

LETTERS/OPINIONS

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Editorials

Artful Expressions

Many admirers are amazed by an art exhibit on display in the RJR Gallery of the Sawtooth Building. Not only are they amazed by the designs and paintings, but most are surprised that the artwork was done by jail inmates. So astonishing are the works, they even attracted Mayor Martha Wood and Arts Council President David Hudson.

The display is the manifestation of creative thoughts from the minds of the inmates. The exhibit, called Project Plant A Seed, shows how young men — mostly African Americans — can use their talent to enhance life and not destroy it. But too often, inmates do not have the opportunity to show their talents because they are not being rehabilitated while in prison. In most systems, inmates are not encouraged to become productive or to use their time to better themselves. Instead, they only learn how to become better criminals. Black Brothers Involvement, two motivational speakers who came to Winston-Salem last week to talk about drugs and violence, was absolutely correct when they told youths in the city that "prison is a business. They make money off of you being (in jail)."

Prison should be more than "three-hots and a cot." It should be a place where a misguided person — or even a hardened criminal — can go, and with proper rehabilitation, can come out to be a productive citizen.

Everyone in prison has some talent, and they should be afforded the opportunity to use it. Many of the youths know they are talented, but it's usually overlooked. So they resort to other means to get attention.

Correctional officers like Leon McCullough should be commended for showing interest in inmates and taking time out to steer them in a positive direction. If not for officers like Mr. McCullough, the talents of many inmates would continue to go unnoticed.

Revitalization Needed

It's not very difficult to notice that Liberty Street could stand a little sprucing up. It also could use some additional businesses along the stretch from the airport to downtown. That's why it is important that a recently formulated citizen's advisory committee pay more than lip service to problems in the area when it begins discussing ways to improve the corridor this Tuesday. The committee must come up with some concrete goals for this vital business district to ensure its future. If attention is not paid to it now, within a few years the community could go the way of the once-thriving business district of Patterson Avenue.

The committee, made up of mostly African-American business owners in that area, must give the City-County Planning Board concrete and viable suggestions to improve the area. The business owners — and the entire community — must then hold city officials accountable for implementation.

We all know that City Hall does not always deliver on its promises. But chances are greater if there is significant interest by people in the community, and if politicians know that they could lose votes if the goods aren't delivered.

After several meetings over the next few weeks, the committee will make recommendations for improvements. It will then be a must for blacks to attend a series of public hearings to have a say in what will likely take place in their neighborhood.

After the votes are in, it'll be too late to change it. Let your voice be heard.

Thanks to W-S for the Excellent Job in Hosting CIAA

To the Editor:

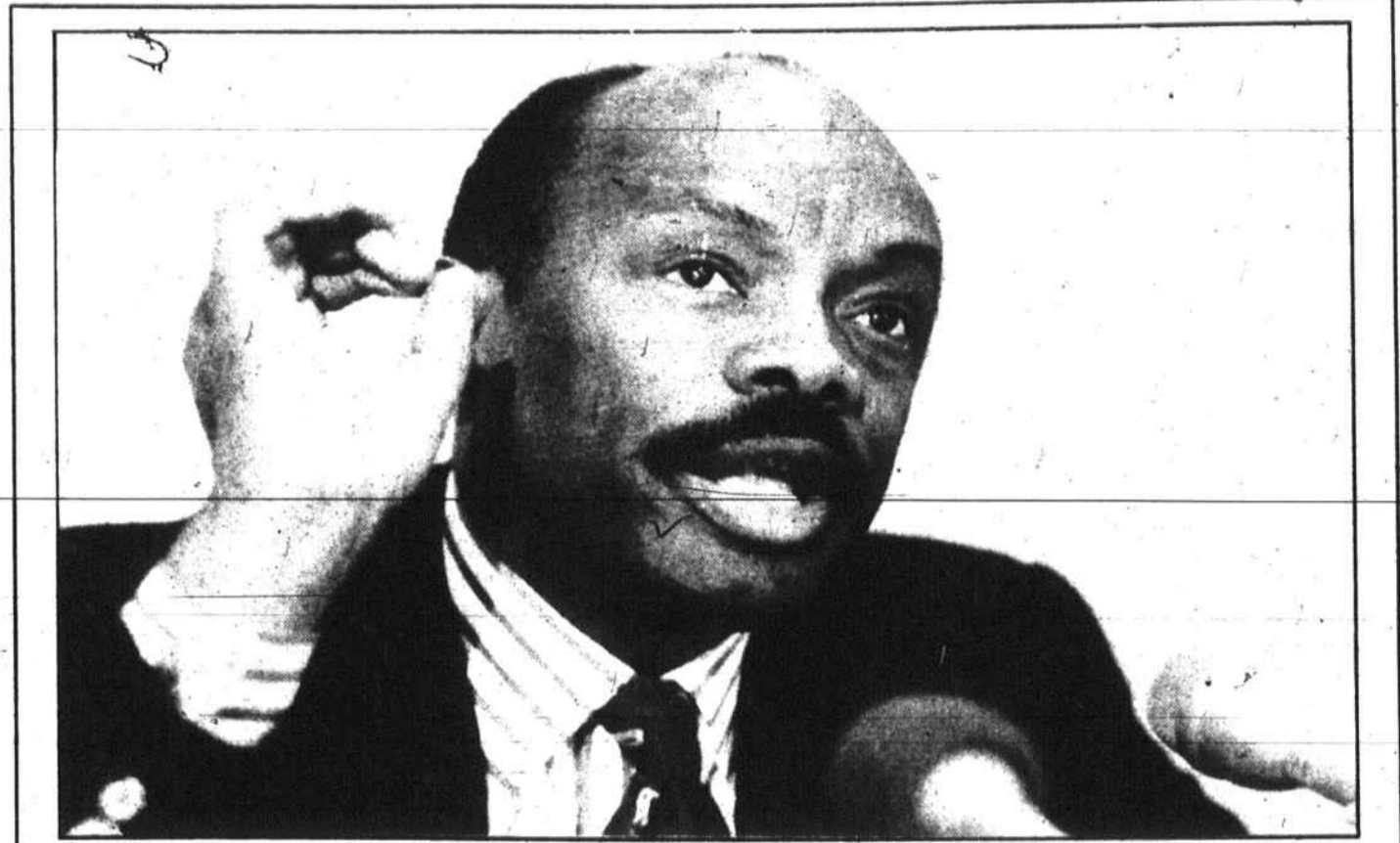
Thanks to you and your associates in Winston-Salem for the excellent job you did in hosting the CIAA. The time your group invested in planning and implementing this project was most evident. We have attended CIAA tournaments for well over 20 years in places like Richmond, Hampton, Norfolk and Greensboro. The receptivity and warm hospitality extended by restaurateurs, hotel staffs and volunteers greatly exceeded the level of receptivity we have previously experienced. Although Helena and I are always at home in Winston-Salem, it was refreshing to see the friendly and helpful support that was extended CIAA participants whenever they needed directions, or other small but important accommodations. Especially beneficial were the extended hours of service at restaurants.

Finally, Winston-Salem is to be congratulated for the overall spirit of unity, cooperation and mutual support that was demonstrated by all involved. The Winston-Salem leadership is to be commended for their vision of what the CIAA could mean to your city, the effort put forth to win the tournament, and the resolve to make a very favorable lasting impression. Thanks for a job well done.

Issiah Tidwell
Charlotte

Crime

To the Editor:



You heard of Phil, Oprah and Geraldo, now meet Willie Brown, shown in this 1987 file photo, talk show host. The speaker of the California Assembly, Brown, is getting his own show on KCRA-TV, starting March 14. The NBC affiliate in Sacramento will broadcast "Willie Brown" weekday mornings for 13 weeks.

I'm was recently in the Dept. of Corrections serving a 10 year sentence for common law robbery. I'm aware of the growing numbers of crime in N.C. and internationally. It's a central time and not enough of support to equate the problems that we are faced with. This is not a time for politicians to go into panic causing them to force legislation into early sessions addressing crime. Enforcing and making new law will not eliminate crime although I do believe it will minimize it. We do

not have dedicated black leaders who voluntarily generate positive impact. Black people do not realize that without our input "black-on-black" crime is only going to kill our crops of generations. It's very sad to think about Martin Luther King, Jr., Paul Robinson, Malcolm X and Miss Jane Pittman to mention a few of what they stood for and the mental and physical torture they went through in order for us to live in a better society. Equally and justly. Until we learn of our culture

and true identity we are gonna continue to feel "inferior", and stagnant of the mind. In essence that truth needs to be announced more often as we need to be constantly reminded that if we as a people do not put down the pistols, drugs and etc. . . and pick up the books, then you can't blame the "white-race." The mind is the most deadliest weapon of all. Let's strongly teach in. Remain teachable and exercise it.
Billy E. Thompson
Hazelwood

Mobilizing to Win Reparations for African-Americans

Speaking at the March on Washington in 1963 in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, Martin Luther King leveled the following charge against the United States Government: "When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir... It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note... Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check: a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.'... We've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

No doubt Martin Luther King was referring to the government obligation to ensure the basic human rights of jobs/income, housing, education, healthcare for all people. Given the history of slavery and genocide suffered by Africans in America, however, the "check" must also include reparations to repair the damages of the holocaust of enslavement. This is a sacred promissory note which was sealed by the blood of our ancestors and is due to the sons and daughters of Africa who survive here in the U.S. It is an obligation which we cannot afford to allow America to default on, for there are more than sufficient funds in the storehouse of land, property, securities, and capital to pay the debt owed to those whose free labor helped to build the edifice of capitalism in this country.

Reparations will not be granted simply because of the righteousness of our claim. African Americans must mobilize and organize to engage the struggle to win reparations from a

nation that is reluctant, even unwilling to recognize our claim. For the past several years Cong. John Conyers, working with the National Coalition of Black for Reparations in America (N'COBRA), has introduced H.R. 40, a bill which would establish a Presidential Commission to study the impact of slavery on Africans in America. The objective of this bill is to force America to recognize the damages done to African Americans through the slavery and to secure suitable compensation for the damages. H.R. 40 will finally get a hearing before a Congressional Subcommittee in February.

A hearing, however, is not reparations. My fear is that there is not a sufficient groundswell of support coming from the African American community and our allies to compel Congress to take up and pass the Reparations Bill. To achieve that goal we need a massive grassroots education campaign spearheaded by N'COBRA to mobilize millions of African Americans behind the drive to win the reparations. Local workshops and conferences must be organized in scores of communities across the country. Black people should be armed with a definition of reparations, a rationale for why African Americans are entitled to reparations, what forms reparations can take and examples of other people, like the Japanese-Americans and Native Americans, who have received some kind of reparations or compensation.

Reparations must be on the mind of millions

of African Americans and reparations must be at the top of the agenda of a wide range of organizations, agencies and associations in Black America. Hence we must reach out to the community-based organizations, churches, civic and fraternal associations and professional organizations to deepen their their knowledge about reparations. Black elected officials at all levels must be in the frontlines of the struggle to win repara-



VANTAGE POINT

By RON DANIELS

Resolutions supporting reparations should be introduced at city councils, county commissions, state legislatures and boards of education. The Louisiana State Legislature, the City Council of Cleveland, Ohio and the Board of Education of Detroit have already passed resolutions in support of the Conyer's bill. No politician should expect to receive Black votes without taking an affirmative position on the Conyer's Bill.

The reparations issue should also be incorporated into every major African American Holiday Commemorative observance. Martin Luther King Day, Malcolm X Day, African Liberation Day, June tenth, Kwanzaa, every time we meet/gather for significant occasions reparations should be on the agenda.

(Ron Daniels is a national syndicated columnist.)

We Need to Invest in Each Other and Our Needs

The keys to success are all around us in the capitalistic society, all we have to do is put them to use. For example, "Every investor should have a variety of investments," says a major stock firm. If Black Americans adhered to this pure, and proven, American Capitalist principle, more of us would have full economic and. Probably social, parity with White America.

Although down from the 1980s, the median family worth for white Americans is \$40,000. For blacks, it is 10 percent of that for whites, or less than \$4,000. In fact, in too many instances in Black America, we have a negative net worth, meaning that we owe for more than we own.

According to David Swinston, dean of the School of Business at Jackson State University, "In general, the current status of African Americans has not really improved over the last decade. In terms of the relative inequality, that is the position of African Americans in comparison to the position of white Americans, the degree of inequality increased since the 1980s. In essence, blacks have lost ground." But for blacks to make up lost ground, we don't need to continue the same old, "Somebody done done me wrong," song. We need to stop letting our collective pre-

occupation be focused around whether the Confederate flag flies atop the state capital building and whether the Jewish community doesn't like the words some black speaker says. We need to start processes of self-sufficiency to a level where we won't give a damn about what another racial group says, or feels, about us.

We need to invest in each other, and in our collective needs. Black enterprise and collective capitalism are not new concepts to us. They are just untried to any meaningful extent in this generation of our race.

Note the words written on this subject decades ago by Carter G. Woodson and then those of Frederick Douglass. "At this moment, the Negro must begin to do the very thing which they have been taught they cannot do. They still have some money, and they have needs to supply. They must begin immediately to pool earnings and organize industries to participate in supplying social and economic demands," said Woodson. "We must become mechanics, we must build as

well as live in houses; we must make as well as use of furniture, we must construct bridges as well as pass over them, before we can properly



BUSINESS EXCHANGE

By WILLIAM REED

live or be respected by our fellow men," said Douglass.

Members of our race should stop dancing around the subject and address our collective need for wealth, head on.

Marcus Garvey said: "Up you mighty race." Black economic development will not start by waiting for Capitol Hill to make a law for blacks to be rich. It will start with groups of us coming together to build and supply the demands of our own people.

(William Reed is a national syndicated columnist.)

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