

FORUM

Tribute to Our Daddies: Happy Father's Day

"Strong men-keep coming..."
Robert Hayden

Father's Day. Daddy's Day. A day set aside to pay tribute to those men whom the Creator has blessed with

timized and vilified, stigmatized and stereotyped in virtually every facet of this society.

Indeed, which all the respect and honor due to our African-American women - those mamas, grandmas, aunts and sisters who raised and reared so many of us; and, who yet remain the lifeblood of our community. Father's Day offers us an opportunity to pay homage to those daddies, stepdaddies, uncles, grandpas and brothers who dared to be men, when society bid them to be boys.

Our people's historic and present-day experiences are replete with evidence of the character and courage of African and African-American fathers.

From those countless African warriors who fought the colonizers on the coasts of Sierre Leone and Angola to Fredrick Douglas, Martin Delany, Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson, Martin King and Malcolm X, male descendants of Africa have stood tall and withstood all in their/our attempts to balance personal achievement, family accord and community advancement.

But, really Father's Day is not necessarily about honoring those "famous" heroes to whom we owe so much. Rather, it is about saying "thank-you", "I Love You" to those daddies who slaved in southern fields and factories, and labored in northern mills and mines; those men who picked rice and cotton, cut tobacco and sugar cane, from 'can't see in the morning to can't see at night'. Yes, those not-so-famous heroes who sacrificed dearly, who defied law and custom, practice and policy, in their attempts to make a better day, a better way for us - their children.

On a personal note, this writer has truly been blessed with a supportive father - my namesake - still alive, at age 72, kicking and "struggling" (to use his favorite line), as well as the yet vivid memories of both my maternal (Oscar) and paternal (Ed) grandfathers; and numerous uncles, men who tangled with hard times and tussled with hardship. Men who stood tall when society demanded they not stand at all. Men who taught me about manhood; lessons that I must now teach my 4-year-old son, Malik (and for that matter, my 12-year-old

daughter, Thema, as well).
So, on this Father's Day, 1994, let us for one moment cast aside the negative images and media distortions of the "sorry", "jive-ass" black male. Indeed, let us even forget - just for a day - about the harsh realities of those males who made babies - yet do not have a clue as to what real fatherhood/manhood means. Those males who in their arrogance and/or ignorance abuse and misuse their spouses, mothers, sister, friends and children.

Instead, let us remember "daddy", "papa", "father" - or those coaches, teachers, mentors and mothers who took their respective places - and say "Happy Father's Day". For daddies - especially, African-American daddies need love and appreciation, too.

"Strong men keep coming..."
"Strong men getting stronger..."

(Clifton E. Graves Jr. is a life-long member of the NAACP and a member of the local Executive Committee.)

GUEST COLUMNIST

By CLIFTON E. GRAVES JR.

the incomparable pleasure and awesome responsibility of fatherhood. And while this day is obviously of importance to fathers (and children) of all races and creeds, Father's Day in the African-American community takes on a special significance. In both the historic and present-day context here, African-American males have been and still are constantly and continually vic-

Now is the Time to Free America's Political Prisoners

The United States government denies the existence of political prisoners - people who are in prison because of their ideas or beliefs. But the world recognizes that the United States does imprison people for their political beliefs.

Amnesty International, the human-rights group, defines a political prisoner as "any prisoner whose case has a significant political element..." The Prisoners of Conscience Project has already identified more than 100 such prisoners in the United States today and according to the National Conference of Black Lawyers, 75 of them are African American or Puerto Rican.

Most of the U.S. political prisoners share two things in common - they were subjects of the FBI's COINTELPRO operation, which targeted activists in racial/ethnic communities in the 1970s and 80s and they have remained in prison longer than those convicted of similar crimes but who are not politically active. Many of them have been imprisoned in very harsh conditions and in the nation's highest security prisons.

These are only three of their stories:

Geronimo Pratt served two tours of duty in Vietnam, ultimately earning two Purple Hearts and both the Bronze and Silver stars. After returning home, he went to California, where he became active in the Black Panther Party, one of the groups targeted by J. Edgar Hoover's counterintelligence program.

In 1968 a white Santa Monica couple was gunned down while playing tennis and the wife was killed. Pratt was arrested as the murderer. But Pratt, now called Ji Jaga, denies that he was even in Los Angeles or that he has ever killed anyone other than in Vietnam and charges that the FBI had targeted him under their COINTELPRO program. The FBI's own evidence agrees.

Pratt's lawyers claim that, in fact, he was framed for this murder, with the government using evidence provided by an FBI paid informer who had his own vendetta against Pratt and suppressing other key evidence which was crucial to Pratt's defense. Moreover, there is evidence that during the

trial the FBI infiltrated Pratt's legal team so that his defense was compromised at every level.

In the 24 years since Pratt's imprisonment, he has seen men who have murdered two or three people released after serving 17 or 18 years. Yet, Pratt's 12 parole hearings and numerous attempts to get a new trial have all failed and he remains incarcerated.



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

Because of new evidence and suppressed evidence, the Los Angeles district attorney agreed to review Pratt's case. But after six months of review, no decision seems to be forthcoming and Pratt's supporters are beginning to wonder if they have reached yet another dead-end.

Leonard Peltier is an Anishinabe-Lakota native American who was one of the leaders of the American Indian Movement, which was also targeted by the FBI's COINTELPRO operation. Like Pratt, Peltier claims that he was framed on false murder charges, which are the result of an encounter between FBI agents and Indians on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1975 in which two agents and a native American were killed. Peltier was convicted of killing the two agents on circumstantial evidence and is now serving his 18th year to two consecutive life sentences. Like Pratt, Peltier has been singled out by the FBI, according to its own documents. Believing that he had no chance of a fair hearing, Peltier left the country and went to Canada seeking political asylum. While there, the U.S. government presented an affidavit signed by a native American woman who claimed she had seen the murders. She later admitted that she had never

seen Peltier before in her life.

Since his conviction Peltier has appealed his case four times and while the Eight Circuit Court of Appeals found that previous trials have been riddled with misconduct and improprieties, it refused to grant a new trial. However, Peltier's appeal for Executive Clemency now sits on the desk of the Deputy Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice and a Leonard Peltier Freedom weekend is planned in Washington, D.C. for June 25-26.

Alejandrina Torres is the wife of a clergyman and mother of two daughters and was arrested in 1987. Like a number of other Puerto Rican political prisoners, she has been accused by the government of conspiring to use force against the lawful authority of the U.S. government of conspiring to use force against the lawful authority of the U.S. government over Puerto Rico. She spent two years of her imprisonment in the Women's High Security Unit at Lexington, Ky., an underground unit where lights are kept on 24 hours a day and which has been condemned by Amnesty International and other human rights groups. She is not scheduled for release until 2004.

Abuse of political power is wrong anywhere, but it is especially wrong in the United States of America. Those who label dissent a crime and then subvert the law themselves are the real offenders. Our country was founded by those who were dissenters. To be a voice for the voiceless, write:

On behalf of new trial for Geronimo Ji Jaga (Pratt):

Mr. Gil Garcetti, Los Angeles County District Attorney, 210 W. Temple, Room 18-1000, Los Angeles, Calif. 90012

On behalf of executive clemency for Leonard Peltier: President Clinton, White House, Washington, D.C. 20500 and to The Hon. Janice S. Gorecick, Deputy Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530.

On behalf of the Puerto Rican political prisoners, also write to President Clinton.

(Bernice Powell-Jackson is Executive Director for the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice)

The President Should Be Judged By His Actions in Office

It's hard to open a newspaper or turn on the TV news without getting a heavy dose of stories impugning the President's character or past behavior.

The media has latched on to Whitewater as if it were a raid on the Treasury instead of a bad investment made many years ago. It's fastened on hints of favoritism in Arkansas as if it didn't exist everywhere else. And it's seized on claims of sexual harassment that appear to be motivated by financial gain and political warfare.

Nowhere in the barrage of accusations, hints, and innuendoes is there the suggestion that the President has done anything ethically or morally wrong during his presidency.

But that's the only thing that counts.

Americans are watching what amounts to a massive campaign to discredit and destroy the President they elected on a platform of change.

Instead of change, they're getting rumors and titillating stories. The serious business of governing and of public policy is being turned into a farcical circus.

My attitude is that enough is enough.

It's time the American people mounted a backlash against this efforts to revoke the outcome of the 1992 election.

It would be tragic if we allowed the serious business of governance to be distorted into a TV soap opera that distracts the Administration, the Congress, and the public from the problems that face the nation.

There has to be a distinction between wrong-doing in office, such as the Watergate scandal that forced Richard Nixon out of office and the Iran-Contra scandal that clouded Reagan's second term, and vague accusations of dubious past conduct by Mr. Clinton.

The president should be judged by his actions in office. If past presidents were held to the kind of standards pressed by today's media, none

would have been able to govern.

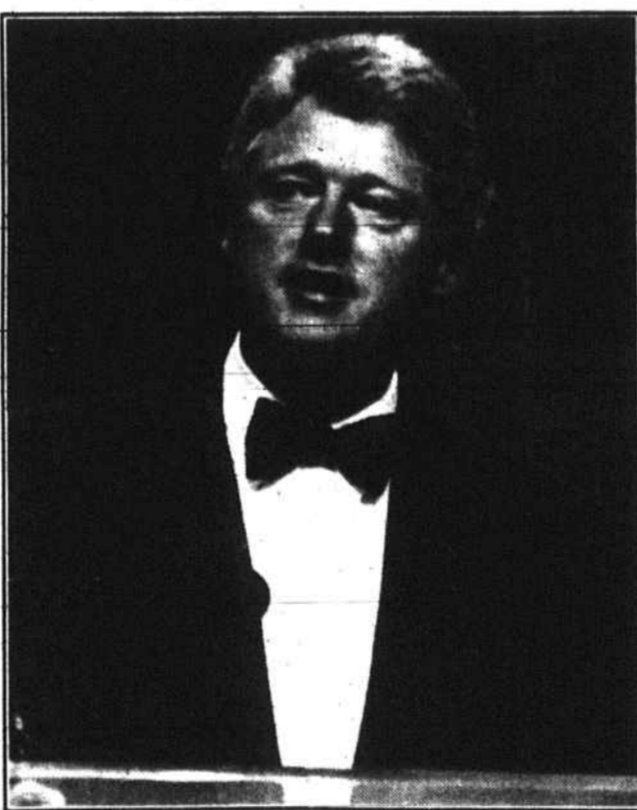
Virtually every president in our history could be subjected to the kind of attacks now being made against President Clinton, and many of them were guilty of transgressions far more serious than those he is accused of.

If the president is frustrated by these attacks, who can blame him?

He has set ambitious goals for his Administration and has performed admirably in moving those goals forward.

He's made his Administration a model of diversity, put the economy back on track, presented a plan to overhaul the health-care system, and much else.

But instead of being judged on its merits, his Presidency is being under-



President Bill Clinton

mined by irrelevant harpings on past events.

There's little doubt that much of the controversy is driven by right-wing zealots practicing the nastiest form of partisan politics. Another element is the pack journalism that makes molehills into mountains in an effort



TO BE EQUAL

By JOHN E. JACOB

to raise ratings.

So Americans who voted for change and against gridlock are in danger of losing change and getting more gridlock.

It's time to let Clinton govern; to judge the President on his record, and to allow him to make that record.

A special prosecutor of unquestioned probity is investigating the Whitewater affair. Let him get on with that job while the President gets on with his.

Sure, it's a lot easier and, for some people, more fun, to seek entertainment in purported scandal than it is to study the details of health care or welfare reform.

But that's no way to educate the public. It's no way to run a country. And it's now way to get the change American needs.

(John E. Jacob is former president of the National Urban League.)

Winston-Salem Chronicle

THE CHOICE FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN NEWS
USPS 067910

617 N. Liberty Street
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102

The Winston-Salem Chronicle is published every Thursday by the Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc.

The Winston-Salem Chronicle was established by Ernest Pitt and Ndubis Egemonye in 1974.

The Chronicle is a proud member of:
• Audit Bureau of Circulation • National Newspapers Publishers Association • North Carolina Press Association • North Carolina Black Publishers Association

National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc. •
45 West 45th St. • New York, NY 10036
(212) 869-5220

How to Reach us...

910-722-8624 • Fax 910-723-9173

NEWS STAFF
DAVID DILLARD
VERONICA GLEMONS
723-8428

CIRCULATION
WALTER MCKLE • VANELL ROBINSON
TODD FULTON • PATRICK EDMUNDS
722-8624
(Call to start or stop delivery or to report a delivery problem)

SALES STAFF
JUDE HOLCOMB-PACK • CAROL DANIEL
WILLIE WILSON
722-8628

BUSINESS OFFICE
LEKE JOHNSON • TAMAH GRAY
TAMIKA HICKS • CHERYL BROWN
722-8624

PRODUCTION

KATHY LEE SUPERVISOR • CHARLOTTE NEWMAN
• SCARLETT SIMMONS • CRYSTAL WOOD

To subscribe...

722-8624
Call for new subscription information or any questions about your current subscription.

Subscription Rates
Single Copy 75 cents
In County

2 years	\$40.95
1 year	30.72
6 mos.	20.48
3 mos.	10.24
Out of County/State	\$45.95
2 years	35.72
1 year	25.48
6 mos.	15.24
3 mos.	7.62

Winston-Salem Chronicle

HOME DELIVERY SUBSCRIPTION ORDER

YES, Please send me the **Winston-Salem Chronicle**
 2 Year-\$40.95 • 1 Year - \$30.72 • 6 mos. - \$20.48

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

check enclosed • please bill me

Mail to: Subscription Department
Winston-Salem Chronicle
P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

Add \$5 if delivered outside Forsyth County