

Sister's Corner

Search for right female role model can be hard

Donna Whitaker
Columnist

When I was in fifth or sixth grade, I saw "West Side Story" on television. I loved to dance, so I was attracted to the dance scenes in the musical. I was especially attracted to Rita Moreno. Gosh, that lady could move! I decided I wanted to be just like her.

As I got older, my desire to become a dancer dwindled while my desire to become a journalist increased. By the time I was in high school, Barbara Walters was a constant face on television. I was firmly rooted into print journalism by my sophomore year; so when people asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I'd tell them I wanted to be a journalist. They'd say, "Oh, you want to be another Barbara Walters, huh?" No, I didn't want to be like her.

But I couldn't think of who I wanted to be like. I didn't have a mentor. I didn't know of any famous newspaper ladies. As a dancer I had a name, but as a journalist, I couldn't think of one.

I continued to work in journalism and

people continued to compare me with Barbara or some broadcast journalist. Even in college, I couldn't name anyone I wanted to be like. I didn't know of anyone who was a "famous" female print journalist who had a wonderful character and a desire to be the best she could be. I didn't have any famous female, let alone any famous black female,

doctorate degrees from the University of Wisconsin. She has taught at various universities, such as the University of Wisconsin and Norfolk State University. She has worked in television, radio, public relations and, of course, print journalism. She also is married and has two children.

Dr. Johnson spoke to journalists at the fifth

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to look up to.

But now, in my last year of college, I do. Now there is a black woman who has struggled in the profession and has ended up being the first black woman to publish a daily newspaper. She is Dr. Pam Johnson, publisher of the Ithaca (N.Y.) Journal, which is owned by the Gannett Newspaper Group.

Dr. Johnson, 36, grew up in Evanston, Ill. She received her bachelor's, master's and

annual N.C. A&T State University Media Conference on March 26. She told us about how she got to where she is and how black journalists can offer multicultural views to newspapers and radio and television stations. She didn't hide her blackness, but she did not use it as an excuse, either.

Recently she has been in the news as though she was a media event. People ask her about being a black woman newspaper

publisher, as though she is supposed to feel differently about herself. But Pam Johnson answers that question with the self-confidence that radiates from her person. At the conference she said, "I've been black for 36 years and I've been in the public for 36 years and I like myself just fine."

Dr. Johnson also talks frankly about herself and her position. At the conference she said, "To say in 1982 that there are only two black publishers (of daily white-oriented newspapers) in this country is abominable. I'm not unique. There are a dozen black journalists as qualified, or more so. It's my company that's unique."

In an article in the March 1982 issue of *Sepia* magazine, her self-confidence is seen again. She even spreads it to others. She said in the article, "I tell my students that you have to succeed in spite of obstacles rather than fail because of them. We all have our motivators and I guess when someone does something that bothers me, then my response is 'I'll show you.'"

Who do I want to be like? I want to be like Dr. Pam Johnson.

Residents question dorm security

Mitchell Vann
Special to the Ink

It was 6 a.m. on a Sunday morning. I woke up and went to the bathroom in our suite. The shower curtain was closed but no one was taking a shower as far as I could tell. I thought to myself . . . suppose someone is back there . . . oh, that's ridiculous . . . but I pulled the curtain back anyway. There was someone back there. He was fully clothed, laying down on the shower floor with a beer can beside him. I did not know who he was. I immediately went to my room and called the campus police.

Incidents like this and other incidents involving thefts and peeping toms raise concerns among South Campus residents about the security of their residence halls.

Gerry Jeffries, a resident assistant on South Campus, said, "The security (in South Campus dorms) is as good as it can be considering the number of people in each dorm and the visitation policies."

Keith Williams, a resident of Hinton James, said that anybody can walk in the dorm easily.

Lauren Stevens, area director of Hinton James, agreed with Williams. "Because of our visitation policies, people can easily come into the building," she said.

"They can just as easily remain in the dorm after the doors are locked . . . therefore residents have to assume more responsibility for their own security," she said.

However, Stevens said she feels good about the security system because there ha-

ven't been many security incidents.

Residence areas run a 20-hour information desk with an attendant from 5 p.m. to 6 a.m. Stevens said the attendants check the keys of people coming into the hall after the doors are locked as a security measure. Only people with a key coded for Hinton James and guests are allowed in.

Jeffries said after-hour key-checking, though, has many loopholes. She said, for instance, residents let visitors borrow their keys, girl-friends check out a third key from their boyfriends and residents allow strangers to come in with them saying that they are their guests when, in fact, the residents don't know the strangers.

Williams supported Jeffries' assertions. "Sometimes I let somebody come in with me that I don't know because they want to see somebody."

"Residents must be more careful," Stevens said. "They shouldn't leave their doors unlocked when they shower or run to the kitchen . . . and they've got to stop leaving their keys in the bathroom when they leave the dorm . . . Everybody knows that trick." Resident safety begins with the resident, she added.

Jeffries sometimes patrols her floor, looking for suspicious people.

"On some weekends, I've taken a roster with me and patrolled the hall," she said. "If I saw someone . . . looking in windows or moving from suite to suite, I would ask them: 'Do you live here?' And if they said yes, I'd look them up on the roster. If they didn't live where they said they lived, then, I'd ask them to leave. Later, if I saw them again I'd call the campus police."

John Conyers

Congressman advocates change in federal budget

Congressman John Conyers, a civil rights advocate and critic of the federal budget, spoke to approximately 39 persons on "The Challenge of Procedural and Economic Democracy" and "The Evolution of the Civil Rights Movement," on March 29, in Hamilton Hall.

"The unworkability of the economic program is obviously demonstrated in everyone's pocket not just the blacks and the poor," Conyers said. "The government and economic structures are fatal," he said.

Conyers said many dangerous spin-offs are flowing out of the future of the economy. Two of the dangerous spin-offs were the restrictions on small businesses and the dismantling of education programs to educate and train citizens.

"What we are doing to restrict small businesses is subversive," he said.

Conyers stressed that there was subversiveness in the dismantling of the educational programs. "It is an act of subversion to eliminate the educational programs," he said. "It is the best way to build a strong country."

The congressman also addressed the evolution of the Civil Rights Movement. "Its techniques have been a life giving force," Conyers said.

For example, "The Civil Rights Movement (of the 50's and 60's) marked the resurgence of blacks and other ethnic groups in America," he said.

Conyers attributed the improvement of race relations to civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other advocates of the Civil Rights Movement.

Conyers also spoke about the past Civil Rights Movement. "It was not a radical movement," he said. "It was conservative undertaken the circumstances which it was under." Conyers said the past Civil Rights Movement had religious aura, and it was nonviolent.

"Revolution means the end of discussion and negotiation," he said. "Now we must resort to violence."

He said that most young people do not know that it was the law to be racist. "If you were not racist, you would have been breaking the law," Conyers said.

"This is now (1980s) phase two of the Civil Rights Movement. The time is different, the mood is different, the tactics are different," Conyers said.

"We are now in the political part of the movement to keep the Voting Rights Act," he said. "We need a different approach, now," Conyers said.