

# The Charlotte Post

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## Butterfly preserved slave culture

By James Alsbrook  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The death of Butterfly McQueen stirs contradictory feelings among many black people who long ago advocated dignity, self-respect and race loyalty. One of these was Rev. D.A. Holmes, long-time minister and NAACP advocate in the Greater Kansas City area. He associated black dignity with Christianity permanently as twin powers propelling his people toward "a respectable seat at the table of American justice." Rev. Holmes urged black people to "Pay your church dues first and pay your NAACP dues next." He said the two payments were inseparable from the survival and progress of black people.

Rev. Holmes did not endorse performers like Bert Williams, the black comedian who long ago used makeup to blacken his face even more, and applied white makeup to make his lips appear bigger and wider and spoke so-called "Negro" dialect. Nor did he applaud performances of songs like "When Malinda Sings" and recitals like "Liza, Liza, Bless De Lawd," a monologue created by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. Black people suffered enough degradation from white people and did not need to self-impose expressions of ignorance, he explained.

The Rev. Mr. Holmes looked upon "Amos and Andy" as racial insults despite the number of church members who said they saw nothing wrong with "a little bit of self-humor." He wanted to know how "Amos and Andy" would add respect and employment to the black community.

The race-conscious minister seemed to associate well-known performers like Stepin Fetchit with immoral behavior when he rhetorically asked congregations to be careful where they placed their values. He among others referred to Psalms 84:10 from which he read, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God than to dwell in tents of wickedness." The "tents of wickedness" seemed to be movies and other public performances that violated the dignity of black people or cast them as negative stereotypes.

Did Butterfly McQueen violate the dignity of her race when she acted the humiliating role of an ignorant maid in "Gone With the Wind" back in 1939? This picture is considered to be a classic by some who revel in the so-called "glory" of an immoral but glamorous and somewhat "cleansed" slave culture that advocated white supremacy and approved imaginary black ignorance.

The legacy of Butterfly McQueen and similar others is a prevailing slave culture that has caused intellectual dishonesty in education and stereotypical behavior in some blacks. For example, not long ago a doctoral candidate from a Confederate state worked long and hard for her degree. But she also went to her white advisor's home and insisted on doing menial "maid" house work for his wife. When she went "down home," she returned with fruit, vegetables, baked food and other "goodies" sent by her parents.

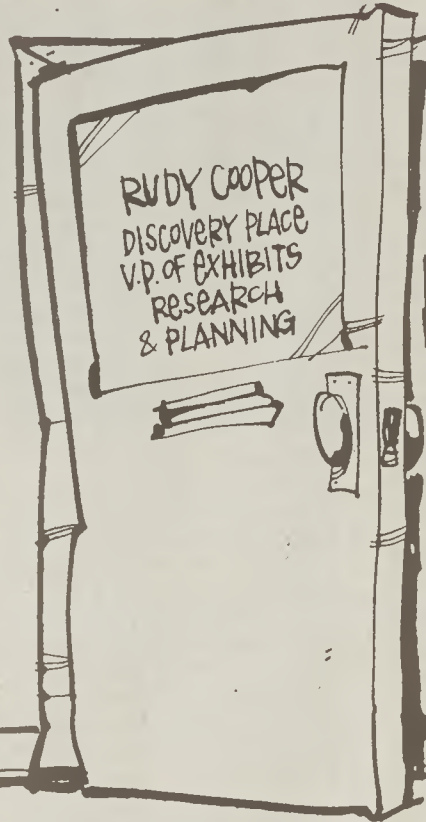
The professor and his wife were very embarrassed and really tried to stop the gifts. Receiving gifts violated these white recipients' personal integrity and the university's code of professional ethics. When I met and spoke with the woman's parents, her father said black people must "take low" and "go with the flow."

But somehow I believe Rev. Holmes would smile if he were here today. He did not live to see the "Cosby Show" with its eight-year, main-event run that began in 1984, lasted until 1992, and still is shown in reruns. The show portrayed blacks in respectable role-model situations and successes. White people who colonized this nation used the Cosby-style emphasis on upward mobility and positive role models effectively ever since they arrived here in America. The admirable idea of portraying educated black women instead of repulsive chamber maid stereotypes is displayed in "Waiting to Exhale," now being shown in various cities.

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MEANWHILE BACK IN HIS  
SAFE HAVEN III

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I'M AFRAID THAT IF WE BRING THE SLAVE SHIP EXHIBIT HERE PEOPLE WOULD BE EXPOSED TO SOMETHING THEY KNEW LITTLE OR NOTHING ABOUT... AND WE CAN'T HAVE THAT AROUND HERE...

## Gingrich's latest insult to blacks

Lenora  
Fulani



Like many conservative politicians, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich makes a big show of criticizing programs that provide public funding for campaigns, such as the Presidential Primary Matching Funds program. He and his colleagues in the Senate regularly denounce these taxpayer funded programs as "welfare for politicians," even as their own party's presidential candidates — Dole, Gramm, and the rest — stuff their already bloated campaign war chests with tens of millions of these matching dollars.

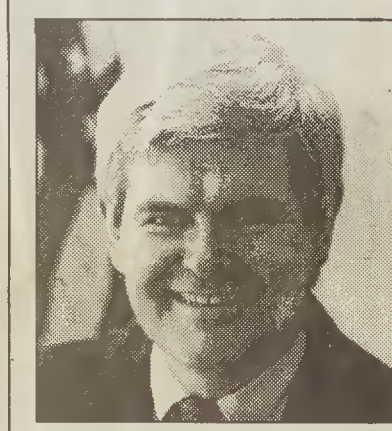
Last month Gingrich once again denounced the matching funds program, this time adding racism to his hypocrisy. In testimony before the House Oversight Committee (the committee in charge of campaign finance reform), Gingrich used me, the first and only African American woman to ever qualify for matching funds, as a prime example of why the program is so flawed.

Referring to me as exemplary of a "nut class of politics," Gingrich said that I had figured out how to "get enough people to support her to be eligible for tax-paid funds so she can earn a living getting tax-

paid funds." According to Gingrich, I know how to "get on the dole" and I run a "terrific racket."

Keep in mind that in the 20 years since the Presidential Primary Matching Funds program was instituted as a campaign finance reform, the beneficiaries of this program have been almost exclusively white men. Hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have poured into the campaign coffers of the likes of Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Bill Clinton, Paul Tsongas, Pat Robertson, and others who "have figured out how to get enough people to support [them] to be eligible." A modest amount of these dollars have helped Rev. Jesse Jackson and Gov. Doug Wilder in their presidential efforts. And approximately 3 million of those matching funds have contributed to my two presidential runs.

In 1988 I became the first African American woman to ever fulfill the rigorous eligibility requirements necessary to qualify for matching funds. I received a little over \$900,000 for my first presidential campaign. These funds matched tens of thousands of small checks—many as small as \$1—contributed by Americans around the country who supported my efforts to open up the electoral process to independent candidates and voters. If the purpose of the matching fund program is to encourage Americans of modest means to get involved in the process, and give small



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amounts to the candidate of their choice, then my two campaigns — to which over 150,000 Americans have contributed an average amount of under \$25 — more than fulfilled that public policy goal.

Unlike Mr. Gingrich himself, who appears to have benefited considerably from the indirect financing and support of his notorious GOPAC political action committee, my campaigns depended on honest, face-to-face contact and conversations between my campaign workers and the tens of thousands of individual American voters who supported me. We didn't rely on political action committees, "independent expenditures," or the "soft money" from political parties that the so-called reformers—Republicans and Democrats alike—pretend to oppose.

My two presidential campaigns, which broke through

many of the legal and institutional barriers that discriminate against independent candidates, set important legal precedents that can now be used by the Perot movement's Reform Party, the Natural Law Party; the Green Party, and other independent efforts. My appearance on the scene of presidential politics — a good ol' boys club if there ever was one — was an achievement of which the African American community was very proud. Gingrich's racist attack on me, with its conscious invocation of numerous racist stereotypes about African Americans, is an attack on our community and on the broad and inclusive practice of democracy that Black America — and all America — desperately needs.

LENORA FULANI is a New York political and social activist and former presidential candidate.

## Stalemated state of the most uncertain union

By Mike Feinsilber  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Clinton gave the longest State of the Union address in history a year ago. It ran 81 minutes. Duration may have been its most memorable aspect. If he wants to avoid the trouble of writing a new address, he can give it again this year. Much would still apply.

The president laid out his agenda in that speech and the Republicans, in charge of Congress for the first time in 40 years and consequently full of energy, laid out theirs in the "Contract With America."

Not much of either became law.

In a sense, they canceled each other. The Republican Congress and the Democratic

administration got bogged down in a debate over what kind of government the American people asked for — and whether they want to pay for it, or charge it.

January is a time of new resolve and new promise, and it would be nice to report that 1996 promises to resolve some of the quarrels of 1995, but that would be optimism bordering on folly.

What 1995 did was to fine tune the choices the people will confront in 1996. The election messages from 1992, which produced Clinton, and 1994, which neutralized him, were contradictory.

The people seemed to be opting for impossible goals: smaller government but no fewer benefits from it; lower taxes but a balanced budget;

greater state and local control, but a federal safety net. In 1996, they'll speak again.

At the end of the year, the Republicans wrapped up their reading of the people's will in a single bill, the balanced budget act, and when Clinton vetoed it, much of the government was left without the authority or the wherewithal to operate.

The Republican Congress could have passed another stopgap spending bill to keep the government running while negotiations continued toward a compromise. But the Republicans — especially the mission-driven Republican freshmen — saw compromise

as the enemy, not the goal. In the choice between status-quo government and no government, they preferred the latter.

The freshmen are House Speaker Newt Gingrich's spear-carriers. He needs them. He is not the first leader ever to race to keep in front of his troops.

The result was more governmental stalemate, which most politicians agreed was what the citizens least wanted. Another result was greater public dismay with Washington.

The people's disgust is a phenomenon that had helped send both Clinton and the Republicans to Washington,

