

WINSTON-SALEM CHRONICLE

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Fair Housing Practices

Last week the Chronicle reported an incident of an East Winston resident being forced from his home into the cold for not paying his rent. That incident sparked a great deal of curiosity on how often that kind of thing actually takes place, and who the parties usually are involved. We found some pretty startling things.

We found that in most instances of tenant/landlord squabbles it always centers on non-payment of rent in the books downtown. There are stacks of books on nothing but that sort of thing. Almost always involving one of the small (but wealthy) realty companies.

We ask them what the problem was and the answers are the same. "These people simply refuse to pay the rent. We have been patient," they say.

Because we saw what the realtors and the courts said concerning these cases in the books in the magistrates office, we decided to hear what some of the people were saying about housing provided by those firms.

One woman took us on a guided tour of some of the places up for rent leased through these "reputable" firms. She explained a few simple facts of life while she took us from place to place. She said old people, black and white, blacks generally, and those living on fixed incomes are at the mercy of the private realty companies if we can't get into public housing. "Look at what they make us live in," she shouted. She pointed to one of a whole row of old houses.

Once inside, we saw a new coat of dull paint on the walls and wood floors. There was rust, grit and slime in the

comode, bathroom sink, and bathtub.

There was no running water. Windows were broken. Frankly, it was dismal. There was a "for rent" sign up. The "houses" along the row were in similar shape. There were people "living" in some of them.

The woman said that most of the people have had rent problems before. She said "the city housing inspector comes along and sights all kinds of violations but nothing is done. The courts see we are behind in rent and owe less than \$40 and figure we are holding back rent."

She said no one hears about the way the realtors or their employees talk to the people living in these places, the language they use, their worthless promises, and their utter lack of concern for the tenants. "And don't ask them to fix something!"

We found that in almost every instance of eviction of people in these kinds of dwellings, the same realtors were involved. We also found that a great deal of the money these realtors make off their tenants is dumped into some pet project like renovating some building, or building a new apartment complex. The law it seems is working for them.

We urge the city housing authority to investigate what we think is an appalling situation, and one that is on the increase in this city. We do not mean to imply that all realty companies in this city operate this way. We are saying that some do, and that these establishments should get top priority from city and even state officials on housing practices that must be considered no less than intolerable.

BLACK HISTORY

"A RACE IS LIKE A MAN-UNTIL IT USES ITS OWN TALENTS, TAKES PRIDE IN ITS OWN HISTORY, AND LOVES ITS OWN MEMORIES, IT CAN NEVER FULFILL ITSELF COMPLETELY."

JOHN W. VANDERCOOK



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BLACK EMPOWERMENT

By Dr. Nathaniel Wright, Jr.

Human Rights Activist

That blacks need to develop new affirmative action strategies should, by now, be evident to all.

In our colleges, for example, black students and black professors, too, are finding themselves on a merry-go-round which results in no progress or no enduring gains.

Sworn testimony regarding this state of affairs for black students was provided not long ago by Martin Gerry, the recent civil rights chief for the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Martin Gerry indicated that all recent administrations—including those of Johnson & Kennedy—had been deliberately slow in the enforcement of racial opportunity policies.

Black students in our colleges, Gerry noted, face a "revolving door" since the white colleges which receive them do little to keep them on campus after enrollment.

Gerry stated: "The fact is that black (college) enrollment has not been translated into practices which affect treatment... The plans have inadequately

addressed retention and that is crucial."

Much the same practice of accepting blacks, only to let them out shortly after acceptance, occurs in relation to white college hiring practices as well.

Colleges are under a mandate to accept blacks as students, faculty and administrators in order to guarantee federal loans and other financial assistance.

Still, the white colleges have demonstrated no "effective intent" to receive blacks with the same good faith as that with which they receive whites as students, teachers and administrators.

Blacks are enrolled, only to be failed within one or two years. In the New Jersey College of Medicine in Newark, several years ago, 16 blacks were admitted as students. By June, the 16 black students had failed.

Remarkably, in this instance, an aggressive affirmative action team of two concerned older local black physicians threatened to close the school down unless a similar number of blacks were admitted the next year...and with sufficient safeguards to make certain that all would pass.

The new black students were admitted? and all passed.

This points up several pernicious fictions which are widespread now and which have grown out of the current affirmative action debate.

One is that blacks should not receive "special treatment". The basic fact here which should be obvious to all is that all schools (or colleges) gear their program and teaching to a "special constituency" which they perceive that they can best serve.

In the definition of their "constituents to be served" blacks have been left out. Blacks only require the same kind of assessment of need and adjustment of program and teaching as was entered into for others for whom the colleges geared themselves to serve.

"Special treatment" is always involved in any education designed to meet perceived human and social needs.

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