

Counts

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would be able to continue her work as an educator. "I began to see that I would be able to take my experiences and broaden them. I would never leave education. In one discussion with the board, it was clear that the board would welcome and support my participation on national boards."

She serves on several national committees and task forces, including the White House Task Force on Public School Choice, which is spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Education. The expectation is that the YWCA will get extensive visibility in the community under Counts' leadership.

Magnet schools, just ending its first full year of operation, will not suffer after she leaves, Counts contends. She said the foundation has been laid and now it's a matter of "polishing and refining the system."

Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Superintendent John Murphy has been supportive of Counts' decision to join the YWCA.

"Her local and national recognition as an educational leader is a tribute to her commitment to the education profession," said Murphy. "I am sure she will continue in her new position to significantly impact the greater community and I look forward to collaborating with her on issues that affect our youth."

"I was deeply touched by the expressions of respect and loss," Counts said. "I'm appreciative of the support he has said he would give in my new role and his commitment to collaborate on children's issues."

In educational circles, Counts is considered to be a mover and shaker who developed a reputation of turning situations around. When she was assigned principal of Piedmont Open Middle School, there were only 10 students on the waiting list. Her task was to make the concept of open school work. "Open education was declining when I was appointed principal," said Counts. We had to redefine the mission and vision of open school. We knew there was a strong foundation. We knew we had the ingredients to be a national model. We researched what other schools were doing."

When she left Piedmont to coordinate magnet schools, the waiting list had increased to 1,000 students and the school had been named a National School of Excellence and a National Exemplary School of the Arts by former president George Bush.

Counts is looking forward to developing YWCA's educational components.

The organization has youth development programs at seven Charlotte Housing Authority scattered sites and two housing communities in Monroe. Its community education services are organized around the needs and issues affecting women and their families.

"With a tradition spanning 91 years, the Charlotte YWCA is committed to meeting needs of women and children in this community," said Barbara K. Massa, president of the YWCA board, in a statement announcing Counts' appointment. "It is because of this deep commitment that we are especially thrilled to be gaining someone of Stephanie Counts' background and reputation as we work to move our organization forward and fulfill our mission."

Counts plans to be process-oriented in her approach to managing YWCA. "First you have a vision, you get involvement and participation, you implement and evaluate," she said.

Issues that will be key to Counts are "closing the gap between black and white children in academic achievement, early intervention programs for preschoolers and diversity issues. I want to give back to women something in terms of mentoring. Turning around and giving back is very important."

Posthumous Award For Tennis Legend



Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, widow of tennis star Arthur Ashe, accepts the posthumous "Tribute To a Black American" award during the National Conference of Black Mayors annual convention. Joining her are Philip Davis, vice president of corporate relations, Philip Morris Companies and Henry Espy (right) mayor of Clarksdale, Miss. and president of NCBM.

Farrakhan Invites Critics To Get Learn About Him

By William Reed
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON - Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan spoke at the National Press Club and from a platform that has been made famous through its use by leaders of "the establishment" from presidents to kings, he brought a message of conciliation that sounded very "mainstream."

In his presentation titled: "A Torchlight for America," the Chicago-based religious leader defended President Clinton and his first 100 days in office, offered the teachings and programs of his Black Muslim organization as models for solving some of America's ills, presented a novel plan for developing Africa and offered an olive branch to Jews and the general media, saying each should "get to know me better."

Sounding themes that have been fostered by conservatives and progressive politicians during his two-hour speech, Farrakhan called for fiscal reform, cuts in government spending, higher taxes, sending jail inmates to Africa, and revival of the enterprise zones concept. "Radical times call for radical ideas," said the 59-year-old protege of Elijah Muhammad who had praise for Clinton, calling him "young, adventurous, intelligent and in trouble."

Farrakhan called for the exploration of the idea of using black prison inmates to help develop resources in African countries. Citing examples of Australia, New Zealand and America as having been created with the labor of British prisoners, Farrakhan said, "Some of our people would be willing to build a new reality in Africa." His plan would be for training programs to be set up to help jail inmates work off their prison terms in helping African countries develop their natural resources. Farrakhan, who has traveled extensively in Africa and the Middle East, said, "The work of European criminals has redeemed them in the eyes of history. Black Americans can be redeemed in the eyes of history in the same way."

In the nationally televised program, which was organized by the Capital Press Club, the oldest black press organization in Washington,

Farrakhan countered many leading civil rights voices and called for reduced federal spending and increased taxes. In the speech, which was broadcast on C-SPAN, Farrakhan said: "The problem is to convince the public this is what must be done. People will pay more taxes if they know things will change." He said Clinton must bypass the Congress and go directly to the public if he is to give his economic ideas a chance to work. He called the national debt "a new form of slavery."



Farrakhan

While Black Muslim followers have had a reputation of being in the world, but not of it for 60 years, many of the media attending the speech said that Farrakhan sounded as if he is moving toward the "mainstream." Farrakhan put forward an olive branch to the Jewish community, saying claims that he is antisemitic are untrue. He cited a recent case where he played a violin concerto by a Jewish composer to bridge the misunderstandings. He also said he would like more involvement with other African American leaders and thinkers. (Farrakhan is scheduled to speak to a meeting of black publishers and members of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) in Los Angeles on June 24).

Rock Newman, manager of heavyweight boxing champion Riddick Bowe, made a point of expressing open support for Farrakhan at the forum. While, Barry Murray, editor of Washington's News Dimensions and a long-time observer of The Nation, said, "He sounds like he doesn't want to be accused of offending the establishment anymore."

Lon Walls, president of the Capital Press Club said, "He wants to go more toward the mainstream. He feels, and rightfully so, that he's got a message that more people should listen to." Roberta McCloud, director of the Howard University Blackburn Center, said: "I was impressed by his plan for prisoners and Africa. What he said is the salvation of America if they would just open their ears and listen."

Grading The President: He'll Pass

By William Reed
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION


WASHINGTON - Black Americans characterize President Bill Clinton's first 100 days in office as ones of "positive outreach."



Clinton

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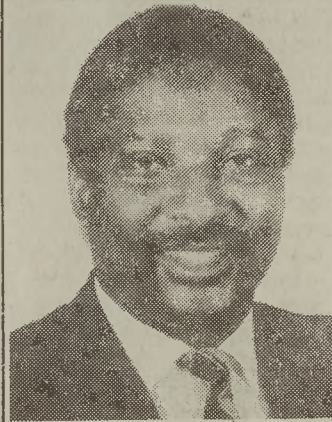
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