

Opinion

Is Black Life Still Cheap In Winston-Salem?

To the Editor:

Citizens United for Justice, by majority opinion, takes a principled stand against the death penalty. We maintain that opposition to cruel and unusual punishment, even in the case of Rickey Knight, the vicious murderer of Carlos Stoner.

However, the rare and only recently enacted sentencing of white

our old traditional methods realistically. We must have the courage to demand, support and defend decisions to effect progress, rather than remain complacent and accept tired, traditional methods which have proven to be ineffective.

If we do not find some successful methods to correct this destructive problem, I fear conditions will deteriorate to the point that we will not be able to find young men and women willing to subject themselves to a career in law enforcement for citizens who demonstrate a lack of concern by their apathy to the conditions in their own community.

I want my brother's death to count for something. Could it bring us all to the realization that your police department can only win this war on substance abuse when the citizens of this community are united with them toward that end?

Sgt. Marshall F. Beane
Winston-Salem
Police Department



Carlos Stoner

men to death for killing African Americans — and the attitude of juror Everhart that it would've taken several black lives to equal Knight's — shows we have a long way to go to having all human life have equivalent value. Black life is still cheap in America and in Winston-Salem.

Citizens United for Justice

From the Beane Family

To the Editor:

I want to publicly thank the many citizens of the Piedmont Triad area and especially the hundreds of law enforcement officers from this and other jurisdictions for their support and concern following the tragic death of my brother, Senior Police Officer Bobby Beane.

His death was devastating to his wife and two minor children, as well as to his mother, sister, brothers and other family members. Since his death, we have tried to find peace in knowing he did performing the duty he had chosen to do for the betterment of our community. But is the community any better for his death?

Bobby was committed to helping others. I hope you, as concerned citizens, will not see this as simply an assault on an individual, but as an assault on this entire community.

I have served in the Winston-Salem Police Department since 1965. It is my opinion that substance abuse is the common denominator found as motive in the majority of violent deaths and other crimes of violence. I wonder if most citizens are actually aware of the total impact of substance abuse and the related problems in our community. The current increase in murders, beatings, robberies and other crimes of this nature are almost always attributed to substance abuse in one form or another.

What will it take for this community to overcome this problem? We law-enforcement officers have been on the front line fighting for years. Today there are more of us, and we are better trained, better educated, and better equipped than any time since I began my career with the department. We have more substance abuse education programs. We certainly have more experience and knowledge in rehabilitation and treatment. All of these are costly and take a large portion of each tax dollar. Still, I do not see substance abuse and the related problems diminishing. No matter how many men, how much training, or how much equipment we have, it is only when the people of the community can say, "Enough!" and we join forces that change can begin.

I believe it is time to look to other resources. We are our own greatest resource. Elected officials respond only when we are heard in sufficient numbers and are persistent enough to accept only substantive change. We must band together as a very vocal, special interest group against substance abuse and any bureaucratic element that is counter-productive against its elimination. We must accept the moral obligation to teach our children responsibility for their actions and self-discipline. We must reevaluate

Womble on Target

To the Editor:

When Alderman Larry Womble recently wrote an uncomplimentary published article about Winston-Salem, he stated that: The city did not warrant or deserve the coveted "All-American City" designation ... It (the letter) was roundly criticized by many of your readers. Some even felt that Mr. Womble had "bad mouthed" our city unfairly, and one letter writer even suggested that he be run out of his elected office for giving the city of Winston-Salem a bad name.

Well, I agree that Mr. Womble needn't have had to remind the city of Winston-Salem of its racism and its head-in-the-sand attitude regarding so many of this community's racial problems. After all, these problems have existed in this city at least ... forever. And what is worse, the rich and powerful and the politicians as well in Winston-Salem — who could have ended all the madness long ago by letting the hooligans like Rickey Eugene Knight and his ilk understand that their kind of conduct would not be tolerated anywhere in Winston-Salem by either black or white — still go about telling folk that the police did their job, the judicial system did theirs, but the jury (or juror, Bob Everhart) made the decision that the castrating and killing of a black person in this city does not warrant the death penalty.

The simple fact is that over the years, the leadership and the powers that be in Winston-Salem have fostered a system which has encouraged or at the very least condoned the thinking promulgated by Rickey Knight and his kind — and people like Mr. Everhart as well — to incubate to a point where the people who think and act the way that they do (and there are many) can do pretty much as they darn well please, so long as the victim is black, and without the expectation of too much punishment.

I know that folks who are in charge in this town don't want to take all the credit for allowing and/or causing Alderman Womble to write such an uncomplimentary letter about our fair city, but I for one will tell you and anyone who will listen that Larry Womble was right on target about Winston-Salem and its racist attitudes!

Carlton Holland

Rummage Sale

To the Editor:

The Junior League of Winston-Salem Inc. wishes to thank all of the many customers who attended the 1993 Rummage Sale. We are also indebted to the numerous members

of the community who donated merchandise. Because of your support, the rummage sale was a tremendous success!

We are thrilled to report the sale netted approximately \$70,000, which will be returned to the community through our projects and trained volunteers.

In this, our 70th anniversary year, we are most grateful for the long-term support of all our friends in the community. Because of you, the Junior League of Winston-Salem Inc. has been able to contribute over one million dollars and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours to improving the quality of life in our community. Thank you.

Arabelle P. Fedora
president Junior League
of Winston-Salem

Teenage Mothers

To the Editor:

The following is in response to your article of May 20, entitled "Deltas Sponsor Baby Shower for

some of their hype. Their is a strong feminist movement, hopefully not lesbians, pushing a bill through the State General Assembly, HB 214, that has already passed the State House and is now pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee. This bill allows spouses to be charged with rape. I have mixed feelings about this particular piece of legislature. On one hand, I don't condone violence in any form. On the other hand, I look to the scriptures for guidance in matters such as this. This country was founded on God's Holy Word. (Look on your money). America was founded on prayer and we have gotten away from the very elements that gave America a solid foundation. I believe that if this country is to survive we must be careful not to destroy our moral fiber any further. We must get back to basics.

I hope that HB 214 doesn't get misinterpreted. So as to put us all on one accord and on solid footing, I offer your readers I Corinthians 7:4 & 5 and Hebrews 13:4 to feed upon. It is important that we

look to God's Holy Word and not get sidetracked by shallow issues of ultra-radical right-wing feminists.

Carol Harris

All-American City

To the Editor:

I am distressed by the letters in criticism of Alderman Larry Womble that have been in The Chronicle. The bottom-line question for me is this: can the critics of Mr. Womble imagine any conditions in Winston-Salem that would disqualify it as an All-American city? I suspect that they cannot. The issue for them is not one of qualifying or not, but rather a knee-jerk response to deny all criticism and with uncritical self-love to lavish praise upon one's own city, state or country.

I wrote a letter to Denver in support of Winston-Salem as an all-American city. I am proud of the work that CUJ has done on behalf of our city in the last year and of Mayor Martha Wood's support of the citizens' police review board. I believe these help qualify us as all-American. But the good work that



Martha Wood

has been done is only proportionate to the bad conditions that called forth this work. I came out on one side; Mr. Womble on the other side; we respect the other's judgment on this issue. He knows I am not a Pollyanna idealist, and I know he is not someone who should "love the city or leave it." For me, I choose to respect Larry Womble and his critical love of our city.

Sid Keely

Stop the Violence

To the Editor:

Wake up, America! We are killing ourselves! Murder, incest, rape, cultism, and suicide have become commonplace in all of our communities. What is happening to the value of life? What is happening to our morals and the inert good that used to exist deep in the heart of mankind? I am very troubled at the legacy that we are leaving behind for our children and our children's children. Life is too short anyway, but to have it abruptly end in some senseless act of ignorance is disheartening. Please, if you are capable of reading this note, please stop the violence! Increase the peace!

R.L. Dulin

Marital Rape

To the Editor:

Some of these white women need to calm down and get rid of

About letters . . .

The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. The letter must also include the name, address and telephone number of the writer to ensure the authenticity of the letter. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to:
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P.O. Box 1636

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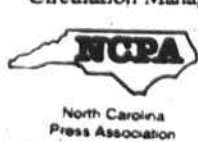
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All American or Not

Whether Winston-Salem is or ever becomes an All-American city is not, in our opinion, that big of a deal. What is a big deal is whether or not we as a city is willing to tackle the problem of racism. We happen not to agree with Alderman Larry Womble writing to the League of Cities opposing the designation, but we do agree with Alderman Womble that this city is racist and segregated. All of us, African Americans and whites, must agree to change that.

What scares us most is not that the city is racist, but that there may be some who would like to keep it that way. African Americans in this country are victims of racism and discrimination. Not all incidents involving blacks and whites are racially motivated. That much everyone can agree on. But, which ones are and which ones are not. That's where part of the problem lies.

African Americans are slowly realizing the economic impact associated with racism. That explains, to some extent, why it is so difficult for blacks to be racist towards whites. Very few black people have the ability to affect the economics of whites.

What we encourage here is open and honest discussion of racism. We should agree to listen to each other and attempt to be sensitive to each other's concerns. The problem may never be solved, but talking about it civilly is a beginning. We don't mean in an accusatory manner. But, do realize that African Americans have been kicked in the behind for a long time. That condition will make anyone sensitive to a raised foot anywhere near their derriere.

Black Life Means Little

On May 27, 1992, Carlos Stoner was brutally murdered by four white men. Later that night one of his killers, Rickey Knight, returned to sexually mutilate him. Shockingly, a jury last week spared Knight's life. In North Carolina no white man has ever received a death sentence for the murder of a black man.

In Louisiana, Rodney Peairs, the white man who fatally shot a Japanese exchange student who he mistook for a burglar, was acquitted of manslaughter. The unarmed 16-year-old student who apparently did not understand Peairs' command to "freeze" was shot at point-blank range.

A Miami police officer was recently retried on charges of killing two young black men as they were being chased in 1989. Following the officer's initial trial, his guilty verdict was overturned.

These modern-day "lynchings" exemplify the continuing presence of racism in this country. The lives of minorities remain undervalued, particularly in the justice process. There is no reasonable explanation why the perpetrators of heinous crimes, such as in the Stoner case, are spared stricter sentences. It would be interesting to see what the outcomes of these cases would have been had they involved a minority accused of murdering a white.

While black-on-black and white-on-black crimes traditionally receive lighter sentences, cases involving white victims are usually punished to the fullest extent of the law. This miscarriage of justice sends a blatant message that the lives of minorities are somehow less important. Although we supposedly live in a land of "equality," the lives of some are somehow deemed more valuable than others.

In the racially charged atmosphere of today's society, minorities still struggle to attain equality. Although minimal gains have been made, such as with the guilty verdicts attained in the Rodney King case, much remains to be done in improving race relations.

The brutal attack of Stoner could have occurred to any minority — a father, brother, or uncle — who unfortunately becomes the victim of racial hatred. A life is a life and until our justice system and the greater society recognizes this truth, a victim of a racist crime will continue to be viewed as little more than another "dead nigger."

(The editorial writer, Sabrina L. Jones, is a student at Hampton (Va.) University and is a summer intern at the Chronicle.)



Sabrina L. Jones

Credo of the Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from antagonisms when it accords to every person — regardless of race or creed — full human and legal rights. Having no person, the Black Press strives to help every person, in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

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