

# OPINION/LETTERS

## Winston-Salem Chronicle

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### Rwandan Water Project

The Rwandan Water Project recently conducted by churches in and around Winston-Salem was one of the greatest collaborative humanitarian efforts in a long time in the African-American community.

Everyone worked together for this worthwhile cause. The ministers worked tirelessly to see to it that enough water was collected to make a difference in that starving country. For weeks, many church basements were filled with water as their congregations actively participated in a project to help out. Those who didn't collect water, took up offerings to buy truck loads of water.

After hearing about water collected but not able to be shipped to Newark, N.J., area truck drivers volunteered.

And Maya Angelou, who was the brain child behind the project, showed once again why she is the remarkable woman she is.

The project began simple enough. Ms. Angelou had been talking on the phone with her son out in California. He was distraught over the suffering of the children in Rwanda and wanted desperately to do something about their plight.

Ms. Angelou then talked with her minister, the Rev. Serenus Churn Sr., and shortly thereafter was born the Rwandan Water Project.

The 194,000 pounds of water still has not been flown to Rwanda, but that should be taken care of soon.

But for this community to be galvanized into conducting what turned out to be a project of monumental humanitarian proportion is indeed a plausible effort.

The coming together for this effort was truly remarkable. Not only were churches in Winston-Salem involved in the project. It involved churches from Greensboro, Reidsville, Burlington, High Point, Mount Airy, Madison and Martinsville.

The Ministers' Conference, headed by the Rev. Ronald Davis, wants to make sure that efforts to help the continent of Africa does not end with the Rwandan Water Project.

Davis organized African-American churches to follow in the tradition of Henry McNeal Turner and Mary Church Terrell to spearhead an effort that would allow African-Americans to directly help their kith and kin in Africa.

The Ministers' Conference recognizes the responsibility the black church has to Africa and wants to have an ongoing relationship with African countries. The group of ministers will continue to look at policies this country has with African nations. One concern the group has is that while Egypt or Israel receives several billion dollars from the United States, the rest of the African countries combined receives less than one billion dollars.

The Rwandan Water Project shows what African-Americans can accomplish when we put our minds to it. Focus on a problem and work toward a resolution. So often, we talk about problems in our communities and worry over them.

The Rwandan Water Project was a clear example that problems are not to be worried over — but solved.

We should use that same drive, effort, energy and organization that went into making the Rwandan Water Project a success to address some problems in the local community, as well.

### Did You Know ...

That sex may be a remedy for some migraine headaches? A study by Dr. James Couch at the Southern Illinois School of Medicine found that eight of 52 women suffering migraines report their headaches were completely gone after making love and 16 reported headache pain had been reduced. Sex may also relieve tension headaches.

### Credo of the Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from antagonisms when it accords to every person — regardless of race or creed — full human and legal rights. Having no person, the Black Press strives to help every person, in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

## Writers Make Appeal to the Housing Authority

(Editor's note: This letter was written to the HAWS commissioners chairman William Andrews and board members.)

To the Editor:

Mr. Andrews and members of the board, I hope and trust things are well with you.

Unfortunately, all is not well within the Housing Authority as recent reports of the unpaid suspension of Attorney Clifton Graves in both the *Winston-Salem Journal* and *Winston-Salem Chronicle* attest.

It is evident that professional, if not personal, problems exist between Attorney Graves and his supervisor, Executive Director Art Milligan.

Sad, if not tragic, is the situation where here two talented young African-American men, all too rare in responsible, professional positions in Winston-Salem's public sector, seemingly cannot get along.

My family and I are personal friends with Attorney Graves, his wife and children. We sponsored a "welcome back Clifton and Sylvia" celebration at our home when they returned to the City.

This would not allow me to condone or excuse unprofessional behavior on the part of my buddy.

However, for Mr. Milligan to be the arbiter of fact in a dispute between he and Attorney Graves seems blatantly unfair.

The New Testament admonishes all of us to abstain from the very appearance of evil or impropriety.

This letter, therefore, is an urgent request for you to provide Clifton and his legal counsel, Attorney Irv Joyner, an independent arbitrator for this grievance procedure.

I hope you can see your way clear to act on this as soon as possible in the interest of community peace with justice.

Carlton A.G. Eversley  
 Dellabrook Presbyterian Church



Clifton Graves

## CHRONICLE MAILBAG Our Readers Speak Out

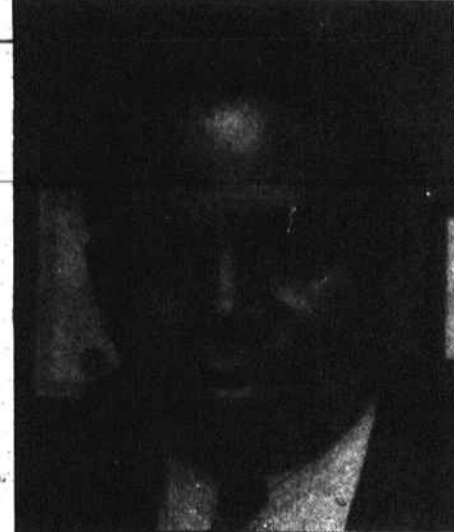


President Clinton, center, joins the Rev. O'Neil Mackey Sr., right, in a hymn during Sunday morning services at the Bethel AME Church in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City recently. New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, facing a hotly contested re-election campaign, is at left.

### About letters ...

The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. The letter must also include the name, address and telephone number of the writer to ensure the authenticity of the letter. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to:

Chronicle Mailbag, P.O. Box 1636  
 Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.



Art Milligan

### Irresponsible Choice

To the Editor:

As pastor of United Cornerstone Baptist Church, I've had members who've lived in the public housing and those who've worked for the housing authority. You serve an important role in this city.

Therefore, public disagreement and in-fighting hurts all of us. It grieves me that this note to you is even necessary. However, the suspension of Clifton Graves without pay is well known. People are concerned throughout the community

that a family man with a lucrative job is now suddenly having to do with-out. Clifton is a home-grown lawyer with a long history of civil service.

If Mr. Graves did something wrong, he should be punished. Before that's been determined, certainly a suspension with pay would be in order. Most importantly, an investigation of Mr. Graves should be conducted and concluded by an impartial party. For Mr. Graves' fate to be determined by Mr. Art Milligan, the executive director who suspended him in the first place, would be irresponsible at best.

J. Ray Butler  
 United Cornerstone Baptist Church

## Inner City Poverty isn't Just a Problem for the Poor

The civil rights movement, so instrumental in securing constitutional rights and expanding opportunities for African Americans in the past, is as relevant today as it ever was.

To me, that seems an obvious conclusion based on the continued racial gap in our society, and on the needs of African-Americans and indeed, all Americans.

But in the wake of the NAACP's well-publicized difficulties, some people are beginning to question the movement's relevance.

I see a continuing need for organizations that expose and combat racism.

It's an unfortunate, but undeniable fact of life that racism is still with us, even if it has taken on subtler forms than in the past.

Studies show that when black and white job applicants with equal qualifications apply for a job, the white person gets it more often than the black candidate.

We still face discrimination in housing, lending, and other aspects of life, including the destructive media stereotyping that brands all young black males as potential lawbreakers.

By identifying and combating

racism, civil rights groups help to keep the Constitution alive and hold discriminatory institutions to account.

But there's another aspect to the agenda of most civil rights organizations that makes their role even more relevant in the changed environment of the 1990's - overcoming the poverty that grips the urban and rural poor.

Inner city poverty isn't simply a problem for the poor; the existence of large numbers of alienated, desperately poor people inevitably means that everybody's quality of life suffers.

It is also a threat to the economy, for America's future depends on its ability to compete in a global economy transformed by technology.

To compete successfully, we'll need to ensure that all of our people have high skill levels, since those left behind will be a drag on the rest of us.

So civil rights organizations need to work on those economic problems, helping those pushed to

the margins of our society to enter the mainstream economy.

Too many people forget that the remarkable economic progress made by so many African Ameri-



### TO BE EQUAL

By HUGH B. PRICE

cans in the past generation stems from the heroic work done by the civil rights organizations in defeating Jim Crow laws and opening up opportunities.

Those striking successes helped to create today's large, stable black middle class.

The challenge of the 1990s is to help poor people become economically self-sufficient, especially those who may not have the strong family and community support, quality education, and skills needed to succeed in today's demanding economy.

That task is made more difficult because the manufacturing jobs that used to provide opportunities for people with relatively few skills

and little schooling, have largely vanished.

So has another major force in turning young men into solid, productive citizens - the armed forces.

We often forget that the army served to help generations of high school dropouts learn social skills and work habits.

That narrowing of opportunities affects people of all races, and every organization in the nation should be concerned about it.

They need to be fighting poverty, alleviating the pain of the poor, providing services and advocacy, and influencing public policy to help lift people out of poverty.

Even as we fought for racial justice, economic and social justice have always been important for civil rights organizations, and they are now at the core of our new role in the 1990s.

(Hugh B. Price is the executive director of the National Urban League.)