

# Forum

## Role Models for Our Young People

It's become common to cite star entertainers and athletes as role models for our young people, for good reason.

Such outstanding individuals excel because of their great talent, their hard work and their ability to focus on the essentials, all worthy traits our young people should emulate.

And most athletes and entertainers have to be able to work with others toward a common goal, either on a sports team or on a movie set — another trait necessary for young people to master.

Unfortunately, too many youngsters focus on the huge salaries and celebrity status, and not on the long hours of hard work required to develop their talents. Others are stuck in fantasies of stardom that can only be fulfilled by a small handful.

Sometimes, entertainers and athletes are themselves confused about what roles they should play.

For example, basketball ace Karl Malone writes in *Sports Illustrated* that accepting "... the glory and money that comes with being a famous athlete" comes "the responsibility of being a role model, of knowing that kids and even some adults are watching us and looking for us to set an example."

But superstar Charles Barkley created quite a controversy by saying: "I'm not a role model. I am not paid to be a role model. I am paid to wreak havoc on the basketball court. Parents should be role models. Just because I dunk a basketball doesn't mean I should raise your kids."

They're both right. Karl Malone's view exemplifies the Biblical saying that to whom much is given, much is required. By virtue of their celebrity status, stars are role models, whether they like it or not. There are implicit responsibilities that come with the territory, and they should try to help influence young people for the better.

They can be powerful forces for good by helping kids to stay in school, working with community groups to improve neighborhoods,

and visibly supporting self-development of the community.

But Charles Barkley also has a strong point. If many adults did their parenting as well as he plays basketball, more of our youngsters would be more firmly on the right path.

We should face up to the fact that a lot of youngsters grow up without the values and the



### TO BE EQUAL

By JOHN E. JACOB

commitment to make it in this society.

Sure, there's plenty of blame to go around — racism, discrimination, unemployment and more. But too many of us take comfort in those excuses for failure.

However real those obstacles are, solid role models can show our young people that they can be overcome and how to do it. What really counts is developing one's self to overcome the challenges, not developing one's excuses for failing them.

I recall that when I was growing up, our role models weren't famous athletes. They were our teachers, who taught us we have to be twice as good as other people to make it in a hostile environment — and showed us.

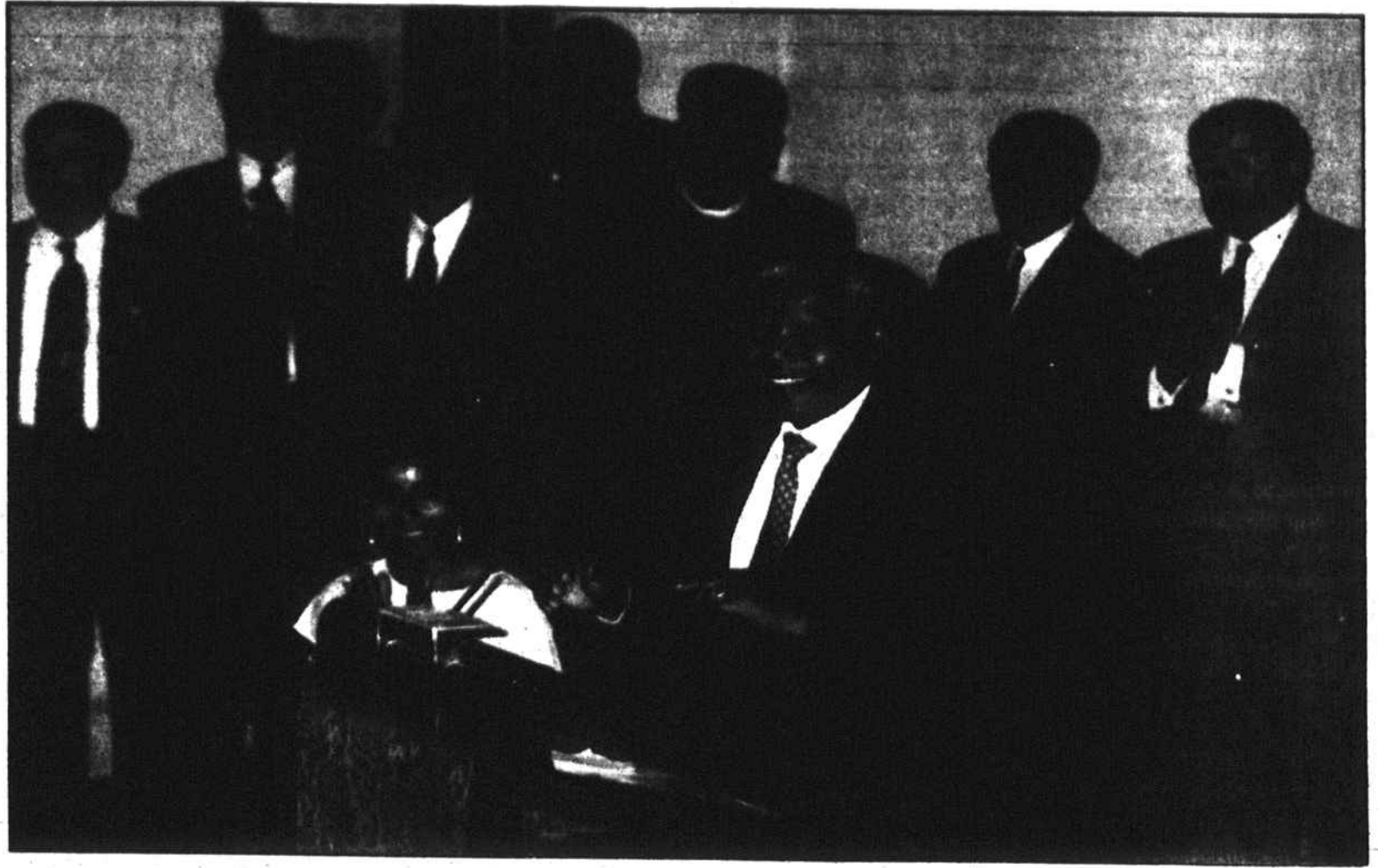
They were local business people and professionals, who demonstrated by example what it took to get ahead.

And they were our parents and neighbors, who, by word and deed, instilled solid values and strict, high standards.

If celebrities have become role models these days, it is in part because many of the rest of us have defaulted in our obligations to the younger generation.

So more of us ought to be involved in community activities, in school and church activities, and in working closely with youngsters.

They need all the positive role models they can get. And the stakes are too high for us to opt out.



African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela speaks in New York at the Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn recently. Mandela began a two-week visit of the United States in which he will cross paths with South Africa President F.W. de Klerk.

## Independence Day is Not for Blacks

This week, America underwent another orgy of patriotism, celebrating a Declaration of Independence that proclaimed that "all men are created equal." Of course, women were left out of the declaration as were Africans and indigenous people. Two hundred and seventeen years after the signing of this celebrated document, the sons and daughters of Africa have yet to experience the full measure of freedom and equality in this land. Over a century ago, the noted abolitionist and African American leader, Frederick Douglass, asked the question, "What is your Fourth of July to me?" That question is as pertinent today as it was in the time of Frederick Douglass.

tion is still very prevalent in American society.

There is also growing resentment of the fact that African Americans are still pressing for civil rights laws and affirmative action to remedy the damages of past and present segregation and discrimination. *Jet* magazine published the results of a survey that clearly indicate that young whites are particularly resentful of the persistent complaints about racism voiced by African Americans. White resentment is boiling over into incidents of racial violence and resistance to any policy or program that is perceived as being primarily beneficial to blacks and

Despite all the "progress" that black people are supposed to have made, black people are still victimized by racism and genocide. Because some blacks have been permitted to live the good life, White America expects, even demands, that black people be silent in the face of racism and genocide. Since the feeling is that any gains made by African



### GUEST COLUMNIST

By RON DANIELS

Americans have been granted based on the good will of white folks, black people should be appropriately appreciative of what white folks have given up on our behalf. It would appear that white supremacy is still the dominant world view for a majority of white Americans who see America as a white nation. In that regard, things have not significantly changed since Africans were ignored in the Declaration of Independence and written into the Constitution as 3/5 of a human being. Now that we have blacks in prominent positions in many areas of American society, there is the illusion of progress. In reality, we are still 3/5 of a human being as a collective community.

Even as President Clinton was withdrawing the Lani Guinier nomination, (for fear of provoking a divisive racial debate) the nation's newspapers were filled with reports of the existence of discrimination based on the color line of this nation. Denny's restaurant chain and Shoney's were both identified as businesses whose affiliates had discriminated against their black customers. A report in *USA Today* cited an incident in Alexandria, Va., where a black woman was denied a room at a major hotel because of her color. When the white woman who was traveling with her went into the same establishment to request a room, she was immediately permitted to register. That same week, the *Washington Post* carried a very extensive story detailing racial discrimination in mortgage lending in the greater D.C. metropolitan area. No matter how much politicians like Bill Clinton would like to ignore it, racial discrimina-

minorities. The dominant view expressed by white Americans is that they have given up enough.

The impact of racism in American society, however, goes far beyond the kindness of inconveniences and indignities that are associated with the denial of access to public accommodations or fair treatment at the lunch counter. The most devastating impact of past and present segregation and discrimination is found in the job market, in the educational system and in economically depressed neighborhoods. Black people are being destroyed by a callous system which has abandoned the black poor as expendable. Inferior education, chronic unemployment, environmental pollution, inadequate housing and inadequate health facilities are among the multiplicity of plagues ruining life within inner-city black communities.

African Americans cannot give in to the expectations that we be silent in the face of racism and genocide. We must not let our people suffer peacefully. Nor can those of us who have been permitted to prosper afford to forget or abandon our less fortunate sisters and brothers. An injustice to any African person anywhere is an injustice to every African everywhere. Hence we must continue to stridently charge racism and genocide and struggle to amass the economic and political power to break the hold of white supremacy over our lives once and for all. America and its Fourth of July can never have meaning for African Americans until the festering cancer of racism has been eradicated from the American system.

## Who Do Black Politicians Represent?

When the political description "liberal" is used by the mainstream media, it now refers exclusively to black Democrats and, to a lesser extent, white and black feminists.

And liberal causes are now relegated to such social welfare issues as increasing the very "entitlement" programs that are driving the debt and the interest on the debt (your family's share is about \$50,000 as of this week — and growing) — without limiting even their growth or cutting the political pork payoffs that hide in the so-called "stimulus" bills.

So it's not hard to understand why budget-conscious White America and a handful of

blacks see the liberal Congressional Black Democratic Caucus as a group representing fringe issues. The result is that liberal blacks, virtually all black politicians, are an increasingly marginal force in American politics — despite the numerical increase in black elected officials.

Most of them will blame racism for their political isolation, but a closer look will show their politics to be the real culprit.

The flip side of this concern is the question: Are blacks in Congress representing the legitimate interest of the black community or white liberal causes? Case in point: abortion. Last week, blacks in Congress, allegedly defending the rights of poor black women to get an abortion, put on a television show not seen since the Anita Hill - Clarence Thomas soap opera.

According to the *Washington Post*, "tempers flared" after Rep. Cynthia McKinney, a black Democrat from Georgia, said she had "just about had it" with the white men, Republican and Democrat, who were backing a "discriminatory policy against poor women who happen to be disproportionately black."

After the hisses died down, Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), sponsor of the 1977 Hyde amendment, which has limited government payments for abortion to saving the life of a woman and now wants it amended to include federal funds for rape and incest victims, responded to the enraged chorus:

"We tell poor women, 'You can't have a job, you can't have a good education, you can't have a decent place to live. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll give you a free abortion because there are too many of you people and we want to, kinda refine, refine the breed.'"

Essentially, Hyde said what black people are saying everywhere. The system prefers dead black babies to radically changing the conditions which could make them successful as living human beings.

But the double standard doesn't permit a white, and certainly not a Republican white man like Hyde, to say what many, if not most, black people believe. So the black liberals tried to shut him up with the worn-out tactic of "racism."

"At that point," the *Post* said, "an angry Rep. Cardiss Collins (D-Ill.) rose and grabbed the nearest microphone. 'I'm offended by that type of debate.'"



### TONY BROWN

Syndicated Columnist

"I'm going to direct my friend (Collins) to a few (black) ministers who will tell her just what goes on in her community," an unimpressed Hyde shot back.

"Several other black female lawmakers quickly got out of their seats and tried unsuccessfully to respond. During a subsequent procedural vote, tempers still raged as several black women screamed at Hyde," the *Post* observed.

Then the abortion-on-demand black women's lobby turned on white male Democrats as well in what the *Post* story called "a bizarre kind of chaos on the House floor."

Are these black politicians in step with the abortion-rights movement or the black community? The answer is readily at hand.

A poll by Home Box Office and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a black think tank, proves that most blacks flunk the ideological abortion litmus test of these liberal feminists. Almost a majority, 47 percent of blacks, believe that abortions should be legal only under "some circumstances" — conditions very similar to the revised Hyde amendment. Only 32 percent said abortions should be legal under any circumstance, whenever you want one at government expense, as the black politicians want for poor black women.

That's why these outraged black politicians will not make these same abortion-when-you-want-it demands in the black churches, where they must go to get re-elected.

The Joint Center's study also found that 33 percent of blacks consider their political views to be "conservative," 31 percent "moderate," and only 28 percent "liberal."

So who does this tin-cup brigade of fringe liberals represent?

### VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Across the country, the debate continues on whether high schools should provide condoms to students as measures against disease and teen-age pregnancy. The *Chronicle* asked city residents whether schools should take that step. Here are their responses:



Eli Watts, 22  
Bowman Gray student

"Schools should provide condoms because people (have sex) anyway, and it demonstrates AIDS awareness. It doesn't encourage teens to have sex."



Mildred Edwards, 32  
PPG of Lexington

"Yes, with parental consent, because youth have sex anyway. Even though they go behind their parents' backs without permission, they still need to be protected."



Karen Perry, 19  
Gemstone Jewelry

"Yes and no. Yes, because we can't tell our teens not to engage in sex. No, because we are actually telling kids that it is okay to have sex."



Eugene Smith, 24  
R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

"Yes, definitely. Teens already know the basics of sex, especially with television hyping it up. In the 1950s and '60s, television was not like that."