

What's The New Face Of Race

by Francine Dunbar

The Seabrook Auditorium was a hot spot last month. As part of the Chancellor's Distinguished Speaker Series, five scholars assembled to form a roundtable discussion. The topic at hand: race in American society today.

Dr. Nicole Lewis, a Professor of Sociology at Fayetteville State University was the moderator for the debate. The panel featured Dr. Thomas Conway, Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff, Dr. Ada Fisher, North Carolina Republican Party National Committeewoman, Dr. Derrick Darby, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kansas, and Mr. Gene Nichol, professor of Law and Director of the Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Lewis asked the panel what they thought were the two most important areas of development pertaining to Black experience respective to each panelist's area of expertise. Dr. Darby acknowledged the election and inauguration of President Barack Obama, which occurred a year ago, to the date of the discussion. It "gave us as a nation an opportunity to realize the dream MLK spoke of and realized the time where all people can be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin," said Darby. Gene Nichol "didn't think that the election of a Black President was possible" but it was with the force of American Constitutional Law. He said without it, there might not have been a Civil Rights movement of 1964.

When asked about the viability of Civil Rights organizations and the roles they play in addressing race in America today, Nichol and Dr. Ada Fisher came to a consensus that there is a great cry for potent participation in the US and the country tends to be a reactionary people instead of thinking to the future. The two also concurred when asked about Iris Ifill's "short-circuit white guilt" and its changed approach from past generations. Ifill illustrates the "Obama generation" of Black leaders as "almost all middle-class, college-educated, and comfortable in multiracial situations. They are not the 1960s stereotype of a civil rights leader. Darby said the "strategies are not to look for blame, but to work together to face the facts," with Nichol pointing out that "America is the richest nation, but still dealing with a great number of impoverished people and children, child issues, and other disparities."

When asked about the role Historically Black Colleges and Universities have today with the percentage of Black enrollment decreasing, Dr. Conway said the focus must be on the retention and graduation rates, which should be the main goal at all institutions. "It is not a question about if HBCU's will have a role in education, it is about what role it will be," said Conway. Darby stated that HBCU's "prepare the 20% of African Americans today and equip them to move out into the world," and will continue to do so. Darby also said diversity improves educational outcomes, not staggers them.

Race as an entity in politics and general American society has taken a turn and is becoming less significant. Since its inception in colonial America, the subject of race has been set up as a system of erroneous and invalid misapprehension. When the declaration of independence was written in 1776, it proclaimed that all men are created equal, which contradicted the entity of slavery or "servitude for life" enacted by the Virginia House of Burgesses law of 1662. With that, the argument had to be immediately raised that the African American population were of a different species, and not human. Through small and significant changes over time with people like Anthony Johnson, Elizabeth Freeman, and John Brown, to activists like Claudette Colvin, W.E.B. Dubois, and Martin Luther King Jr., the new face of race has transformed and made a way for President Barack H. Obama and many more.

The next featured speaker in the series is Dr. David C. Driskell, a renowned painter and collector of art, as well as one of the leading authorities on the subject of African American art and the Black artists in American society. In 2000, he received the National Humanities medal from President Bill Clinton and in 2007 he was elected as a National Academician by the National Academy. The homily will take place on February 16, 2010 at 6pm in the Seabrook Auditorium. For more information, please visit <http://www.uncfsu.edu/govandcommunity/events/speakerartseries.htm>.

The Daily Commute

by Barron Green

We're on the downside of winter but we still have to take precautions to keep our cars in good shape for the cold weather. With the winter month's temperatures ranging from 35 to 60 degrees, commuters like myself must rely upon personal or public transportation. If you have a personal car it is important that you keep the maintenance up. Bad weather can send temperatures plummeting to the point where it could negatively affect your vehicle. To assure you have a reliable vehicle during winter months, it is smart to check your anti-freeze and oil. The anti-freeze within your cooling system is a chemical mix along with water to help cool your engine and lower the freezing point of the coolant. If straight water freezes inside your engine, it could cause vital parts of your engine to fail. Not having the correct blend or amount of anti-freeze in your vehicle could cause engine failure and thousands of dollars in repairs.

Oil changes and having the correct amount of oil in your vehicle will maximize reliability in cold weather. Oil within your engine serves as a vital lubricant to assure the life of your car. Oil can be distinguished by how thick the solution is, or its viscosity. Your factory service manual will give you the correct viscosity of oil to put into your vehicle. Vehicles that have low amounts of oil could result in engine failure and thousands of dollars in damages. If you choose to tackle this task alone, all the supplies you need can be purchased from your local parts dealer.

Cold winter mornings can pose the threat of thick frozen ice on the windshield. Your windshield is constructed of three panes of glass that must be thawed properly to deter breakage. The correct way to clear your windshield on early mornings would only take three easy steps. The first step to thawing your windshield would be to turn your wipers on high. The second step would be to get a pitcher of water. Be sure to use cold to lukewarm water when thawing your windshield. Although hot water would seem more practical to melt the ice, this would crack your windshield. The final step is to simply let your wipers slowly swipe the ice away.

The benefits of keeping your vehicle maintained outweigh total neglect. You save your hard earned money by investing in your vehicle's health much like your own. This will play a major role in your confidence towards long cold commutes ahead.