

OPINION/EDITORIAL

Letter to the Editor America still needs Black History Month

Dr. Lenwood G. Davis

This month, February, the nation is celebrating black history. Many whites and some African-Americans still do not see the need to set aside a month to honor the contributions African-Americans have made to the building and development of the United States and the world. Some may ask the question why set aside a special month to honor a certain group of people?

There is definite need for such a month because contributions that African-Americans have made to America and the world have not been given their proper place in most United States history books. Carter G. Woodson, an African-American Harvard University PH.D, saw the need to draw attention to contributions African-Americans made to civilization. In 1915, he founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Since Dr. Woodson wanted to popularize the study of people of African descent's history, he inaugurated Negro History Week in 1926. The month of February was selected for two reasons. First it is the birthday month of Abraham Lincoln, proponent of the so-called "Great Emancipation," which is debatable. The second reason is that February is the birthday month of the great orator, freedom fighter, and abolitionist, Frederick Douglass.

Because of the demands of African-Americans and others, Black History Week was expanded into a month-long celebration in 1976 by President Gerald Ford as a part of America's bicentennial. When Carter G. Woodson died of a heart attack on April 3, 1950, he was writing a six-volume Encyclopedia Africana. Woodson was born in 1875, in New Canton, Virginia, and died at the age of 85.

Woodson, "The Father of Black History", as he is called, was well aware that African-American people needed to take cognizance of and appreciate their history in order to feel proud as free men and women. Woodson did not think that the knowledge of African American history should be limited only to African-Americans. The historian wanted whites and others to be made aware of African American history so they, too, might understand and appreciate African-American contributions to this country and the world.

Why Black History Month? It is not only to honor "the greats of black history" such as Richard Allen, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Joseph Charles Price, Benjamin Banneker, George Washington Carver, W.E.B. Dubois, Paul Robeson, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Marcus Garvey, and many more great African-Americans that are too numerous to name; but it is also to pay tribute to countless other African-Americans who gave their lives so that other African-Americans could live in dignity and equality.

Black History Month is a constant reminder of where African-Americans were, where they are, and where they need to be in the future. Hence, we must remember the words of Carter G. Woodson when he declared: "The day has come when we must supply the facts of [African Americans] own history and blaze the way for a new Negro literature." Hopefully, not too far in the near future the contributions and achievements that African-Americans have made not only to America but also to the world will be included in history books. When that happens, perhaps, it will be unnecessary to have Black History Month. Until that occurs, there is a need for Black History Month.

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Superdelegates will most likely choose who will run for president on Democratic ticket

MCT WIRE SERVICE

The following editorial appeared recently in the Philadelphia Inquirer:

If you vote for a candidate for president, and your candidate receives the most votes, then your candidate wins, right?

Not necessarily in the Democratic primary. (Nor in the infamous general election of 2000, as you might recall.)

Before this year, few people knew — or cared — that a group of Democratic Party insiders known as "superdelegates" had the potential to cancel out the votes of ordinary citizens.

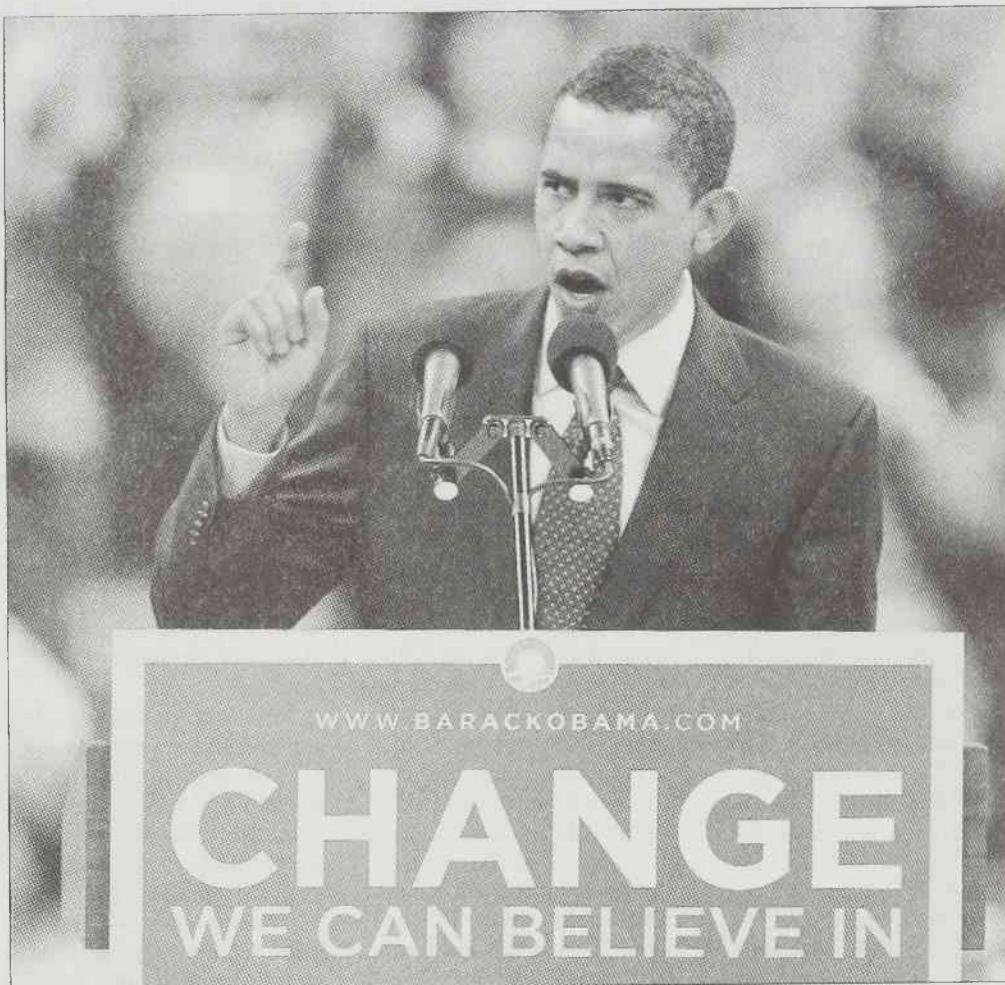
But more Democrats are paying attention now that the closeness of the race between Sens. Hillary Clinton of New York and Barack Obama of Illinois has increased the likelihood of superdelegates deciding who will be the party nominee. Obama and Clinton are nearly deadlocked.

To win the nomination, a candidate needs 2,025 of the 4,090 delegates at stake at the Democratic National Convention; among them are 796 superdelegates. A superdelegate isn't bound to vote for a given candidate, regardless of the popular vote in his or her state's primary or caucus. (The Republican Party doesn't have superdelegates, although it does have 463 "unpledged" delegates, about 19 percent of the total.)

Most superdelegates are elected Democratic Party officials, including all of the Democratic members of Congress. These men and women are the prizes in a parallel, less visible contest between Clinton and Obama. More than half of the Democratic superdelegates haven't declared which candidate they will support.

Democratic Party officials should get rid of this establishment-friendly rule before the next presidential contest. This system, in place for decades, has the potential to undermine the collective will of voters. Who knows what deals will be made to gain a superdelegate's allegiance?

Democratic officials defend superdelegates,



Barack Obama is currently holding a slight lead the democratic primary with approximately 1,300 pledged delegates after wins in Wisconsin and Hawaii last week.

saying it makes sense to include people who have worked hard for the party and are passionate about its success. They say superdelegates don't ignore voters' wishes. Even regular delegates aren't bound by law to vote for a particular candidate, although they almost always vote for the person to whom they are pledged.

Still, the very existence of superdelegates is the party's way of saying it doesn't trust the will of the voters. This feature

was created to ensure that the Democratic Party establishment could nullify a candidate deemed too risky. But it has the potential this year to deny voters the final say in a contest between two strong candidates.

Political parties, of course, have the right to create rules as they see fit. But allowing so many freelancing delegates increases the likelihood of a contest being settled in a backroom — not at the ballot box.

Thug mentality may be fine for Tupac, but not for college males

Corbin Robinson
BLACK COLLEGE WIRE

"Silence is a must, violence is a plus."

These are the words from legendary rap artist Tupac Shakur describing, "living the thug life." But is this the life an educated black youth would want to live?

From incarceration to death, this "thug life" mentality has turned into its own culture.

From the style of clothing, to the phrases used as greetings, this culture has generated millions of dollars off retail.

As a woman on Florida A&M University's campus, I notice a

lot of guys. I notice all different shapes, sizes, and backgrounds. There's a particular group of guys that intrigue me the most.

They are the ones who came from substandard living environments and brought certain practices with them to college, creating the thuggish college man.

I never understood how a guy could come from the 'hood, get an education, and still be 'hood.'

Some guys are balancing biology classes with trying to get weed from a homeboy.

It boggles my mind when I see these guys in class, and then

turn around and see them have run-ins with the law.

These "college thugs" need to choose one lifestyle or the other.

Be the college student you know you were sent here to be.

It's not about being a "square," it's about having a mind of your own.

A lot of people try to mimic what they see in the media. I see these same guys in the club smoking and drinking like they were in a rap video. Yet, they come to class the next day and are "Mr. Studious."

Everyone doesn't blame the thug culture for high homicide

rates, drug use, and the media. Many people blame the environment that some black youth grow up in.

Either way, there's no excuse for young black men to behave in a way that could jeopardize their college careers.

The thug movement isn't all bad. It has become a culture where youth can express themselves through music, dance and other venues.

It would behoove young black men to stop coming to class high and to embrace this chance to do something better than what you were doing in the 'hood.'

OBAMA TAKES LEAD WITH WOMEN IN MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA



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