

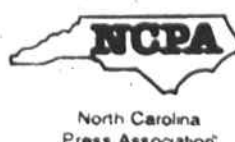
# Winston-Salem Chronicle

"The Twin City's Award-Winning Weekly"

Established in 1974

Ernest H. Pitt • Ndubisi Egemonye  
Editor/Publisher Co-Founder

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## Editorial

### Columbus: No Praise

By Rev. John Mendez

For many Americans, October 12, 1992 will be a day of celebration filled with expressions of patriotism over the centennial celebration of Christopher Columbus "accidental discovery" of the Americas. During the Reagan administration a special Quincentennial Jubilee Commission was appointed and a budget of \$87 million was appropriated by Congress for lavish festivities, including building replicas of the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria.

For native Americans and African-Americans and other people of color, how the story of Columbus is told is of grave concern. The Columbus myth fit well into North American annals of history, especially as it related to other myths such as the so-called "pioneering spirit" that propelled the U.S. into greatness.

**Too many people have suffered and are still suffering because of the ghost of Columbus.**

But on October 12, 1992, masses of native Americans, African Americans will not be celebrating the historic coming of Columbus. The coming of Columbus was not a discovery but an invasion. The coming of Columbus brought violence, genocide, slavery, domination of people of color by Europeans and the ushering in of the era of colonialism and slavery.

History clearly documents that the Indians had built great civilizations 25,000 years before Columbus arrived. Within 50 years of the arrival of European invaders, more than 1 million Taino Indians, who once numbered 8,000,000 when they first welcomed Columbus in 1492, were reduced to 28,000 by 1514, but by 1560 they were totally extinct. Women were raped, the environment was ravaged, and most of what existed was destroyed. Perceiving them as racially, socially and culturally inferior served as a convenient rationale for confiscating their land, usurping their labor and annihilating them as a people.

Columbus' successors used the same savagery in Africa. More than 75 million African slaves died in the slave trade and more than 25 million were transported as slaves to the Americas to produce wealth, to work the gold mines, cotton, tobacco and sugar plantations for the benefit of their European invaders.

Meanwhile, at the time Columbus set sail to the West, the African Moors and the Jews were expelled from Spain by Queen Isabella. It was the African Moors who helped to civilize the Spaniards whom they considered uncouth.

The invasion of Columbus left more than a trail of death, slavery, tears and subjugation, but a destructive, greedy inhuman value system which still plagues us even now, continuing the same oppression, exploitation, and genocide today as 500 years ago. As Jean Snidah of the National Council of Churches says, "the same greedy drive for profit and the accumulation of capital which was the impetus 1492 still shapes the political, economic and social parameters of our existence as we head towards 1992."

The same drive and values that motivated Columbus to commit genocide and create slaves out of humans also motivates white-collar crime and street crime. When money is more important than people, people are perceived as being a means to an end and not an end in themselves. It effects black and white, rich and poor, professional and blue collar the same.

This is no time for celebration, but for honest confession, repentance and the changing of our ways to embrace the ethic of the good Samaritan. Too many lies have been told. Too many myths have been fabricated. Too many lives have been lost. Too many people have suffered because of the ghost of Columbus.

On Columbus Day, we call upon this community not to celebrate Columbus, but to recommit to the struggle for justice, right and sharing.

## National Black Museum is Needed

To the Editor:

After years of effort and hope, a full committee of the House has unanimously passed for Floor action H.R. 1246 as amended sponsored by Congressman John Lewis.

This bill, in its strongest form proposes the establishment of the National African-American Museum. We are overjoyed that its proposes, among other things include the following:

1. A brand new architecturally significant structure.
2. Adequate size (approximately 400,000 sq. ft.)
3. Maximum African-American influence and participation on the Board of Trustees, and
4. Substantial benefits to existing African-American museums.

It is our understanding that immediate and further strong support by the Congressional Black Caucus could cause this Bill to receive floor action before Congress adjourns.

The National Urban League joins us in respectfully urging you to act now.

Write or call to show your support: P.O. Box 70617, Washington D.C. 20024, 202-554-7879.

**Tom Mack**  
President, National Council for Education and Economic Development



## CHRONICLE MAILBAG Our Readers Speak Out

Hawaii. With equal sincerity and appreciation, we thank the thousands of individuals who responded to the needs of disaster victims by making a financial contribution to Red Cross disaster relief; you are providing emergency relief to disaster victims.

We also extend our thanks to the United Ways of Forsyth, Davie, Yadkin and Stokes Counties and their member agencies for coordinating additional relief efforts. And again, we thank the local media for their attention to our relief efforts and the direction they provided to the community by encouraging everyone's help.

**William E. Baxter, Executive Director**  
**Mazie Woodruff, Chapter Chairman**

### Can't We All Choose to Be Peaceful?

To the Editor:

Regardless of one's profession or station in life, these words always seem to help: Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

The announcer on cable today (9/30/92) complimented Jimmy Carter who had just proposed a great program to help the inner cities in his own back door and state of Georgia. The program was received with great enthusiasm and wide support. The drawbacks and snags now being met are turf wars: "Don't come in trying to teach and lead us"; try to be more sensitive. Include the voices of the poor whom the program is actually designed to help. Let's share power, information, and goals desired! Authorities say, (paraphrasing meaning), we'll decide

which programs to fund, to merge, or not to fund so that we do not overlap, or continue to fund programs that are not working.

Mr. Carter, in an attempt to smooth matters and get the project out of the ditch, is deciding to restructure the board and make it one half white and one half black; for if this program which had met with such acceptance did not succeed, then none would, he said.

No matter how good the thought or action, some spirit will rise up and and try to knock your good deed off its feet when if we really care, we can find a way to work things out; but you know; some erroneously think physical force is their power. In the above case, the suffering poor in urban centers needs are continually shelved while ego trips and power needs are played out.

About peace, Martin said in order to have peace one must be a peaceful person. (Thanks to the W-S Chronicle's informative serial coverage of Martin King during Feb. 1992). Your actions leading up to and after the event occurs should be one of peace-making, the non-violent proponent encouraged. It is my considered opinion; the Democratic platform will seek a "true" peace with our world wide neighbors.

**Lozie Ann Gray**

### Home Is Not Always a Nice Place

To the Editor:

"Home sweet home." "There's no place like home." Old expressions evoking images of peace and serenity.

Unfortunately, the sad reality is that these messages are increas-

ingly foreign to the millions of American women and their children who are victims of domestic violence each year. For these abused women, home is a combat zone. A world in which the unpredictable cease-fires may last as long as months or as brief as hours. And when the cease-fire ends and the violence resumes, the woman may face being demeaned, threatened, pushed, hit, choked, sexually assaulted, or killed. Not the stuff that Norman Rockwell paintings are made from!

As a community, we play a crucial role in preventing and responding to this major social problem. One role is to learn more about this issue. To this end, the public is invited to an upcoming event scheduled during October, designated as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

On Monday Oct. 12, Family Services, Inc. a locally funded United Way agency, and the Winston-Salem Chapter of the National Organization for Women are presenting a panel discussion by leaders from the criminal-justice and domestic violence counseling fields. The discussion will be held in the auditorium of the Forsyth County Public Library from 7-9 p.m.

It is hoped that a large number of women and men from across our community will attend this event. We all have a stake in eliminating this problem because we all are affected by it, whether we realize it or not. Perhaps through all of our efforts, homes can be not only "sweet" for women and children, but also safe and nurturing.

**Michael Turner**  
Director, Family Violence Division Family Services, Inc.

## Learn from 'Murder in Mississippi'

In the height of the election season, it is obvious that the Arts and Entertainment Network's decision to air "Murder in Mississippi" Friday night was no coincidence in timing.

The story about the 1964 murders of three young civil rights workers in Mississippi should remind all of us, especially blacks, how important our vote is; it should remind us that it is imperative that we use that right that came at such a very high price, including the lies of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner.

After training at the Freedom Summer Camp in Oxford, Ohio, to register black voters in the South, the young men were murdered on their way to Meridian, Miss., to carry out their mission.

The Ku Klux Klan dragged the men from their station wagon, beat them, shot them, and buried them at the site of a new dam.

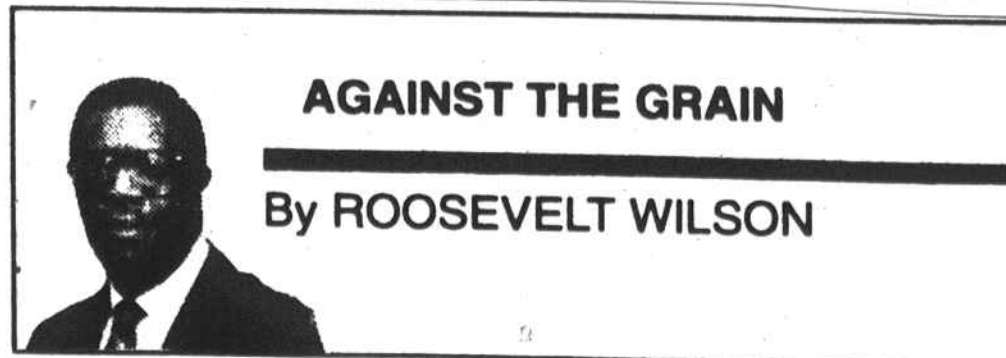
What made the murders even more shocking is that the Mississippi State Police, after stopping the men the day before, had turned them over to the Klan. The police and other local officials then refused to cooperate with the FBI in the investigation.

The program, unlike other representations of the events, is an investigative piece of journalism, and was especially poignant for all blacks.

The program should have raised some logical questions, even for those who have no interest in politics:

- What was such a big deal about blacks being registered to vote?
- Why were some white people so violently opposed to blacks voting?
- Why did it take so many constitutional amendments and the Voting Rights Act to guarantee women and blacks the right to vote?
- The answer is not a complex one: A vote is power!
- Supremacist and other oppressive groups did not want to share that power with black people or even white women.
- A vote is power!

Supremacists and other oppressive groups love it when black people don't vote. Today, they don't have to drag us from our cars and kill us to keep us from voting. They just sit happily as we do them the big favor. And



**AGAINST THE GRAIN**

By ROOSEVELT WILSON

the people like James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner must be turning over in their graves, wondering why they gave their lives to empower us with a weapon that we refuse to use.

A vote is power!  
People who vote help select the people who govern them and help determine the nature of their government.

A vote is power!  
People who vote can and do make the difference.  
"Murder in Mississippi" also details how blacks were used as spies and instruments of sabotage in the civil rights movement.

As tragic as the murders in Mississippi were, even more tragic today is how we have empowered and continue to empower those who wish to do us harm.

We empower them by not voting.

### About letters . . .

The Winston-Salem Chronicle welcomes letters from its readers, as well as columns.

Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or printed legibly. They also should include the name, address, and telephone number of the writer.

Columns should follow the same guidelines and will be published if we feel they are of interest to our general readership.

We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and grammar.

Submit your letters and columns to:

**Chronicle Mailbag**  
P.O. Box 1636  
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102