

Caucus weekend: A snobbish charade?

This column is excerpted from the *Washington Afro-American* and is being distributed nationwide by the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

THE GUEST COLUMN By AL SWEENEY

Now, during the CBC weekend, at the prestigious event where the awards are issued, black newsmen are issued second-rate passes and are shunted into a room to cover the event from a closed-circuit screen.

While reporters from the white media obtain platform seats to get a live view of the proceedings, black reporters, who do write about the event, are relegated to Jim Crow status.

The excuse? "The dinner was oversold. We just don't have space, so take the back seats."

The event has been sold out to Corporate America for its white and black lobbyists, who buy the tables.

That's at least partially understandable. The CBC weekend requires money to produce. The impressive sessions

held in the Hilton meeting rooms and the hearing rooms of the House of Representatives are costly.

But, while I commend the CBC sponsors for this noteworthy project, I condemn them for their social exclusiveness.

When I attempted to obtain credentials to cover this event, I received a "Who are you?" query.

"I write for the *Afro-American*, the *Call & Post* of Cleveland, the *Miami Times* of Florida and the *Sacramento Observer* of California," I said.

The persons responsible for issuing credentials responded, "What kind of papers are they?" A second-class brown pass was issued.

A woman who said she represented the *Plainfield Daily News* was given a white pass that afforded her first-class opportunities.

The working press is a group of individuals assigned to cover an



event. They are on the scene to accurately report or interpret activities that unfold.

At the CBC, the black reporters from black publications -- and I am not referring to those hanger-oners who hustle media passes to every event and don't write or report a line -- were issued second-class tickets that barred them from certain events, while black reporters from white media were given first-class credentials.

While the 20 members of the CBC prepared to don their finest garb with the appropriate cologne, some eight members of the executive board of the National Newspaper Publishers Association huddled around their executive director, Steve Davis, at the Howard Inn.

The NNPA, an organization of black papers, was fuming. They were mad as hell at the second-class treatment given their working representatives.

They were mad and I am mad, since I was one of the victims given those "Who are you?" queries.

When you are asked by staffers of a black political group what kind of newspapers the *Afro-American*, the *Sacramento Observer*, the *Cleveland Call & Post* and *Miami Times* are, you wonder.

As for getting the proper credentials, I called my black Please see page A10

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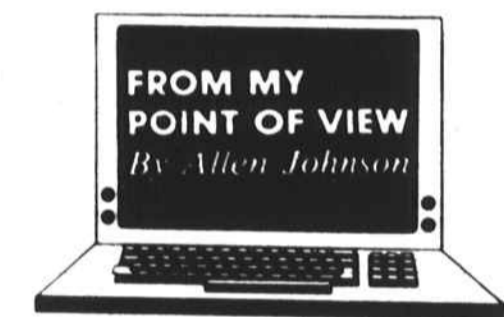
Robinson: He'd just as soon you fuss over his team

I met Eddie Robinson one hot day in Greenville, Miss., at a Holiday Inn coffee shop.

He was mighty low-key to be a legend in his own time. Even though Harry Belafonte once played him in a TV movie, Robinson didn't seem particularly impressed by himself, nor did he seem to expect me to be.

He seemed quite content merely to win football games and graduate his players, both of which he has done remarkably well over the past 44 years.

Robinson, 66, looks distinguished, if not legendary. He sports a salt-and-pepper mustache and thinning, gray-streaked hair that he combs to the



side. He also coaches one of the best small-college football teams in this country.

Last year, he blamed himself for a subpar season by his team. Now that his Tigers are winning again, he gives his players all the credit.

Whoever's fault it is, Grambling State is undefeated and top-ranked among the nation's

predominantly black schools.

The Tigers trampled all over poor North Carolina Central recently and just two Saturdays ago embarrassed Oregon State -- a much larger, predominantly white school that plays among the likes of UCLA and Southern California in the Pac 10 conference.

Still, the news at Grambling these days is not Robinson's fine team.

Insist as he may that the spotlight shine somewhere else, the news these days is Robinson himself.

If you haven't heard, Robinson has won more college football games than any other coach

in the history of the game.

He also has trained his players well enough in the art of passing, kicking, hitting and running to place large numbers of them in the professional ranks.

Robinson, to whom winning is old hat, seems less than awed by his 324 victories and might just as soon plead with the media to focus on this year's very good team rather than the number of times his team scored more points than the other guys.

He tried to say that during an interview on national television in September, but his hosts wouldn't have it. They simply cut Robinson off when he tried to

Please see page A10

Fair-mindedness and sports: Can the two of them co-exist?

To The Editor:

In looking at the many definitions of "sport," "sporting," "sporting chance," "sportsman," etc., I've noticed that the word "fair" appears most often.

Yet, in our major sports, unfairness is very evident.

Many years ago, I listened to a game which involved the Boston Red Sox. The announcer had nothing but praise for the affluent owner. He said that every bat boy who was competent intellectually would be given a full scholarship to the college of his choice by this philanthropist.

I saw no black bat boys. I still haven't seen one. It's a known fact that a high I.Q. is not a prerequisite for such a menial job.

Also in organized baseball all the managerial jobs given to blacks involve bottom teams. Frank Robinson managed the San Francisco Giants. After several dismal seasons, he was fired. Since his demise, the team has done more poorly.

Football, which has more than its share of black superstars, has yet to name a coach of the minority race.

I wonder if copies of this letter should be sent to the presidents of these two leagues.

I have no qualms about basketball. Could it be that the persons involved here are more knowledgeable? True intelligence has no room for obvious prejudice.

CHRONICLE LETTERS Our readers speak

These facts are worthy of study and investigation. As long as we are quiet, nothing will be done.

Hattie G. Tanner
Winston-Salem

The New Chancellor

To The Editor:

Your Oct. 3 editorial, "First Impressions of Thompson," paints a fairly accurate profile of Dr. Cleon Thompson.

As a student of Shaw University in the 70s, I can recall the presence of Dr. Thompson. It reflected the aura you speak of when you describe him as "a put-up-your-feet-and-make-yourself-comfortable kind of guy."

As the years passed, I once again had the opportunity to observe Dr. Thompson here in Raleigh at our facility, the Garner Road YMCA, where Dr. Thompson formerly attended his Sertoma meetings.

Winston-Salem State University definitely has acquired a person who will contribute significantly to the mission of WSSU and historically as a leader.

I extend my best from Raleigh to Dr. Thompson.

Sarah L. Glover
Raleigh

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