

Being a first time teacher, even a gender-segregated (boys and girls were separated for hormonal purposes) class of 10 students intimidated me.

The difference between these kids and typical teenagers proved to be their interest to their future. SCFP kids volunteered, even begged to attend a school during the summer that was not required by law. Intensive learning and summer generally are not concepts that surface in the teen-aged mind simultaneously.

Instead of spending the summer traveling the road toward drug addiction and teen pregnancy, these Sunflower County Freedom students chose the road less travelled by. The road to success, the road to

their future.

Though the magazine my all-star journalism students put together by the end of the summer thoroughly impressed me, I was most proud of another one of the kids' accomplishments.

The kids worked especially hard in drama class to perfect their performance of a play written by Chris Myers entitled "A Boy Named Bobo." The play was based on the story of Emmitt Till, the 15-year-old Chicago native who was killed in 1955 while visiting relatives in the Delta for whistling at a white woman.

In the scene just before Emmitt is killed, his would-be assailant utters this line which accurately the sentiment of racism

that continues to linger in the Delta:

"You gon' be an example of to all those sassy northern niggers who think they can come down here and talk to our women any which way. Anytime a nigger even thinks about a white woman, he's tired of livin'."

At the end of the summer, the kids took their play on the road, performing in Atlanta, Georgia, Washington, D.C. and the performance capital of the world, New York City. They received standing ovations and moved audience members to tears.

In the end, the kids taught me much more than I could have ever taught them.

Message to self: Thank Chris Myers.

What Do You Dream for You and Me?

By Lindsay Reed

Charged with the task of reading, "The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks," as a result of participation in Hekima, the literary program of the Black Cultural Center, my views of the legacy of our ancestors were expanded. While attending a luncheon for the Blacks in Diaspora Lecture Series last spring, the keynote speaker and author of this probing book, Randall Robinson, heightened my awareness of the relevance of securing a future for the descendants of the enslaved ancestors.

After this extracurricular research project, I was determined to learn more about the plight of African descendants and how they can reap the benefits of a great period of oppression. My casual interaction with Randall Robinson led me to Washington, D.C., where I interned at TransAfrica Forum. Robinson writes books in his spare time, but his time is rarely free. As executive director of TransAfrica, Inc., a lobbying organization that supports better U.S. foreign policy towards Africa and the Caribbean, and TransAfrica Forum, a research institution that educates the American public about Africa and the Diaspora, Robinson has had his fair share of work.

TransAfrica Forum, established in

1981, provides substantive commentary and scholarship on policy issues related to Africa and the Caribbean and educates Americans, in general, and African-Americans, in particular, on such topics as human rights, democracy and global economic policy.

As a non-profit, tax exempt, non-governmental organization, TransAfrica Forum is a small organization with five staff members and a Board of Directors.

While participating in the internship program at TransAfrica Forum I was exposed to all of the various operations of TransAfrica Forum; there is no particular

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department in which an intern is assigned. I acquired several short term and long term projects that were to be completed simultaneously.

Daily activities included maintaining records on journal articles, specifically articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* related to Africa. These articles were stored in a database and filed for the Arthur R. Ashe Foreign Policy Library, a component of TransAfrica Forum. Once the articles had been acquired, they were analyzed, categorized and documented in a report, called Media Watch, on the frequency of articles related to Africa in major media sources.

Another activity required interns to assist in the development of seminars sponsored or co-sponsored by the Arthur R. Ashe Foreign Policy Library's Viewpoint Series, Film Series and Writer's Corner. I researched the issues discussed at these

seminars and published a document highlighting the critical information for the attendees. Research for these "issue briefs" was gathered by attending local conferences, attending Capitol Hill hearings, soliciting articles collected from the Media Watch, doing phone interviews with experts and utilizing literature available in the Arthur R. Ashe Foreign Policy Library.

The Arthur R. Ashe Library's usefulness is not only limited to TransAfrica Forum interns, but instead it is a rare collection of books pertaining to Africa and the Diaspora, and so, interns were trained to catalog and gather research materials for library patrons.

There were many roles that one had to play while working in this professional environment, but there is so much to be gained from building an institution that celebrates the African heritage.

Hopefully, this legacy will continue to renew itself and encourage critical thinking about the way in which American culture values contributions of African descendants. It was a pleasure to work at this institution because its mission to help connect the Africans and African descendants is necessary to reaffirm the beauty of Black culture.

One of the most powerful lessons I learned at TransAfrica Forum is that we, African descendants, have been surviving oppression for a long time, but freedom is upon us regardless of what adversity we face. It was the dream of Lumumba in Congo, Dr. King in Alabama and it is mine today. What do you dream for you and me?