

Black J-School Professor Is First In A Lot Of Things

by Rhonda Hubbard
Managing Editor

"Being the first Black female is not new to me," Regina Sherard said from across her neat desk on the second floor of Howell Hall.

"I was the first Black female at the Leo Burnette research department (a Chicago advertising agency). I am the first Black female to get a doctorate from the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri.

"And I am the first Black female here" at the University's School of Journalism.

She added, however, "I would be just as honored if I were the second, fifth or tenth Black female here."

A 1968 graduate of Fisk University in Tennessee, the Atlanta, Ga., native went on to get her masters degree at Michigan State University in 1972. She will receive her doctorate from the University of Missouri at Columbia in May.

Although she also held a teaching position at Missouri, she has been coordinator of the Black Cultural Center at Missouri and a research analysts at the Leo Burnette agency.

Sherard, who's been at the J-School for 1-1/2 years, said she saw a sense of purpose in her current teaching position. "We (Black journalists) have a lot to offer students--they need to be exposed to different cultures and different perspectives," she said.

"I have an interest in all students, but particularly Black students," she said, "because I think they have some unique types of problems... They are placed in a situation which tests their endurance and perseverance in a number of ways."

Sherard said Black students sometimes felt helplessness in an environment that is predominantly white.

"I've found myself in the same situation. Sometimes the feelings of alienation, the feelings of not having a particular attachment, the feelings of being intimidated or overwhelmed in a particular environment were there (when I was in school)."

Black students tend to think they cannot talk to anyone about their performance when it is bad, she said. "I try to encourage students to talk.

"Sometimes I can't solve the problem, sometimes I can't do anything to help, but sometimes just having someone to talk to, as another human being--specifically as a Black human being--is just what you need to get you through a pinch."

Outside of journalism, Sherard said she had several interests with music at the top of her list. "Music is important to me," Sherard said. "It's not only important--it's necessary."

Since age 14, she has learned to play the piano, organ and french horn--as well as sing and write music. While at Fisk, she sang in the choir. She has also had opportunities to sing with Stevie Wonder and Oscar Brown, Jr.

She said she didn't plan to sing professionally, but added, "If someone were to come up to me and ask me to sing at the Savoy, I'd be agreeable to that."

Her singing avocation has been put on hold in recent months because of her doctoral dissertation, she said. She added that her activity in other organizations had gone to the back burner.

A member of Kappa Tau Alpha, a journalism honor society, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Sherard said writing her dissertation had not only put those organization's on hold, but also any research for publication in research journals.

She said she would also pursue her interest in the judicial system focusing on criminal justice and the free press/fair trial controversy.

"There are so many people who are victimized by the criminal justice system," she said. "This, a lot of times, results from ignorance, lack of money, race and a variety of other reasons that impugn the credibility of the justice system."

Nevertheless, her interest in being a good journalism teacher is foremost, and she thinks the University's J-School is the place to do it. "The thing that impressed me most about this school is the staff."

In addition to the faculty being very close-knit, she said they had the student's best interest in mind. "We want to make sure that our program is a credible one--we want to make sure that students are challenged."

Six African States Support South African Struggle

by Darlene Campbell
Staff Writer

Six states in Africa have pledged to aid the liberation effort in South Africa due to their political concepts and geographical location, Julius E. Nyang'oro said during a seminar, "The Role of Front Line States in the Liberation of Southern Africa", at the University March 16.

Nyang'oro, a visiting professor from Tanzania in the curriculum of African and Afro-American Studies, said Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana and Zaire emerged as front line states in this liberation.

The seminar was part of a symposium on South Africa -- "Inside Apartheid" -- which was co-sponsored by the Curriculum in African and Afro-American Studies and the Black Student Movement.

According to Nyang'oro, the six states recognize the sovereignty of South Africa and only have one quarrel with the Republic -- the issue of apartheid.

Nyang'oro said, "They look at it as unjust and inhumane treatment of minority citizens that should be changed."

Like Nyang'oro, many people view apartheid as an unjust regime.

The International Solidarity Union in its description of apartheid said: "While Black Africans make up 72 percent of the population of South Africa, they are confined to 13 percent of the land; they are barred from voting or running in the elections of the governing white parliament; their movement is restricted by 'pass and control laws'; their annual per capita income is one-tenth of that of whites; their educational facilities are inferior to whites; and their family life is continuously disrupted by forced removals and separations."

The role of the front line states is acting as coordinators of liberation activities through political work, humanitarianism and military roles, Nyang'oro said.

Through political work, the countries emphasize the joint struggles of all people in South Africa by encouraging efforts in unifying struggles in all countries, he said.

Humanitarian roles come into play when the states help refugees who come into their territories, Nyang'oro said.

Since the states allow their territories to be used as training stations, Nyang'oro said, South Africa has taken it as a matter of policy to attack those states helping in the liberation. Thus, the states have sacrificed themselves the most through their military roles, he added.

"Despite the fact that on several occasions there has been an ideological difference among the front line states in which direction the states should go in support of liberation," Nyang'oro said "the states signed a manifesto to show their commitment."

"We would prefer to negotiate than destroy, talk rather than kill... We have no choice but to give support to those people in their struggles," Nyang'oro said quoting from the 1969 Lusaka Manifesto.

"Though the manifesto was adopted by the General Assembly as an official document," he said, "its weakness is the belief that professional powers such as the United States could be persuaded on moral arguments."

Though the future of South Africa has not been defined in political terms, Nyang'oro said, what the front line states have done has speeded up the process in the liberation of Southern Africa.

Nyang'oro said, the front line states had been responsible for bringing support to the United Nations; for raising the question of apartheid in many forums including the United Nations' agenda; and for jousting the awareness of apartheid.

"Despite the obstacles facing the front line states," he said, "I think that they (the front line states) have been tremendously successful because Mozambique is independent; Angola is independent; Zimbabwe is independent."

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