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Ndubisi Egemonye  
Co-Founder

Ernest H. Pitt  
Editor, Publisher

Robert Eller  
Sports Editor

Elaine L. Pitt  
Office Manager

NCPA  
N.C. Press Association

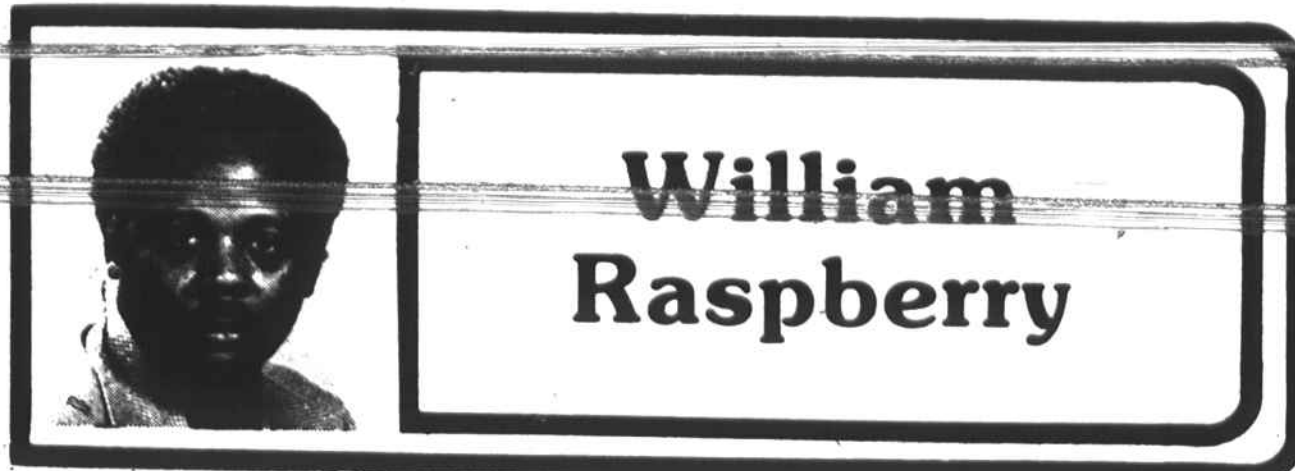
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# Appointing A Woman To The Bench

Washington--If President

Reagan makes good on his affirmative-action campaign promise by appointing a woman to the U.S. Supreme Court, it will be widely assumed -- though few may be so rude as to say it aloud -- that he will have lowered the standards for service on that august body.

Not that anyone will know much about the particular appointee. We seldom know anything about Supreme Court justices until after the fact anyway. Nor is it that most of us assume women lawyers and judges to be innately inferior. The inference of lowered standards will derive from the way the appointment came to be.



## William Raspberry

If the appointment of a woman resulted from a national search for the best combination of legal ability, scholarship and judicial temperament, there would be no implication of lowered standards.

But Reagan promised during his election campaign that he would appoint a woman to an early vacan-

cy on the court, which can be said to mean that for that particular seat men were arbitrarily disqualified. And since men far outnumber women as lawyers and judges, the "best-qualified" person for the court seat would far more likely be a man. It's simple mathematics.

And all this intellectualization of the situation

will miss the crucial point, which is that rarely is the best-qualified person named or elected to any post in the land. We could never agree on what makes a person "best-qualified in the first place," and even if we could we haven't the faintest idea about how to go about finding that person.

Does anyone sincerely

believe that Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan represented the peak of qualification for the highest office in America? And yet those are what our choices were last fall. Does anyone outside their immediate families believe, to take just two examples, that Warren Burger and William Rehnquist were, prior to their appointment, head and shoulders above all other lawyers and judges available for service on the court? What was there in the record of Henry Ford II or William French Smith or the head of Penn Central that made them clearly the best available candidates for their jobs?

And yet the notion persists that the holders of high office are there because they are particularly meritorious. We are troubled by proposals to distribute the plums of life on any basis but merit, believing that it serves the national interest and social efficiency to put the best qualified individuals in the most important, best-paid positions.

Our favorite analogies are based on athletics. No one would dream of insisting on hiring a handicapped centerfielder, or a female middle linebacker, or an Asian-American basketball center simply because they are members of an underrepresented class. We want the best. But athletic competition is virtually unique in its ability to discover the best. For most of life's important positions, we are lucky to find adequacy.

William Ryan, author of "Blaming the Victim," makes the point in his latest book, "Equality."

"The argument based on social efficiency is perhaps the most widely cited and accepted argument against any kind of equality other than of opportunity," he says. "While it is superficially plausible, there is in fact no demonstration -- and perhaps no way of demonstrating -- that the most able, virtuous, and intelligent members of society are in fact occupying the leading roles in it."

"To adduce one obvious example, are we to say that Nixon, Agnew, Haldeman, Mitchell, Ehrlichman, and company attained the top positions of political leadership in America because they were the outstanding statesmen available in our land? Or because they were morally superior? Or perhaps because they had the greatest political talents? What is the correlation between their abilities and characters and their achievements?"

"In fact, the richest and most powerful persons in America are not more able or virtuous, in any demonstrable way, than the rest of us."

If Ryan is right, and I don't doubt that he is, then it makes sense to see to it that those who lead our major institutions are reasonably representative of the people they serve, provided only that they are demonstrably qualified and competent.

The appointment of the first female member of the Supreme Court, so long as she is a member of that vast body of trained, experienced, competent and decent professionals, will not represent a lowering of standards. The standards, apart from these basics, have been mostly nonexistent anyway.

"Best-qualified" is nothing but an appealing myth.

## Strength In Unity

The recent victory of the residents of the Skyline Village Apartments should serve as more than a victory for the black community. It should serve as a symbol of the innate power any people can generate when they unify as a group and take a stand on an issue.

When the tenants were served with eviction notices by their landlord, the John R. Taylor Real Estate Company, they could have separated into individual factions, fighting for individual causes. Residents who had not been served with eviction notices could have closed their ears, claiming that the case did not effect them and those who were financially able to move could have done so without giving second thought to those whom they would leave behind.

It could have been the way things generally proceed in a situation where the victims are black and feel helpless within

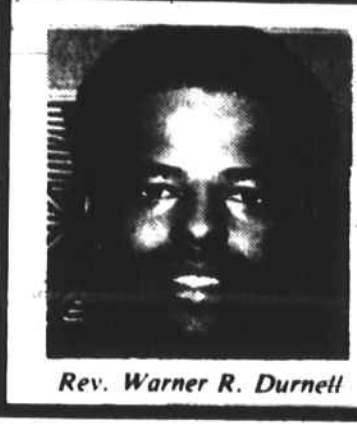
the bureaucracy of society.

The residents could have sat, complained and done nothing. Certainly, Taylor Realty would have proceeded on course with the eviction procedures for whatever their reasons, if not a fight had been staged.

But the residents did fight, banding together, young and old, employed and unemployed, whether facing eviction or not, under the common goal of a community.

The message should be taken by all and can be applied to any and every situation that may and probably will arise for black people under the present federal administration. Our security has been and forever remains in our unity.

The Chronicle salutes the courage of the residents of the Skyline Village Apartments.



## HOW WE SEE IT



## Should ERA Be Ratified?

A fortnight ago, firecrackers lit up our sky in celebration of America's 205th Anniversary of independence from British colonialism. While millions of Americans gobbled up a hillside of hot dogs and guzzled down a sea of beer, many of their neighbors were gathering on court steps to lobby for the liberty that has eluded fifty percent of our populace. As this nation paused this past July 4th to commemorate the men who "fathered" this country, citizens all across these United States were marching for justice under the law on behalf of the daughters of the mothers who actually gave America its birth. It is a tragic testimony to hear and to know that after two centuries of the "American experiment," equal right for women have yet to be realized!

Should the equal rights amendment be ratified? Does the Bible offer an answer?

As is the case with many concerns that confront contemporary American society, the Bible gives no direct answer to this question. But the Bible does give us guidance in seeking to answer this crucial question.

Early on in the scriptures, we read where God holds conversation with God and said; "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," (Genesis 1:26). In the very next verse we read; "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them," (Gen. 1:27). In this creation account from the sacred writings, female and male are created together to fill the earth and subdue it. Together they are to be God's co-creators. Although other readings have often held sway concerning the older creation account in Genesis 2, there are solid critical grounds for regarding woman's creation after man and the animals as a signal not of her subordination but of her completion of the creation and of her equality and bond with man from whose rib she was taken, (Genesis 2:20-25). According to the creation stories, women and men were created equal by God. After the fall of humanity (Genesis 3), under the condition of sin, is where the Bible begins to speak of women's subordination and her pain in childbirth. Of course, this was never to be the expression of the creative intent of God!

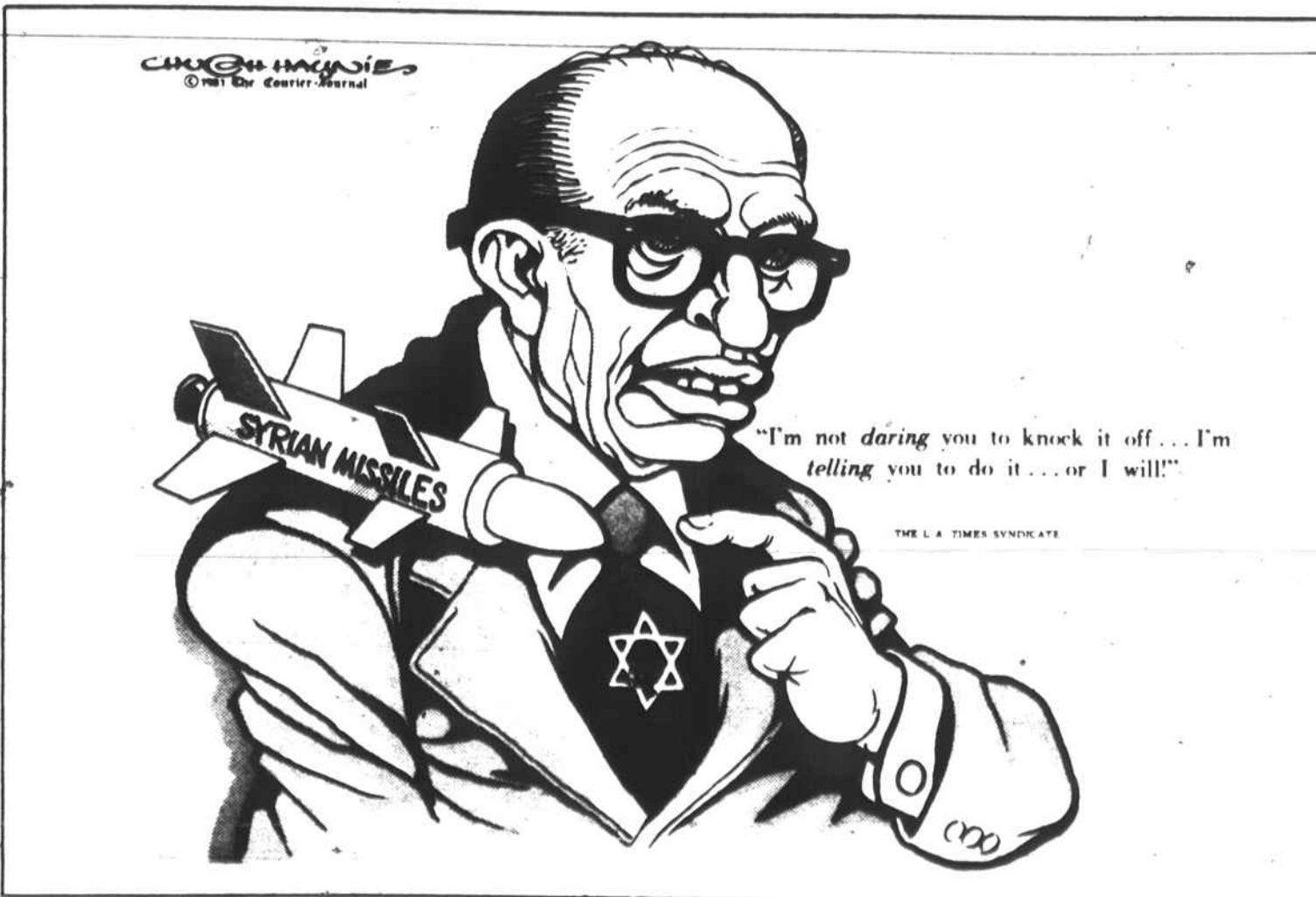
Moving to the beginning of a new day in the history of humanity, with the coming of Christ, we see from the Gospels where Jesus treated women in a radically different way than was culturally accepted. Women were treated with equal respect by Jesus. He frees women to assume roles and identities other than traditionally prescribed (Luke 10:38-42; John 20:11-18). The apostle Paul, who gave some culturally conditioned opinions about the status of women in two letters that bear his name such as; "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness,"

(1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11), also wrote concerning the new era inaugurated by Christ; "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28). In Christ, we find God at work in seeking to restore lost creation. The distinctions that divided human persons are barriers torn down by the ushering in of the kingdom of God!

According to The Book, God made women and men equal. After the fall, sin created division between men and women, along with the assumption of superior and subordinate positions. This was not God's design for human beings, and through Christ, God is seeking to regain harmony of human interaction which existed before the fall. If the equal rights amendment, yet to be ratified will help to bring us closer to equality and solidarity between men and women, then it deserves our utmost support. God is for equal rights for women and men. This does not mean that God desires to see us in a unisexual society. God wants us to celebrate his ordained diversity within the human condition. But it ceases to be celebration when we hinder the right of women to fully enjoy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" on a plain equal to that of men.

Send your opinions to:

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"I'm not daring you to knock it off... I'm telling you to do it... or I will!"

THE L.A. TIMES SYNDICATE

THE L.A. TIMES SYNDICATE



"Cheer up! We're no longer asking for an arm and a leg!"

## To Be Equal

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

### Reindustrializing For Whom?



There is agreement that the nation has to embark on a long-term reindustrialization program that will increase productivity, make America's products competitive in the world economy again, and reshape the nation's economy.

That's a tall order, and whether it can be done will determine the living standards of future generations. How we go about it too, will determine the shape of our society in the near-term as well.

That's why all discussions of reindustrialization have to be accompanied by sharp questions about just who we will be reindustrializing for.

If the name of the game is to create further distortions in our society, making the rich richer and the poor destitute, then the nation would just be creating a house of cards that would topple under the pressure of discontent.

But if the goal is to maintain full employment by providing the jobs our society needs and an improvement in the quality of life for all, then reindustrialization will win support from every sector of our population.

The Administration's approach to reindustrialization

is to support blanket incentives for the private sector to invest in productive capacity -- accelerated depreciation for capital investments, big tax cuts, less regulation.

Such steps might unlock a lot of safe deposit boxes and move savings from unproductive investments like gold to productive ones like new factories.

In the process though, such an undirected incentives policy might just worsen our economic and social problems. It could drain funds and jobs, from older industrial regions to other sections of the country, or even to low-cost foreign countries.

For example, tax policies designed to encourage building new plants could make it easier and cheaper for industries to abandon their older installations and build elsewhere. Older cities have seen the erosion of their industrial base, with the consequent loss of jobs. A new round of incentives to build new facilities could wipe out the local economies of major parts of the nation.

So incentives should be narrowly targeted to create jobs where they are needed most. Tax breaks for rehabilitating aging plants should be more favorable than building new ones. Or the system could be designed to favor replacing present facilities in the same areas.

The plan to create "enterprise zones" in inner cities, where job-creating businesses would be encouraged through tax breaks and other means, is a step in that direction. But it would be doomed to failure if even sweeter concessions were given to industries moving away from the same urban areas.

So far most of the reindustrialization talk has been confined to creating incentives for business to invest in capital facilities. Not enough stress has been given to investing in human resources. But that is where the nation faces a major bottleneck in its attempt to compete.

The fact is that there is a shortage of skilled workers in key fields. A reindustrialization program that will mean a new generation of productive machinery will run into a severe shortage of skilled draftsmen, tool and die makers and other crafts.

And the renewed arms procurement program will only worsen the situation, draining off skilled workers needed for civilian goods production, spurring inflation.

That argues forcefully for a massive program to restrain people in obsolete trades and to train today's unemployed, youth, and neglected minorities for mainstream roles in tomorrow's economy.

Revitalizing our economy and overcoming gross inequalities in our society demands sharply targeting programs and incentives for balanced growth among the nation's people and regions.