

# CIVIL RIGHTS UPDATE

**TWO VIEWS:** A few days apart, President Carter and Vernon Jordan, President of the National Urban League, commented on the yet-to-be-written civil rights stories of 1979.

Speaking at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Ga., on the day before the anniversary of Martin Luther King's birth, Carter promised: "I will continue to strengthen and to enforce the civil rights laws of the land firmly and with equivoque; not only the letter of the law, but the spirit of the law as well."

Three days later, Jordan released the League's annual report in Washington, D.C., indicating that Black America needs all the help it can get, both from the administration and Congress.

"Black America today verges on the brink of disaster," he opened. Recalling that last year he taled of new measures and new alternatives, he called present conditions so grave that "we are reduced to trying to preserve the few and relatively meager programs currently in existence."

**PARALYZED INMATE:** A Federal District Court judge in Richmond, Va., has approved the largest settlement ever won by a prison inmate against an institution. In an out-of-court settlement, the Virginia Prison system offered Henry Tucker \$518,000 in damages because neglect and improper medical care in prison caused his permanent paralysis.

**TAMPERING CHARGED:** NAACP executive director Benjamin Hooks, commenting on "the chilling effects of the Bakke decision" in his annual report, charged that a number of U.S. educational institutions, including Yale, Rutgers, and the University of Pennsylvania, are "tampering with, and in some instances, boldly uprooting, special programs aimed at assisting minorities."

**STERILIZED WOMEN:** Five women who allege that they had to undergo sterilization to hold their jobs or take lesser paying one have sued the American Cyanamid Corp. in Willow Island, W. Va.

In another case, five female workers received an undisclosed cash settlement from Allied Chemical Corp. because they were laid off after a study linked the refrigerant they were packaging to birth defects. Two of the women underwent sterilization. Eventually all wer reinstated.

**INDIAN GROUPS:** Forty Indian groups from 21 states have petitioned the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington to be recognized as Indian tribes. The list includes seven groups from Washington, four from California, and three each from Georgia, Louisiana, and Michigan.

**JOB BIAS:** A Federal Judge in Philadelphia has ruled that Interntional Operating Engineers Local 542 of Delaware and eastern Pennsylvania internationally discriminated against blacks in membership and job referral policies.

The ruling said 1,400 contractors and four trade associations that hired through the 7,000-member union were subject to injunctive relief and possibly liable for damages of more than \$10 million.

**TEXAS AGREEMENTS:** The Department of Justice has obtained consent agreements, including goals and timetables, with seven Texas state agencies to hire and promote more blacks, Hispanics, and women. It's suit against an

eighth, the State Highway Department, has yet to be resolved. The seven, with 27,000 workers, are the Departments of Human Resources, Health, and Parks and Wildlife; the Rehabilitation, Alcoholic Beverage, and Highway Commissions; and the Merit System Council.

**BOILERWORKS REINSTATED:** A Houston boilerworks company debarred as a federal contractor in 1977 for job discrimination has been reinstated by the Labor Department and is now eligible for government work. Hahn and Clay Machine and Biolerworks, Inc, has agreed to correct all deficiencies found in this hiring and promotion practices toward women and minorities, set hiring goals and timetables, and make "good faith" efforts to meet the goals. The company will file a quarterly progress report with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. Of 18 contractors debarred since 1972, Hahn and Clay is the eighth to be reinstated.

**NATIONAL ORIGIN:** A city planner in South San Francisco, fired because of his national origin has been awarded his job back and \$80,000 in lost wages. Surendra N. Amin, of India, filed a complaint with the Fair Employment Practices Commission in 1975. The city had contended that Amin had a language barrier, but could point to no record of criticism.

**UPDATE CORRECTION:** In its December edition. Update characterized the Associated General Contractors of America as an organization that "regularly opposes Federal laws that set goals for minority business enterprises."

AGC Assistant Executive Director John Ellis advises Update that it is opposed to quotas, not goals. He adds that the training program proposal described in Update "was carefully developed (at AGC expense) and has been offered as a positive and effective means to help achieve the goal of equal opportunity for all."

Update regrets its misrepresentation of the AGC position.

**ARMY WOMEN:** The Department of Defense expects the number of women in the Army to reach nearly 12 per cent of all personnel by 1984. It adds that 46 percent of all the enlisted women on active duty still serve in traditional jobs as clerks and medical and dental technicians. None serve in close combat jobs on a regular basis.

**CHIEF JUSTICE:** The nation's third female chief justice of a state supreme court, Mary Stallings Coleman, a 64 year-old Republican, has assumed that prestigious post in Michigan. She was unanimously elected by her six male colleagues last month.

The other two are California's Rose Bird and North Carolina's Susie Sharp.

**HUMAN RIGHTS:** Civil liberties and political rights increased for 563 million people in 24 countries last year and decreased for 144 million people in 8 countries, a worldwide survey by Freedom House, a nonprofit New York based organization, shows.

By its criteria, 35 per cent of the world's 4.23 billion people are free. 25 per cent are partly free, and 40 per cent are not free.

**MATERNITY SERVICES:** The planned relocation of public hospital maternity services from downtown

San Antonio, Tex., to suburban Bexar County discriminates against Hispanic and black women patients, a Justice Department suit claims.

The suit says that 90 per cent of Green Hospital's 6,000 annual maternity inpatients are poor and indigent inner city minorities who wouldn't have access to Bexar County Hospital, 12 miles away.

**INDIANS' GUNS:** A long-ignored Federal regulation restricting the sale of guns and ammunition to Indians was officially stricken from the U.S. Codebook by the Bureau of Indian Affairs last month.

**SOCIAL SECURITY:** Certain amendments to the Social Security Act discrimination against husbands of disabled women workers, a U.S. District Judge has ruled in Philadelphia.

He said that a 48-year-old man who sued HEW was indeed entitled to Social Security benefits after quitting work to care for his ailing wife. HEW had claimed that he would be entitled to benefits only if he had reached the age of 62, although employees' wives would be eligible regardless of age if they had minor children.

**UNEQUAL PENSIONS:** Private pension system usually offer inadequate protection for women—both as wives of workers and as workers themselves, a Department of Justice task force on sex discrimination reports.

It states that women generally have no rights to their husbands' pension benefits, and as workers, suffer because they are more likely to work part-time or be out of the labor market for significant periods. Thus, they forfeit their employers' pension plan contributions and indirectly help pay for others' benefits.

**COURT CLERKSHIPS:** The Department of Justice has filed a civil action against the New York cork administration, charging that women stenographers are discriminated agains in competing with men for court clerkships in the New York City court system. In 1978, 37 of the city's 377 court clerks were women.

The suit alleges that the defendants have failed to allow the defendants to take promotional exams to clerkships and senior court officers.

**AGE BIAS:** HEW expects to issue regulations by June requiring medical and other professional schools to accept students regardless of age. Denial of admission may be illegal under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

A 1977 Civil Rights Commission study found 28 out of 114 medical schools specifying age restrictions as part of their selection criteria.

**WALLACE REFLECTS:** On stepping down as Governor of Alabama last month, George Wallace reflected that his state was better off without the segregation he once vowed to preserve.

He told reporters that in March, 1965, the commander of the Alabama State Troopers defied his direct orders by attacking Selma civil rights marchers.

"I was not an enemy of blacks in those days," he maintained. "I was the enemy of the Federal government, big government."

**UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has violated the very laws it was created to enforce, a U.S. District Court Judge ruled in Washington, D.C.

He agreed with employee Aida Berio, a Puerto Rican, that she had been passed over for promotion because of her national origin.

**HANDICAPPED EDUCATION:** The U.S. Supreme

Court has agreed to decide whether public and private educational institutions must admit the handicapped and give them special help, even if a handicap could hinder the individual from effectively pursuing educational programs or careers.

The court will review a 4th U.S. Court Appeals decision that Southeastern College, Whiteville, N.C., violated the Federal Rehabilitation Act in refusing to admit Frances Davis, a woman with a severe hearing problem, to a program that would lead to her certification as a registered nurse.

**BILINGUAL GRANTTS:** Grants totalling \$16 million that will enable 119 colleges and universities to establish or improve bilingual teacher programs are being distributed this year by HEW.

The institutions are located in 27 states and Puerto Rico. Much of the money may be used as stipends to students enrolled in bilingual teaching programs or fellowships for graduate students preparing to train others to teach bilingual education.

**CORPORATE HELP:** The NAACP is looking to major American corporations to help it raise \$3 million in its 1979 fund raising campaign.

Already Mobil Oil has promised to sponsor a series of newspaper ads. AT&T's president, William Ellinghaus, will chair the drive. Benjamin Hooks contends that accepting such help won't make NAACP a captive of big business.

**FEMALE HOUSEHOLDS:** Women head a quarter of the nation's households. But nearly half pay more of their income for adequate housing than the average U.S. householder, a HUD study shows.

**TV STEREOTYPES:** The U.S. Civil Rights Commission has released a fresh bundle of data showing that minorities and women continue to be badly cast and underemployed by the television industry.

A new 97-page report, "Window Dressing on the Set: An Update," points particularly to a lack of minorities and women in decision-making positions. This is most pronounced at network headquarters.

The report challenges the overuse of black males in comical, often ridiculous roles, and women in "jiggly" parts. It also points out that, although women constitute 51.2 per cent of the U.S. population, they constitute only 27.7 percent of prime-time dramatic characters on TV.

The report also looks at network television evening news: who it employs, how it ignores minorities and women when looking for "experts" to comment on current events, and the types of stories it selects to cover. Minority women, who are underrepresented across the board, are virtually absent from network news.

The Commission makes ten recommendations to the Federal Communications Commission and the industry. Principal among them: the FCC should conduct a public inquiry and show more leadership.

Single free copies of the report are available by contacting Update.

**HOUSTON BOUND:** Denying a request by Houston, Tex., Police Chief Harry Caldwell, the Commission reaffirmed its intention to conduct public hearings on police practices and civil rights in that city this year.

To allow the Commission's legal staff — now at work on a similar public hearing in Philadelphia this month—sufficient time to prepare for the Houston session, the Commissioners agreed to move back the proposed March hearing dates, possible to June.

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