

Endsights:

"White people are valued more in this society. Black people are the center of the Black Cultural Center, in everything else, we are the fringes."



By Kimberly Ellington and Jenise Little
Staff

On Thursday, November 8, the Black Student Movement continued its ongoing Umoja series. Umoja, a Swahili word meaning unity, hopes to bring a sense of community and togetherness for students, faculty and staff. The program held on November 8, the third this year, discussed the need for a Black Cultural Center (BCC) at UNC.

Ann Ards, tri-chairperson of the Black Student Movement Special Projects Committee, opened the evening by introducing Mrs. Margo Crawford, director of UNC's BCC and our most prominent leader in the struggle for a BCC that reflects the diversity of the African-American culture. Not only is Crawford leading the fight at UNC, but she is also co-chair of the National Association of Black Cultural Centers. With all the racial tensions running rampant through this campus and this state, there could not be a better time to discuss our quest for more than a mere "Black Cultural Closet."

Crawford began the program by explaining what the words "Black Cultural Center" really mean. The term Black is used instead of African-American because the latter term is limiting in its scope. Black, however, is all encompassing; it identifies people of African and American descent and reaches farther to include native Africans as well as West Indians. Collectively, these groups embody the richness of black culture.

Crawford continued, saying the culture that African-Americans have inherited accents the spiritual aspect of their being. European culture focuses on the importance of technology, whereas African culture focuses on the study of God and of love.

Crawford said this "spiritual culture" is one of the primary elements of African life that the Europeans tried to eradicate through a process called "season-

ing." Europeans wanted to "de-Africanize" slaves in an attempt to destroy all recollection of their home land and culture.

"The plan was that you would not know anything about Africa," Crawford said. "This can also be considered the origin of the complexion problem that many African-Americans have today. You will never meet an African who is concerned about being 'too dark'."

Crawford considers this "seasoning" process a part of the justification for needing a Black Cultural Center. Crawford also said she is often asked why there should be a Black Cultural Center as opposed to a Multi-Cultural Center at UNC.

"What languages are taught on this campus?" Crawford said. "Are there any other cultural groups that have been exposed to this kind of seasoning? Did anyone attempt to completely strip the heritage from these groups? A Black Cultural Center at the University of North Carolina is a place that everyone, not just African-Americans can come to educate themselves about an entire race."

Crawford contends that the "European-American Cultural Center" is a white university. She said one of the goals of the BCC is to reconnect the black community.

"Who else is talking about the black community?" Crawford said. "If we don't care, who will? America does not support people of African descent, so we must support ourselves. White people are valued more in this society. Black people are the center of the Black Cultural Center, in everything else, we are the fringes."

Express yourself about issues that concern Black Ink readers. Drop your article by Suite 108-D Student Union, or mail to Black Ink, CB# 5210, Student Union, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

The Real Drug War

Sick and tired. I am sick and tired of turning on the news and seeing African-Americans paraded in handcuffs in front of the camera, thrown up against a police car getting frisked or lying in a pool of blood with only their \$150 Nikes and a broken crack vial showing. Is it just me or are you tired of your race carrying the lone burden of the U.S. drug catastrophe? The mass media seems to think the African-American race is somewhat more responsible for the drug crises than any other race. According to a study done by the Center for Media and Public Affairs in Washington, D.C., African-Americans are featured in almost fifty percent of all photographs accompanying network news stories about drug abuse. That proves to be a curious finding since African Americans make up only 12.4 percent of the U.S. population. I guess white middle class is not affected in the least by the tragedies of drug use. It seems that the hip hop, illiterate, drug dealing Negro stereotype not only lives but is perpetuated to new heights of hip hopness and addiction on the TV news every night. The study found that beginning in September 1989 when President Bush declared his war on drugs and continuing for 10 months, African-Americans were featured in 47 percent of 1,336 camera shots, while Caucasians were shown in 32 percent and a mixture of Caucasians and peoples of other ethnic origins were seen in 17 percent of the stories. The study found the major networks to be guilty as charged. NBC's visuals were 41 percent black and 38 percent white. CBS had 49 percent black and 28 percent white, while ABC's visuals were 53 percent black and 29 percent white. How are these false perceptions affecting our youth, black and white? What are their impressionable minds to believe when night after night they view demeaning, demoralizing images of the African American race? A message that African Americans are subordinates and the cause of many of the problems faced today and the perpetrators of most crimes committed in this country is hammered with a unrelenting barrage of photographs and headlines in the mass media into the hearts and minds of the youth. This continual subliminal message so early in life forms rigid attitudes and opinions that are hard to change with adulthood. No one is denying that there is a drug problem in the black community, but it is more accurate to call it a larger, shared problem not just by minorities but by the human race. — Teresa Jefferson

Think Black Ink...

Black Ink will hold a staff meeting today in room 226 of the Carolina Union at 6:30. All interested UNC students and staff are welcome.

Today!!

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is coming

Dec. 3

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