

Black Colleges Praise Reagan For Increasing Aid

By Larry A. Still
Capital News Service
WASHINGTON, D.C.
 Leaders of the nation's 111 historically black colleges praised President Ronald Reagan's commitment to these traditional institutions of higher learning and urged him to appoint a presidential commission on the Economic and Educational Development of Blacks, during the annual conference of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Democratic administration level of \$110 million to a proposed Republican level of \$152.6 million in the face of other budget cuts is a sign of President Reagan's commitment to support of historically black colleges, leaders of NAPEO declared last week. Secretary of Education Terrel Bell confirmed the administration's support for the increase during a hastily called meeting with NAPEO officials during the conference.

Dr. Charles A. Lyons, chancellor of Fayetteville State University and president of the 111-member organization of black college presidents and executives expressed optimism at the future of the predominantly black schools at the opening and close of the NAPEO conference, March 20-22.

Emphasizing the conference theme of Mainstreaming Blacks, Lyons declared "...our colleges always have been the most integrated institutions of higher learning in the nation. We are concerned about the development of resources to meet the needs of the majority of our students who come from poor family backgrounds..."

The fact that the approximately 100 black colleges annually have 60,000 graduates which is more than all of the nation's 2,000 other colleges admitting black students is proof enough of the importance of these institutions, declared Dr. Elias Blake, president of Clark College in Atlanta.

"We could be graduating 120,000 students a year if we had adequate resources," added Dr. Blake in emphasizing the contributions black college alumni are making to their communities and the nation.

"The increase in Title Three funding, though significant in its own right, is a dramatic signal to all agencies of the Federal government, sent forth at a time when other agencies are experiencing massive budget cuts, that the President intends to keep his commitment to the historically black colleges," Lyons declared.

However, NAPEO officials are mildly critical of administration proposals to cut funds in other educational aid programs, especially the basic grants funds for students from low income families.

"We are not so much concerned about the guaranteed loan program because most of our students cannot even afford loans," explained Lyons in reference to administration plans to eliminate the government guaranteed loans and interest for college students. The controversial program has been criticized for favoring middle income families who secure the low interest loans and place the funds in higher interest bank and money market accounts, reportedly.

NAPEO officials went on record favoring a maximum cut of \$50 in the Pell (basic) grant of \$1,800 to a maximum of \$1,750 "as a budget cutting contribution," Lyons emphasized.

"NAPEO joins the entire higher education community in urging a prompt and expeditious resolution of problems that currently exist concerning student financial aid. Approximately ninety per cent of students attending historically black colleges depend heavily on student financial aid, compared to 25 per cent of students in the total nation. The historically black colleges are more vulnerable than other institutions to disruptions in financial aid programs," the organization spokesman stated.

The statement also said "NAPEO recognizes that to accomplish the goal of economic recovery, the elimination of waste and the reduction of government spending are essential steps. We endorse the underlying concepts in the Reagan Economic Recovery Program of erecting a safety net to protect the truly needy and of eliminating from programs for the needy, many well-to-do who have gotten into programs not intended for them."

Seminars were held during the conference on procedures for mainstreaming blacks in government jobs, community affairs, higher education, international affairs, women's affairs and the American power structure.



Prison Mother

Ms. Michelle Gray tickles the cheek of her baby, Chauncey, in a room they share at the Lowell, Florida Correction Institution for Women. The woman has an eight-year-old son who is living with relatives. Recent testimony has disputed the wisdom of rearing children in prisons. Two bills are pending in the Florida State Legislature to abolish the program. "This is pretty nice over here," Michelle says of the cottage, "but the baby wakes me up about three every morning." UPI Photo

Black Summit Meeting Assesses Housing Needs for the 1980's And Beyond

By William R. Morris

From all parts of the nation they came to the Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina: San Francisco, Atlanta, New York, Chicago, Washington, and even Epps, Alabama and Bolton, Mississippi. Black experts in every area of housing recently gathered at Hilton Head to review and assess the state of housing in black America, and to propose practical remedies for solving the problems faced by blacks in securing decent and affordable housing. This select group included economists, researchers, mortgage lenders, developers, real estate professionals, community leaders and government officials — all black.

There are many blacks who have never heard of Hilton Head, although it ranks at the top of the nation's list of exclusive and wealthy retirement and resort communities; playground of the rich, home of famous golf and tennis classics. But there's another side to Hilton Head, the black side. Home of Northern forces during the Civil War, the island was given to black slaves who lived there when the war ended. It remained largely black until the mid-1950's, when whites started to buy and develop large parts of the island for resort development.

The site of the Summit, the Sea Pines Plantation, boasts 4,500 acres of condominiums, tennis courts, golf courses and shady white ocean-front beaches. Today, descendants of the original black families on the island own less than twenty per cent of Hilton Head and are engaged in a last-ditch effort to maintain black control of what's left. Although black lands contain the only remaining areas yet to be developed, they are marked by eroding beaches, swamp land, dilapidated houses and trailers. Many of its owners are land-poor; awaiting the day it can be developed by blacks and become a source of black economic advancement.

It was in this setting that the NAACP National Housing Corporation of New York City convened the first Black Summit Housing Conference — to hammer out a black housing agenda for now and into the next century. Although planned well before the Reagan Administration came to power, the summit's timing could not have been better, for much of its focus was on proposed cuts in federal housing programs. To do its work, the group of twenty or so broke into small working groups to examine the following issues as they relate to blacks and their housing needs:

The future of black communities; Housing supply and demand; Economic, tax and land use policies; Housing policies and programs in rural areas; and Housing and urban programs and policies.

To emphasize the importance of the work to be done, Margaret Bush Wilson, the NAACP National Board Chairman and Bill Oliver, president of the NAACP National Housing Corporation, came and stayed the full five-days of the conference (and didn't get near a tennis court or swimming pool). Conferees who came expecting some fun-in-the-sun found little time to run loose on the plantation, as everyone quickly plunged into the difficult and complex task before them.

Once the major problems had been identified, statements of basic principles were developed around each of the issues. Recommended actions which should be taken by black organizations, the Congress, the White House and the private-sector, were then discussed and agreed to; i.e., should black communities be saved, are housing vouchers good for blacks, rent controls, block grants, etc.

In a way, all those who participated in the Summit departed Hilton Head with a feeling that it was well worthwhile, and that they had contributed something of historical significance to black progress. They knew that never before had blacks representing such a broad spectrum in housing come together to seriously deal with the solutions needed to provide decent housing to blacks in America. What was done at Hilton Head could well be the fore-runner of new initiatives by black professionals to define black problems themselves, and to prescribe remedies in line with black aspirations.

The NAACP and its housing corporation deserve a vote of thanks from both black and white America for its vision and initiative in bringing together such a group at this time, even if it was necessary to return to the "plantation" to do it.

HAPPINESS THROUGH HEALTH

(Continued from Page 15)

ing Network show a twenty per cent decline in adverse reactions to marijuana and angel dust overdoses reported by the hospital emergency rooms between the third quarter of 1979 and the similar period last year.

Pollin said a number of factors have contributed to the apparent downturn in marijuana use. They include:

- Broader awareness of the potential dangers of marijuana, as reported in new scientific studies.
- A dramatic change in the old attitude that the drug is basically harmless.
- Growing disapproval of "druggies" among teenage peers.

• An increasing number of drug treatment programs — now more than 3,500 across the national — as well as increasing parent, teacher, and community campaigns to curb drug abuse.

The earlier attitude that marijuana was a benign drug was very unfortunate," Pollin said. "I don't know of any group that now believes marijuana is harmless. Daily intoxication can cause great harm psychologically and physically."

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