

HOWARD UNIVERSITY PROGRAM HELPS NATION'S POOR

By Henry Duvall
Correspondent

Bobbie Ross, a recent law school graduate working in rural Louisiana, tries to prevent foreclosure on a farmer's mortgage due to hardship. Alphonso Gaskins, a recent law school graduate working in a low-income area of Washington, D.C., helps a young woman who has been denied workmen's compensation for an injury.

James Richmond, a former appellate court judge working with Navajo Indians in Window Rock, Arizona, ponders damages arising from a spill of toxic and radioactive material in waters flowing into the Navajo nation. These three individuals and more than 280 like them are representing the poor in the Reginald Heber Smith Community Lawyer Fellowship Program administered by the Howard University School of Law.

Smith Fellows, commonly called "Reggies," spend up to two years rendering legal services to the poor in community law offices throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Pacific island of Micronesia. They're working in urban and rural areas, migrant labor camps, and on Indian reservations. By and large, they serve as staff attorneys in legal services programs.

Funded by the Legal Services Corporation, the Smith Fellowship program operates on the premise that "vigorous practice of the law plays an effective and substantial role in the alleviation of poverty," says John W. Davis, executive director of the program. The future of the program, however, faces a road of uncertainty.

Reagan administration budget cuts threaten continued legal services to the nation's poor. Twenty-five per cent of the funds for next year's program, says Davis, have already been slashed, meaning the program will have 75-80 fewer fellows next year.

Ms. Ross, a 1980 graduate of the Southern University law school in Baton Rouge, La., is assigned to the North Louisiana Legal Assistance Corp. She works with elderly blacks in rural Lake Providence, La., providing legal assistance in resolving housing, social security and health care problems. She also handles domestic, unemployment compensation and mortgage foreclosure cases for both blacks and whites in northern Louisiana. A Louisiana native, the vibrant young black woman says, "A lot of people are inspired by my presence. Many folks expect to see a white male."

Gaskins, a 1980 law school graduate of Howard University, is assigned to the Neighborhood Legal Services Program in Washington, D.C. He presents social service cases before administrative law judges on behalf of low-income residents in far northeast Washington. He also serves as legal adviser to People for Prison Progress, an organization being established to provide job training and counseling to ex-convicts from the District of Columbia's Lorton prison facility.

Richmond, a former judge of the Arizona Court of Appeals who sat on the same bench with recent U.S. Supreme Court appointee Sandra Day O'Connor, is primarily serving in the capacity of a trainer for the legal services agency serving the Navajo Indians. He trains young staff attorneys and Reggies as well as investigates the agency's complex legal cases. After eighteen years of law practice and four years of service on the Arizona Court of Appeals, the 58-year-old Richmond decided to work in legal services to make a "contribution" to society.

Smith Fellows are recent law school graduates as well as lawyers several years out of school who have demonstrated concern for the problems of poor people. Howard University handles the recruiting, training and placement of Reggies. All newly selected Smith Fellows are required to attend a week-long orientation program in Washington, D.C. Orientation includes community workshops that cover services to the elderly, migrant and rural services, legal research and writing, litigation techniques, and community-based economic development strategies.

With a starting salary of \$15,000, the Reggies set out to represent the nation's poor, whether on Capitol Hill or in the courtroom. Joy West, a 26-year-old Reggie and graduate of Howard Law School, wrote an amendment to the Higher Education Act last year as a legislative advocate in the Migrant Legal Action Program in Washington, D.C. Her amendment to the act, which was signed into law October 3, 1980 by then-President Jimmy Carter, gives statutory authorization to two educational programs for migrant and seasonal farm workers.

Another Reggie, Elaine Zamora, a graduate of the Loyola University School of Law in Los Angeles, has been representing the interests of Hispanics in state and local reapportionment in California. She is also involved in establishing a lawyer referral service to handle claims against the Los Angeles police department.

Rodney "Roadrunner" Clarke, a Reggie assigned to the Idaho Legal Aid Services' Indian law unit, is conducting research on a case involving a crime committed by a non-Indian on an Indian reservation. The graduate of the University of California-Berkeley law school, who is a descendant of the Klamath Indians, is also trying to improve relations between Indian tribes and federal agencies, and informing tribal councils of their legal rights.

Norma Ramos, a Reggie who graduated in 1981 from Temple University law school, is trying to help the poor in public housing, adoption and consumer protection cases in Harlem.

Still another Reggie, Paul A. Quander, Jr., a

1980 Howard law school graduate, is representing low-income residents of Washington, D.C.'s far southeast area in litigation involving welfare, consumer protection, land, and landlord-tenant rights.

The Reggie program started in 1967 at the University of Pennsylvania in honor of Reginald Heber Smith, a poverty lawyer who believed that American justice should be impartial—that rich and poor could stand equally before the law. The program transferred to Howard in 1969.

"What I like about the program," says Ramos in Harlem, "is that you can have impact on the quality of life."

The majority of Reggies continue practicing poverty law after completing the fellowship, says program director Davis. "Poverty lawyers have made significant advances for rights of all Americans," Davis emphasizes.



STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY—was the theme of the Solidarity Day march on the campus of Duke University. The march which began at East Campus, proceeded to West Campus without incident. More than 150 persons participated in the march. Photo by Kelvin A. Bell

Listening With The Other Ear

By Laura Parks
NNPA Correspondent

Europe was laughing itself silly when it heard that "tough cowboy" Reagan had dispatched three former Presidents to attend the Sadat funeral to represent the United States. The laughter grew to belly laughs when it was discovered that the former Presidents were to fly on the same plane. Wits in London and Paris were quick to suggest that perhaps Reagan wished all three men out of the way permanently. The British were gleeful that their future King, the recently married Prince Charles, was going to the funeral while the "tough cowboy" remained safely within White House walls.

Hard pressed Britons still find it difficult to forget Nancy Reagan's expensive gowns worn at the wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diane. They feel it was a Hollywood type of upstaging of the Princess reminiscent of that town's gaudier days when those without talent were seeking the limelight.

This British reaction toward the Reagans is an indication of the growing opposition to Reagan's policies insofar as they affect Britain and the rest of Europe. Europe feels that high American interest rates are forcing interest rates up in Europe, preventing economic recovery.

Further, it is believed that high American interest rates are a deliberate attempt by the United States multinational corporate establishment to gain

supremacy over their European counterparts. It is said that the Reagan Administration cares little if in the United States it drives small business to the wall, the cities to ruin and despair providing the giant multi-nationals achieve victory over their international rivals. The weapon being used in this war is the rate of interest, held at ruin-causing levels as it fluctuates between 12% and 20%.

Opposition to Reagan policies in Europe is broad and deeply felt. The feeling is particularly strong against United States military plans for the continent. Briefly stated, Europe does not wish to become the battlefield caught between the Russians and the Americans. The proposed stationing of sophisticated American weaponry in Europe is regarded as greatly escalating the chances for a nuclear showdown.

Leaders of the rapidly growing European peace crusade recognize that Europe must take a calculated risk and begin unilateral disarmament. This is echoed by the leader of the British Labor Party and surprisingly enough by several retired West German generals. Europe does not wish to die.

In increasing numbers the European peace movement is taking to the streets. In a speech before the West German Parliament, the German Chancellor Schmidt declared that the German peace crusade has in effect declared war against his government. He was particularly infuriated when it was

discovered that many leading members of his own party participated in the largest mass rally in post war German history.

The now historic Bonn Peace march has placed the Schmidt government in deep political trouble at home and has raised the anxiety level in the Reagan establishment, regarding the future course of German politics and the fate of American arms in Europe.

Europe maintains that the Middle East will forever remain in turmoil as long as the United States is unwilling to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian peoples, and this right includes the right to independent nationhood. While regretting the death of Sadat, Europeans noted the hostility of the Arab world to the slain leader and the obvious indifference of the Egyptians themselves at the news of his death.

Again the Europeans are strongly suggesting that recent American administrations have consistently poured arms and funds into the hands of leaders who on the surface appeared to be in command of events but who were in reality holding the lid on massive discontent.

Europeans looking at the troubles in their own backyards and those of the Middle East are more than eager to offer the suggestion that we in the United States are heading for deep troubles a year or so from now as the stubborn Reagan policies take hold of the nation. In short, Europe does not like Reagan, is distrustful of his basic philosophy and their practical implication.

Caucus

(Continued from Page 13)

4) Reassess Caucus support for the reauthorization of the Refugee Act in 1982.

The Caucus also said the Haitian refugee phenomenon results from political, social and economic pressures and that the U.S. should develop a foreign policy to influence Haiti toward adopting political and economic reform.

Cable

(Continued from Page 13)

Washington, D.C.: Dr. William Douglas, president, Gary Communications Group, Gary, Indiana; Zakee Amer Rashid, executive vice president and director of franchise, Telecab Broadcasting, East Cleveland, Ohio; Alex Mercure, president, Mercure Telecommunications, Arlington, Va.; John Mansell, Jr., editor, Cable TV Security and Cable TV Regulations, Falls Church, Va.



NEW MOVES—are shown by the NCCU marching band during halftime during homecoming. Photo by Kelvin A. Bell

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