

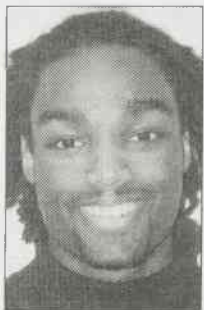
Opinions & EDITORIALS

From the Editor

Athletics aren't the only way out

By James Jones Jr.
ARGUS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Recent controversy has surrounded former NBA superstar Charles Barkley and his decision to pose as a slave breaking chains on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*. A lot of young people were shocked that Sir Charles would make such a move, reasoning that he set blacks several years back to slavery times.



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However, it is Barkley's quote, which starts on the cover next to his controversial picture and continues inside of the magazine that really needs to be paid special attention.

Barkley says that, "Every black kid thinks the only way

he can be successful is through athletics. That is a terrible thing because that ain't even one tenth of what we are"

But if we are not athletes, what are we? We as young, bright black college students may find this question hard to answer because we are seldom told and we rarely read about successful blacks outside of what we see in the media.

We turn to media sources where we see highly paid athletes and we aspire to be like them and make their salaries. However, there are numerous examples of successful blacks that are not only athletes, but also make equal or more money than athletes.

Mae Jemison, the founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of The Jemison Group, which focuses on the beneficial integration of science and technology into our everyday

lives, took the road less traveled by young blacks. Before her current CEO position, she participated in one of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) space programs. Through hard work and very stiff competition, Jemison became the first African-American woman to enter space in September 1992.

Earl Shaw, the inventor of the free electron laser (FEL) is another example. He has contributed to the advancement of science and technology by creating a technique in which a beam of relativistic electrons can pass through a periodic magnetic field in a way that conventional lasers cannot. Although it took him ten years of persistence and diligent research to create the FEL, he

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Black Professional



Argus illustrations by
Jamil Steele

Mary Eliza Mahoney (1845-1926) was America's first black professional nurse. Mahoney is known not only for her outstanding personal career but also for her exemplary contributions to local and national professional organizations.

Is anyone buying into Barkley's rhetoric?

By Anthony Nelson
ARGUS GUEST COLUMNIST

Charles Barkley and *Roots*, or maybe Barkley and *Amistad*, come to mind upon viewing a recent issue of *Sports Illustrated*.

Barkley is bare-chested, wearing only white knickers. He is breaking away from shackles that bound his neck and wrists, with the tag "Charles Unchained" in bold red. Barkley's wife and close friends (including Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods) did not necessarily back the idea of putting this image on *SI's* cover, nor do fans understand to what degree "Sir Charles" needs to be unchained when he charismatically expresses himself regardless of time or place.

He has always been pretty much unchained when it comes to expressing his thoughts. Maybe

the picture symbolizes Barkley's views and theories concerning minorities and their abilities bar-athletics.

Aside from his normal punch lines, in this *SI* article Barkley tosses another penny or two that should be picked up and flipped by the minority communities. Already successful with money and with spotlight readily available, he says that "sports are a detriment to blacks, not a positive. You have a society now where every black kid in the country thinks the only way he can be successful is through athletics. People look at athletes and entertainers as the sum total of black America." This may be a discreet attempt for Barkley, a republican, to jump start a career in politics as he says he will do in the near future.

He already has the support of Marty Connors, the chairman of the state of the GOP, and Sabo Waggonner, a republican representative, in his quest to run for the governor of Alabama, his home state.

They see it as a great way to sell their ideals to the African-American community, and Barkley will have no problem relaying a message that accompanies his beliefs as well. That is why the generalization that the base of African-American success stems from athletics or entertainment hold no authenticity. But too many of our minority youth who desire to be the next Kobe Bryant, Marshall Faulk or Venus Williams, view the statement as reality. We are all aware of the success and fame that a sports or entertainment career can bring. The

many pitfalls that catch those striving to obtain such status are also apparent.

As easy as it is to observe these success stories for athletes, it is just as easy to overlook those successful neighbors of ours who happen to be teachers, fire fighters and priests. Maybe "Citizen Barkley" is expounding on this view when he poses for this picture and makes this observation.

Uncle David Stern, the commissioner of the NBA, and other owners of leagues live well on the money that our idols and role models produce for them. Much of their job comes from creating more rules for us to follow while playing. OK, the fee for our talents has risen tremendously, but until there are more African-American or minority owners in the sports

world, our song and dance really has not changed; it has just changed pace. Before one gets upset, I must be prompt in saying that maximizing our God-given athletic ability is a positive, and I support all who do. The negative side that Barkley may be speaking of is the failure for these successful individuals to return some of the benefits of those who reach for these levels. Barkley establishes lesser known charities, which he directly transfers money from his pocket. The Charles Barkley Foundation has given money to Leeds High and Auburn, his two alma maters. The difference between Barkley and Jordan or Woods is that his image is not squeaky

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