

OPINIONS • OPINIONS • OPINIONS • OPINIONS

Women of past shine

DONNA WHITAKER
Columnist

In her book *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, feminist Michele Wallace explores the myth of black superwomen. She examines the myth that says black women are strong, rugged and durable, and explains that it isn't necessarily so.

The black woman has been falsely defined, according to Wallace's publishers. Instead of the powerful matriach that legend has made her out to be, "she is the most vulnerable figure in American society..." they say.

Although we as black people should toot our own horns all the time, Black History Month is a time to extoll the work of famous black women plays an important part in that discovery.

Reg Hildebrand, lecturer in the history department at UNC-CH, recently told his view of black women through history. Hildebrand, who teaches *The History of Afro-americans from 1865*, said, "Since both sex and race imposed severe limits on the kinds of things that black women could do, it is almost incredible that so many of them excelled in areas that were traditionally reserved for men."

Hildebrand mentioned Harriet Tubman, who he said "was the most effective conductor of the Underground Railroad, even though most successful refugees from slavery were young males." Tubman also established an outstanding military record in the Civil War, at a time when it was uncertain whether black men were capable of being soldiers, he said. Harriet had convictions that encouraged her to express on. She said.

There was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive. I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted, and when the time came for me to go, the Lord would let them take me. (from Harriet Tubman, *The Moses of Her People* by Sarah Bradford, written in 1896).

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, an early feminist who reached fame in the latter

19th century as a lecturer, talked about social and political affairs concerning blacks. She lectured in the North and South, "even though most males believed that it was not quite right for ladies to tax their delicate minds with such things," Hildebrand said.

A black female newspaper editor and owner, Ida B. Wells Barnett, lead the fight against the lynching of black men during the lat 19th centuries. She exposed lynchings for their true causes, such as economic rivalry between black and white merchants for black patrons. Although her newspaper business in Memphis, Tenn., was destroyed, she continued to speak out for black people while in the North.

Other names come to mind when speaking of famous black women. mary McLeod Bethune, who came to fame during the early part of the 20th century, served on the staffs of presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman. She also founded Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Daisy Bates, president of the Arkansas NAACP during the 1957 desegregation crisis in Little Rock, spearheaded the struggle for school desegregation there. She initiated the integration campaign, guided and supported the students in their long struggle, and braved bombings and threats.

These women are but a few of the many black women who have struggled to make our lives better. Michele Wallace says that the superwoman role black women have played has been detrimental to them and black people because it has lead to a deep distrust, and maybe hatred, between black men and women. But Reg Hildebrand offers another view. He says,

Historically, black women have been expected to be subordinated and supportive, strong and assertive, exemplers of an alien standard of beauty and the moreal cement of their families and churches. Clearly, they have been expected to carry an unreasonable burden. Happily enough for all, they succeeded in doing so.



Mary McLeod Bethune

The Spirit Lives On!



Sojourner Truth



PLAYMAKERS REPERTORY THEATER

The Hostage, by Brendan Behan, will be performed beginning Feb. 2-12. Performances will be held at the Paul Green Theatre. For more information or tickets call the box office at 962-1121.

CAROLINA UNION GALLERY COMMITTEE

The 1984 Undergraduate Student Juried Art Show including painting, print-making, sculpture, mixed media, will be held in Great Hall of the Carolina Union. Details are at the Carolina Information Desk. The show is being sponsored by the Carolina Union Gallery Committee.

MOREHEAD PLANETARIUM

"Skyways," a show exploring how the real and apparent motions and changes in the heavens affect our everyday lives, will run through March 26. Shows are weeknights at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 11 a.m., 1, 3 and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2, 3 and 8 p.m. There is an admission fee for all shows. Call (919) 962-1236 for information.

HANES-WILLIS LECTURE

Irene J. Winter, professor of art history at the University of Pennsylvania, will present the Hanes-Willis Lecture in Art History Friday, Feb. 10, at 8 p.m. in the theater of the Art Classroom-Studio Building. For more information, call (919) 962-1449.

BLACK LIGHT THEATRE OF PRAGUE

The Black Light Theatre of Prague will present a program of comedy and drama through the media of mime, magic and music on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall. For ticket information, call (919) 962-1449.

ACKLAND ART MUSEUM

"American Graphics: 1860-1940," a collection of prints from more than eight decades of American printmaking, will be on view Feb. 11-March 25. The Ackland's permanent and temporary exhibitions are open to the public 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and 2-6 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free. For more information, call (919) 966-5736.

WALDORF MARIONETTES

The Waldorf Marionettes will present a Grimms Fairy Tale, "The Bremen Town Musicians" Sunday, Feb. 12, in the Genevieve Morehead Memorial Rotunda in the University's Morehead Building. The free, public shows will be at 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. the marionettes are sponsored by the Waldorf Educational Association of North Carolina. For more information about the UNC-CH performances, call the Morehead Planetarium at (919) 962-2136.

ART BUILDING

An exhibition of silkscreen works by Gordon Christopher will be on view through Feb. 18. The exhibition is free and open to the public. Gallery hours are noon-5 p.m. daily. For more information, call (919) 962-2015.

INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC CONCERT

Local church choirs and UNC students will present a musical concert Friday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. The concert will be held at Great Hall in the Carolina Union. Donation: \$.75.

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