

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

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## EDITORIALS

### 'It ain't easy'

ELECTED officials everywhere can identify with a familiar Rodney Dangerfield line: "It ain't easy being me."

Almost daily, whether in the aisles of the local supermarket or in the aisles of City Hall, public officials are requested -- sometimes demanded -- to take sides in battles between conflicting interests.

Such was the case Monday night when the aldermen voted unanimously to seek another site for the proposed transit center, preventing the potential demise of 14 minority businesses located at Fifth and Liberty/Trade streets, downtown. In this instance we feel they made the right decision, and we publicly commend them for it.

Not enough can be said, however, about the push-and-pull life of the elected official. Often, they are placed in the unwelcome position that, no matter what they do, they are "damned if they do and damned if they don't."

In the highly charged transit center issue, the aldermen were caught between two forces: the 14 merchants and their legion of supporters on one side and the threat of lawsuits from federal judges with unlimited power on the other. Very few of us would relish facing such a dilemma.

## CROSSWINDS

What Others Say

### King Day set at last

From the Arizona Republic, Phoenix.

IT took Gov. Evan Mecham the better part of six months, but he finally came to his senses and realized -- as have so many other Arizonans -- that slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is worthy of special recognition.

What precisely caused Mecham to change his mind remains a mystery, but the burgeoning convention industry boycott cannot be dismissed as insignificant. The loss of \$18 million in convention cancellations is not peanuts for a state dependent on tourists and conventioners.

Nor can the damage to our image as a progressive state be discounted. Sharp criticism about our governor and the resultant embarrassment when he rescinded a King holiday declared by his predecessor, former Gov. Bruce Babbitt, has been painful.

Mecham's decision to declare the third Sunday in January as Martin Luther King Jr.-Civil Rights Day will not please those advocating a paid state holiday on the third Monday in January. The issue of paid vs. non-paid holidays has served to polarize the camps. There's a sense that King could have compromised for seats in the middle of the racial bus, but he held out for total equality. A paid holiday was symbolic of that struggle.

Regrettably, at this time the political reality dictated a compromise as the only way King could get the recognition he deserves for his lifelong commitment and his sacrifice so that future generations of Americans, both black and white, could live in dignity and harmony.

The governor's proclamation likely will defuse the convention powderkeg. National organizations that once said they would boycott Arizona over Mecham's rescission of the King holiday last January may want to rethink their actions in lieu of his recent declaration.

The situation in Arizona, at least among blacks, probably will change little. A Sunday King-Civil Rights remembrance will be viewed as half a loaf. That same belief likely will hold true in the Legislature in the sessions ahead. Mecham's hope that his act will "remove a major impediment to cooperation in the legislative process between partisan legislators" seems to be wishful thinking.

Mecham's tardy proclamation begs the salient question of why it took him so long to move unilaterally. It was he, it will be remembered, who said King was undeserving of a holiday. He also called the ensuing flap "a non-issue." It was as if he hoped the issue would evaporate like raindrops at high noon.

The appropriateness of the governor's proclamation, which is viewed as tokenism, will not extinguish the public debate on how best to commemorate King. The people of Arizona have a right to expect more than mere gestures from their elected officials.

## ABOUT LETTERS

The Chronicle welcomes letters from its readers, as well as columns. Letters should be as concise as possible and typed or printed legibly. They also should include the name, address and telephone number of the writer.



## Why Michael Spinks is my champ

TONY BROWN  
Syndicated Columnist

NEW YORK -- Going into the fifth round, the fight for the "People's Championship" between Gerry Cooney and Michael Spinks, who was bleeding slightly above the right eye, was dead even.

After keeping a stiff jab in Cooney's face and connecting with combinations in the second round, Spinks was pounded hard in the fourth with several jarring left hooks to his ribs.

Cooney's 30-pound and 5-inch advantage showed; Spinks was literally running to keep away from that awesome left hook that Cooney had used so well in previous fights.

I had gone to my first heavyweight fight, not because I'm a fight fan, but to support Michael Spinks and Butch Lewis, who had supported my effort to raise \$15,000 to save a Wilmington, Del., woman's life. The \$8,000--donated by Spinks and Lewis sent the drive to buy Cindy a kidney over the top.

Then there was the matter of Lewis and Spinks singlehandedly forcing whites in boxing to stop

doing business with South Africa's apartheid boxing establishment and exposing other blacks in boxing who were going along.

So Spinks was my champion, not Mike Tyson who has yet to identify himself as anything other than a boxer.

Cooney's best punch of the night to the target. Spinks then stepped inside and snapped Cooney's head back with a jolting right hand.

The 6-7, 230-pounder's legs buckled under the barrage that followed. With 9 seconds left, the referee showed Cooney some

"Afterward, instead of talk of Spinks' lack of guts, they bragged of his courage; instead of his alleged fear, they talked of his taking the fight to Cooney."

But at the top of the fifth, my champion looked like he was nearing the end of his boxing life.

I was reminded of Cooney's manager's words: "I got news for Michael Spinks. When he tries to fight from outside, he's gonna get hit in the face with the best left jab in boxing."

He added, "Let's face it, most people are coming here to see Gerry Cooney knock out Michael Spinks."

Don Johnson ("Miami Vice"), the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Mike Tyson, all seated in my section, were as tense as I was when both fighters answered the bell for the fifth round.

Midway, Spinks' looping right hand beat what could have been

mercy by stopping it all. And there I was, standing on my chair and screaming my delight.

Afterward, instead of talk of Spinks' lack of guts, they bragged of his courage; instead of his alleged fear, they talked of his taking the fight to Cooney.

The next day, the most cynical of sportswriters admitted that Spinks was the smartest boxer in the world.

I knew that when he opposed apartheid and helped us save Cindy's life.

Tony Brown is a syndicated columnist and television host, whose series, "Tony Brown's Journal," can be seen Saturdays at 1:30 locally on channels 4 and 26.

## Companies must go it one better

NEW YORK -- Corporate America must go beyond equal employment hiring to groom young black managers for line positions and career ladders that lead to the top.

Part of the problem is that companies are locked into "credentialism" -- abstract criteria that are not job-related and do not predict job success.

Corporations have to look at people, not at culture-bound credentials. When they do, they get outstanding performers.

Too few corporations are willing to bring promising black managers along in a succession of increasingly responsible line jobs and then put them in a vice president's chair. Instead, they cry about the "limited pool" of blacks for managerial jobs.

The problem is worsened by corporate restructuring that reduces opportunities for promotions, leading some of our most talented middle managers to hit a career plateau.

A related problem is the proliferation of covert barriers to black advancement.

This is the skeleton in the corporate closet. It's something no one talks about. It's something few will admit to. But it's there. And it effectively sabotages even the most sincere corporate affirmative action directives.

Companies need institutionalized mechanisms to insure that equal opportunity policies operate throughout each company and in all aspects of business interactions.

In most corporations today, blacks with the proper skills, credentials and attitudes can get

TO BE EQUAL  
By JOHN JACOB

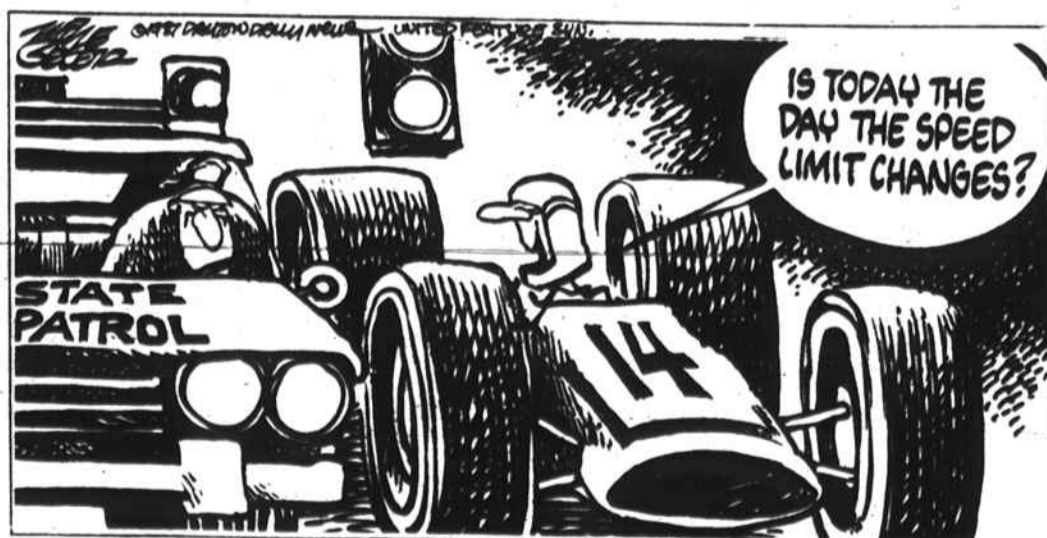
ahead. They'll face some low-level harassment at times. There may be a double standard for performance. There may be a subtle ceiling to their progress.

But none of that is very new. Blacks have always had to be bet-

there are hopeful signs that we may be on the brink of some real breakthroughs in Corporate America.

It is in Corporate America's best interests to advance and retain black and minority managers. Today performance, not race, is becoming the major factor.

But both blacks and whites



ter than anyone else, have always faced racial bigotry and have always been held to a double standard that says a black who has made it to a managerial post is doing pretty well, even though his white counterpart is sitting in a vice president's chair.

The difference today is that there is a critical mass of bright, capable young black managers who are advancing to operational jobs that have bottom-line impact. The best companies want to keep them happy. And the new breed of black managers has options -- they can either stay in Corporate America or go on their own.

We are all impatient for more change and faster change, but

must keep up the pressure to win equal treatment and a fair shot at the height of corporate power. As Tom Shropshire, who recently retired as senior vice president of Miller Brewing, one of the most powerful jobs held by a black man in corporate America, says:

"It's up to us as black people to keep up the pressure on those corporations and not let up for a minute because our fight is by no means over. We've got to make them understand that we're not going to accept being pushed in the background anymore."

John E. Jacob is president of the National Urban League.

## VERNON ROBINSON

### On meeting the challenge

Historically black colleges and universities, or HBCUs, are among the most precious resources in our community.

But I wonder whether we are supportive enough of them? HBCUs must create a healthy working environment for their employees, develop human capital and strengthen their governing boards of visitors or trustees. It is vital that the public subject these institutions to scrutiny, review and, when necessary, agitation to insure that they meet the challenge.

The history of these institutions is replete with tales of iron-willed administrators who built their institutions brick by brick and were equally tough on students and faculty. Their management style could be summed up as: "Spare the rod, spoil the faculty."

If this "Theory X" authoritarian management style was ever appropriate, it is no longer so. We are at the dawn of the information age, one in which wealth is a function of innovation, creativity and risk-taking. Such an environment is impossible to achieve when the dominant culture is one of fear and standard operating procedure. Unfortunately, this is the culture of far too many HBCUs.

You may wonder, "Why is this creativity stuff so important? There's no creativity on the line where I work."

The importance for both manufacturing and education of innovation and creativity is overriding. Even more so for the university, as it is the original information-based institution. It makes no sense to run one as an intellectual sweatshop.

UNC President C.D. Spangler was absolutely right in firing Fayetteville State Chancellor Charles Lyons. Lyons created an environment of personality cult, fear and intimidation that robbed the university of the wealth of human capital as surely as if a bandit had taken it from the till.

HBCUs must cut through the endless layers of approval that crush creativity and risk-taking. The public must inquire and forcefully protest when the layers of administration that poison the well of innovation are added to HBCUs, as was recently done to Winston-Salem State University.

Unlike the days of old, where wealth was measured in terms of land, physical plant, sculpture gardens and endowments, wealth in the era of human capital is a function of innovation, creativity and knowledge. For the first time in history, HBCUs meet their white-college colleagues on a level field in terms of the potential to develop this new kind of renewable capital.

The public must insure that the "X" administrators are swept away and that their replacements reward innovation and invest in developing human capital.

Finally, we must do a better job of scrutinizing those to be placed on the governing boards. All too often, these jobs are given like some merit badge for 40 years of community service. HBCUs which fall prey to this trap will not survive this riptide of dynamism which figures prominently in their immediate future.

We need strong swimmers -- those with intellect, creativity, vision, commitment and access to the resources to implement that vision. We cannot afford those who tread water or those who should be kept in wading pools.

With regard to public HBCUs, the governor must realize that for a community that thrives or perishes based on education, these appointments are the most important that he will make. Anyone who seeks to remain in or move into the governor's mansion, and fails to appoint the strong swimmer, will not and should not get the support of the black electorate.

Vernon L. Robinson is chairman of the 21st Century PAC of North Carolina.