

violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964. No one knows why the education department waited almost 27 years before anyone said that minority scholarships were discriminatory. The 1964 Act was the most comprehensive law ever passed securing the rights of all American citizens. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 contains 11 titles or sections dealing with equality. The minority scholarship issue arises because Title VI of the law deals with nondiscrimination in federally-assisted programs, which would include financial aid. Title VI section 601 of the Act says: "No person in the U.S. shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Michael Williams used this clause to justify his ruling that minority-based scholarships were discriminatory. Nowhere in section 601 does it say that U.S. colleges and universities cannot set aside money for minority scholarships. Title VI was written to ensure that minorities receive equal treatment as whites in the federal financial aid process.

Since 1964, Title VI has provided the financial foundation to provide minorities, many of them blacks, with the resources needed to attain a post secondary education. It is a shame that Michael Williams has twisted it to mean something else. African-Americans were beaten, brutalized and killed while trying to get this Act

1965. The House Education and Labor Committee has studied the Act for several years hoping to find ways to improve it. Evidently, Michael Williams has never read this law either. The Higher Education Act contains eight titles, which deal with federal rules regarding federal financial assistance to colleges and universities. Title IV is the most important part of the law for students because it specifically deals with federal financial aid programs. Title IV Section 401 says: "It is the purpose of this part to provide ... through institutions of higher education, educational opportunity grants to assist in making available the benefits of higher education to qualified high school graduates of exceptional financial need, who for lack of financial means of their own or of their families would be unable to obtain such benefits without such aid."

Title IV of the Higher Education Act provides the basis for the government's financial aid programs. Many of the programs help minority students because they are usually disproportionately represented among economically-disadvantaged families. In order to receive funds from these programs, families must earn less than \$25,000 a year. Among these student aid programs are the Pell Grant, which provides money to about three million students a year. The Pell grant is the only one of the programs that does not provide funds to graduate students. The Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant is awarded to about 750,000 students a year and about

system. There are also numerous other scholarships and grants that Universities give to minority students. Without these programs, many minority students would not be able to attend college.

The Higher Education Act is extremely important to minority students. However, if the administration listens to people like Michael Williams, this law may also be in jeopardy. Even though the Williams plan has been revised, it will probably still endanger the Higher Education Act in two ways. First, the Williams plan will open up all financial aid programs to scrutiny. People can now claim that almost any scholarship or grant program is discriminatory. It is likely that all five of the major financial aid programs under the Higher Education Act will come under attack. Anytime scholarships are set aside for minority students, somebody in the country has the right to question the validity. Secondly, the Williams plan will complicate the procedures for applying for federal aid under the Higher Education Act's programs.

And as most parents and students know, the financial aid process is already complicated enough. Complex applications, tax forms, W2s, verification, lost award letters, can frustrate students to the point that they never receive funds. As the federal government sets stricter guidelines for receiving financial aid so too will student aid offices across in the nation. Even in a watered-down form, the Williams plan will have an indirect effect upon the availability of federal aid to minority students across the country.

What is probably most disturbing about the whole minority scholarship affair is that the person arousing the controversy is a **black man**; an African-American who is stirring up the trouble for his own people. He is an Uncle Tom who acts and articulates the goals of the conservative Bush administration. Michael Williams is black only in his color; he has no soul nor any compassion or concern for people of African descent. He acts as if he is talking about a group of outsiders when he speaks about

minority scholarships. Michael Williams is a case in fact of how black people can hold each other back—how brothers and sisters of African descent can participate in their own degradation.

The number of minority students who pursue higher education is already small, and without financial aid that number will get even smaller. Minorities in general, especially blacks, are stereotyped as low achievers. Minorities are not low-achievers nor do they lack motivation; however, economic disadvantages do impede their attempts to seek higher education. The Education Department's decision to restrict minority scholarships is in a sense punishing people because they are too poor to pay for school. Inherent inequalities exist in society that cause more minorities to come from low-income families than whites. African-Americans must organize efforts to fight against attempts to deny financial aid to black students to ensure that all citizens have an equal chance to seek a college education.

## Reflections

passed. The Civil Rights Act was a direct result of protest, boycotts and litigation during the 1950s and 1960s, which can be called the greatest phase of agitation in the struggle for black equality. It is disturbing to note how a law designed to help blacks has been used to hurt them. Minority scholarships enforce the Act rather than violate it because it ensures that non-whites are guaranteed their constitutional, civil and human rights.

In addition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there is another federal law designed to provide equal opportunities for all in higher education. The Higher Education Act was passed by Congress in

200,000 receive State Student Incentive Grants. The College Work Study program awards about one million part-time jobs to students each year. The Perkins program provides about 800,000 low-interest loans to low-income students.

In addition to these five programs, many universities award minority presence grants to encourage minority students to attend college. These state-funded grants were created in the early 1970s to help the cause of integration at the nation's colleges and universities. In North Carolina, presence grants provide 1.5 million dollars to needy students each year in the 16 schools of the UNC

Unless we keep living the dream,  
they'll live a nightmare.

