

FORUM

CIAA: Cultural Ideal for African Americans

The CIAA tournament is much more than great basketball. It is also a blessed expression of black life and culture and a unique example of the purest form of those heavenly-inspired ideals and values that are identified with collegiate sports.

The CIAA was a welcomed break-kind of like a time out—from all the social ills and woes of black people. It was, likewise, a breed apart from the crash commercialism seen from the average black pro-

entire week: those things that are much more important to their long-term life chances and happiness.

Every CIAA player had an equal opportunity to go to dinner, to the theatre, to the museum and to the receptions where he or she could be on the "inside" of the power networks where the brokers looked like themselves, went to the schools they now attend, and rub shoulders with those who represent realistic role models: something that does not exist in the NBA, where most of them will never go anyway.

Virginia's former black governor, state and national legislators, judges and doctors, teachers and principals, dentists, business-world professionals, veterinarians, agents of government and self-employed business persons were there. Even those with arthritis and consumption could be seen cavorting about, giving generously love-affirming embraces to any within reach. Where never was heard a discouraging word as mouths dripped in animated, courteous talk about charity, responsibility, and commiseration for those not present. A black kid could learn a lot at the CIAA to contradict the conclusion that the black world has fallen apart.

The CIAA basketball contests are between black colleges, not just black players. Fifty years is a long time to kids accustomed to a mass cultural ethos of fast burning fads. The cohesion they witnessed has been generated between the players as well as the institutions. Young African Americans had to note the infectious laughter and gaiety everywhere, and I don't think they often hear college-educated black adults greeting each other with that old-fashioned, "Hi ya doin' brother, sister?" That is reserved for the church homecoming

back in the country. And that is the heart of the CIAA secret: most CIAA devotees are nothing but out-of-the-closet, small town, salt-of-the-earth types—dressed like city-slickers!

Mr. CIAA has taken on a mystical and mythical aura. The CIAA kids—old and young—believe in Mr. CIAA and they anticipate his flashy-duds exits from the restrooms the same way kids anticipate Santa Claus dropping down the chimney or the way Clark Kent exists phone booths. This brother ain't real . . . but ain't that the fun of it! American black people need more clean, wholesome fun like that offered by the CIAA.

God bless the pioneers of the CIAA: Mars Hill of Morgan State, John McClendon of NC College, Harry Jefferson of Virginia State, and, of course, Winston-Salem's own Clarence Gaines. Because of them, like the swallows' predictable return to Capistrano each year, the disciples and supporters return each year to the CIAA roast. It is not surprising to see how sure and self-confident they are: sure of who they are, where they are, why they are where they are, and, most importantly, Who they are.

And, because of their strength to play this tournament "just for fun," an almost eternal vision has been born. And, when they all are at once before The Great Scorekeeper, the trumpet will sound to begin a higher set of CIAA games.

And, may the CIAA games—and the values and ideals represented—continue to be played well back here on earth as they are in Heaven . . . forever and ever, Amen.

(Dr. William H. Turner is a regular freelance columnist for the Chronicle).



LIFT EVERY VOICE

By Dr. WILLIAM H. TURNER

fessional basketball players and their too-often outlandish antics and self-centered styles.

In addition, the CIAA competition is singly distinct from the ACC, the SEC, the PAC-10 and BIG-10 conference basketball tournaments. Clearly, black players dominate the UNC, Wake Forest, and NC State teams, for example. But, as one walk through the LJVM Coliseum last week, it was clear to the senses that there were "other games" taking place on the borders that were just as alluring as the question as to who might dethrone Virginia Union.

As a matter of fact, the CIAA players, unlike their white college counterparts, could do other things besides playing games for an

Workfare for Welfare Recipients Gets Support

Food Stamp Fraud

Workfare looks like it's well on its way to becoming reality. Five counties in the state already have workfare and several members of the General Assembly are looking for a way to expand it to the rest of the state.

House Bill 24 calls for able-bodied food stamp recipients to volunteer or perform community service type work in order to receive the aid.

"There are still a lot of concerns that I have about the bill," said Forsyth County Representative Larry Womble. "It seems that we'll be passing the costs along to the local governments and they can't afford much more than they've already got."

Supporters of the bill say the added cost will be minimized because there are several sources of federal money that can be sought to make up the difference. Womble said one of his biggest concerns was the cost effectiveness of the program.

"I'm not sure the federal waivers will come through," Womble said. "And that could mean the money will have to come from somewhere else."

The North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force and North Carolina Women United each presented a wish-list of recommendations they hope the General Assembly enacts.

BY JOE JOHNSON

CAPITOL CORRESPONDENCE



Rep. Ruth Easterling, D-Mecklenburg, has taken the lead on the issues these groups want addressed. But she conceded that it might be difficult to make headway in getting these measures passed.

"Many of the issues before us are affected by the budget," Easterling said. "Despite the atmosphere of cutting taxes, I hope that we'll recognize the genuine need we can fulfill."

Insurance Tax Cut

A \$20 million deadline was avoid last Thursday when the House adopted the unemployment insurance tax cut spelled out in Senate Bill 13.

Three days of partisan bickering threatened to stall the bill and the benefits employers would realize with the tax break. Otherwise, the money could have been transferred to the federal government.

North Carolina's unemployment insurance fund contains about \$1.7 billion, which puts the state's Employment Security Commission on firm financial footing. Thanks to the state's low unemployment rate, the amount in the fund has ballooned to its present level. More money is being collected than paid out.

After the bill got snarled by a number of amendments and motions, Rep. David Redwine, D-Brunswick, suggested that there ought to be a way to clean up the mess.

"It's best that we back out of these amendments or we're going to be chasing this rabbit around until the deadline passes," Redwine said.

Connie Wilson, R-Mecklenburg, finally relented Thursday by withdrawing her amendment.

Wilson's amendment called for a cap to be placed on the unemployment insurance fund.

Smart Start Still Questioned

If it's not Smart Start, the early childhood education program favored by Gov. Jim Hunt, then it probably doesn't stand much of a chance of seeing increased funding. Even Smart Start might have some problems.

"A lot of programs start out with good intentions," said Surry County Sen. Don East. "The jury is still out on Smart Start because we don't have a good way to judge the program yet."

That didn't stop others from pushing forward with their own programs, though.

Industrial Hog Farms Contested

High tech hog wallows have made some folks who live near them hopping mad and they let legislators know about it last week.

Industrial hog farms face few state environmental regulations. Neighbors of these operations, including Northampton Rep. Howard Hunter, claim their groundwater has been polluted by the wastes produced by the thousands of hogs that cycle through the farms.

"This is no longer an agricultural concern or an economic concern," Hunter said. "We're facing a public health concern."

Recent attempts to regulate these large hop operations have failed. Bills were introduced and they were summarily buried in committee.

But this year, Hunter has a plan. He hopes to craft legislation in a way that forces local governing bodies to establish zoning restrictions.

"This is a zoning issue," Hunter said. "You don't see one of these operations located near a country club. They're located in areas that don't have a lot of resources."

Firefighters Could Have New Weapon

Firefighters and emergency medical service personnel could have some "new" weapons to use when responding to fires or other emergencies on school grounds.

Zeno Edwards, R-Beaufort, introduced a bill in the House that would exempt emergency personnel from a provision in the crime bill passed last spring that made carrying weapons on school grounds a felony. Axes and other sharp-bladed tools feel under the description of a weapon according to the language in the crime bill.

Soon they won't have to worry about facing felony charges after fighting a fire on school grounds.

HOUSE ROLL CALL VOTES

HB195 (Public) Provides for the election of superior court judges by judicial districts.
Candidates seeking an office for regular superior court must be nominated and elected by voters of superior court district. Introduced by the House Judiciary I Committee.
Adopted, 83-23. Sent to the Senate for consideration.
Yea: Mike Decker, Theresa Esposito, Lyons Gray, Wayne Sexton
Nay: Pete Oldham, Larry Womble

HB17 (Public) Returns the food stamps fraud felony threshold to its pre-1991 limit. The amount decreases from \$2,000 to \$400. At this level, food stamp fraud becomes a Class I felony under the Structured Sentencing Act instead of a Class I misdemeanor. Effective Dec. 1, 1995.
Introduced by Rep. Julia Howard, R-Davie.
Adopted by affirmation on third reading.
Second-reading vote was 109-5 in favor. Sent to the Senate for consideration.
Yea: Mike Decker, Theresa Esposito, Lyons Gray, Pete Oldham, Wayne Sexton, Larry Womble

HB82 (Public) Allows members of the General Assembly and chairs of county boards of commissioners to administer oaths of office.
Effective Dec. 1, 1995. Introduced by Rep. Frank Mitchell, R-Iredell.
Adopted by affirmation on third reading.
Second-reading vote was 106-6 in favor. Sent to the Senate for consideration.
Yea: Mike Decker, Theresa Esposito, Lyons Gray, Pete Oldham, Wayne Sexton, Larry Womble



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