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Founder's Day speaker Dr. Clarence Williams and his wife, Mildred Cogdell Williams, joined North Carolina Central University Chancellor Charlie Nelms on the podium after Williams' address to present Nelms with a \$50,000 endowed scholarship. Williams, who graduated from NCCU in 1961, presented a speech titled "Letters to Dr. Shepard" that told the story of how the university shaped his life and career. (NCCU Photo by Lawson)

Wealth Disparities Likely to Grow

By George E. Curry
TheDefendersOnline.com
A widening gap between the mega-rich and the rest of society, documented in a recent congressional study, is likely to create even larger economic disparities between African-Americans and whites.

NEWS ANALYSIS
The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) issued a report that stated: "For the top 1 percent with the highest income, average real after-tax household income grew by 275 percent between 1979 and 2007." By contrast, 60 percent of the population in the middle of the income scale (the 21st through 80th percentiles), the growth in average real after-tax household income was just under 40 percent. For the 20 percent with the lowest income, their after-tax income grew by only 18 percent over the same period.

The 47-page CBO report is titled, "Trends in the Distribution of Household Income Between 1979 and 2007." It showed that the share of after-tax household income for the top 1 percent more than doubled over the period studied, rising from nearly 8 percent in 1979 to 17 percent in 2007.

The most affluent 20 percent of the population received 53 percent of after-tax household income in 2007, an increase of 10 percent over 1979. Put another way: The top 20 percent earned more after-tax income in 2007 than the combined income of the other 80 percent of Americans.

These figures are fueling the heated debate over the Occupy Wall Street movement that has spread throughout the country and around the world. But that discussion has virtually ignored the plight of blacks, who have already seen the wealth gap widen during the most recent recession.

A State of the Dream report issued earlier this year by United for a Fair Economy chronicles African-Americans' stalled economic progress.

"In 1947, blacks earned 51 cents to each dollar of white median family income," the report recounts. "By 1977, blacks were earning 56 cents on each dollar in white income, a gain of five cents. Most of those gains were made in the 1960s.

"Then, as the backlash took hold, progress slowed - and stopped. By 2007, blacks earned slightly over 57 cents (57.4 cents) to each white dollar, a gain of just one penny in thirty years. Two years later, as the Great Recession set in, blacks lost a half-cent, ending at 57 cents to each white dollar of median family income."

Such erosion has led to the widest wealth gap on record between blacks and whites.

In July, the Pew Research Center issued a report that stated, "The median wealth of white households is 20 times that of black households and 18 times that of Hispanic households." It explained, "These lopsided wealth ratios are the largest since the government began publishing such data a quarter century ago and roughly twice the size of the ratios that had prevailed between these groups for two decades prior to the Great Recession that ended in 2009."

The bursting of the housing bubble (Continued On Page 15)



NCCU Chancellor Charlie Nelms, left, presided at a wreath-laying ceremony last week during Founder's Day. Milton "Toby" Fitch, right, grand master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons, offered reflections. (NCCU Photo by Lawson)

Media Treats Obama Much Worse than GOP Challengers

By George E. Curry
NNPA Columnist
News media coverage of President Obama is much more positive than stories about each of his Republican challengers, giving him almost four negative stories for every positive one.

That's the conclusion of an extensive study by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. According to the report, titled "The Obama Primary," Texas Gov. Rick Perry received the most negative coverage and was subject to the least favorable coverage until several weeks ago, when he was taken in that category by Herman Cain.

"One man running for president has suffered the most unrelenting negative treatment of all," the study found: Barack Obama. Though covered largely as president rather than a candidate, negative assessments of Obama have weighed positive by a ratio of just 4-1," the report stated.

These assessments of the president have also been substantially more negative than positive evaluations of the 23 weeks studied. In no week during those five weeks was more than 10% of coverage about the president in tone."

Gingrich's favorable coverage stood at 15 percent, six points higher than Obama's. Interestingly, although Perry did not enter the race until August - three months after the study began - he received more coverage than any other candidate. Moreover, even after poor performances in the Republican presidential debates, he received the most flattering coverage over the period studied - 32 percent positive, 20 percent negative and the remainder neutral.

Coverage of Cain was 28 percent positive - two points higher than Romney - and 23 percent negative, which was four points lower than Romney's negative coverage. Cain's recent coverage has more positive than his overall numbers reflect because prior to his winning the Florida straw poll, he was largely ignored and received more negative coverage than in recent weeks.

The sour economy and Republican attacks are responsible for much of President Obama's negative coverage, according to the study. "In many stories, Obama was the target of not only the whole roster of GOP presidential contenders. He was also being criticized in often harsh terms by Republicans in Congress," the study found. "Added to that, members of his own party began criticizing him on both policy and strategy grounds, particularly as his poll numbers fell. And for much of this period, the president's coverage reflected the biggest problem on his watch - a continual flow of bad news about the U.S. economy."

Even the killing of Osama bin Laden did not reverse the president's poll numbers. "One reason is that many of the references to his [Obama's] role in the hunt for bin Laden were matched by skepticism that he would receive any long term political benefit from it. Another was that bin Laden news was tempered with news about the nation's economy."

And that is the problem. While journalists are compelled to cover stories about political

warfare and the economy, they should not attack Obama or anyone else in news stories under the guise of providing context for readers and viewers.

An Associated Press story on May 2 is a textbook example of this problem:

"A nation surly over rising gas prices, stubbornly high unemployment and nasty partisan politics poured into the streets to wildly cheer President Barack Obama's announcement that Osama bin Laden, the world's most wanted man, had been killed by U.S. forces after a decade long manhunt. The outcome could not have come at a better time for Obama, sagging in the poll as he embarks on his re-election campaign."

The news of bin Laden's death was almost buried.

The story could have also been presented this way: "Despite former President George W. Bush's promise to capture Osama bin Laden 'dead or alive,' it was his successor who delivered on that promise in grand fashion, prompting thousands of U.S. citizens to take to the streets in noisy celebration."

Another option: "President Obama, who had his foreign policy credentials questioned repeatedly during the 2008 presidential campaign, delivered on a campaign pledge to kill Osama bin Laden if ever presented the opportunity, a surprise action that led to impromptu celebrations across the United States."

Either approach would have provided more relevant context than AP wrapping its story in the highly-charged language of his Republican challengers.

President Obama knew he would be double-teamed by GOP congressional leaders and Republican candidates hoping to unseat him. But he probably didn't expect the stealth attacks from major media outlets.

Vote
November 8

House votes to honor first black Marines

Montford Point
By Kevin Freking
WASHINGTON (AP) - The nation's first black Marines received a rare national tribute Oct. 25 as the House voted to award the Montford Point Marines with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor given by Congress.

History books and Hollywood have chronicled the Army's Buffalo Soldiers and the Army Air Corps' Tuskegee Airmen, but the men who integrated the Marines during World War II often have been forgotten. That is starting to change, beginning with the House's 422-0 vote.

The black Marines received their basic training adjacent to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, where conditions were harsh and the treatment from their fellow Marines could be even harsher. The black Marines were not allowed to enter Camp Lejeune unless accompanied by a white officer. In the few times they participated in training exercises, they could not eat until the white Marines had finished. They were routinely passed over for promotions.

"People forget they were fighting two wars - both foreign and domestic," Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Ga., said.

More than 300 lawmakers were co-sponsors of the legislation, providing Republicans and Democrats with a rare moment of bipartisanship. Lawmakers from both parties spoke in favor of the resolution, which was sponsored by Rep. Corrine Brown, D-Fla.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the Marine Corps to accept blacks. The Marine Corps was the last military branch to do so. Rep. Brad Miller, D-N.C., noted that the Montford Point Marines were presumed unsuited for combat and not allowed to fight alongside their white counterparts until the Korean War. Still, they underwent intense fire in their supporting roles in the Pacific during World War II, serving at Okinawa and Iwo Jima.

"They served with great valor and distinction and loved their country more than their country loved them at the time," Miller said.

Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., said he hoped that the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal would "soothe the pain of yesterday with the glory of today."

About 19,000 men trained at Montford Point between 1942 and 1949. Most have since died. Eugene Groves, a staff sergeant who fought in Korea, was one of four Montford Point veterans on hand for the vote Tuesday. The lawmakers gave the four a standing ovation shortly before the vote. (Continued On Page 2)