

The Special Love: Black Love

By Jarvis "Brother J" Harris
Ink Columnist

February is the month to celebrate Black contributions to America and to celebrate love. I think that the Black contributions and love need to be tied together and discussed because there seems to be trouble in the realm of Black Love.

Many times, I hear brothers talking about the "Strong" sisters. When speaking of sisters, brothers seem to speak about and focus on the negative aspects or the perceived negatives of our sisters.

Brothers speak about the attitude that many of our women seem to have and their demanding nature. To these brothers, I say that the attitude and uncompromising element of our women are the things that make them distinct and very special.

Yes, our women seem to display an attitude that causes many of us to lose interest, but brothers, we must realize that these same women have been the backbone of our society for years.

These women are the descendants of the mother of all of civilization and the queens of great empires. They have stood by our side during slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and even Reaganomics. We must realize that they deserve the attitude that they have. They have given so much and at times, have been given so little, especially from their Black men.

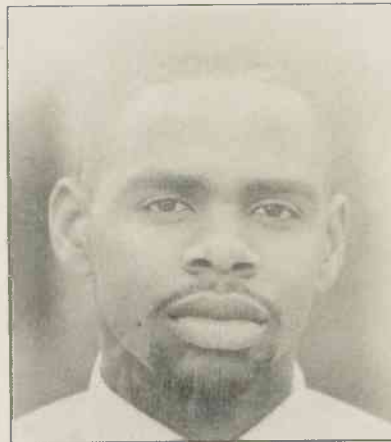
Black women in America have had to serve as the provider, the father, the nurturer, the teachers, the healer, and everything else that African-American society has called on them to do.

Most importantly, Black women have had to do all of these things because the Black man was not around or able to fulfill his role in the partnership. Brothers, realize that our women do love us, but they have struggled for us and with us for so long that they are tired and exhausted from the struggle. They are ready for us to step up to the challenge of being Black men.

Brothers, it is our job to be

patient and understanding of their situation. We need to try to give them some of the things that they ask for and deserve. A little bit of our time and consideration will not leave us empty or somehow less of a man.

Acting like our women are important to us in a large social setting, will not rob us of our manhood, but rather affirm the bond that is so special between the Black woman and the Black man. Brothers, support your woman in



the positive things that she is trying to do, and respect her for trying to do what so many things others are not willing to do — stand by you.

Black women, you are special and deserving of a special place in the heart of Black men and society at large, but you are not totally absolved of blame for the tensions that exist in relations between Black men and women. Black women, we realize that it is hard to be a Black woman, but you must realize that it is just as hard to be a Black male.

Our struggles are not mutually exclusive, but rather our trial and tribulations are intertwined and linked. Society socializes the Black male to believe that he is to be the provider for the family, but yet, when he goes to get a job, the door is continuously closed in his face. How can he make a living for himself, let alone a family, if cannot get a job that pays more than a minimum wage? Black women it is hard.

Black women have you ever thought about how it makes a man feel when confronted with the knowledge that his family could be a lot better off financially if he were not in the home?

The Black woman is rewarded or at least taken care of if she is a single-parent. The government will provide all types of aid from free diapers to formula. I realize and agree that brothers should understand that there is more to being a father than financial considerations, but how does a brother reconcile those feelings and understandings when he sees his son or daughter going without clothes, shoes and food?

I dare say that any Black man would be faced with a difficult situation and decision.

Yes, I know that we are living in the '90s. This decade is supposed to be for the woman, but Black women, you must not become so independent that you leave the Black man out of your plans and lives.

Yes, you are more self-sufficient and self-reliant than

ever before, but you must make the Black man feel that he is important to you. Black women support your Black brothers who are trying to be positive.

If a brother is truly trying to be positive, let him do his thing. Do not bombard him with unreasonable time expectations. Don't get me wrong, a brother should give you some of his time, but if a brother is busy, and not just hanging with the boys, then let him take care of business regardless of the time it takes.

According to some of you, there are no good Black men. If you have a good Black man, support him and make sure he stays on that positive trail. I guarantee that both of you will be better off in the long run. One day when you need your space to be productive, he will have to understand because you did it for him.

We need to understand that no one person is more important than

another in our interactions. We must learn that our success is in part tied to the success of our mate.

Brothers and sisters, we must learn that in order to receive we must give. The question is are we willing to make the sacrifices necessary to make sure our African-American culture, especially our Black Love, survives?

Brothers and sisters, it is all about RECIPROCITY.

Be strong and cherish that Black Love!!!

1994 GREEK BREAK

THE FREAK IS BACK!!!

APRIL 16, 1994

UNC-CHAPEL HILL