

# Editorials & Comments

## Black Press Champions Human Rights

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.  
Post Executive Editor

In 1827 John Russwurm and Samuel E. Cornish pioneered the field of Black journalism when they co-founded the **FREEDOM'S JOURNAL** newspaper in New York City. In the first issue of the **JOURNAL** they wrote, "We plead our cause," that is, the cause of freedom from chattel slavery and for black self-development through education, thrift and hard work.

Others who pleaded "our cause" in these pioneering days were Philip A. Bell, founder of the **COLORED AMERICAN** (1837) and publisher of the **SAN FRANCISCO ELEVATOR** (1865 - 1888); Martin R. Delany, founder of the **PITTSBURGH MYSTERY** (1842); and Frederick Douglas, the eminent abolitionist editor and orator who founded the **NORTH STAR** in 1847.

In recognition of the contributions of these 5 enlightened Black Americans, the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Black Press will be highlighted this week with the enshrining of these men in the new **Gallery of Distinguished Newspaper Publishers** at Howard University.

As a result of these humble beginnings, and in spite of the sporadic birth and death of a number of black newspapers, the Black Press in America today comprises approximately 385 weekly and 5 daily newspapers. These newspapers employ about 5,500 people and have a circulation of approximately 9 million.

To the extent that American journalism has historically provided a place for the small newspaper which reports the activities of special interest groups, the Black press is like many others. However, the Black press is unlike others in that it began as a protest against institutionalized slavery and continues today as a champion of human rights.

### Attack On Slavery

For example, since the **FREEDOM'S JOURNAL** printed its first attack on slavery, Black newspaper content has followed a chronological pattern of stories about escaped slaves, lynchings, protests against Jim Crowism and desegregation. Beginning in the mid-1950s, stories about Black power and the "Black revolution" captured the headlines. These were followed by stories of

Black rising expectations accompanying the Economic Opportunity Act of the early 1960s and the urban riots of the same decade. Black pride and achievements, Black studies programs, "Black capitalism," and stories about Africa and Africans occupied the pages of the Black press through the early 1970s. The central theme through these years of Black newsprint has been that of human rights.

Today, the Black Press continues its tradition of providing news coverage of areas overlooked, ignored, misunderstood or distorted by the majority white daily newspapers. For example, news accounts of how the federal regulatory agencies -

such as the Interstate Commerce Commission - often contributes to discriminatory practices as well as stories about Blacks who have achieved positions of considerable influence and power in both the government and corporate sectors are thoroughly covered in the Black press and nearly ignored or relegated to the lower part of the back page in the large white dailies.

### Dedicated Commitment

Furthermore, while the Black press has maintained a dedicated commitment to dignity and human rights dating back to the era of slavery, the majority of the larger white press has, in a historical context, run ads for the sale and capture of run-away slaves, editorially supported slavery, ignored the end of Reconstruction and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, largely sanctioned by its silence the exploitation of both black and white sharecroppers and the shameful treatment that many contemporary multinational corporations impose on the peoples of the less developed nations. Finally, the larger white dailies' principle shortcoming is in their inability or lack of interest to view some things from a black perspective or viewpoint.

### Reaffirm Our Pride

However, before we as Black people reaffirm our pride in the accomplishments of the Black press, let us be reminded that in spite of the aforementioned shortcomings of the white press, it was partly white abolitionists and white journalists

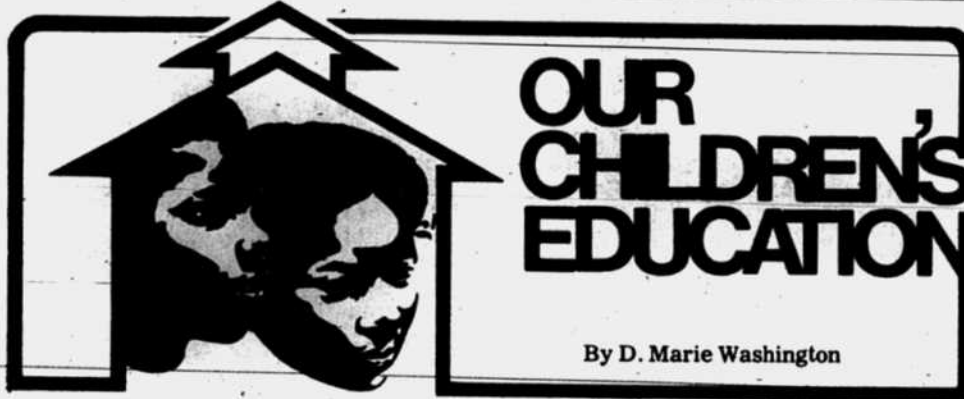
such as Horace Greeley in the early days who gave considerable moral support to the Black Press. Today, the white business community's advertising dollar is a major source of financial support for the Black Press. This has occurred partly because too many Black businesses lack sufficient capital to advertise adequately or they fail to understand the benefits of advertising.

We note these facts because a newspaper, like any other business, cannot survive on its past accomplishment; it is what it is doing today, and plans to do tomorrow, that determines its success or failure. As Black people, we must do more to insure the continued existence and success of the Black press. To do less would be to abandon a vital voice in our never-ending struggle for equality of opportunity and human rights.

Support the Black press so that the Black press can support you.



**150 Years Of Dedicated Service**



By D. Marie Washington

## Intelligence And IQ Tests

No one knows quite how to define intelligence, yet we go on measuring it just as though we do know. But every so-called intelligence test is limited by what the test-maker thinks intelligence is, and the attempts to define intelligence sound very much like the story of the blind men who each described the elephant according to the part which he felt.

According to Alfred Binet, who developed the first instrument for measuring intelligence in 1905, intelligence is the ability to make sensible judgments. Lewis M. Terman, who modified Binet's test in 1916, defined intelligence as "the ability to think in terms of abstract ideas." The definitions of intelligence have multiplied as the use of intelligence tests has grown over the years, and now, some psychologist simply turn the whole argument back on itself by saying that intelligence is what the intelligence tests measure! E.L. Thorndike, a well-known name in testing, believed that intelligence could be identified through four factors, L.L. Thurstone defined intelligence in terms of approximately 8 factors, and G.P. Guilford

claims to have identified over 50 different kinds of intelligence. Some psychologists "measure" intelligence by using questions on sentence completion, arithmetic problems and vocabulary; others seek to test the ability to memorize quickly and manipulate objects, and still others believe that a test of intelligence must take into account such things as will power, self-control and persistence. Since each definition requires its own test to measure what is being defined, there are almost as many "intelligence tests" available today as there are definitions for the word. It makes one wonder if the practice of intelligence testing can really be considered scientific, objective and accurate, or is it just "an affair in which

magic, science, and myth are intermixed," as Sheldon White of Harvard University describes it in an article, "The Social Implications of IQ," (National Elementary Principal, March 1975). Those who have been outstanding in the construction of IQ tests have also recognized an underlying contradiction about the "measurement" of intelligence. E. L. Thorndike pointed out that

it still was not determined what was being measured by the tests or what was meant

by measurement. David Wechsler, whose IQ tests for adults and children are widely used, has commented that psychology is continuously devising tests for measuring intelligence and then disclaiming responsibility for them by pointing out that nobody knows what the word really means.

It appears that the word "intelligence" is a symbol for an idea which is just as abstract as the ideas represented by the words "happiness" and "love," meaning different things to different people. Yet children throughout the public schools in America are being judged, labelled and educated - or miseducated - according to this concrete "measurement" of something which is too abstract to be defined.

Citizens Safety Association  
A safety tip from Citizens Safety Association: Drivers should stay far left in case other vehicle crowd center line.  
If passing, tap your horn to let the other driver know. At night - flash your lights.

**TO BE EQUAL**



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

## The Black Press' Birthday

This March marks the 150th birthday of one of America's most important institutions - the black press.

In March, 1827, fifty years after an American Revolution dedicated to freedom and liberty but based on slavery and exploitation, two black men launched the first black-owned newspaper in the country. They were John Russwurm, America's first black college graduate, and Samuel Cornish. Their paper bore the appropriate name, "Freedom's Journal."

Especially after watching "Roots," we can appreciate the courage it took, not just the financial risk, but the very real obstacles placed in the way of black activists by a national power structure that endorsed slavery and viewed free blacks with distaste.

Why a black newspaper? John Russwurm answered that in his first editorial, and it's worth quoting:

"We wish to plead our own cause," he wrote. "Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations in things which concern us dearly."

And in what still describes many sectors of the nation, Russwurm pointed to those "who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifle, which tends to the discredit of any person of color; and pronounce anathemas and denounce our whole body for the misconduct of the guilty one."

"Freedom's Journal" had a short-lived life, but from its humble beginnings grew one of black America's major resources - a vigorous press that exposed the conditions forced upon black people and a press responsive to their needs and aspirations.

The black press became a central factor in the abolitionist movement, and Frederick Douglass founded and edited the major newspaper of the pre-Civil War era, the "North Star." The paper's object, Douglass wrote, "will be to attack slavery in all its forms and aspects, advocate universal emancipation, exact the standard of the colored people; and to hasten the day of freedom to our three million enslaved fellow countrymen."

Since those days, the black press has become a natural source of black leadership, with such giants as T. Thomas Fortune, William Monroe Trotter, Carl Murphy, A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins emerging from its ranks.

Their publication and others engined black civil rights protest, fought lynching and peonage, opposed segregation, and spurred black efforts to gain a foothold in the economic mainstream.

The black press still performs those functions, as well as providing the community with news of local and national importance. As in the past, it provides a forum for black expression, a haven for unpopular ideas fated to triumph, and acts the role of a sentinel against injustice. It's vigor can be seen in the publications of the Johnson Publishing Company, the Sengstacke newspaper chain, and many others too numerous to mention here.

Now, in its maturity, the black press faces great challenges - it must respond to a new readership, increasingly more sophisticated and integrated into the mainstream in a greater degree than ever before. And on the business front, it faces mounting costs and competition for the advertising dollar.

as i see it

## Legalize Marijuana?

By Gerald O. Johnson

Marijuana has been proven to be less harmful than alcohol, barbituates, and cigarette smoking. All of these items are easily purchasable from any store in the country.

Yes, it has been fought and tried over and over again to no avail because today marijuana is still illegal.

I think this is unfortunate. But before going into detail let me bring you up to date on my own experiences with marijuana.

During my hey day, alcohol was the in thing and few people were using marijuana that I knew of. My first experience with marijuana was when I was in college. I did it because everybody else was doing it. It really wasn't a big thing except that it didn't leave you with a hangover.

Well, eventually I realized that I didn't enjoy doing everything that everybody else was doing, and smoking pot was one of those things, so I stopped.

Later, I realized that most people smoking pot started just to conform. Now, some of these people are pot heads and others are hard users. This latter point is one of the major reasons that anti-legalization groups use to keep marijuana from becoming legal. I will return to this point later on.

I have said all this to show that I could care less personally if it is legalized or not.

But it is a bit ironic to me that it isn't legal. And it is to this irony that I will address myself.

Obviously, if marijuana has been proven a health hazard it should be banned. But it has not. Even things we eat have been proven to be more harmful than marijuana. Insecticides, birth control pills, saccharin, coffee, and many other things have been shown to be hazardous to your health, yet they are still being sold legally. Therefore, the government can't be concerned with marijuana being a health hazard.



Gerald O. Johnson

Returning to the point made earlier, marijuana can only lead to hard drugs if it is illegal. Drug pushers use marijuana as a lead to getting users to go to hard drugs. It is not the marijuana that leads on to hard drugs but the pushers themselves. Therefore, legalizing marijuana would ease the drug traffic. Moreover, since possession of marijuana is a felony,

legalizing marijuana would ease the backlog of cases currently facing our courts.

But most of all I don't believe that it is feasible for government to think that they can legislate anything that is a self inflection. It is true that a person high on Pot is a traffic risk. But he is less dangerous than a person high on alcohol. So then why have strict penalties governing one and slack penalties governing the other.

There are many other reasons why legalization of marijuana is feasible.

What has occurred to me recently is that the government is hesitant about legalizing marijuana because it has not determined how to regulate it.

Obviously after legalizing the stuff the government will try to corner the market. They will try to tax it, or sale it or something to get some money out of it.

task to control the market. But I am sure it will be legalized and remember you heard it first right here.

Now, for you people against the legalization that are saying to yourselves 'That fool is just saying this so he can smoke pot without going to jail' hear this!

I have smoked pot, but I do not smoke it now and that is the truth. You can ask anybody who associates with me socially. I don't put down anybody for smoking it, nor do I get upset if they smoke around me.

It does, however, make logical sense to me to have it legalized. Most people who are against it that I've talked to have never tried it, never been around it, yet they have an opinion on it.

They don't like it. They can not justify why they don't, they just don't.

This type of reasoning ability is what has made the donkey what he is today; an ass.

### REDISTRICTING

My final word on re-districting Charlotte is that it will pass. There is no doubt that under a redistricting plan will place more Blacks on the city council. But I will venture to say that this does not mean better representation.

A black man is just as apt to slide you down the annal of time as a white one will. Mr. Gantt, in my opinion, has been the only black to represent the black people well in city government.

The others either are or were status seekers striving to lift themselves above the everyday concerns of westside Charlotte. I am saying all this to say that regardless of the mechanism used to elect an official it is still your responsibility to put the "Man" in office.

Whether you vote for or against the redistricting plan is really secondary to whom you vote for in the council election. Remember the city you save may be your own!

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