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A powerful tax shelter for your income

By James Clingman
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Are you looking for a way to decrease your taxable income? I know it's late in the year but not too late to make some last minute contributions that will have a positive impact on your tax bill. While we complain a lot about paying taxes, we seem reluctant to do the things that are necessary – and legal – that will lessen that burden.

In my last column I asked you to send in \$5 to the Piney Woods School as a part of a nationwide campaign started on Black Radio.com. I trust you have responded by now; if not, please send in your donation to that excellent school. Meanwhile, let's look at another very worthy 501(c)3 organization through which we can channel some of our hard-earned dollars.

Most of the readers of this column are quite familiar with Claud Anderson (Powernomics), his economic empowerment books, his speeches, and his radio appearances. However, you may not be familiar with another aspect of his work called the Harvest Institute, a non-profit, tax-exempt research educational, policy and advocacy organization founded in 1993 by Anderson.

The mission of the Washington, D.C.-based Harvest Institute is to engage in activities that lead to a Black America that is self-sufficient and competitive as a group within the next decade. It sets forth a national economic empowerment plan that is defined and explained in Anderson's best-selling book, "Powernomics," and works in conjunction with local economic movements across this country.

Here's the good news for all of those searching for last minute deductions from your taxable income. The Harvest Institute is a member of the Combined Federal Campaign; the I.D. number is 1052, and if you can make regular donations, throughout next year as well, via this convenient vehicle. Additionally, you can make a contribution right now. Send in your tax-deductible gift to The Harvest Institute, 623 Florida Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

Every week, in this column, we write approximately 900 words about economic empowerment principles and how black people can utilize economic strategies and tactics to secure a strong economic position in this country. Of course, it takes money – our money, in addition to any other money others want to supply, but initially it takes our money to get the job done. For four decades now, Claud Anderson has worked for what we say we need and, for the most part, he has done it with the nickels and dimes given to him by grass root supporters, a few clergy, and one fantastic black contributor. How can he or any other individual or organization continue to do what really must be done if we do not support them with our dollars? A better question is: Why should they continue?

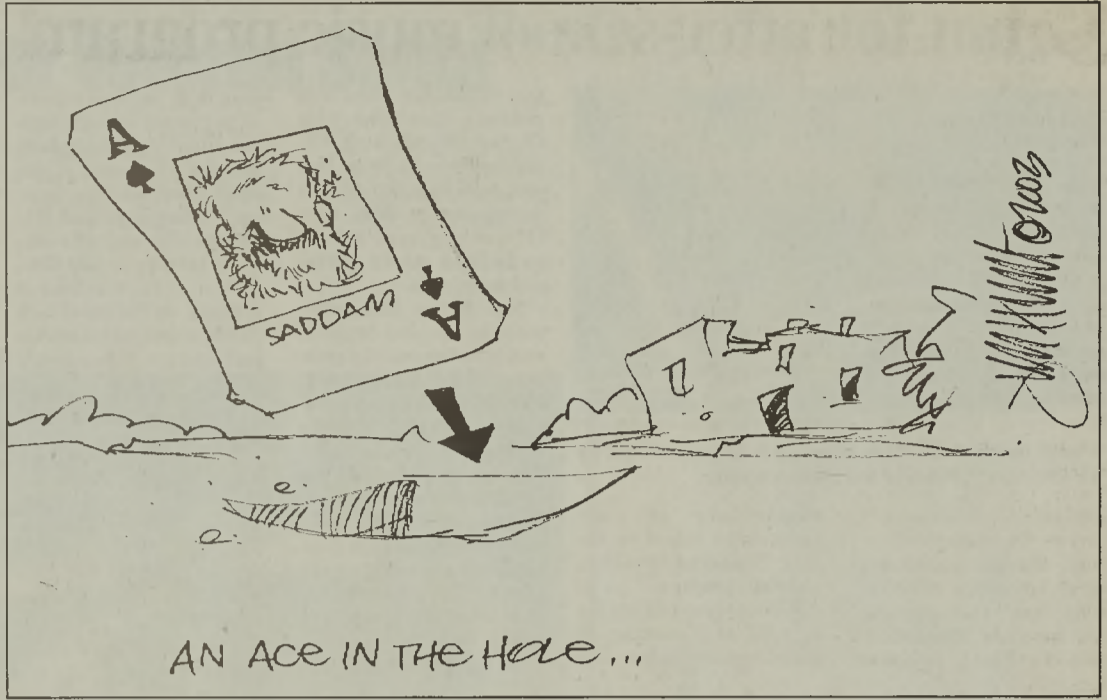
I would love to see a nationwide groundswell of financial support for Anderson from black people, enabling him to heighten our awareness and move us to action around economic empowerment. I'd love to see black people use more of our dollars to support brothers and sisters who are fighting for us and putting their families, their positions, and even their lives at stake to empower Black America. And, even more, I would love to see our affluent brothers and sisters, who heretofore have found some reason not to use a portion of their wealth to support Claud Anderson, direct some of their annual donations to the Harvest Institute. Wouldn't that be great? I would rejoice to the heavens if that happens. As far as I know, there is only one person in this category who, with the support of his family, financially supports Anderson's efforts on a regular basis.

I want this to be an informative and timely article on a little-known tax shelter and how we can save on taxes and do something for ourselves simultaneously. I want it to be a solicitation to you in support of an organization that is working on your behalf. I know my passion is showing but believe me, it is an honest and sincere passion. It is a passion for those who are working to empower black people – the same way other groups in this country have empowered themselves.

Please don't allow Claud Anderson to disappear from the national scene without having completed his mission of helping to set us on a solid collective economic foundation. We should at least show him our appreciation for his many years of laboring for our cause, by contributing to the Harvest Institute. And take a tax write-off to boot! Claud does not need a dinner in his name; he does not need a plaque or some other award. He does not need empty platitudes from radio talk show hosts who talk a good game and applaud economic empowerment, but never take action to implement Anderson's plan. He does not need people who espouse economic empowerment but neglect doing something as simple as purchasing products made by other blacks via the MATAH Network, something that Claud Anderson has been doing for years.

The Harvest Institute needs your support, your dollars. Please make your tax-deductible contributions today. For more information see www.harvestinstitute.org or call (202) 518-2465.

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An open letter to my stepfather

GEORGE E. CURRY



Dear William:

As you followed my career for more than 30 years, you told me that nothing I could do in the future would ever surprise you. You told me that after I accompanied Jesse Jackson on a trip to the Vatican to visit Pope John Paul II. You told me that after I attended a private dinner for Nelson Mandela in New York and you told me that after I shared the stage with Bishop Desmond Tutu in Wilmington, Del.

You told me that but I think my two-week trip here to Egypt – with stops in Cairo, Hurghada, Aswan and Alexandria, among other places, would surprise you. You would not be as surprised about my coming here as you might be about what I found. And what I found was what you've been telling me since my childhood – and so much more.

As long as I can remember, you've told me about the glories of Africa, about how civilization originated in Egypt. You told me about Black kings who ruled a civilized society while people in other parts of the world roamed caves. I remember your frequent complaints about the depiction of Africa in the

media and how ridiculous those old Tarzan movies were.

William, although you never completed elementary school, you taught me more about Africa than all of my teachers combined. I learned more from you, a self-taught man, than I learned in high school, in college, and in the special summer history programs I attended at Harvard and Yale universities.

I thought I was prepared for what I would see at the end of an 11-hour flight from New York's John F. Kennedy Airport to Cairo, a bustling city with more smog and more people than New York City or London. When I stepped off the airplane in Cairo, I felt I was walking into history. We're talking about a country that has existed for almost 6,000 years, a place where Jesus Christ himself walked. What is now the Abu Serga Church is said to be the spot where the Holy family lived when they escaped to Egypt to avoid King Herod. That was only part of the story. Hosea 11:1 reads: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

You told me about the pyramids in Egypt but they are even more stunning than you could have imagined. Many people talk about the three major pyramids in Giza, but there are more than 100 of them, all perfectly shaped. I even climbed inside of the Great Pyramid and would love to show you those photographs.

Guarding the Great Pyramid, built around 2650 B.C., is the ever-dutiful sphinx.

On this trip through history, one of the first things I noticed was that many of the monuments have been partially destroyed, usually missing a head or an arm. The tour guide said this was done when different countries conquered Egypt. But he couldn't explain why the nose of many of the statues had been defaced. He didn't have to explain why because, as you had told me, early Egyptians had physical features similar to ours. And that is obvious in the statues and monuments that were left intact.

One of the most remarkable segments of my trip has been visiting ancient temples and tombs and seeing the sophisticated way early Egyptians communicated. The various drawings and sketches we've seen reproduced were not art for art sake; each symbol had a meaning and told a story. Here, too, is unmistakable proof that their features were more African – after all, Egypt is and has always been in Africa – than European.

Your favorite part of the trip undoubtedly would be Aswan. This region is populated by dark-skinned people who express pride in seeing their American "brother" or "cousin" returning home. You can see the pride on

their faces – and on the faces of the African American journalists on this trip. Capturing this valuable history is the Nubian Museum, an impressive modern building that brings to life such figures as King Taharaka, a Nubian-born King who ruled a head or an arm. The museum celebrating Nubian culture dates back almost 3,000 years before the birth of Christ is near the Nile River.

It's amazing how much history we forget – or never learn. You told me that not only is the Nile the world's longest river, it's the only one that flows from south to north. So traveling from Cairo to Aswan was a trip up the Nile, not down, even though Aswan is geographically in the southern part of Egypt. I don't know if any view can match watching the sun set on the Nile. Not only did I cruise "up" the Nile, I saw two other great bodies of water, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Oh, there is so much I'd like to share with you, William. This trip comes a year after your death and because I couldn't tell you all these things, I decided to write you a letter. You said nothing I could do would surprise you anymore. For some reason, I think this trip might have surprised you. Love always,

George
GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPressUSA.com.

Democrats need some self-assessment

VAL ATKINSON



After picking up the endorsement of Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. of Illinois, Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean has managed to pick up another high profile endorsement. To his long list of endorsers he added the most recently elected president of the United States – Al Gore.

Gore's endorsement will have great impact on almost every aspect of the Presidential race. Dick Gephardt, General Clark and Joe Lieberman are the big losers. Gephardt is one of the losers because now Dean inherits Gore's political machines in states that were heretofore toss-ups. Clark's rise was contingent upon the stall and eventual decendency of the Dean campaign and Lieberman is still in shock and awe that Gore didn't call first to let him know of his decision to sup-

port Dean. This also puts a huge damper on many of the schemes and plans formulated by North Carolina's own, Senator John Edwards.

But the greatest impact that Gore's endorsement will have is on the question of "win-ability". Too many Democrats have joined the voices of the opposition by summarily declaring that Dean is not conservative to win. I say that's bull! I say that line of thinking is exactly

Dean

what's got Democrats where they are today. Conservative Democrats like former Georgia Sen. Zell Miller, Sen. John Beaux of Louisiana and Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut are trying their best to move the Democrats to the right of center – where the Republicans are. Well, we already have a right-wing national party we don't need two. What we need is balance, what the American people need is choice.

It's these same conservative Democrats who are spreading the word that Dean can't win because he's not conservative enough. I think it's time that the Democratic Party stop trying to woo the likes of Miller, Beaux and Lieberman and concentrate on their own base.

Why should Americans vote for some sort of "knock-off" of the Republican Party when they could have the real McKoy? The conservative wing of the Democratic Party is dead wrong when it comes to the future path for the Democratic Party.

I don't know if Dean can win or not. And that's not really the question. The real question is whether the Democrats have a message and a credible messenger. Dean is a credible messenger and many believe that he has a message. Dean got to be where he is by developing a message that all the other Democrats were afraid to touch. He says he represents the democratic wing of the Democratic Party.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party has too many Americans who are

registered as Democrats, but are afraid to embrace the core values and principles of their own party. So instead of bringing these people back in the fold (or finding others to replace them) too many Democrats in decision making position seems to want to move the party to where these disaffected brethren are.

Howard Dean says he's a part of the democratic wing of the Democratic Party; meaning that he believes in democracy within the Party itself. And maybe it's time for the majority in the Democratic Party to decide the direction of the Party. Maybe it's time to allow folks to make a choice. It's time to be what you really are. Democrats would be wise to adhere to the words inscribed on the seal of the great state of North Carolina... "Esse Quam Videri" (It's better to be than to seem). Democrats need to be Democrats. Seeming to be Republican won't get you anywhere with either party.

VAL ATKINSON of Durham is a longtime Democratic advisor and activist.