

Winston-Salem Chronicle

"The Twin City's Award-Winning Weekly"

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Ernest H. Pitt • Ndubisi Egemonye

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Editorial

Black curriculum

We applaud the minority affairs committee of the school board for moving deliberately forward with specific plans for the inclusion of African-American history into regular classroom instruction.

Studying the contributions of African-Americans lets us in on the reality of history: it was made by many different cultures and both genders, not just white males.

Acknowledging black history also serves a much deeper purpose: it allows black children to view their ancestors as talented people who gave their gifts, and their lives, for America. To integrate black history into social studies classes is to legitimize the contributions of African-Americans and afford black children an opportunity for heightened self-esteem. White children are allowed to see blacks in a completely different light when they study about black scientists who made important contributions 150 years ago.

Black history belongs in the classroom every month: not just in February.

Our opinion

Black history is a rightful part of classroom social studies.

Upward moves

The federal and local housing authority deserve credit for fostering a new self-help program for residents of the four local housing complexes. Self-help, independent thinking and acting, will be our salvation.

Our opinion

Resident manager program is a step in the right direction.

During the next two years, 21 residents will be thoroughly trained in how to run a business. In time, they will build businesses that can contract with the local housing authority to provide much-needed services. We applaud the formation of a corporation between local housing developments. It will better enable them to receive and use federal dollars, and its very existence will strengthen the heart of the black community.

We look to the leadership of Winston-Salem and the community at large to support this corporation in every way possible — it is one vehicle to a very bright future for some very deserving and long-waiting residents.

Dark moments

A tragic — and historic — moment took place last Friday in the federal building here. Three highly visible members of the African-American community, a grandmother and two grandfathers, were sentenced to prison.

They each played different parts, and with varying degrees of understanding, in business deals the government maintained were illegal and unethical.

To those who maintain that these people committed crimes far worse than what whites get away with every day, we ask: how many white grandmothers — grandmothers who literally gave their children's beds to women who were completely down-and-out — how many white women like that have been sentenced to prison?

This fearless grandmother didn't commit murder, never hurt or betrayed anyone: her crime was being a friend to the wrong person.

Our opinion

We will long remember the lessons of the Winston-Salem Four.

Tise, McKellar deaths unintentional

To the Editor:

It is imperative that the Winston-Salem community intensify its efforts to bring the people closer together in terms of better understanding and being able to work together in social and political harmony.

The racial tensions between Blacks and Whites are bad enough, but the tension between the Black community and the police department has reached a point of crisis.

I doubt seriously that the young adults who went fun-riding on a tractor intended to kill a police officer and wound another. I doubt seriously that the five police officers who arrested a black woman, bound, gagged, and put her in a holding cell, really intended to kill her. It is likely that it would have required a professional medicine to realize that a person bound and gagged, with cocaine in her blood stream, could possibly die from positional asphyxia. However as most of us have learned, we must try harder to consider the consequences of our actions.

I think Police Chief Sweat tried to withhold information to prevent more racial tension. Not really understanding how the death occurred and why, he made the judgment to wait. It would have been better to report the occurrence and explain that a complete investigation would take place and all questions would be answered when all information was in. By not coming forward earlier, it looked like he was withholding information for a possible coverup. I think the jury is still out on Chief Sweat. I would recommend to him that he consult with leaders in the black community when making a decision of crisis proportions for an honest and objective opinion.

Our police chief needs to be sensitive to the feelings of all ethnic groups that comprise this city. Police need more criminal justice information and education to better do their job. District attorneys need to do a better and more thorough job of investigating when prosecuting crimes with racial overtones to avoid Darryl Hunt and Rodney King type trials.

The black community has the serious responsibility of teaching young people not to hate the police uniform. Teach them that hate can only destroy some innocent policemen as well. Teach them that when in contact with policemen, hostility breeds hostility and respect breeds respect.

The problems that exist now affect the moral fiber of the community. We will have to live and work together or face further deterioration of the criminal justice system, which in turn will undermine social and economic progress in our fine community.

J. Raymond Oliver

The human factor

To the Editor:

The death of Sheila Epps McKellar in the custody of the Winston-Salem Police Department is a tragic and unfortunate event. Regardless of the fact that she had a



CHRONICLE MAILBAG

Our Readers Speak Out

criminal record, was a drug abuser, and had the HIV virus, she was still a child of God, and every life is valuable and precious in His sight.

As a local pastor and a former executive secretary of the Maryland Branch NAACP, I am concerned with the recent response and statements of our black aldermen and the local branch NAACP. I agree with their statements regarding an independent investigation of this case regarding the death of Ms. McKellar and why the public was not informed in a "timely" manner. However, I take exception to the statement that since four black youth were originally charged with the death of police Lt. Tise, so too, all the police officers involved in the arrest of Ms. McKellar are murderers and should be charged with first degree murder. The NAACP went so far to state, "What's good for the goose is good for the gander."

In response to this statement, I raise two concerns for consideration. First, the cases of Lt. Tise and Ms. McKellar are not related by event nor circumstance and should not be used to create a racial polarization. Secondly, the majority of the police officers involved in the arrest of Ms. McKellar are black. To call for murder indictments against the arresting police officers "collectively" is a slap in the face "individually" to the black police officers involved.

One of those arresting police officers is a member of my congregation, Sgt. L.O. Saunders. He is a devoted husband and father; a devoted police officer with integrity and honor; and a loyal and valued member of St. James AME Church. I take exception to one such as Sgt. L.O. Saunders being labeled "collectively" as a murderer. For Sgt. Saunders and his family, this is a very traumatic moment in their lives, as well as the McKellar family and every other police officer

involved. The officers and membership of St. James AME Church pledge our support to Sgt. L.O. Saunders and his family as long as such support is required.

To the McKellar family, St. James AME Church expresses sincere sympathy and empathy in your hour of sorrow. To the Winston-Salem Police Department, for you, we are praying. To the Winston-Salem aldermen and the local branch NAACP, before making collective and general public statements, first consider the human factor.

Rev. Carrington Carter
St. James AME Church

Citizens vs. gov't

To the Editor:

Forsyth County government should be serving the people of Forsyth County. County employees should be serving the citizens. Instead, we citizens are expected to serve the county. Fellow citizens, we must unite and let our voices be heard. Every dollar taken from the citizens should be a dollar the citizens receive.

Taxes must be stabilized. No one wants a tax increase except government. We want the county to find new ways to generate revenue without taking more from us. For instance, our county needs to support the Sovereignty Program, currently endorsed by 347 taxing bodies and the National Association of Mayors. This program calls for the U.S. Treasury to issue interest-free bonds to local taxing bodies to enable them to work their way out of the mountain of debt that is destroying them and to rebuild their infrastructures.

Waste must be halted. Too much of our money is going to welfare, school officials, county officials, and county offices. Not enough is being spent in the schools themselves for education and in programs for the elderly. We do not

want more buildings, higher salaries for county officials, nor programs that encourage people not to work. Rather, the money should be spent for our children and our senior citizens.

Our county government never consults us about how our money should be spent. But your voice can be heard if you speak up. Send letters to the County Commissioners expressing your concerns. Let them know what you want; you don't have to settle for what we are (not) getting.

The organization "DIG" (Dump Irresponsible Government) is joining with the Constitution Society to bring back "government by the people and for the people." If you are interested in obtaining more information, you are cordially invited to attend our meetings. Our next meeting will be September 14 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the Winston-Salem library, 660 W. 5th Street.

Walter V. Hunter

Newell supports ward

To the Editor:

In response to the letter writers who have seen fit to criticize my defense of the citizens of East Ward, I admit categorically that the constituency I serve gets primary consideration!

This constituency has expressed its confidence in my ability to fight for its member's rights as first class citizens by electing me to the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen for four consecutive terms. They further respect the 15 years of service I have delivered on their behalf.

I am too busy with the problems of the people of East Ward to be bothered by opinions of those who have little to do but espouse the tenets of bigotry and racism and have no concept of compassion.

Virginia K. Newell
Alderman
East Ward

Did you get insulted or did you help?

In August 1991, I spoke to the leaders of 150 national black organizations at a NAACP-sponsored summit conference on self-help.

I proposed that the 350 black groups who spend \$16 billion a year on conventions in white-owned facilities cancel their 1992 annual meetings and use \$3 billion of the \$16 billion to buy hotels and create a capital fund to rebuild our community.

My idea requires that the black middle class reevaluate its behavior and take the leadership role in using the resources already at hand, instead of maintaining its contemporary function as managers of resources allocated by government and corporate programs.

It goes without saying that I was soundly ignored. 1992 came and thousands of blacks returned to the same pattern, taking billions more of consumption-investment to non-black enterprises.

At one 1992 convention of black leaders, a 70-piece all-white orchestra entertained. Of 50 waiters at the event, only two were black. And, of course, speaker after speak-

er blamed the Republican administration for the black community's demise.

The National Bar Association, the nation's black lawyers, met in St. Louis for work and fun at its 67th annual conference. Shortly afterwards, its president-elect

money to black-owned restaurants and businesses in St. Louis. And because of white rejection, a handful of black businesses made a couple of bucks.

In contrast to being insulted into self-help, the Xerox Midwest Concerned Black Employees

claims she was disrespected by the hotel management.

A three-day boycott of the hotel's facilities, other than the 583 rooms already rented, followed. Of course, they couldn't move to a black-owned hotel because blacks don't own one major hotel in America.

The issue for the black lawyers became: should blacks spend their money in hotels that disrespect them?

In retaliation, these well-heeled professionals took some of their

responded to my proposal to rearrange their convention dollars in black institutions. Instead of meeting in a plush white-owned Chicago hotel, they moved to a black-owned institution with dormitory facilities.

While white hotel managers, security guards, and the St. Louis police were banging on the door of NBA president-elect Paulette Brown's suite at the Adam's Mark hotel and threatening to physically throw her out, Wilberforce University president John L. Henderson

and his staff were welcoming the Xerox black employees to a three-day live-in on the campus of the nation's oldest black college.

Aside from the symbolism, these black corporate managers from Xerox set aside a portion of their registration fee for a scholarship fund for young blacks who don't have the money to go to college. The group plans to donate \$600,000 in scholarships to this black college where the mean income of the students' families is a scant \$16,000.

The Xerox employees commissioned a black artist and unveiled a painting from which prints will be reproduced and sold to aid Wilberforce's students. And a good time was had by all because anything less would not qualify as a black meeting.

How many blacks who attended their conventions can say they met and greeted old friends, took care of organization business, and left behind \$600,000 to train our youth and maintain the institutions that will insure our future as a people?

TONY BROWN

Syndicated Columnist

