

Senator Speaks In Support Of Private Black Colleges



Speak Out

Curtis Massey, NCCU's Student Government Association president encourages students to vote at a "Speak Out" held at the Alfonso Elder Student Union Patio. Photo by Roy Harris

Smith Says Extreme Labor Costs Cost Americans Jobs

NEW YORK—The ultimate price of non-competitive labor costs in the nation's auto industry is jobs, the chairman of General Motors declared recently.

Keynoting the 50th International Conference of the Financial Executives Institute, Roger B. Smith said that according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, in the last two years domestic automakers have closed or announced the closing of more than twenty facilities resulting in the 50,000 workers being affected. In many cases, those jobs were permanently lost, and there was a reduction in the community's economic base.

The lights in U.S. auto plants have been going out all over America, extinguished by high labor costs. The price is too high for us — and it's too high for our employees, Smith said. "Remember, the ultimate price of non-competitive labor costs is jobs."

Smith said there is an urgent need for GM and the UAW to sit down now and discuss these labor costs.

"Unless we can get a handle on excessive labor costs in our industry, there will be more plants shutting down — and more auto industry jobs going offshore," he said.

"Because of our long lead times, important business decisions affecting General Motors' future — and our employees' future — are being made every day, based on present circumstances. We can't wait until next year to start our discussions. We need to address the labor cost differential now, before too many more jobs are lost."

Smith said GM's labor costs are currently eighty per cent higher than those of Japanese automakers and also about eighty per cent higher than the costs for all of American manufacturing.

Over the last decade, the situation has greatly deteriorated, he added. For example, the premium in labor costs at General Motors was only some fifty per cent higher than those in the rest of American manufacturing. But today, the premium has grown to eighty per cent.

"If this sort of trend were to continue, becoming competitive would not just be difficult but impossible," Smith said.

"All this adds up to one simple fact of life: If General Motors is to continue to have viable operations here in North America, and if we are to continue to maintain a high level of employment in the United States, then we and the unions are going to have to sit down together."

Any agreement that would help correct the labor-cost disparity could send positive signals throughout the economy — particularly

at a critical time like this, according to Smith. Such an agreement could have a beneficial influence on negotiations in other American industries, and it would represent an enormously important contribution to the welfare of our entire country.

Smith went on to point out that while plant closings are taking place regularly, GM is looking at alternatives to closing facilities completely. GM, he said, is faced with a non-competitive labor-cost situation at its New Departure-Hyatt Plant at Clark, New Jersey. Rather than closing the plant and putting the employees out of a job, GM is planning to sell the plant to employees, most of whom are represented by the UAW.

"They (the employees) intend to run the plant themselves," Smith said. "But in order to make it competitive, they'll be paying themselves thirty per cent less than they currently receive from General Motors."

Smith then pointed to the changes under consideration in the Clean Air Act as holding the potential for creating additional jobs in the auto

Minority Industrial Trade Fair Slated

ATLANTA—The fifth Annual Minority Industrial Trade Fair will be held Thursday, October 29 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Georgia World Congress Center, announced William Miller, executive director of the Atlanta Regional Minority Purchasing Council, the trade fair's sponsor.

More than 200 exhibitors, mostly Atlanta area minority firms, and an estimated 500 corporate buyers from around the country are expected to attend, Miller said.

Last year's trade fair stimulated a record breaking \$800,000 in business for area minority firms.

Georgia Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, and other dignitaries will officially open the day-long event.

Initiated in 1977, the industrial fair encourages trade between minority-owned firms and major corporations. "The fair gives corporate buyers a chance to meet area minority suppliers, see samples of their products or services, and discuss purchasing opportunities," Miller said.

Major corporations, particularly those in the southeast, are encouraged to participate in this year's trade fair. Interested persons should contact William Miller at (404) 521-0845.

The trade fair will be preceded (October 21-23)

industry and related supplier industries.

"The sooner Congress acts in revising the Clean Air Act, the sooner General Motors can begin to take some of the emission-control equipment off these cars," he said. "We can't take all of the equipment off, of course, nor would we want to. But we might be able to remove some \$300 worth from our base cars."

He said whatever GM can remove will be reflected in sticker-price reductions as soon as possible after the changes are in effect. "Lower prices should create greater demand. And increased demand, in turn, should result in the hiring of more employees," he added.

According to preliminary studies, Smith said GM estimates that every one per cent reduction in prices made on an industry-wide basis could result in a new gain of up to 4,500 auto industry jobs. And in the supplier industries, there would be an additional gain of 9,500 jobs. "A total of 14,000 jobs in all," he said, "and for every additional one per cent cut in price, another 14,000 jobs could be created."

NEW YORK—Speaking to over 1,000 United Negro College Fund supporters in Houston, Texas, Senator Lloyd Bentsen said private black colleges have a vital role to play in U.S. higher education.

Senator Bentsen was the keynote speaker at the 37th Anniversary Dinner commemorating the founding of the United Negro College Fund, which was held in Houston October 1. Dolph Briscoe, former governor of Texas, was the evening's guest of honor.

"I believe in what you are doing," said Senator Bentsen, to an audience that included the presidents of all 41 United Negro College Fund colleges and universities and the organization's Board of Directors. "I share your pride in what has been achieved in the past against incredible odds. And I look forward to helping you build an environment in which independent black colleges can continue to bring education and opportunity to our people."

Briscoe was honored for his years of dedicated service to the United Negro College Fund. He was the first Governor of Texas to serve as Honorary Chairman for UNCF, a position he held from 1975 to 1979.

The 37th Anniversary Dinner was the highlight of a national gathering of the organization's 41 college presidents and its Board of Directors, whose semi-annual meetings were held October 1-2.

A major topic of conversation during the two-day gathering was how a sluggish economy and recent budget cutbacks will affect the private, historically black col-



Mindpower Week

leges that the United Negro College Fund helps support.

"The historically black colleges have always had fewer financial resources than the average college and university, so these schools know how to do more with less, commented Christopher F. Edley, Executive Director of UNCF. "But the twin ravages of inflation and the energy crisis have put a tremendous strain on their budgets. Our institutions are relying on the United Negro College Fund now more than ever before to raise the funds that will help them close the budget gap."

Over half of the students studying on UNCF campuses come from families earning less than \$12,000 annually. More than ninety per cent of these young people require financial assistance to pay for tuition, room and board.

Benjamin Ruffin, special assistant to Governor James B. Hunt, was one of the speakers at North Carolina Central University last week during the university's observance of National Mindpower Week. Here he listens to the views of an unidentified NCCU student. Standing next to Ruffin is Mrs. Lou S. Barnes, program director of the Alfonso Elder Student Union. Photo by Roy Harris

Many of them will be affected by the federal budget cuts in student loans and grants. Maximum Pell Grants, which assist the nation's most financially disadvantaged young people who want to attend college, were reduced by \$80 this semester from \$1,750 to \$1,670.

"On the outset, \$80

may not seem like a great deal of money," Edley continued. "But many students at UNCF colleges receive full financial aid. They have no place to turn to find the extra \$80. So, they get discouraged and drop out of school. Our colleges are searching frantically for new sources in

the private sector. This year the United Negro College Fund plans to raise \$21 million to help the operating expenses of 41 private, historically black colleges and universities. The organization is known by its motto: "A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste."

Accounting Student Awarded Scholarship From NABA

ELIZABETH CITY — Business Administration majors with concentrations in accounting, in the Walter R. Davis Department of Business and Economics at Elizabeth City State University, continue to receive wide recognition for their achievements. Dr. William H. Lane, professor of business, announced that Terry O. Jordan, senior, Moyock, N.C., has been awarded

a \$1,000 scholarship by the Charlotte Chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants, Inc. (NABA).

Dr. Lane stated, "We certainly thank the NABA Chapter for joining other organizations, including the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, in recognizing and providing assistance for our deserving students."

Jordan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie D. Jordan, is a 1978 graduate of Currituck County High School where he headed the senior class and won awards in English and mathematics. Currently vice president of Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society and student bookkeeper for the Pasquotank Action Council, he continues to maintain a very high average.

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