

OP/ED



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Why No Uproar For Heaven?



Kalvin Michael Smith
Guest Columnist

Heaven Sutton was the seven-year-old African American girl who was shot and killed in Chicago last year while fleeing with her mother.

"Why no uproar for Heaven?"

Not downplaying the Trayvon Martin ordeal because it was a horrific injustice. But why is it that there is no outrage over the black-on-black fatalities occurring throughout the country?

People traveled from far and wide to denounce the actions of George Zimmerman against Trayvon Martin. Why do we downplay the actions against little Heaven as the norm? Most of us have become content with the violent actions of many African-Americans towards one another. Even though Heaven may not have been the intended victim, some other African-American was.

The violence that is being perpetrated in the streets of our communities will continue to get worse the longer everyone turns their head the other way and accepts these actions as a part of our culture. Violence towards one another and self-genocide is not the culture of our people nor a part of it. Our ancestors, all the way back in Egypt, Timbuktu, Alexandria, and beyond, all the way up into slavery and beyond, were a people of love, spiritual awareness, self-awareness, family oriented and culturally



Heaven Sutton was a victim of senseless violence last summer in Chicago.

grounded. So I ask you, why no national uproar?

Not only have most African-Americans strayed away from the values of our ancestors.

We have strayed after things that bring us nothing but spiritual and physical destruction. As I always say, "We glorify things that are of no worth." Many of us are so mentally and spiritually poor, that we live out our lives daily to be accepted by others, never taking the time to learn and accept ourselves.

Our youth must learn to love instead of hate. They must learn to love themselves first, because until then they can never love one another. Black-on-black violence has been an issue at the top of the list of improvements within the African-American communities for years and that's part of the problem: that it's only at the top of the list and only being talked about.

Everyone must become hands-on, foot soldiers.

Ending the epidemic of black-on-black violence could help improve educational opportunities. Safer neighborhoods are essential to creating better learning environments. A mass campaign to end these senseless murders could save the lives of thousands of victims of black-on-black violence. Lily Tomlin once stated; "I always wondered why somebody doesn't do something about that, then I realized that I was somebody." Why No Uproar For Heaven?

Kalvin Michael Smith is a Winston-Salem man serving time in the Caswell Correctional Institution for the 1997 beating of Jill Marker. Smith has always maintained his innocence and a growing number of local residents are questioning his conviction and the investigation that led to it.

Competition

from page A4

Development Division will be available to provide technical assistance to participants throughout the competition.

Executive summaries and business descriptions are due on Friday, Feb. 15 to be considered for advancement to the final

stage. The final round requires the submission of a completed business plan in May. The winning business plan will be announced in early July.

An informational meeting for the Small Business Plan Competition is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 15 at 6 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room of the Bryce Stuart Municipal Building, 100 East First

St. There, further information about the competition and what a winning business plan should include will be given.

To learn more about the Small Business Plan Competition, contact Business Development Supervisor Ruben Gonzales at 336-747-7474 or rubeng@city-ofws.org.

Singers

from page A1

star who has sold millions of CDs - is sending the wrong message to her legions of young female fans.

The reunion has become a hot topic of conversation on 102 Jamz's WildOut Wake-Up Show, according to TashaMakia Acevedo, a domestic violence survivor and the hip hop station's lone female morning show host.

"It's not cool with me," she said of the relationship. "That's why at this moment, it's so much more important for me as the woman on the morning show to get out there and talk to the kids and let them know this is not how you should be treated."

Brown was roundly ridiculed in 2009 after he beat Rihanna inside of a rented Lamborghini on a Hollywood street a few days before the Grammy Awards, where they both were set to appear. Photos of the Barbados-born songstress' bruised and swollen face made the social media rounds soon after the incident. Brown was ordered to take anger management classes and perform community service.

"It's so funny. I remember when they first went through everything ... people were very angry," related Acevedo, a Bridgeport, Conn. native. "Now, it seems like people are like okay, more so, 'people deserve a second chance.'"

Acevedo said she spent 15 years in a relationship that began as controlling and ultimately escalated to physical violence before she found the courage to leave.

"It's not something that you can easily get out of once you're in it, you're stuck. I really believed that I was born to die with this man, and not in a good way," she related. "It was to the point that I wanted to take myself out ... I prayed to God, 'If You get me out of this, I promise I will help other girls.'"



This widely-seen photo shows the injuries Brown inflicted on Rihanna.

Kimberly Hinton-Robinson founded LIFE (Living is Finally Enjoyable, Inc.), a non-profit organization that seeks to help and support battered women, after being a victim of a stalker.

She says a man who beats a woman once will almost certainly be a repeat offender.

"I feel like if a person violates you once, then they'll do it again," she said. "...I believe in forgiveness too, but that (relationship) doesn't sit well with me."

DeWanna Hamlin, coordinator of Prevention and Education for Family Services Inc.'s Safe Relationships Division, said Brown and Rihanna are following a pattern that is often played out within abusive relationships.

"It's concerning to me when any abusive relationship goes through the cycle of violence," said Hamlin. "It is not uncommon for the victim to take seven to 10 attempts before they can completely extricate themselves from the domestic violence relationship. There's a lot of leaving and going back."

Victims of domestic violence return to abusive relationships for a variety of reasons, Hamlin said. Many victims cite love, children and not wanting their relationship to be a failure. Too often, Hamlin said, the focus is on the victim who returns to the relationship, and not the abuser who continues to lure him or her back.

"We're much quicker to judge the victims and why they stay than we are

to look at the perpetrator and why it is acceptable to do violence to people that we love," she remarked. "I think that's the deeper issue."

Arlene Crump-Peebles, founder of Alabaster Place, Inc., a domestic violence training and advocacy center, said it is important that not only victims of domestic violence get help, but perpetrators as well.

"It provokes me to really just speak with the advocates and those who we have trained to remind them how serious this is and how important this is. In spite of the media saying that this is okay, it's not," said Crump-Peebles, who is also a domestic violence survivor. "...If you are the abuser, you need to be held accountable. If you're the victim, you need to know life has so much more to offer you."

Acevedo, a mother of three, has made it her mission to help as many women as she can escape the horrors of domestic abuse, primarily by speaking out against domestic violence at every opportunity given to her.

Today, "I'm free; I'm strong; I'm confident," she said. "I have a story to share, but most importantly, I have a job to do. I believe that God has brought me to radio ... to be the voice of women that don't even know they're in (an unhealthy relationship). I swear on my last breath that nothing fills me up more than helping somebody get out of this because I swear I was lost."

Though unfortunate, the Rihanna-Chris Brown relationship can serve as a teaching tool to educate people - especially women - about the dangers of domestic violence and the importance of avoiding such relationships, Hamlin said.

"I use her as an example a lot in my training or education because it's something people can relate to. It opens up a great conversation for people who don't think they know somebody that's experiencing domestic violence," she said of Rihanna. "...I think this is a great time to have conversations with our youth about what is healthy."

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, please contact Family Services' confidential, 24-hour crisis line, 336-723-8125.

The Black Press at its Best



George Curry
Guest Columnist

When then-National Newspaper Publishers Association Chairman

Danny Bakewell Sr. asked me to emcee the Black Press Week luncheon at the National Press Club in 2011, I had no idea that I would be witnessing history. At the urging of Wilmington Journal Publisher

video about the Wilmington Ten at the luncheon and its leader, Benjamin Chavis Jr., was interviewed by me and the publishers. When I asked Ben, a longtime friend, about his lowest point in prison, he tried to steer me away from the question by saying he preferred to focus on the future, not the past.

For Chavis, the trouble began after the all-Black high school was closed as part of the court-ordered desegregation of New Hanover County, N.C., schools. The Black students

were forced to attend the previously all-White high school, where they were harassed. In February 1971, the United Church of Christ dispatched Chavis, a native of Oxford, N.C., to help organize a school boycott. During that period of unrest, someone fire-bombed Mike's Grocery, a White-owned business located a block away from Gregory Congregational Church, where Chavis had set up headquarters. When fire fighters and police officers arrived, they were attacked by snipers.

Chavis and nine others were charged and convicted of arson and conspiracy in connection with the incident. Most of the defen-

dants received a 29-year sentence, with Ann Shepard, the White woman from Auburn, N.Y., receiving the lightest sentence of 15 years and Chavis, then only 24 years old, getting 34 years, the longest sentence. In 1980, a federal appeals court overturned the convictions of the Wilmington Ten and directly contradicted at least 15 of his allegations.

After taking up the cause of the Wilmington Ten, NNPA newspapers gave prominent display to stories written about the case by Cash Michaels, editor of the Wilmington Journal, and distributed to member papers by the NNPA News Service. Through talent and dogged persistence, neither Cash nor his publisher, Mary Alice Thatch, would let the campaign for pardons stall.

Without Michaels' exceptional reporting and the national exposure, many of the facts about the Wilmington Ten injustice would still remain unknown - and Gov. Perdue would not have pardoned the civil rights activists.

This was the Black Press at its best.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA.) Reach him at www.georgecurry.com.



Cash Michaels

Mary Alice Thatch, the NNPA decided to launch a national campaign to win pardons for the Wilmington 10, a group of activists who were falsely convicted and sentenced to a combined total of 282 years. Everyone knew it would be an uphill battle, but it was a battle the NNPA was willing to wage. It established The Wilmington Ten Pardon of Innocence Project with a goal "to generate national and worldwide support for the petition, to the state of North Carolina, and specifically the governor, to grant individual pardons of innocence to the Wilmington Ten."

NNPA publishers saw a



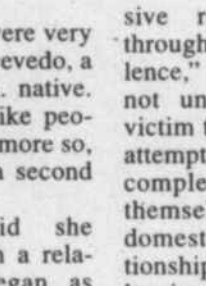
Crump-Peebles



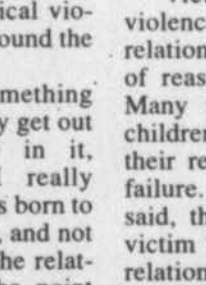
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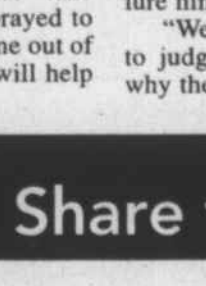
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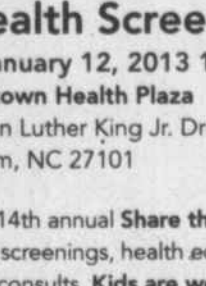
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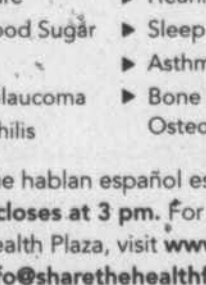
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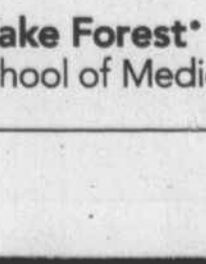
Curry



Bakewell



Crump-Peebles



Acevedo

Share the Health Fair

Free Health Screenings

Saturday, January 12, 2013 10 am-4 pm
at the Downtown Health Plaza
1200 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Join us at our 14th annual Share the Health Fair for free health screenings, health education and physician consults. Kids are welcome!

- ▶ Blood Pressure
- ▶ Diabetes/Blood Sugar
- ▶ Cholesterol
- ▶ Vision and Glaucoma
- ▶ HIV and Syphilis
- ▶ Hearing
- ▶ Sleep Apnea
- ▶ Asthma/Lung function
- ▶ Bone Density/Osteoporosis
- ▶ Physical Therapy/Mobility
- ▶ Body Mass Index (BMI)
- ▶ Skin Exams
- ▶ Mental Health

Interpretes que hablan español estarán disponibles
Registration closes at 3 pm. For more information, including directions to the Downtown Health Plaza, visit www.sharethehealthfair.org. Further questions? Email us at info@sharethehealthfair.org. See you at the fair!

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