

Gantt: Black progress in own hands

During his keynote address at Friday's opening ceremonies at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Gantt proposed a four-tier plan of attack - which included politics, economics, the obligations of Afro-American professionals to return something to their communities, and the education of children -- for Afro-Americans which, he said, would help them deal with some of their major concerns. Borrowing from Dickens, the former mayor described 1988 as the "best of times and the worst of times, in terms of what it means to be black in North Carolina in 1988."

Politically, Gantt said, 1988 is a good time "because Ronald Reagan won't be president at the end of the year. Whether we keep the same party or not, Reagan won't be the president. There are going to be some changes. ... These are the best of times because we've seen a person of color run seriously for the highest office in this country."

Glancing around the audience, Gantt said that great educational strides also have been made among Afro-Americans, allowing them to secure more success in the corporate arena. But he reminded the leadership caucus that the seeds of the civil rights movement are just beginning to ripen and that a debt is owed to those who fought in the movement.

"We have done well because of the efforts of those who came before us. You are holding down good jobs," Gantt said. "We are reaping the benefits of those who went before us. We are doing well economically and it's the best of times in this sense."

But, Gantt said, all is not entirely well with Afro-Americans. While there are positive notes, there

are also some areas of Afro-American concern that will require some housekeeping from Afro-Americans themselves, he said. More damaging than governmental cutbacks, Gantt said, are the attitudinal problems developing within the Afro-American community, a crisis which he said also makes these the "worst of times for Afro-Americans." While racism remains a growing obstacle to Afro-American progress, Gantt said that an increase in poor attitudes within the Afro-American community has become a "fire burning out of control in our own community."

"The legacy of the seven-and-one-half years of Reaganomics has made a difference with cutbacks in health care, basic education opportunity grants and welfare payments. But even more severe than these cutbacks in social programs is the attitudinal change that has filtered down," said Gantt. "There is less compassion and concern for the elderly. Less concern for the poor. We ought to be concerned. There is a disdain today for people who are poor and it's coming from us."

Citing statistics pointing to increases in drug use, unemployment and the number of children living in poverty among the Afro-American population, Gantt said that too many of these problems are running rampant because Afro-Americans are not taking charge of their own communities and dealing with some of their own problem areas. Racism, he said, is not an acceptable excuse for sitting idly by and ignoring the problems in Afro-American communities.

"Racism is on the rise. Folks are becoming more racist and more blatant with it. But I didn't come here to bash racists or those who would

oppress us. We have to be more in control of our own destiny," said Gantt. "We've got some problems that need addressing. I don't let racism and oppressors off the hook, but we need to look within at new strategies and new ways of addressing these problems. 1960s tactics just don't work. The values and priorities (from the 1960s civil rights movement) we ought to hold on to, but some of the strategies we need to look at (in order) to deal with the late 1980s and the year 2000."

Gantt said also that Afro-Americans must deal with the problems confronting their children themselves and not lay blame solely on outside factors. He conceded that some of the blame for children's problems may be placed on poor school facilities, poor teachers or administrators, but stressed that Afro-American parents bear most of the responsibility for instilling what he terms the "Jackie Robinson Mentality" in their children.

"We have to teach them that if they're going to compete with white folks, they're going to have to be better than white folks," he said. "Too many of our children say, 'I can just pass.' We don't want them to 'just pass.' We need to instill in our youngsters an attitude of excellence. Too many of our children want to be the greatest Michael Jordan or James Worthy. Not enough of them want to be a good doctor, a good lawyer, a good person in the community who works hard and makes a difference."

Gantt challenged the leadership caucus to develop means of dealing with the attitudinal problems afflicting the Afro-American community. He also encouraged Afro-Americans, who have reaped the rewards of the civil rights movement, to share their time with those who have

not yet felt the gains of the movement.

"The leadership cadre ought to be addressing this attitudinal problem and talking about it just as much as we talk about the KKK and racism," said Gantt. "When we look at the future we need to ask ourselves a hard question. A lot of our leaders of tomorrow are getting absorbed in the lower class or they're getting so much education that they're leaving our communities. They're getting good, well-paying jobs, nice condos and nice stereo systems. They get into their nice BMWs and Mercedes, and every other kind of car you can imagine, and they go back and forth to their condos and they assume that everything is all right. We've got to get them back. Too many of our best and our brightest are not here today. They're somewhere else. They might not care. This leadership cadre must teach those standing on our shoulders to stand tall and to know where they came from and we must help those who left us to come back home. That is our task."

Abuse cases untended

Where will the children go?

No, it's not a scene from an eighteenth century orphanage movie. It's one of many cases of child neglect now existing in Winston-Salem.

And Albert F. Grisard Jr., executive director of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Forsyth County, Inc., says neglect is only a subtle form of child abuse. "It just doesn't show on the outside," he said.

When a child is continuously left alone, with no food in the refrigerator, no soap in the bathroom, dirty old clothes to wear to school, and no doctor when sick or hurt, it is child neglect. If a pattern of harsh discipline damages a child physically or mentally, it is also child neglect.

Victims of child abuse and neglect often develop severe emotional problems. Delinquency, destructive behavior, delayed educational development, sleep disorders and fatigue are only some of the symptoms, and vary from child to child, George Bryan, executive director of Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN), a privately funded group that counsels families suffering from abuse.

The Department of Social Services must investigate all child neglect reports and base their action on the severity of the case, Superintendent of the Division of Protective Services J. Daniel Bolz said. "It depends on what you find," he said. "If the kids have been left alone, maybe the parents just need talking to. If it's a pattern, maybe they need daycare. Often substance abuse is the problem. Then we get the parent lined up with a program."

If the parent is harming the child because of alcoholism or drug use, the department may enroll the parent into an in-patient substance abuse treatment program, Bolz said. If the child is in danger of serious injury or death because of neglect, the case will be taken to juvenile court where treatment will be ordered for the parent, or the child will be taken out of the home.

Neglect is usually more prevalent among low-income families, Bolz said. "For one thing, if you've got money, you can hire a babysitter, have medical insurance, buy food," he said.

But Grisard says the Forsyth County Department of Social Services should take child neglect more seriously.

Betsy Kaiser, a teacher at the Lowrance Middle School for handi-

capped children, has reported several incidents of suspected child neglect and abuse to the Forsyth County Department of Social Services and has often been unhappy with their response. When a student came to class "literally unconscious" a month ago, Kaiser immediately filed a report with the department. "I thought he had gotten into or was given some drugs or medication," she said.

Kaiser's 7-year-old student and his sister have come to school before with second-degree burns on their bodies and welts on their backs. These incidents were also reported to Social Services, and a social worker has been working with the family for two years, Kaiser said.

A social worker arrived at the Lowrance School about six hours after the child came to school. "By this time he had eaten lunch and was O.K.," Kaiser said. "There was no follow-up on the case, because the social worker said 'he was awake' when he saw him."

Kaiser complained to Social Services when a month came and went with no confirmation of her report. State laws require that all complaints filed with the Protective Services Division are answered by a letter telling whether an investigation is in progress, has been dropped or was completed.

Kaiser was recently informed that her complaint had never reached the Division of Protective Services. The Supportive Services Division of the Department of Social Services had determined that the case did not indicate abuse, Bolz said, and there was no reason to report it to protective services.

Kaiser, meanwhile, thinks something concrete should be done to help her student and his family. Bolz, however, said the social worker handling the family determined that "the situation is under control."

Kaiser concludes that the route her complaint took through the Department of Social Services did not accomplish much. No medical examination of the child was ordered, she said, although his mother said she took him to a doctor who determined that the child had probably had a seizure. Kaiser said she thought Social Services should have followed up on this report.

"Six other teachers also observed this," she said. "With handicapped children, you see

seizures often, and this looked like no seizure we had ever seen. We had documented the child's behavior and had an interview with the supportive services worker."

Bolz said, however, that a social worker accompanied the child and mother to the doctor, and afterwards explained the diagnosis to Kaiser. "She was just unhappy with the outcome," Bolz said.

"We hoped to get someone in the home to teach parenting skills to the mother," Kaiser said. "When I told the people in Social Services that nothing had been done they said, 'Yeah, I know.' They said they had explored all the alternatives, and there's nothing they can do."

Please see page A3

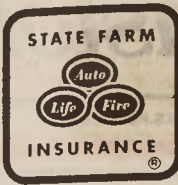
Like a good neighbor,
State Farm is there.

See me for
car, home, life
and health
insurance.

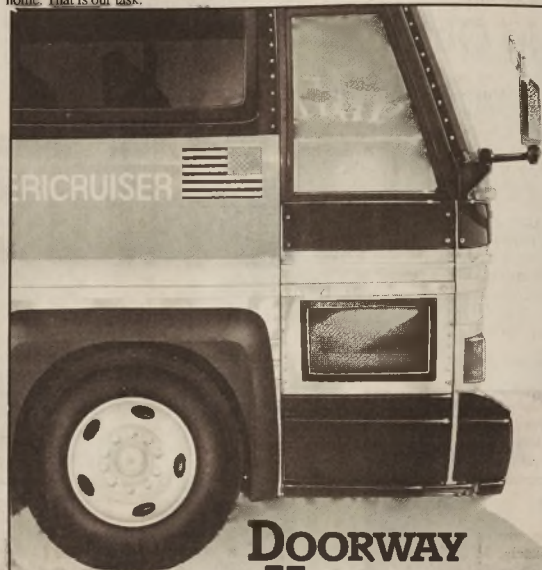
Joseph R. Daniels
Agent

1520-A Martin Street
Suite 102
Winston-Salem, NC 27103

Bus. Phone:
919-724-9257
Home Phone:
919-768-6116



State Farm Insurance Companies • Home Offices: Bloomington, Illinois

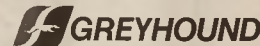


DOORWAY
TO HAPPINESS.

Come aboard, relax and enjoy
the ride. From Seattle to St.
Louis, Detroit to Montgomery,
Dallas to L.A., or Miami to

\$68

Memphis. Greyhound will get
you where you want to go, when
you want to go. In comfort. And
for no more than \$68 one way.



Tickets are non-refundable and good for travel on Greyhound Lines, Trailways Lines or other participating carriers. Advance purchase required. Refund penalty and some restrictions may apply. Fares subject to change without notice. No other discounts apply.

© 1988 Greyhound Lines, Inc.

JTPA OPPORTUNITIES:
The only thing it will cost you is
a better opportunity to get a job.

JTPA

JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT



JTPA provides employment and training programs for the economically disadvantaged residents of the Winston-Salem Forsyth County area through the following:

ON THE JOB TRAINING - Training provided by an employer on-the-job for permanent full-time employment.

LEARN-TO-EARN - GED preparation and remedial education opportunities in reading, writing and computations.

JOB EXPLORATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM - In-school youth program providing after-school employment assistance.

If interested, you may apply at:
JTPA Intake Center

Human Services Department,
City of Winston-Salem
222 S. Liberty St. (Foundry Building)
Winston-Salem, NC 27101
or call 727-8004, 727-2440

JOB SEARCH - Provides job-seeking skills training in application and interviewing techniques, self-awareness, goal setting and resume development.

INDIVIDUAL REFERRAL - Training for specific job skills provided by local educational/training institutions. Assistance with training cost available to those who qualify.

INSTITUTIONAL OFFENDERS - Employment assistance to offenders.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM - Provides on-the-job skilled training and work experience during the summer months for youth 16-21 years of age.

Proof of the following information is required when applying:

- Forsyth County residency
- Family income
- Social Security card
- Selective Service registration (for males born after 1959)

Support Services:

- Day Care
- Transportation
- Vocational Assessment
- Job Counseling and Placement Assistance