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Program worth copying

Public schools could learn some things from the business world

By Emory Curtis
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

I wish public schools would ape successful American businesses and copy good ideas wherever they find them.

If public school educators and administrators had that business copycat instinct, they would be aware of a University of South California-sponsored program that is taking sixth grade "C" students and making high school graduates with first class college and university front door credentials.

Last year 27 students who started the program in the seventh grade graduated. Thirteen are now in USC on full scholarships; 10 in a community college; two are in the California State University system and one is in the University of California system. Only one of them is not in school.

Thirteen students joined the program after the seventh grade and seven of them are in USC on academic scholarships, five are in community colleges, and one is in another four year institution.

This year, 53 students will graduate. Thirty-one of them started with the program in the seventh grade; 25 joined after the seventh grade. So far, 29 of those graduates have been offered academic scholarships to USC.

No matter how you look at it those numbers are impressive. Furthermore, any operation taking groups of sixth grade "C" students from low income area, under performing elementary schools and making them into college-going material has lots of good copycat material for other schools.

James Fleming Ph.D., the director of the USC's Neighborhood Academic Initiative program, sells parents on the value of education and gets them seeing that it is a lifelong process. The college is committed to giving 50 full four-year scholarships each year to students from USC's immediate area; that is, if they meet USC's normal academic entrance requirements. In that low income area, few children-households have anyone who has attended a four-year education institution.

However, since the focused NAI program is so intense, having parents or responsible adults fully buy into the program is a necessity. To bring those students up to speed, Fleming has a rigorous course for students and parents to follow.

Instead of parents being a problem, in this program they are the solution. Dr. Fleming says it is parents who inspire and guide children and for a parent from a disadvantaged area to change their child's view, they must change themselves.

When I interviewed parents at a recent awards ceremony, I found that Dr. Fleming had done just that. The parents in the program didn't object to having three hours of no TV each school day so their child can study; they accepted having their child go to USC each morning at 7:30 a.m. for sessions before going to regular school. Also, the student has to stay two hours after school two days a week for study and tutoring.

Probably most important of all, parents didn't complain about the four-hour sessions at USC each Saturday that they must attend while their child attends his or her own session.

USC's NAI program is putting paid to the widely held view that low income parents in the main are not concerned about the education of their children and won't attend school meetings. That program needs to be inspected by copycaters. If they did, we would all win.

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Looking for a role - in a movie, in life, wherever it's needed

D.G. Martin



Chapel Hill in the summer. It usually slows down after the students go home. It's more like the small town it once was.

This summer there is "small town" excitement about the movie that is being filmed here. It's called "Patch Adams." Robin Williams is the star.

What is it about the movies that so captures our interest—and makes us walk over to the campus to try to catch a glimpse of Robin Williams or see the movie being shot?

I am not sure. Maybe it is because the movies give us something to talk to each other about.

Movies may be our best platform of common ideas and images. They give us stories and characters and themes that "everybody knows about." It is the movies now, not the Bible or the Greek legends, that give us our best sources of widely recognized vivid images.

Whatever the reason, most of us are suckers for movies. As I cross the campus near the Patch Adams movie operations, I think back almost 50 years ago. My grandmother spent a day or two as a movie extra.

The film, "A Man Called Peter," about the minister, Peter Marshall, had a few scenes in her

When will we get to overcome?

By James Clingman
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Will someone help me understand why some of us get so involved in being fair to everyone else that we forget about ourselves?

I submit that black people are the last ones on earth to serve as "Fairness Police" when it comes to economic empowerment for other ethnic groups. Our economic house is on fire and we are holding the ladder saying "after you" to everyone else. Does that make sense?

I know we are a compassionate people, but as the flight attendant says on the airplane, "In case there is a loss of oxygen, put your mask on first, and then put your child's mask on." Economically speaking, black people are the parents and other ethnic "minority" groups are our children. We can't help them until we help ourselves.

You cannot help someone else

if your situation is in constant upheaval, and right now black people are in economic strife. Financially, we would be one of the largest nations on earth if we controlled the \$469 billion we earn each year. But we don't.

While every other group is taking care of its people, black people always seem to be leading the way, making sure that everyone is brought under the same "big tent" and included in whatever benefits are handed out to so-called "minorities."

First of all, we must not continue to allow ourselves to be called "minorities" and to be dumped into the same cauldron with every other non-white male group in this country. That only diffuses what little influence we have.

Black people built this country; we suffered the most horrendous treatment in the history of the world, in a holocaust lasting hundreds of years. Our claim to the rights and privileges of the United States was bought and

paid for many years ago.

Most of the laws and regulations written to right the wrongs that had been committed were written for black people. Now, after our people have fought and died to uphold those laws, everyone else is waltzing in and taking full advantage of their benefits. We cannot continue to fall for this scam. Equal rights for "minorities" is fine, but leave black people out of that scenario.

Call us non-immigrants, as Dr. Claud Anderson says. Please don't get me wrong. I have nothing against any ethnic group or any individual. My gripe is primarily with us. We sit back and allow others to manipulate and placate us with terms like "minority" and accept the silly notion that every group except white males equates to black people.

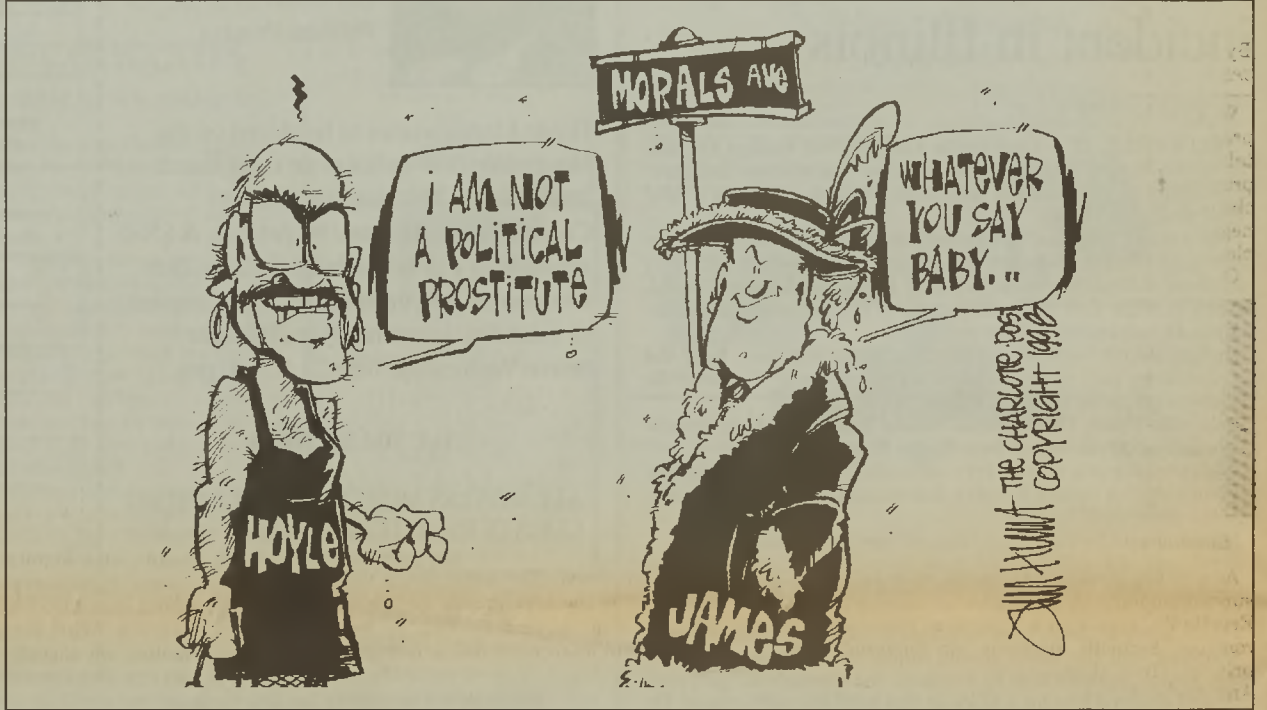
At the same time, those same "minorities" are marching right by us in terms of employment, contract awards, business deals, median income, net worth, and

in every other category you can think of.

Please, somebody tell me, does that make sense? Who is looking out for black people in this country? Surely not other minority groups. Certainly not the government, nor multi-national corporations. It is our responsibility to look after ourselves, no one else's. Black people have an obligation to look out for one another.

We must understand that we are never going to overcome until we take care of one another first, just like every other group does in this country. Believe me, there is nothing wrong with self-interest, brothers and sisters, especially in the economic arena. Let's try it for a while, collectively, and see how far we get. Maybe then, we will be able to sing, "We have overcome."

JAMES CLINGMAN is director of the Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce. He is a former editor at the Cincinnati Enquirer and an author.



Creating more black political power

By Conrad W. Worrill
SPECIAL TO THE POST

One of the major question still facing the African Community in America remains how we can best achieve black political power. I often remind readers that "politics is science of who gets what - when, where, and most important of all, how."

Since 1966, when Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael) made his pronouncement that what African people in America needed to strive for was Black Power, the dynamics of black politics in America have shifted drastically.

It has been over 31 years since Kwame made this call for Black Power. Today there are more than 8,000 black elected officials in the United States that include more than 40 congressmen and congresswomen, a U.S. Senator, more than 400 black mayors and a host of state senators and state representatives, and numerous local elected officials in a variety of

electoral and appointed political positions. Most of these elected and appointed officials are Democrats.

With all these elected and appointed officials, the question must be raised as to whether we have all the political power that we can have in the United States. The answer to this question is an obvious NO!

Ture's call for Black Power led to the organizing of the first Black Power Conference that was convened on Saturday, Sept. 3, 1966 at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C. The session was called by the late, great, congressman Adam Clayton and was generally referred to as a National Planning Committee.

As a result of the conference, subsequent Black Power conferences were held in 1967 in Newark, N.J., 1968 in Philadelphia and the Fourth International Black Power Conference was held in

Bermuda in 1969.

As an outgrowth of these, the Congress of African People conference was called in the summer of 1970 in Atlanta. More than 3,000 people of African ancestry attended this meeting. It was here that a resolution was adopted that a political structure be established to create a National Black Political Convention. More than 8,000 Black people from every state participated in the convention in Gary, Ind. in March of 1972. It also "created a structure called the National Black Political Assembly which was to continue permanently after the convention." Additionally, it was the aim of the Assembly "to develop a new black politics and organize the National Black Political Agenda" that was established at the convention.

We must also be reminded that in the Mission Statement of the Million Man March, we committed ourselves to "the follow-up development of an

expanded black political agenda and the holding of a black political convention to forge this agenda for progressive political change."

In that statement we also called for "a massive and ongoing voter registration of black people as independents; using our vote to insist and insure that candidates address the black agenda; and creating and sustaining a progressive independent political movement."

Finally, we must stop selling the black vote to white political interests that don't benefit the masses of our people. If African people in America are to truly acquire political power, we must develop true independent strategies apart from the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or any other white-dominated political party. This should be clear to all by now.

CONRAD WORRILL is the National Chairman of the National Black United Front in Calumet Park, Ill.

a young medical student.

"Why don't you join us?" he asks. And he shows me where to sign up. A day later, I get a call.

Soon, I am seated in the auditorium where the extras have assembled. There are hundreds of us. Those of us who are new are thrilled. We have "been called up."

But the "old" extras are not smiling. It turns out that there is a lot of waiting around—as scenes are rearranged, cancelled, and postponed. Being "called up" doesn't necessarily mean that you are going to be on film. It only means that want you there just in case they need you.

"What is this movie about?" I ask some of the other extras. "It's about a medical student—and he

gets in some sort of trouble."

"There is a book, I think."

"I think it is about a real person."

Nobody knows for sure—or cares much.

It turns out that Patch Adams is a very real person—a medical doctor who takes a revolutionary approach to patient treatment. "We never charged money, accepted third party reimbursement, or carried malpractice insurance: believing that these practices are all at the core of the horror of a modern medical practice."

The real Patch Adams is trying to turn the world of patient care upside down by "creating a medical context that is loving, joyous, and healing for patients and staff."

The movie is going to be about Patch Adams' early life. But we (the extras) aren't thinking about the plot or the meaning of Patch Adams' life or his movie.

We just hope we can be a small part of something, even if it's a scene in a story that we don't know.

We are useful only if somebody else picks us to help tell his or her story. We are like paints on the artist's palette or words in the author's vocabulary.

We are nothing until the one who knows the story puts us to use. By ourselves, we have no role to play and no control over our destiny.

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