

## Black political strength You use it or lose it

The recent election of Chicago's first black mayor has been like a flexing of muscle for black political activists.

Though both candidates tried to play down the "race issue" the tension that prevailed over the city was undeniable. Whites wearing white buttons just seemed to prove to blacks that "white people stick together."

Harold Washington won by only a small margin over his opponent Bernard Epton. But only 20 percent of his supporters were white. This means that whites were still not willing to look at Harold Washington as a candidate, and that they would rather change their whole political ideology to vote Republican rather than to vote black.

Fortunately, black voter turnout is nearing the levels of whites. Recently released figures showed that in 1982 blacks voted in larger numbers than whites in several cities.

With the political strength of blacks on the increase we must also, through reading, listening and asking questions, make ourselves more politically educated.

Most people were aware of the situation in Chicago. The media coverage was continuous. But most events of relevance to blacks are not so blatantly spelled out and we must look closely in order to recognize them.

For instance, issues involving teachers and public schools are of special significance to us because of the numbers of black teachers and black students in the public school system.

## Viewpoint

President Reagan has shown the impact of the executive office on the lives of blacks. Ironically, it is the people who are least likely to go out and vote — the poor and under-educated — that are hurt the most by his policies.

It was the policies of recently elected Governor George Wallace, who boasted the support of several Alabama blacks, that serves as another example of lack of awareness on the part of blacks — or group support on the part of whites. To allow a man who once vowed to uphold segregation, to win political office is an irrevocable action. Even if Wallace has changed, his hatred for blacks is unforgettable — at least to those of us on the outside looking in.

This is not to say that all blacks must vote a certain way, or even think a certain way and stick with the group just because "the leader" says this is who we're going to vote for this year.

This *is* to say that more blacks should realize the implications of decisions made on their behalf by people who they either elect or allow to be elected, blacks who have a common interest — whether it be in higher quality public education or paved roads on their side of town — must recognize that voting strength is one very good way of getting what they want.

## BLACK INK

If blackness can be converted into words and pictures, we intend to do it.

Gwendolyn Hailey  
Editor in Chief

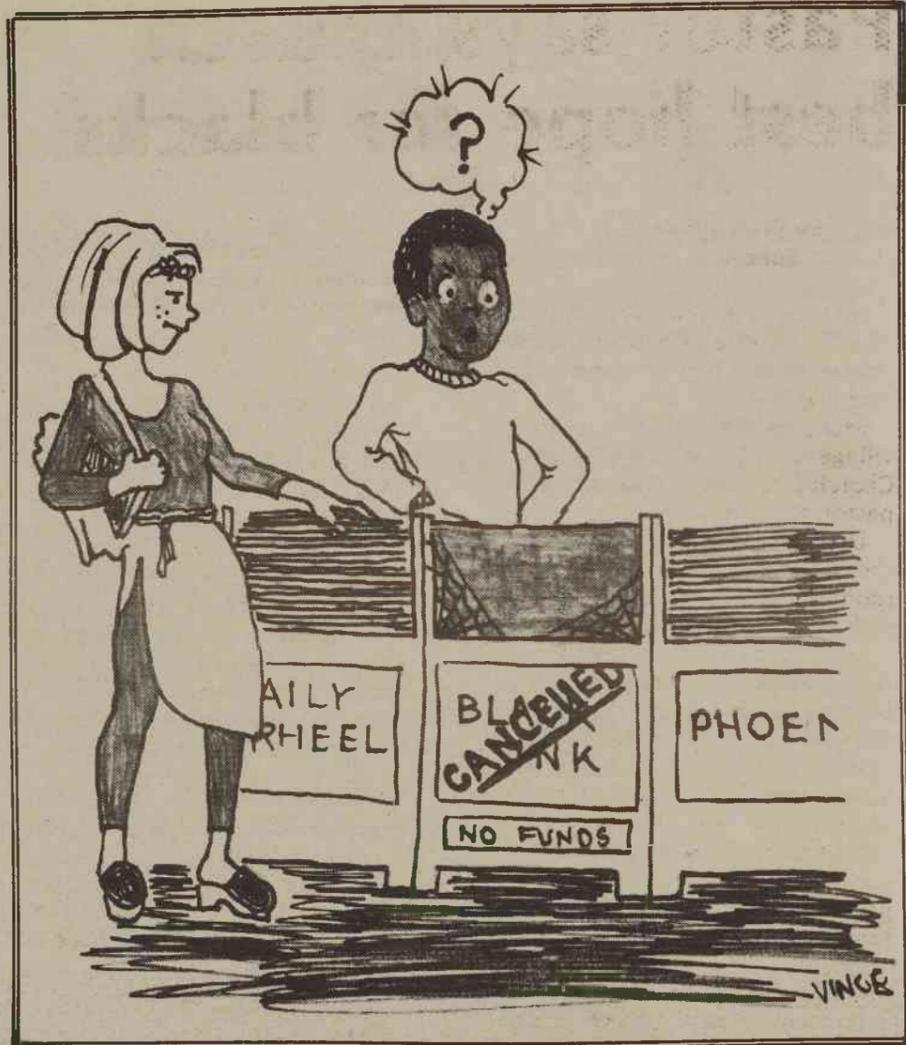
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## In Perspective

### Blacks should hold onto past

By Albertina Smith

Finally, the moment we've all been longing for — the end of the semester and the beginning of another summer. Some plan to work while others will be attending summer school. A few intend to tour places like Mexico and the Bahamas while others will be lucky to see anyplace but Smurfville, North Carolina. If you're like me, you'll be content just to stay home and eat genuine mom's food for a change.

Regardless of what we plan to do this summer, we should all hope to make the best of it. One way to have a really memorable summer is to spend it by getting closer in tune with family members, particularly the elderly. It is surprising to realize how strengthening such relationships can help you develop a deeper appreciation for your family and cultural history.

It is especially vital that we seek to enhance our family ties in these times in which the family seems to be disintegrating and losing out in importance to the materialistic society.

I often reminisce over the summer before my freshman year. I stayed with my grandparents throughout July. I did everything that a little country girl could ever think of.

Starting off the day at 6 a.m., I would help my grandfather paint, build cabinets, and lay down countertops. Some days we would go out in the country and pick beans, peas and relax at the end of the day with a nice, cold watermelon.

The most peaceful times were spent picking blueberries in the midst of the dark and cool leaves of the vines and chasing yellow birds that ate the ber-

ries. That summer my grandfather even told me "How to make a nigger," which incidently is a recipe that you won't find in Betty Crocker's cookbook.

All in all the summer was spent just getting closer to my grandparents and thanking them for all that they had done for me. During our most secretive moments, I shared my dreams for the future with them. They told me how they had to struggle just to keep the family fed. It was evident that their lives were full of pain.

Learning of a past that I had never had to live gave me a greater appreciation for my grandparents and our collective history as a black people.

I believe that it is particularly important for black students at Carolina to strengthen their hold on their past. To possess the inner power and courage that comes from our family ties serves as a stabilizing force in our lives. In a world such as our's, it is easy to have your sense of self shattered by the racist and dehumanizing aspects which surround us.

Hence, our family ties can be a valuable lifeline that will hold our heads above the high waters as we attempt to progress and to mobilize ourselves.

Our generation of blacks have great potential. Yet this potential is like sand in the wind unless we know where we've been, who we are, and where we are going.