

## Black women: the double minority

### Speaker urges black women to reach beyond stereotypes

by Darlene Campbell  
Staff Writer

"Women who have pioneered new roads for black women have been catalyst for change," the first woman to head the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said Tuesday, March 25.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, who was chairman of the commission during the Carter Administration, said black women have just moved out of the background of night and into the full light of day.

"It is only in recent history that black women have been able to escape a traditional destiny," she said.

Norton, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, was chosen by the Women's Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to deliver the keynote address for the Black Women's Leadership Symposium.

Her speech was titled "Black Women's Leadership: Challenges and Strategies."

"If we had to choose the movement which caused this change, when would it be?" Norton asked about 400 people at Hill Hall.

"Would it be when Marion Anderson became the first black to sing at the Metropolitan Opera? Would it be when Shirley Chisholm ran for Congress?"

"Would it be when black women formed in 1984 the Black Women's Political Conference, the first black political organization of black women?"

Perhaps it was the moment before the last election, she said, when the percentage of black women casting votes was higher than that of any other group of registered voters."

Norton said that black women have been driven to change by "self-combustion that has always been their energy."

This energy has made black women distinctive activists and indistinctive feminists, she said.

"It is this energy that makes it possible for black women to be at once part of two of the most influential movements of the 20th century: the American civil rights movement and the worldwide movement for women."

Norton said black women live in a period that demands freedom. "Today, women are at the realm of change," she said. "And this change in the status of women whose role has been secondary since evolution, changes society," she said.

It is a change that can't be stopped, Norton added. "We are in the midst of the greatest change since evolution," she said "the re-ordering of male and female relationships."

Today, three times as many black

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### Black women survive history

by Marjorie Roach  
Assistant Editor

Despite a history of hardships, black women have emerged with humanity intact, according to Paula Giddings.

"Sex-exploitation did not make us less, but more—the true femininity is not one of weakness, but strength," she said.

Giddings, author of *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race in America*, spoke to an audience of 100 people as part of the Women's symposium on Mar. 26 in Memorial Hall.

Her speech focused on traditions as a way to help black women look at the 1980's in a new light. "Black women collectively forged a tradition too easily forgotten," she said. "A new focus on black women happens periodically throughout history. It is interesting looking back at triumphs and how we resolved problems. If we were not successful, we would not be here today."

Giddings spoke about the efforts of newly freed slaves to rebuild their lives in freedom.

"Ex-slaves remarried in freedom. Seventy couples at a time lined up to reaffirm vows. Black parents who had their kids taken away to be apprenticed walked 10 miles to get them."

Giddings said the black family and community was strong and



Photo by Tammi Foust

Paula Giddings

thrived after slavery despite racism. "People left homes to protect their wives and daughters, to proclaim their manhood, to be left alone, earn a wage and to dream decent dreams for their kids," she said.

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## Black women have ability to control system

by Denise Moultrie  
News Editor

Any black woman holding a job with implied authority should know that race and sex contributed to selection, said Mary Francis Berry, member of the national civil rights commission.

"Any person who says their appointment didn't take into account that she was female and black should think again," Berry said.

Berry, who served as provost and chancellor at the University of Colorado, Boulder, spoke at the Black Women's Leadership Symposium in March.

In her speech, "Working within the system for change: shaping public policy," Berry said black women should use positions of authority make way for others like them.

Berry said she has often been

the only black and the only woman in a room where important decisions were made. The rest of the people in the room were upper-class white men, she said.

If she ever brought up this fact, "They claimed that I was oversensitive," she said.

Berry said some people in positions to hire often say they can not find qualified blacks for employment. Her rebuttal was that there have been a number of unqualified white men hired for the same positions.

When black women do gain those positions, they should be present during major discussions, she said. "They should be there ready to ask the questions that no one else will ask."

The presence of black women in that particular role has influenced politics. Though there are passive ways to affect change, "Protest is an essential ingredient to politics," she

said.

"What I'm saying is that it's the squeaky wheel that gets the oil," she said.

Other ways to get change include exerting pressure from outside the system, Berry said. "There should be people outside who can develop information and data that those in charge can use.

This combination will yield results by putting pressure on people in positions higher than black women officials', she said.

Other results black women can work for include "harm control," she said. "This is the kind of work you do when you wake up in the morning and say, 'Oh, Lord, what can I stop them from doing today,'" she said.

Black women should be cautious when dealing with the media, she said. "You should use the media to get your point across. Try to know when you're

being used," she said.

The media use information purposefully and black women should learn to know what that means, she said.

Something black women should know is that they can help themselves and other blacks, too. "Some black women may follow the path of going along to get along," she said.

These women merely hold office and do not make any changes at all, Berry said. They leave the office saying "I was in that office," They should be willing to step forward and say, "they are unbought and unbossed," she said.

Black women as voters can change the face of politics, she said. All they have to do is fully implement their right to vote.

All this means, she said, is "Finding a way to stand up and say, 'I shall not be moved.'"