

Editorials

GREAT TRIBUTE IS DEDICATION

The greatest tribute that can be paid to the memory of Martin Luther King Jr., is our individual dedication to the principle for which he stood, lived, and preached. During the observance of the late civil rights leader's birth, all people should take time for self-introspection.

Ask yourself if you believe in good rather than evil, love rather than hate, peace as opposed to war and opportunity for equal accomplishment in lieu of prejudice against fellowman. When is a better time than now to set and strive for the satisfaction of our personal goals that will benefit humanity.

Envision the dream of world peace and harmony and do your part to wake up to this as a reality. The sacrifice that Martin Luther King Jr. made for his beliefs will be equalled by so very few. However with the small effort and time of those who are still here, much can be done to achieve his dream.

Each of us should look to his "mountain top" and equip ourselves for the climb. If not for Martin, for our children.

State Legislature Must Act Quickly

The North Carolina General Assembly will meet this week to begin the 1975 session. There is much work to be done, we all know. This session of the Assembly should not be as meaningless as some others have been. This session, undoubtedly, will demand some no-nonsense actions by its members.

The legislature will have to act quickly and seriously if it intends to ease some of the economic pangs in this state's stomach. Rhetoric and meaningless legislation will not do the state nor its private citizens any good at all. This may mean, however, that voters take a more active part in making the legislators feel the pulse of the community.

It is the obligation of every citizen who pays taxes to let his or her representative know of the problems and desires of his or her community. It is not against the law to make nor to keep contact with representatives. They owe not only the state but you, an honest day's work. But often times it is necessary to remind some of that obligation.

We know that the legislators feel a sense of urgency. We cannot afford to dilly-dally too long. We know that strong and meaningful legislation must come forth and quickly. Several groups in the state have called for legislation that will ease some of the problems faced by the people of this state. We hope the legislators give due regard to those requests.

It is hoped that this delegation and the entire state legislation will put forth a great effort to ease the burden of this troublesome economy.

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TO BE EQUAL

By Vernon E. Jordon, Jr.

Racism, called by some, "the American disease," has slackened since its glory days years ago, but it is still with us and still represents a major public health problem.

The infection of racism has been generally contained over the past decade but signs of a resurgence are unsettling. While many white Americans may be content to think it is a thing of the past, the truth is that racism is still alive and well in 1975.

It stuck in its sickest form around New Year's when a home owned by a respectable, hard working black family was dynamited in a previously all-white neighborhood in Queens.

It struck in its currently accepted form when Boston's School Committee, defying a contempt of court citation, refused to submit a desegregation plan for the city's troubled schools.

And it struck in its most hidden form -- the accumulated hurts and pain of a black lifetime -- when a Chicago police detective died of a heart attack, leaving behind a letter revealing the toll prejudice and discrimination took. "Mine is a wasted life, he wrote, "full of degradation, muted feelings and not belonging. This is one hell of a world for a black man."

It is instructive that racism's victims in these instances -- an innocent black

family, black school children, and a lone black man -- all lived in the North, in cities that were vocal in their support for black civil rights in the South.

Doubtless, instances of racism could be drawn from the South, perhaps even more. But that would only prove that racism, that peculiarly national disease, is an infection that's spread across the length and breadth of this land.

The stupid thing about it is that the victims include hater and hated, alike. Psychologists could probably explain the twisted mental mechanisms that result in racism, but the social costs of that behavior are plain for all to see.

Boston is a good example of this. White parents are tearing up their town, just to prevent busing that will integrate the schools. They can't even claim they want to preserve the excellence of their school system because, if anything, the schools of Boston's white ghetto are even worse than those in Roxbury.

If nothing else, integration could break down the defensive barriers of white and black school kids alike and better prepare them for our multi-racial world. At best, it could galvanize white and black parents to go after the

real enemy -- the forces that keep the city's schools inferior for all.

The anti-busing hysteria has provided a convenient cover for overt racism feelings. In Boston, the fact are very clear: the all-white School Committee has persistently and consciously maintained a segregated school system, they have done so in defiance of the law of their State and their country, and they have persisted in this in the face of court orders to remedy the situation.

Desegregation in Boston has been made more difficult by the failure to comply with the law and by failure to prepare parents and school officials for the change. Desegregation has worked elsewhere -- even in the most segregation-ridden Deep South towns -- and there is no reason why mob rule should prevent it from working in Boston.

What's needed in Boston and in the nation is firm leadership. That's why I've urged President Ford to take the occasion of his State of the Union address to speak out loud and clear against racism and for the integrated, pluralistic open society that should be our number one national goal.