


# viewpoints



**Winston-Salem Chronicle**  
Founded 1974

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## To Be Equal

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

### Which English?



## Lessons For The 1980's

The decade of the 1970s was one in which blacks in Winston-Salem made a significant amount of progress, yet failed to deal with their fundamental problems. Many are the firsts and other accolades which individuals and groups have earned since 1970. Blacks have possibly made their greatest impact in the area of government.

Mrs. Mazie Woodruff and Beaufort Bailey became the first blacks elected to the Board of County Commissioners and the city/county school board, respectively. Mrs. Vivian Burke and Virginia Newell became the first black women elected to the city Board of Alderman. Richard C. Erwin became the first black state legislator from Forsyth County and later became the first black ever elected to hold statewide office as a judge of the N.C. Court of Appeals. He has now been nominated as a federal district judge.

Blacks also rose to high administrative posts in city government, although the decade ended with a highly qualified black candidate being overlooked for the post of city manager.

The way had been paved for a black even being considered by such people as John P. "Jack" Bond, the first black assistant city manager and now city manager of Petersburg, Va., personnel director and now assistant city manager Alexander R. Beaty, Deputy Fire Chief Lester E. Ervin Jr., Police Capts. Johnnie A. Landon and O.D. Redd, human services directors, Florence Creque and Nellie Jones and economic development coordinator Walter "Doc" Farabee.

Two black administrators rose to posts of associate superintendent and assistant to the superintendent in the city/county school system.

Limited progress was made in the area of employment in major corporations, as blacks began to climb up the executive ladder.

Some black businesses, such as Cartwood Construction Company, have been able to take advantage of the opportunities afforded minority firms. Cartwood was the

first firm in the South to use the 10 percent set-aside in the federal Local Public Works Act. The firm was prime contractor for the fairgrounds administration building.

Many of the accomplishments, such as the electoral successes, reflect the hard work of dedicated groups, yet for the most part, the accomplishments blacks have to look back on are those of individuals.

Those accomplishments are no less meaningful because of that. However, that fact gives focus to the direction in which the black community must head for the 1980s.

We start the decade without a single unifying force able to set priorities, and rally disparate groups toward common cause.

Too many people have made that same observation for the situation to continue much longer. For as the decade wore on, the realization that individual gains can be wiped away without broad support began to wear on many minds.

We start the decade without an economic base, although the city's black population would rank as the ninth largest city in the state, if considered separately.

For food, clothing and simple sustenance, jobs, housing and financing, our community is dependent on outside interests.

So, the direction for the future is evident. The abysmal rates of voter registration and participation must be increased through a common effort on the part of political, civic and social organizations.

Neighborhoods must continue to find issues of joint impact on which they can cooperate.

Our business base, including retail and manufacturing establishments, must be expanded upon as the only remedy to the pervasive lack of jobs in the black community.

The '60s gave us the opportunity in the '70s to make an impact on our own destinies. The '80s could be the last chance we have to convert the hopes of those two decades into reality.

Last summer a judge in Ann Arbor, Michigan ruled that teachers at an elementary school serving youngsters from a nearby low-income housing project would have to take a course in "Black English."

That decision won't be the last we'll hear on the subject. It relit the fires of controversy surrounding Black English, and it resolved the issues in a reasonable way. Proponents of Black English suggest that it is a separate language and black children must be taught it both because it is their "home language" and because proficiency in Black English will pave the way for their mastery of Public English.

Opponents on the other hand, condemn its use in the schools and insist that the children be taught in Public English, with no concessions made to those who use Black English on a daily basis.

But the crux of the issue was never which language should be used in the classroom. Black parents have made it abundantly clear that they insist their children be taught -- and be proficient in -- standard English.

Black English became a barrier to learning not because of the children's use of it, but because teachers automatically assumed its use signified inferior intelligence, inability to learn, or other negative connotations.

Teachers often decided, on the basis of student's speech patterns, that they can't learn. As one black psychologist testified at the Ann Arbor trial, "too many are branded as stupid, just because they are brought up using different words than whites." So by focusing on the teachers, the judge made the right decision. Sensitizing teachers to Black English will equip them to

communicate better with pupils who use the language in their daily lives. And it should help them to make better assessments of their students' ability to read and speak Public English.

But it's a big leap from that to advocate teaching Black English in the schools. That would be a big mistake.


For one thing, if many black children already speak the language at home there is no need to teach it to them. For another, it is inappropriate. It may be a useful communications tool in the playground, but not in their dealings with the rest of a society that universally uses Public English.

And the use of Black English varies widely according to region and class. Educators can't assume that being black automatically means a student knows or uses Black English.

So Black English's place in the school is best seen as a sensitizing mechanism for teachers, aiding them to teach Public English to their students.

Language isn't the only area where many teachers need to be sensitized. Just as hearing Black English makes many stigmatize its user, so do too many teachers display discriminatory attitudes based on race, dress and class.

Teaching black, Hispanic, or poor children requires that teachers demonstrate respect for the child and his heritage. It means overcoming white middle behavior and speech patterns and accepting the validity of other cultures. Such a constructive attitude demands a degree of sensitivity lacking in many schools today.



## Christmas From The Grassroots

Parable

Manning Marable

Blackman was shivering. It had been a cold day for southern Georgia. Frost was beginning to settle on the few leaves that remained clinging to the trees. The sun had drifted lazily behind the western horizon, and darkness was swiftly setting in.

"Why do I always have to pick this time of year to visit my Aunt Mamba?" Blackman muttered angrily to himself. Once a year, every December, he returned to his childhood home near Albany. His car had broken down a few miles to his childhood home near Albany. His car had broken down a few miles away on a single-lane, dirt road.

No one had stopped to assist him; no one seemed to care about a black man's dilemma with a recalcitrant automobile. Blackman grabbed Mamba's old quilt that was in the backseat of his car, draping it over his weary shoulders, and began to walk toward the nearest service station.

"A little Christian charity at Christmastime," Blackman said to himself, half aloud. Perhaps no one stopped because of the fear of picking up a black hitch-hiker.

One old Chevy then slowed down. As Blackman ran up to the door, a white youngster leaned out of back window, his countenance filled with hate, and spit into his face. Abruptly, the Chevy sped away into the night. Blackman wiped his lips, lowered his head, and continued to walk quietly on.

Suddenly, the impending darkness gave way to a brilliant light. Just above his head, near the center of the

night sky, blazed a bright star. "A comet? Or a falling star?" Blackman asked himself. "The intensity of its light, the aurora of brilliant colors seemed to strip away the shroud of darkness.

"Where did the star come from? And what could this bright star mean?" Blackman wondered. He turned, and began to follow the star. His new path descended down yet another country path that led into a barren cotton field.

The headlights of another automobile began approaching Blackman. Narrowly avoiding him, the car came to a halt. The rear door opened and a tall, silver-haired white man in a business suit approached him.

"Praise the Lord, my darker brother," declared the white man. "Let me lead you to the light."

Blackman then recognized that the stranger was the famous and fabulously wealthy evangelist, the right Reverend Billie Gram Cracker. "Pastor Gram Cracker," Blackman declared, "what brings you out here on a cold, blistery night?"

"That star, beyond the horizon, marks a new beginning for all Americans," the Reverend Gram Cracker asserted.

"My boy, have faith in the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures: 'for unto you is born this day a new saviour, born in the light of knowledge, created in the image of the Father,'" quoted the pious Reverend. "This white child will mark a new beginning for our western

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## Keeping Budget In Focus

The Focus hearings held by the City of Winston-Salem on the 1980-81 budget will likely prove to have been a waste of time.

Bad timing and inadequate preparation helped to insure that residents were not able to make really meaningful suggestions about the budget.

Scheduling the hearings between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays helped keep the turnout for the five meetings below 100, a small sample on which to base public attitudes about the city's needs.

The last hearing concluded a mere two weeks before the arrival of a new city manager. Getting comments

from citizens in a hearing format would have been an excellent introduction to the new city executive.

Most important, citizens were given no real framework in which to understand the budget. Residents of the neighborhoods where the sessions were held could have been given a breakdown of city services provides in their areas, along with the funding sources.

Without such a background, the inputs received was akin to stumbling around in the dark. If the city is to continue the Focus hearings, officials will have to make greater efforts to actually inform the public. Otherwise, the hearing becomes just a publicity stunt.

## New Year's Resolutions

As the year 1979 and the decade of the 1970's both draw to a close, Chronicle Camera went to the Patterson Avenue YMCA to ask "What resolutions are you making for the new year?"

Following are the responses we got:

**Alphonse Chaplin**--"My New Years resolution is being a better person. I've given my life to Jesus so I'd like to let him be a more outstanding leader in my life. "I'm going to do more to treat my family equal and just try to be an All-American person.

"I've cut out all drinking, I've got some other problems to deal with, but to sum up, I'll just be serving God."

**Roland Fulton**--"I'm just going to try to work and to conserve more. I'm going to stop throwing away unnecessary

money for things I don't really need."

**Lee Blakeney**--"My resolution is to get more involved in the community and helping others.

Since I've been part of the YMCA, I've learned more about people and their needs and I want to exert myself more.

"We're also trying to get more people involved in the Y."



Chaplin



Blakeney



Fulton

## T. Diane Bellamy Small

### Giving Thanks

**GREENSBORO**--Am I my brother's keeper; retorted a man when asked about the whereabouts of his brother. The questioner had knowledge that harm had come to the brother and wanted the responsibility of that action to be accepted by the one causing the harm. There are so many confusing things happening in our lives today and it's hard to know who is responsible. Greensboro has been the victim of a retortion in the last few weeks. And though some would have the black community appear to be fools they have not been. The lack of support of those who would have us believe that they have our best interest at heart has not been true.

So those who would try to bully the leadership in the black community in to making hasty decisions must give way to common sense judgement. There is a definite need for something to be said or done but having outsiders with shady intent try to manipulate what we feel, how we react or what we say is not what the black community in Greensboro needs right now.

As we sit down together in family love this holiday, I hope we will evaluate and try to understand as much of everything that is and will be affecting our lives in the 1980's. The situation in Iran will have a definite affect on

employment and the livelihood of most Americans. In 1980, we need to be responsible for going to the polls and voting intelligently and in numbers.

Students should strive diligently to get good grades and venture out in areas where our resources have not been fully developed. We should increase our awareness of the kinds of things we individually and collectively can do to help each other.

As for the Ku Klux Klan, we know that they are on the march again. If we fear them they will overcome us. If we use extremes to retaliate against them, we are no better than them. There are fallacies in the systems that we have working, but too little is accomplished outside of the system unless you wish to become a martyr. We should remember the past both good and bad, but our future must reflect something that we learned from the past. If we learn nothing, we will be foolish and make the same mistakes.

Are you your brother keeper? Only you know what your commitment to life is, but I think life is alot more meaningful if your answer is yes.

Be thankful for the opportunities you have, though you don't use them all.