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A. Léon Higgingbotham, Jr., second from left, chats with Irving Joyner, associate dean, NCCU Law School, far left; Mary E. Wright, dean of the NCCU law School; and Chancellor Julius Chambers, far right. Higgingbotham spoke at the Law School.

Denny's Tries To Shake Stigma of Racial Complaints

By Jim Clarke
Associated Press Writer
SPARTANBURG, S.C. (AP) — After months of defensively answering discrimination charges at some of its restaurants, Denny's top managers are zealously embracing diversity.

The managers say a plan to strengthen the company's image preceded the bad publicity that surfaced a few months ago, giving the taint of bigotry to a chain of 1,500 eateries that bills itself as family-friendly, 24 hours a day.

But they also acknowledge events have dragged Flagstar Cos., Denny's \$3.7 billion parent, to the front of American businesses con-

fronting racial and ethnic

hostilities. This summer, Flagstar shook up the top management of Denny's, installing three executives considered particularly sensitive to work place diversity.

Florida restaurant executive Ron Petty, 48, was named Denny's chief operating officer. Norman Hill, 51, was recruited away from Perkins Family Restaurants, where he had been vice president of human resources. Joe Russell, 50, a consultant and former personnel executive from Control Data Corp., will oversee random testing in Denny's California restaurants. Petty is white. Hill and Russell

are black.

Russell's appointment was part of a settlement with the U.S. Justice Department, which investigated discrimination allegations in that state. He also will lead a diversity training program for the entire chain. Hill will oversee Denny's field hiring.

The company also agreed with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to hire more minority managers, award 53 minority-owned franchises by 1997 and steer more than \$700 million in business to minority-owned suppliers.

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After Drought, Grant Comes For Farmers' 5-Year Survival

John Bullock, a small Sampson County farmer, hoped that this would be the year he would earn a profit from his farm operations. As one of a breed of young, African American farmers, he had hoped to cash in on new markets that are being developed for profitable alternative crops. Bullock took his meager life savings along with a farm operating loan to plant high value crops as yellow squash, zucchini squash, green sweet corn, cucumbers and watermelons. Ever, because of the drought, Bullock's dream of a good year wilted under the hot summer sun.

North Carolina was declared a "disaster area" because of the drought. This did make farmers eligible to receive federal assistance. But that will not be enough to keep many African American and other farmers from losing their farms, said James P. Green, Jr., executive director of the Durham-based Carolina Coalition of Farm and Rural Families. He said that even with federal disaster assistance, drought will cause farmers who were already in debt to go under. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of these farmers are minorities.

In an effort to find solutions for this problem, the U.S. Farmers Home Administration recently announced that it was awarding the Coalition a \$100 grant to develop a 5-year strategic plan for addressing the needs of socially disadvantaged farmers in North Carolina. Green says this grant will help the group, giving an opportunity to work with state, universities, government agencies and other groups around the state to plan for the needs of minority and limited resource farmers.

Green says the resulting plan must be truly comprehensive in that it must address all major issues affecting the lives of small farmers. "This plan will not only address what the Coalition can do to help, it will establish a coordinated service delivery model that will involve the participation of all governmental and nonprofit service providers."

Green says the plan must address the farmers' need for access to capital, technical assistance and training, production planning and coordination, business development opportunities, domestic and international marketing opportunities, and legal assistance.

Green says this summer's drought culminates more than a decade of substantial declines in the state's farm population. Over the past ten years, half of the state's minority farmers went out of business. It has been widely predicted that, at the current rate, there will be no African American farmers left by the year 2000.

Despite the dismal statistics, Archie Hart is

optimistic. He is a special assistant to the state's commissioner of agriculture, Jim Graham, and coalition board member. He says that new business opportunities can be developed to sustain existing farmers and attract young, beginning farmers. The key, Hart says, is that farmers must have access to capital, access to markets, and access to technical assistance and educational opportunities.

The Coalition has already organized small farmers to take advantage of new marketing opportunities with major retail and wholesale buyers. The coalition has established a shipping point facility in Duplin County. Green says this facility serves as a central point where area farmers can bring their crops to be weighed, graded, packed, cooled and shipped to major buyers.

However, according to James Hartsfield, the Coalition's marketing specialist, this summer's drought slowed the movement of produce through the facility. "Our farmers had crops to literally dry up in the fields."

The Federal Disaster Program will be the saving grace for many of these farmers, Green said. He said that the Coalition and Land Loss Prevention Project have sponsored a series of workshops to show farmers how to take advantage of the Federal Disaster Program. Green was quick to add, however, that "our farmers cannot become dependent on handouts...we must continue to develop new agribusiness opportunities."

Green said the Coalition is currently working with Job American Management Export, Ltd., an export management and marketing company to develop new opportunities in the areas of food processing, institutional marketing and exporting. The Newport News, Va.-based company is currently involved in marketing food products internationally, including countries in Africa, the former Soviet Union and Japan.

Oswald Brown, chairman of Job America's Board of Directors, said that the company is in the process of developing an agri-business industrial park somewhere in rural North Carolina. Sites currently being considered are in Warren, Hertford and Edgecombe counties.

Green said the project will provide stable, new markets for North Carolina's minority and limited resource farm community in addition to creating jobs and generally stimulating economic development in rural North Carolina. He said the project is also important because it gives "poor farmers and factory workers the chance to share in ownership and control over a major business development project. Now that's economic empowerment."



NAACP FREEDOM FUND DINNER PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Durham Branch of the NAACP will host its annual Freedom Fund Dinner on Saturday, November 20, at 7 p.m., at the W.G. Pearson Cafeteria on the campus of North Carolina Central University. The honoree for this occasion will be Benjamin S. Ruffin, community leader and civil rights advocate. This event will feature "The Men of Distinction" and entertainment. The Freedom Fund Dinner is open to the Durham community. Tickets are \$25 per person and may be obtained by contacting the Durham Branch Office at 682-4930.

It's Not So Easy NOT Being Cop To The World

By Walter R. Mears
AP Special Correspondent
WASHINGTON (AP) — Successive presidents, their diplomats and leaders in Congress have repeated the denial almost word for word while accepting, unavoidably, a world role that doesn't quite fit the disclaimers.

There is no easy way out because, as retired U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters observes, while the United States shouldn't be the world's policeman, he would not want to live in a world with no police at all. Still, police officers don't get to pick the alarms they answer.

U.S. policy-makers can, and President Clinton has told the United Nations that it must, know when to say no if Americans are to say yes to worthy peacekeeping missions. On his terms, that must include answering a clear threat to peace, with set and well-defined objectives, a firm timetable and end point, and financing that doesn't leave all the bills for Washington.

With that list of conditions, plus the need for congressional support, the administration will always have grounds to refuse a role in a U.N. mission. But outright refusal is increasingly difficult for the only superpower in the post-Cold War world.

"The United States cannot be the world's policeman, but also cannot turn a blind eye to the world's problems," Clinton said earlier in the Somali operation. In presidential farewell, George Bush renounced the policeman's role, saying it is supported neither at home nor abroad — but adding that the United States must promote democratic peace because there is no one else to do so.

The admonition and the assignment are not easily put together. When U.S. troops are committed abroad, so too is the prestige of the United States, its full faith and

credit, in the words of former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney. The commitment doesn't hinge on the numbers; recall President John F. Kennedy's description of the outnumbered U.S. garrison in West Berlin during a 1961 Cold War crisis as hostage to America's intent to defend the city.

The latest U.S. mission, to Haiti, stirred political misgivings and congressional criticism even before Monday when the landing of about 170 Americans was put off because another vessel took their pier while a gang of toughs disrupted arrival arrangements on shore. That apparently was sanctioned by the military regime that is supposed to be yielding power next month.

About 700 Americans are due to be part of that U.N. operation, most of them training and engineering specialists. Some members of Congress warn that the mission could put lightly armed Americans in a very dangerous situation, might embroil them in another police action.

Sen. Bob Dole, the Republican leader, complained that the operation did not follow the four conditions Clinton had just set at the United Nations, and said it ought to be dropped.

The administration said the Haiti mission involves important U.S. interests, including the risk of another flood of boat people seeking American asylum unless a stable, democratic government takes charge.

It is a training and reconstruction assignment. But the lines are fine ones. Secretary of State Warren Christopher demanded the Haitian army help, not hinder, the U.N. "mission for peace." But the same statement carefully noted that Americans were not being sent to "perform a peacekeeping mission." And, as critics point out, the original Somalia mission was fanciful relief, not peacekeeping or pacification.

The administration had offered to send American troops to Bosnia to join an international effort to enforce a cease-fire, if the civil warring sides agree upon one. Dole said the Somalia crisis probably precludes that unless Clinton makes a compelling case he hasn't heard yet.

The U.S. forces in Somalia are part of a 30-nation U.N. force, but Clinton pointed out the linchpin role the United States takes when it becomes part of such operation. "Make no mistake about it, if we were to leave Somalia tomorrow, other nations would leave too," Clinton said. "Chaos would resume, the relief effort would stop and starvation soon would return."

"Our own credibility in world affairs would be undermined at the very time when people are looking to America to help promote peace and freedom in the post-Cold War world," he said.

That points to the difficulty of defining the U.S. role while denying that it is to police the world.



DISCUSSING BANQUET DETAILS for the NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner are Planning Committee members (l-r) Frankie Perry, Brenda Scarborough, President James Black and Carol Letimore. Photo by Ray Trent

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1994 Domestic Cars

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By the editors of CAR and DRIVER