

Black Workers Killed At A Higher Rate Than Whites on the Job

By David Williamson
UNC-CH News Services
CHAPEL HILL — Black workers in North Carolina still are 10 percent more likely than white workers to die from injuries sustained on the job, according to a new study.

The study, conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health, suggests that part of the reason is that black workers on average are less successful in securing jobs requiring education and training, which means they have to accept more dangerous work to earn a living.

After eliminating that effect of employment patterns, however, blacks still are more likely to be fatally injured when working in the same types of jobs as whites, researchers found. Direct personal discrimination at the worksite is a possible explanation for the excess risk.

A report on the research appears in the January issue of the American Journal of Public Health. Authors are Drs. Dana Loomis and David Richardson, associate professor and research associate, respectively, in epidemiology at UNC-CH.

It has been known for a long time that minority workers have higher rates of fatal injuries at work, Loomis said. "What wasn't known for certain was the cause of

it."

In public health literature, the two chief explanations for blacks' greater death rate were that they were less prepared to compete in job markets and that explicit racism plagued the workplace. The UNC-CH researchers looked at evidence for both explanations.

"We found support for both to a degree and that black workers in North Carolina have a 50 percent higher job fatality rate," Loomis said. "African-Americans do tend to hold different kinds of jobs from whites. That accounts for part of the excess risk, but not all of it. Apparently, direct personal discrimination such that blacks are assigned more hazardous tasks at the worksite also plays a role."

The UNC-CH study involved analyzing N.C. death data from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner from 1977 through 1991. Researchers found 2,039 deaths at work during the period that fit their definition for study. They also used employment data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

As expected, whites were found more often than blacks in safer managerial, administrative and sales jobs. Blacks were more likely to be employed in dangerous jobs including logging, farming, motor transportation and material moving.

After eliminating the effect of holding different kinds of jobs,

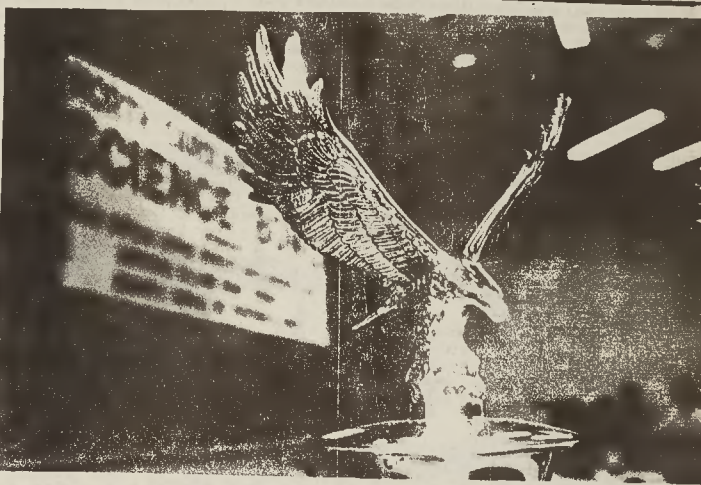
black men still faced a 13 percent excess risk, Loomis said. Black women overall had slightly higher fatality rates than white women, but the numbers were too small to draw firm conclusions.

Results of comparable studies could be expected to be similar throughout much of the South because employment patterns elsewhere are similar to North Carolina's, he said. Outside the South, results would be comparable, but less so.

"During the first half of this century, dirty, dangerous jobs, collectively known as 'Negro work,' were openly reserved for black workers," the authors wrote. "African-Americans are still disadvantaged at work today. Relative to white Americans, they have more difficulty finding work, and when employed, their jobs pay less and are of lower quality."

"As long as the existence of hazardous jobs is tolerated, the most economically and socially disadvantaged workers will continue to be at the greatest risk."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supported the research through grants to the UNC-CH Injury Prevention Research Center.



This is the First Place trophy given to members of the Chapel Hill Senior High School Science Team. They competed recently at NCCU. (Photo by Lawson)

GE Gives \$25,000 to VSU

ETTRICK, Va. — Virginia State University has received a \$25,000 grant from the General Electric Fund to support scholarships in the School of Business.

Jacqueline Fraser, VSU's director of Development, applauded the award, saying it will "enhance the University's capability to attract and retain talented students interested in studying business."

"We are extremely grateful that

the GE Fund has recognized the University's efforts to provide scholarships for students who are committed to academic excellence," Fraser said.

To be eligible for the GE Fund Scholarship, students must be enrolled in the School of Business and must have a 3.0 grade point average.

Housed in the newly-renovated Singleton Hall, VSU's School of

Business is comprised of nearly 900 students in four departments: Accounting, Economics and Finance, Information Systems and Decision Sciences, and Management and Marketing.

The GE Fund is a foundation that supports programs in higher education, science and engineering, pre-college education, public policy, international programs, management, and arts and culture.

Marian Wright Edelman is UNC-CH Spring Commencement Speaker

By Karen Stinneford
UNC-CH News Service
CHAPEL HILL — Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, will deliver the spring commencement address for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

UNC-CH Chancellor Michael Spitzer will preside at the ceremony, to be held May 17 at Kenan Stadium. Five foreign degrees also will be conferred.

Edelman is a outspoken advocate for disadvantaged Americans throughout her professional career. Edelman graduated from Spelman College Law School. The first woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar, she directed the Legal Defense and Education Fund office in Jackson, Mississippi, and served as counsel for the People's March that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. began in 1965 before his death.

Edelman probably is best known for her work at the Children's Defense Fund, which she founded in 1971. Under her direction, the Washington-based nonprofit organization has become a strong national voice for children and families. It educates the public about the needs of children and encourages preventive investment before children get sick, drop out of school or become pregnant, and watch families break up or get into court.

Edelman has been known for a number of years and admired her as a dedicated and articulate spokesperson for children's welfare. "Hooker" is not only she a powerful voice of what one can achieve when motivated from the heart. I think she will encourage our graduates to leave with a stronger sense of responsibility and importance of responsible involvement in their communities."

Edelman, who received an honorary degree from UNC-CH in 1988, was a visiting adjunct professor at the UNC-CH School of Social Work in 1994. During the 1994 Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture series, Edelman called attention to the need for business and social work communities to better work together to solve problems facing children.

A previous MacArthur Foundation prize winner, Edelman has received the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize and the Heinz Award. She is the author of several books, including "Families in Peril: An Agenda for Social Change," "The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours," and a new 1995 book, "Guide My Feet: Meditations and Prayers on

Loving and Working for Children." A new children's book, "Stand for Children," will be published this May. Another book, "A Memoir of Mentors," will be published next fall.

A selection committee of students and faculty recommended Edelman as this year's commencement speaker, and their recommendation was approved by Hooker.

"We're excited to have a speaker with such a tremendous reputation for her work with children," said Franklin C. Golden, president of the Class of 1998 and a senior from Charlotte. "I am especially pleased that we're having a woman commencement speaker as Carolina celebrates 100 years of women at the university."

Venus is On View In Morning Sky

CHAPEL HILL — If you've gone out to fetch your newspaper between 5:50 and 6:30 a.m. the past few days, you may have noticed an extremely bright point of light in the southeast.

It is not an Unidentified Flying Object (UFO), although it is the one object in the sky most commonly mistaken for a UFO. It is the planet Venus.

"Venus is the second brightest object you can see in the night sky, with only the moon appearing brighter," said Dr. Lee Shapiro, director of the Morehead Planetarium at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "In fact, Venus is so bright, it can even be seen in the daytime sky, although it is difficult to find."

For people who want to see Venus in the daytime, or are just interested in a pretty view, the early morning hours Monday, Feb. 23 of

fer a perfect opportunity. On that morning, the thin waning crescent moon will appear low in the southeast. Just to the left of the moon will be Venus. The two will make a striking pair that an observer can see from 5 a.m. until 6:53 a.m.

If you continue to observe the moon and use it as a guide to find Venus, then you will have a good chance of seeing Venus even after sunrise. The technique works even better if you can position yourself so that a building or tree blocks the rising sun from your view.

On Sunday, Feb. 22, the moon will appear higher in the sky at the same times, with Venus below and to the left of the moon. On Tuesday, Feb. 24, Venus rises first and you may have to work harder to find the moon, which will be a very thin crescent below and to the left of Venus.

THE SHEPARD HOUSE RESTORATION PROJECT

Located across the street from the entrance to the North Carolina Central University campus, the home place of Dr. James E. Shepard is an educational and cultural monument that is falling apart after years of neglect and disrepair. The goal of the Shepard House Restoration Campaign and the University is to restore the Shepard House in a manner that preserves the architectural character of the house; and its distinctive setting.

The Shepard House will become the major repository for historical archives and University artifacts. It will also become the University Information and Visitors Center, and its operation will insure that the legacy of Dr. Shepard receives the recognition it deserves.

THE CAMPAIGN - THE FUTURE

The restoration of the Shepard House is part of North Carolina Central University's \$50 million campaign to support scholarships, professorships and facilities expansion. With the Shepard House as the anchor, long range plans include the acquisition of land across Fayetteville Street in front of the campus entrance and also the building and land of the old Hillside High School.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

North Carolina Central University needs your help to raise sufficient funds to restore and maintain the Shepard House. Together, we can insure that generations of students and visitors to the University will broaden their understanding of the struggles of a proud people in their continuing quest for educational opportunity and economic sufficiency.

If you are committed to the values exemplified by Dr. Shepard's life and service, please make a generous contribution to this important cause. Do it today!

SHEPARD HOUSE CONTRIBUTION FORM

Yes! I want to support the restoration of the Shepard House.

My gift to the Shepard House is: (check one)
 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 Other \$ _____
 (Donors of \$100 or more will be recognized in a commemorative book.
 Donors of \$500 or more will be recognized in a permanent display in the Shepard House.)

I am enclosing \$ _____
 Pledge balance of \$ _____ will be paid by (Date) ____/____/____
 Please bill me: quarterly monthly specify: _____

Please charge my credit card: _____ Master Card _____ Visa _____
 Account # _____ Exp date _____
 Authorizing Signature: _____

My company will match this gift. My employer is: _____
 A completed matching gift form _____ is enclosed _____ will be forwarded shortly.

Donor Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: Day: _____ Evening: _____

Please make checks payable to
 NCCU Foundation/Shepard House, and mail to NCCU, P.O. Box 19363, Durham, NC 27707