. Clearly, they have been expected to carry an unreasonable burden. Happily enough for all, they succeeded in doing so.

BLACK INK

"The essence of freedom is understanding."

E. Ramona Brown
Editor

Lawrence Turner
Managing Editor

Lisa Lewis
Advertising Manager

Donna Whitaker
Columnist

Regina Smith
Business Manager

UNITED STATES SLAVERY



Carolina Free Press

Newspaper questioned

FRANCES SILVA
Special to the Ink

The United States' free press has been the envy of many countries whose journalists enjoy less than a free hand in what they can report. But this month, at UNC-CH the free press has taken on a different connotation.

The *Carolina Free Press* is the product of a handful of students who feel a conservative voice is needed on campus to balance the other "liberal" and predictable student publications. They claim that the *Free Press* will "question the sagacity of our campus pontifications." It will also offer an outlet to the conservative who "thinks Jesse Helms isn't that bad and that Chapel Hill is a bit out of touch with reality."

But is this publication necessary? With the first issue of this newspaper published on Feb. 2, it appears that almost every subject that could be covered from a conservative perspective was covered. The mix of subject matter, however, could not have been considered anything less than peculiar. Disarming America, abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment were topics explored thoroughly. But will the newspaper continue to offer such tidbits as a movie review, roughing it on the Wallawas Mountains and a preview of the upcoming Carolina basketball game? Couldn't those stories have been covered in the existing campus publications?

After all, what could be conservative about a Carolina-Virginia game unless UNC-CH basketball players Sam Perkins and James Worthy could conservatively limit Virginia's Ralph Sampson to less than 30 points?

In an effort to leave no stone unturned, the *Free Press* rapped many "liberal" organizations such as the Association of Women Stu-

dents and the Black Student Movement. The BSM, according to the newspaper, puts the entire campus in suspense "trying to figure out who the Black Student Movement would endorse for student body president." (Former BSM chairperson Mark Canady ran an unsuccessful bid for the student body presidency this month.)

Although "A Free Press Doesn't Live By Coercion," its publishers should have thought to specify their audience. Granted, the first free 5,000 copies of the newspaper, which is to be financed by contributions, were scooped up by the curious. But if another issue is published, will the students of this campus be compelled to pick up the newspaper again?

Any publication has the right to exist and to express its publisher's opinions as guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. The *Free Press* may well serve to educate students that attitudes to the far left are alive and well. But shouldn't the newspaper determine what type of publication it will be? Will the *Free Press* be solely the organ of the conservative student or will it also focus on the arts, sports and other campus features? What then will distinguish this publication from others which cover the same areas?

The result of its appearance has been the suggestion that the University lacks special interest publications. The *Free Press* has sought to alleviate this problem, a little. But it must be remembered that each staff of a campus publication, whether the *Black Ink*, *The Daily Tar Heel*, *The Phoenix*, *SHE* or any other, works diligently to produce a quality product.

This campus would welcome any publication which seeks to uphold journalistic standards, but those which seek only notoriety, as the *Free Press*, should be left to die a quiet and peaceful death.