DYNAMIC DUO CHANGES AGENTS

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they had seen. "What I saw was kind of like a tooth ache. You've got to experience it to know what it's like," said Clyde Jones as he described where he and Robert A. Scales, a Printing Mechanic at Archer, had witnessed. "That's right," said Mrs. Miller. "Most of us have had a toothache at one time or another. But if it was a long time ago it's hard to remember how much it really hurt."

Mark Freeman, who was Deputy Director in 1968, said, " The $1 million from Reynolds, along with funds from other local businesses and citizens helped set up the Winston-Salem Urban Coalition. This new organization was now functioning and has just made its first grants—including one to improve and equip a number of recreation areas in the neighborhoods. Most of the grants from the Urban Coalition went for housing and job training. Opportunities for job training and made adequate housing available were two of the keys in the war on poverty. With proper training may of these people would get the jobs they so desperately need to support their families."(Caravan R.J.Reynolds Tobacco Company November 1968,Vol 2 No.11).

After Mark Freeman, it was just the beginning of what the "dynamic duo", Mrs. Louise Wilson and Mrs. Florence Creque would do to develop programs designed to help poor people break through the prisons of poverty. They would go directly into the community. Both ladies were passionate about the community and its needs. They were confident women, who could get a job done, and done well. Both educated women, who were the wives of physicians, and could have found other things to do. In spite of their prominence in life, the war on poverty became a divine assignment for them; they became "change agents" who made a difference to the Winston-Salem community at large. These ladies wanted to see change, and were not afraid to get their hands dirty to rebuild the community. They were even know to invite the staff to social events that they hosted. This "dynamic-duo" believed that it took the whole community to make a difference. Louise Wilson was the Deputy Director and Florence Crequea was her assistant, directly responsible for daily operations.

One of Wilson's strengths was to assimilate a diversified staff who were multi-talented. A wise woman in that, she invited consultants from other states to develop innovative programs that would improve living conditions for poor people, especially in the black community—which had been ignored. Wilson had a muti-cultural staff of various backgrounds, and from various States. There was even a staff persons from other countries (Cuba, and Israel). Wilson was instrumental in inviting Preton Hill, a consultant on race relations, to Winston-Salem, so that he could help develop a local Human Relations Commission. She encouraged her staff to be a part of racial dialogues which took place at the YMCA with Marjorie Northrope and many other whites who wanted to improve race relations in Winston-Salem. Not only did she encourage local involvement, but she also encouraged staffers to go to Philadelphia to a National Meeting formed to organize and recognize Kwanza as a National Holiday, with Ron Kurema, its founder. Wilson was known to require team work from the entire staff. They were all asked to help deliver coal and wood to poor people when it was a snow storm, and to help renovate Community Houses. Working in just your area was unheard of; her passion was to have everyone become a part of the changes for poor people that she envisioned.

Florence Creque, on the other hand, was on-hands more frequently with local staff. She managed the operations of each program site. Her office was in the middle of , what was called the Boston Area of Winston-Salem. her, Her office was housed in the apartments on Abitwa Street, near Kimberly Park Public Housing. She too was passionate, and wanted to see changes in the Black community.

Under Wilson's leadership, Community Houses were developed as one way to begin change on hands in the community. This program was designed to organize the community. Creque staffed and managed the operations of these houses. Creque was asked in an article contributed by Shederick Adams (Caravan) if there was a good response from young adults and teenagers in the community houses? She said, "We are fairly successful with the teenagers, but it's hard to reach the young adults."(Caravan R.J.Reynolds Tobacco Company November 1968,Vol 2 No.11).

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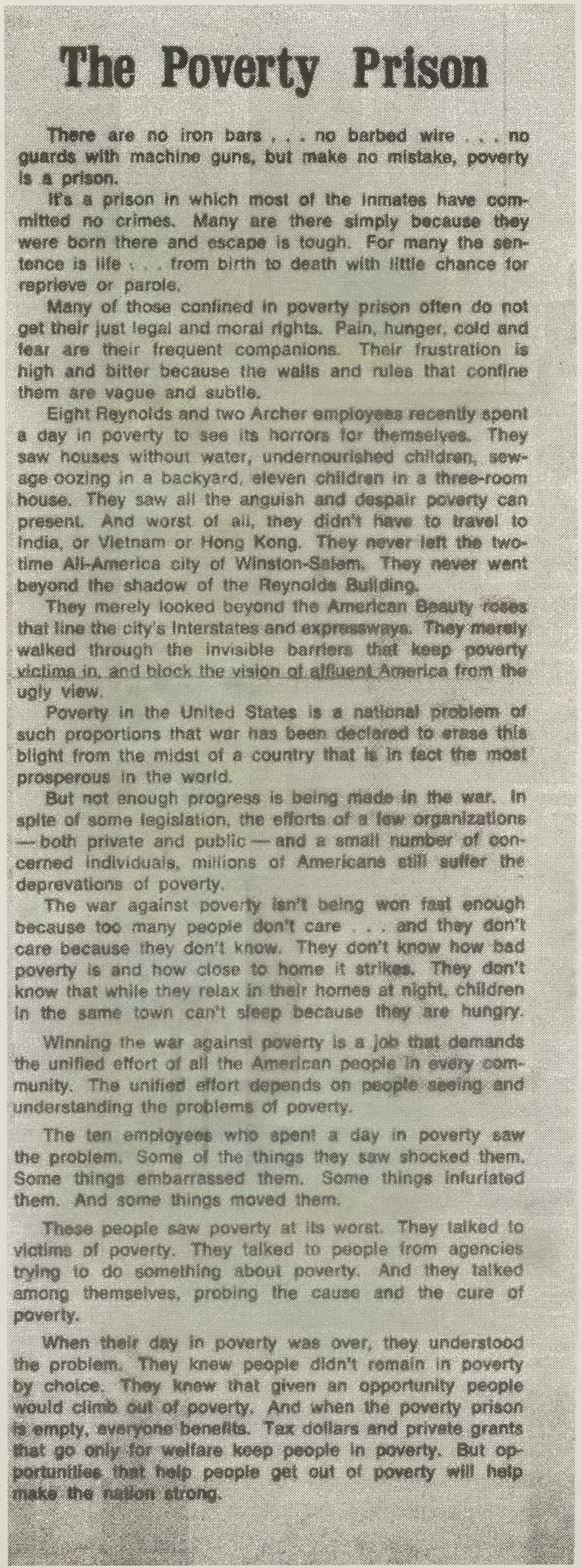
A Special

Caravan Comment



The Poverty Prison

There are no iron bars . . . no barbed wire . . . no guards with machine guns, but make no mistake, poverty is a prison.

It's a prison in which most of the inmates have committed no crimes. Many are there simply because they were born there and escape is tough. For many the sentence is life . . . from birth to death with little chance for reprieve or parole.

Many of those confined in poverty prison often do not get their just legal and moral rights. Pain, hunger, cold and fear are their frequent companions. Their frustration is high and bitter because the walls and rules that confine them are vague and subtle.

Eight Reynolds and two Archer employees recently spent a day in poverty to see its horrors for themselves. They saw houses without water, undernourished children, sewage oozing in a backyard, eleven children in a three-room house. They saw all the anguish and despair poverty can present. And worst of all, they didn't have to travel to India, or Vietnam or Hong Kong. They never left the two-time All-America city of Winston-Salem. They never went beyond the shadow of the Reynolds Building.

They merely looked beyond the American Beauty roses that line the city's Interstates and expressways. They merely walked through the invisible barriers that keep poverty victims in, and block the vision of affluent America from the ugly view.

Poverty in the United States is a national problem of such proportions that war has been declared to erase this blight from the midst of a country that is in fact the most prosperous in the world.

But not enough progress is being made in the war. In spite of some legislation, the efforts of a few organizations — both private and public — and a small number of concerned individuals, millions of Americans still suffer the deprevations of poverty.

The war against poverty isn't being won fast enough because too many people don't care . . . and they don't care because they don't know. They don't know how bad poverty is and how close to home it strikes. They don't know that while they relax in their homes at night, children in the same town can't sleep because they are hungry.

Winning the war against poverty is a job that demands the unified effort of all the American people in every community. The unified effort depends on people seeing and understanding the problems of poverty.

The ten employees who spent a day in poverty saw the problem. Some of the things they saw shocked them. Some things embarrassed them. Some things infuriated them. And some things moved them.

These people saw poverty at its worst. They talked to victims of poverty. They talked to people from agencies trying to do something about poverty. And they talked among themselves, probing the cause and the cure of poverty.

When their day in poverty was over, they understood the problem. They knew people didn't remain in poverty by choice. They knew that given an opportunity people would climb out of poverty. And when the poverty prison is empty, everyone benefits. Tax dollars and private grants that go only for welfare keep people in poverty. But opportunities that help people get out of poverty will help make the nation strong.