

## Editorials



by Lillie Booth, Editor

Since I've been at Fayetteville State the one question that I've been asked the most is: "What do you plan to do with a non-teaching degree in English after graduation?"

I smile, usually, and inevitably end up listing the numerous possibilities. I don't think they take me seriously, however. They don't seem to realize that a good English major is worth her weight in gold.

Now that that's off my chest, I'll confide in you

that I plan to write a best-selling novel, eventually. I've written since grade school and have had material published in **Essence**, **Players**, **Family Weekly**, **True Story**, and others.

As editor, I can frankly say that the position can be frustrating at times. But, of course, there are high points. One memorable experience for me was the interview I did of James Inglehart, star of the movie, "Death Force."

My hobbies are photo-

graphy, freelance writing, and bowling. I enjoy reading how-to books, listening to Al Green records, watching soap operas, especially, "All My Children," and sharing films at home with my family.

I appreciate moments of solitude more than anyone else, I believe. The fact that I have five children, a cat, and two dogs may contribute to this.

I love teachers that are enthusiastic about the subject they teach and are able to effectively relate the material to students. I de-

test teachers who don't know as much about the subject as they should, yet try to convince you that they know what they're talking about even though you're aware that they don't.

Once I graduate, I hope to establish a scholarship fund in order that a student that has contributed greatly to the progress of the paper will be rewarded. Perhaps this will serve as an incentive and also let the person know that the job that he/she is doing is appreciated.

## Between The Races, A Parable

by Dr. Manning Marable

Two runners are on the track preparing for the first of two important races. One is black; one is white. Both have trained many years for these celebrated races. Both are looking forward to the spirited competition and to the handsome cash prize given to the victor.

Before either runner can position himself in his starting blocks, several conscientious officials run onto the field. The black runner's legs are chained together. The gun is fired suddenly and the white runner trots away. The black runner languishes far behind. He cannot stand, he can barely crawl. His muscled legs are cut and bloodied from the constant rubbing against the rusty irons.

The white runner reaches the halfway point around the track, when a sympathetic black spectator realizes the injustice of the contest. He runs down to the track, grabs a metal ball from the shot put area and gives it to the black man. The black runner smashes his shackles. He stands and begins to quickly narrow the distance between himself and his sole competitor. As the white is turning the bend toward home, the black runner is approaching the halfway point. Closer and closer he comes to the white runner. The finish tape is clearly in sight. Finally, the white runner surges forward, defeating the black runner by a few steps.

The black runner argues loudly that the race was not at all fair or sportsmanlike. The white runner disagrees: the rules of the race call for one of the runners to wear ankle

irons throughout the contest. It was an unfortunate accident of fate that the black runner received the chains and that the white runner had not. But certainly, the white runner insists, rules are rules. The race was designed by fair and impartial gentlemen. The race was a national institution and public celebration, designed for the amusement and pleasure of the general public. Surely you are not questioning the traditions, the customs and the authority of the race?" the white runner asked in amazement.

"Exactly so," states the black runner. "The rules of this game must be revised. What I desire," he argues, "is equality between our races."

"Long before we began training for this race," the white runner responds, "you knew that our respective positions were to be separate but equal. Why, you know the old saying: 'We can be separate as the fingers, yet one in the hand in all matters of mutual athletics.'"

The officials of the games congregated, disagreeing amongst themselves what course of action to follow. One junior official, the sole black man, suggests cautiously that the white runner be allowed to keep the large cash purse for his victory, but that the race be declared a draw. The senior official disagrees intensely. The black runner should receive nothing, and should possibly be banned from further competition. "Indeed, he violated every code of his race by deliberately breaking his chains!" he says. The spectator who had run onto the

field of play illegally had already been arrested and was in a local police station awaiting criminal charges. The black runner must be penalized in some way. Still another official believed that the white runner should donate some small portion of his prize to the black man's children and that the entire incident be erased from the official proceedings.

Finally, the perfect solution is reached. Both runners are ordered to return to the starting line for the second race. The white runner is allowed to keep both the first place prize and is declared the winner of the first race. The black runner will be neither punished nor rewarded for his actions. Henceforth, no runner will be bound by chains.

All the participants including most spectators in the stands agree that the decision is both fair and just—save the black runner. "The white runner should be penalized by wearing my chains, at least through a brief portion of the second race," he insists. "Those are the rules of the race. You said so yourself. Look at your own rulebooks, if you dare to. Either the white runner should wear these chains in this race, or I should collect the prize from the first race."

All of the officials, including the black one, disagree. "That would not be exactly fair, now would it?" he explains. "You wanted equality. You even broke your chains for equality. Now you've got it."

The black runner continues, "but those old chains bit into my legs,

cutting deep wounds and leaving bruises. I may not be able to run well this time. Certainly I should be compensated in some significant way."

"There is nothing in our rulebooks about compensation to injured players," a white official interjects. "You run the race, you assume the risk. We know the rulebook; we wrote the rules for our race."

"I hate to be troublesome," the black runner persists, limping slowly back toward the starting point. "But it seems to me that the white runner could be forced to start perhaps five to ten yards behind me in the second race. My legs are swollen and still bleeding. It would only be fair."

"Of course it would be fair, my boy," a white official smiles, placing his arm around the black runner's shoulders. "But it wouldn't be equal. That's what you've been asking for all along, isn't it? All the runners will be considered equal in all these future races, endowed only with their physical abilities in their pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. Besides," he adds, "there is no such thing as perfect equality between all races."

An impatient official looks at his watch. A gun is raised and fired. The second race begins.

This essay was published as a Postscript in Manning Marable's recent book, **From the Grassroots: Social and Political Essays Towards Afro-American Liberation**. Dr. Marable teaches political economy at the Africana Studies Center of Cornell University and is a leader of the National Black Political Assembly.

DO IT YOUR WAY  
THE AMERICAN WAY  
VOTE

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