

Forum

You can save two geniuses

Because two young black geniuses are threatened, I am requesting that 99 other black people join me in making a donation of \$1,000 each to secure their future.

If you can help, call me at (212) 575-0876 after you read this column to make a pledge or to recommend a person or organization to donate \$41,000 to a \$100,000 trust for the maintenance and education of two youths in desperate need.

On Sunday afternoon at the Black Expo U.S.A. at Philadelphia's Civic Center, I told 1,500 cheering black people that the salvation of the black community is the development of black people into "human capital." It was church.

Income and wealth are different, I said. Income is what you earn; wealth is what you're worth. And what you're worth is based on what you know. An informed, educated person will earn large incomes; the uninformed, uneducated will permanently comprise marginalized groups on society's economic and social fringes.

My theme throughout was when we help the least in our group, we do the most for our group. It was church, again. The next morning, April 13, church became real.

"A Child Shines Amid the Shambles," said a six column front-page headline in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* over Kimberly J. McLarin's wrenching story. "Mother Jailed, Money Short, Yet Grades Excel."

"Karesha Lowe is 14, and fatherless and poor, with a mother serving life, a half-sister as a reluctant guardian, a crowded house, an angry brother and an intellect so hungry she thinks algebra is fun," proclaimed McLarin's lead paragraph.

In one way Karesha's life is no different from millions of black youths trapped in a cycle of poverty, rough schools and peer-group pressure to conform to failed expectations and anti-social behavior.

In another sense, put eloquent-

ly by McLarin: "Karesha Lowe is a rose growing through rubble, one that will unfold or be trampled underfoot."

"Trampled underfoot" is a distinct reality, unless there is an orga-

take. To succeed and reach their potential, he and Karesha need a supportive home life and a college education, preferably at a black university, where they will be appreci-



TONY BROWN

Syndicated Columnist

nized intervention in her life to secure her maintenance and her education

McLarin's story tells how Karesha's father was shot to death during a fight before she was 11; how her mother was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison when she was 12; and how the pretty teenager and her 13-year-old brother, Chris, now live in a "dim and crowded rowhouse" with a stepsister who has three children and two grandchildren of her own.

In spite of all of the curves that life has thrown, Karesha makes straight A's at Vaux Middle School, graduated from eighth grade at the top of her class and has been admitted into the best public high school in the city, the *Inquirer* reported. McLarin's article said that "no one would have been surprised if Karesha Lowe slipped into the pit of failing grades and falling hopes long ago. Thousands of other children have."

In spite of the well-adjusted math whiz's accomplishments, she's not out of the woods yet. According to the *Inquirer*, Chris, at 13, is trying to fit in with the losers for peer acceptance. Being "smart" doesn't get the small youngster very far in a world of expensive sneakers and retrograde values.

Failure, jail — perhaps death — are the options of black male children in this social milieu. Karesha is going to the High School of Engineering and Science next year. In a figurative sense, it's problematic what direction her brother will

ated and nourished.

Karesha might make it, but even then, without help, she may not reach her full potential. Her brother's future is even more precarious. Without intervention, it could become a familiar black male statistic. It will cost taxpayers \$25,000 a year to keep him in jail, a lot more than it will cost to send him to college.

That's why I'm inviting 99 other middle-class black contributors to join me, Karesha, her brother, her supportive teachers, (Florence Johnson and Lynne Johnson), Kimberly McLarin of the *Inquirer* and Mary Mason and George Woods of WHAT-AM on national television to make their donations to this trust fund.

I'm asking for money from black people only because black people should save these two young people. These are our children, our potential human capital; this obligation is our responsibility.

If we have \$16 billion to give to white hotels each summer for meetings, we certainly have \$100,000 to save the boy or girl who may discover the cure for AIDS or set up the first space station on Mars.

Call me at (212) 575-0876 with your \$1,000 pledge or the names of those you think might make a pledge. (Tony's Brown's weekly commentaries and one-minute news updates can be heard on the Buy Freedom 900 Network by calling 1-900-454-0411 for \$1.99 the first minutes and \$.99 each additional minute.)

Blacks' image improving

Clear and strong signals indicate that African-American people are on the verge of enjoying a new year of much-improved race relations and a more-inclusive role in the workings and benefits of mainstream America.

I know that recent racial friction has sparked fires of hatred and

the abortion issue and second, by the Anita Hill issue. Their power was demonstrated, in part, by the defeat of ex-Senator Dixon of Illinois who was replaced on the Illinois senatorial ballot by an African-American woman, Carol Moseley Braun.

The action of the print media

professionals who are not their servants but their equals.

In this new barrage of favorable African-American images showered upon televisioners by national advertisers, media owners, and consultants, American is experiencing what amounts to a public relations campaign. This campaign has not been announced to the public but its choreography is pleasantly evident.

The first purpose of this campaign is to soften racial hostility by demonstrating that African-American people are not stereotypical buffoons or duds previously shown on the stage or screen, but are normal, intelligent human beings worthy of respect and admiration.

The second purpose of this campaign is to signal to African-American people that they are not the racial outcasts they once were, but are being recognized and accepted on the basis of their value to society. Someone is attempting to replace African-Americans' hopelessness and agony with the idea that success is available to all.

Both purposes are designed for maximum impact. History demonstrates that public opinion is a very powerful factor in controlling people. They vote for presidents on the basis of opinion, so it controls politics. They spend money on the basis of opinion, so it controls the economy. Public opinion usually dominates human behavior.

With print media, electronic media, and most women of America putting positive faces on African-Americans, the climate will change and the sun will shine brighter.

Just watch the better-balanced media and the politically active women!



MINORITY REPORT

By JAMES E. ALSBROOK, Ph.D.

fighting on college campuses. I know also that various bigot groups have stashed nests of hate mongers in various locations nationwide.

I know that nationwide elections will be held in November and that Willie Horton-like scares will be used. Also used will be Reagan-like pilgrimages to the ghastly sites of murder where Ku Kluxers shot to death three civil rights workers and were implicitly pardoned and applauded by the grinning and vote-seeking Reagan at Philadelphia, Miss.

But greater forces are at work. Unexpectedly appearing on the side of better deals for African-Americans are two of the most powerful forces in America.

They are: 1) The print and electronic media which finally have begun to exercise that social responsibility admired by good journalists. They seem to have begun a public relations crusade to reduce further racial hostility. 2) The women of American — the single largest group identified as a "minority."

Most are motivated first, by

has been shown by the more frequent printing of success stories concerning African-Americans as positive role models. In various cities having large African-American populations, the newspapers have used their African-American reporters to find good feature stories that accentuate the positive. Buffoonery and ignoramus are almost extinct nowadays.

One of the most significant projections of a positive African-American role model appeared Friday, April 10, in the seven biggest newspapers in Ohio. These papers, reaching millions of readers, carried the same full-page photograph of an attractive, dark-skinned, African-American customer service representative who symbolized the information sources at Ameritrust-Society, a billion-dollar bank.

Moreover, television stations and networks have become powerful projectors of the better and more positive phases of African-American life. College-bred, competent, and attractive African-Americans on-camera are confronting white Americans as pro-

Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU

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