

OPINION/LETTERS

Winston-Salem Chronicle

ERNEST H. PITT, Publisher/Co-founder NDUBISI EGEMONYE, Co-Founder

ELAINE PITT, Director of Community Relations

MICHAEL A. PITT, Advertising Manager MEL WHITE, Business Manager

Blacks in Corporate America

Federal officials have recently discovered what was "old news" to Black Americans. U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Robert Reich has admitted that minorities and women still are rare in the board rooms and executive suites of Corporate America, despite a "growing awareness" among corporate leaders of the "bottom-line value" of including them in senior management. "Progress has been disappointingly slow," and barriers to advancement persist, the department's Glass Ceiling Commission reported to Reich. The report also found that black men with professional degrees earn 79 percent of the salaries of white men with the same job titles and educational backgrounds. And a study of Stanford University business school graduates found that, more than a decade after graduation, men were eight times more likely than women to be corporate chief executive officers, said the report. The Glass Ceiling Commission, which was created in 1991, presented a report which documented the existence of so-called "glass ceilings," invisible barriers that keep minorities and women out of the highest levels of business. Reich, a Clinton Cabinet member, says, "The world at the top of the corporate hierarchy still does not look anything like America," adding that two-thirds of the population and 57 percent of the work force is minority, female or both.

The report found that 97 percent of the senior managers of Fortune 1000 industrial companies and Fortune 500 companies are white, and nearly all of them are men. In Fortune 2000 industrial and service companies, five percent of senior managers are women, virtually all of them white. Secretary Reich advocates increasing awareness of the benefits of diversity in the work place and enforcing the laws against discrimination in places of employment. "If companies are discriminating against women and minorities, they are acting illegally," Reich said. "The companies have to change. Women and minorities don't have to change. Narrowing the pool of talent from which they draw is among other things, a blunder in competitive tactics," for corporations, he said. Corporate leaders in the automotive, banking, and other industries, such as Hugh McColl of NationsBank, have stated that they now consider diversity in their workforces, and contracting practices, "is a good thing."

Many blacks say that Labor's report simply shows that most of America's employers have unfair hiring, contracting and consumer practices. An African-American respondent to a poll on affirmative action stated that such programs are necessary to overcome the glass ceiling "because of the serious disadvantages that blacks and other minorities have suffered in the workplace and in education. You have white managers in the majority of the high-level management positions and making decisions on promotions, pay raises and management positions. In my experience, they tend to hire and promote and favor those who are most like them either in ethnic or educational background." In an example of employment, contracting and consumer matters that have a negative impact on African Americans, a part of the NAACP's national leadership is asking that blacks boycott Dr. Pepper and Seven-Up products alleging that the soft drink company, based in Dallas, has unfair practices against blacks and charge that the company has no black executives, even though 22 percent of its consumers are blacks. Leaders of the Southeast regional chapter of the NAACP urged the company to start a \$500 million, five-year program to improve minority hiring and contracting. Dr. Pepper's spokesman Gary Rollins acknowledges that there are no black executives in the company's upper management, but stated that 14 blacks are currently working in entry-level, "management-track" positions. The company also contends that two blacks rebuffed offers to serve on its board of directors, that blacks account for less than 8.5 percent of its sales, while 12 percent of the company's 950 workers are black. Dr. Pepper-Seven Up also says that the NAACP is "spreading false information" about it and about 15 percent of its outside spending is done with minority vendors. Secretary Reich said it was understandable that the white men in high corporate positions feel comfortable hiring and working among people like themselves. "But (the report) is also a very strong argument for extra efforts to cast the net more widely and find qualified minorities and women," he said. He said persistent stereotyping of women and minorities, mistaken beliefs that they aren't qualified for management and decision-making posts and fear of change keep the glass ceiling in place, although increasing numbers of corporate officers say they realize the need for diversity. Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, said the report "confirms the obvious" and that it might be "encouraging" for President Clinton who has ordered a review of federal affirmative action in light of calls from congressional Republicans to end them. "Affirmative action is a carrot and a stick. It's a valuable tool to pry open the doors," Ireland said. "It's a means to an end."

—William Reed

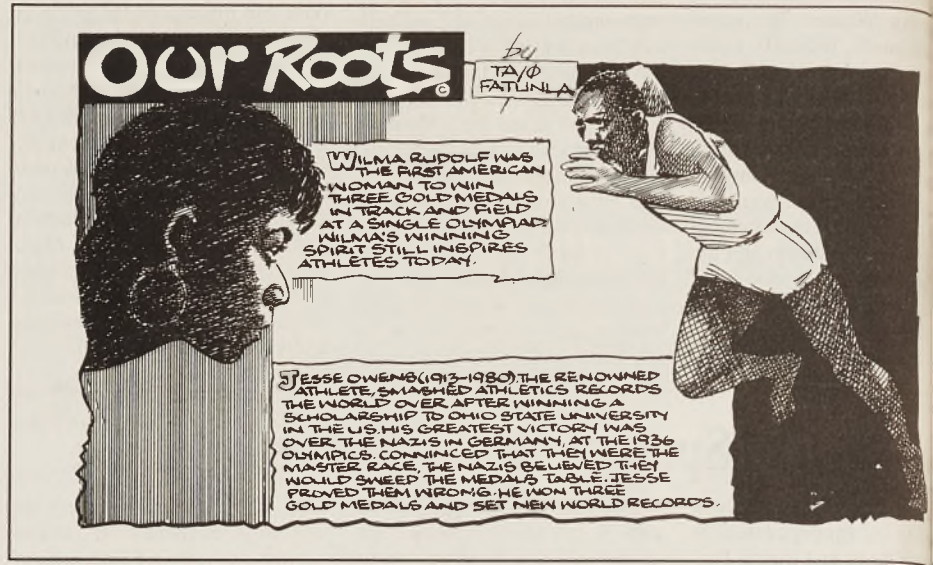
Appreciation for "Taste of Town" Sponsors

To The Editor:

Almost 2,000 people got more than they hoped for at the fifth annual "Taste of the Town" on Sunday, April 2. In addition to sampling food from twenty-five of the area's best restaurants, patrons experienced a taste of hope!

While CONTACT was the primary beneficiary of the biggest and best "Taste" ever, everyone who participated was a "winner!" African American and Caucasian, young and old joined in this multi-cultural feast of food, art, and entertainment. Patrons ate their fill while participating food providers wooed future customers. Bidders in the charity auction found some unbelievable bargains while donors advertised their products and services.

Attendance and fund-raising goals were exceeded as a result of the combined efforts of twenty-five restaurants who tantalized patrons palates, more than a hundred businesses who contributed exciting items for a charity auction, and sixteen sponsors who underwrote the cost of "A Taste of the Town." Such corporate generosity allows 100% of every patron dollar spent on admission and auction items to go directly to CONTACT's life-saving programs.



CHRONICLE MAILBAG

Our Readers Speak Out

Best of all, every dollar of increased revenue generated by this year's "Taste of the Town" will be matched by a challenged grant from the Winston-Salem Foundation! To everyone who made this event possible — foun-

dations, sponsors, restaurateurs, entertainers, patrons and a small army of volunteers, "Thank You."

People often ask why I continue to work in the nonprofit sector and, in particular, for CONTACT. "A Taste of the Town"

always reminds me of my "Because from this position, privileged to witness generosity both of spirit and substance, every corner of the community love."

Rev. James T. Farley

Get Emotionally Involved

"Well, I just don't want to get emotionally involved!"

How many of us have ever used this reason to get out of something we know we should do? It always seems to be reserved for a situation where we want SOMEONE to do something, but WE don't want to be that someone. I noticed this recently while conversing with one of my co-workers about the fact that I was a volunteer Big Brother. He indicated that he had just heard this about me and he wanted to know more about the program. Given the fact that I am a member of the agency's African American Recruitment Task Force (a fact that he was unaware of at that time), I felt this was a golden recruitment opportunity. He was curious about the things my little brother, Ralph, and I do together, how often I see him, what he is like, etc. He said that it sounded like a great program and that a lot of disadvantaged children would benefit from such an organization. His mood then began to turn darker as

he began to think aloud about some of the kids he thought needed big brothers or big

which I know I am the least bit responsible. Some of the things that I take more pride in are the little things; like when he says "Thank-you" without being asked to do so (something that he has been working on for the past part of two years).

Because of my co-worker's seemingly genuine interest, I thought that this was the optimal time to "pop the question."

"How would you like to become a brother too?"

"I don't think I would."

"Why not?"

He laughed nervously for a couple of seconds, trying to think of an excuse, and up with those famous words,

"Well, I just don't want to get emotionally involved!"

I replied, "To me, the emotional investment is what makes it worthwhile!"

(Waldo Lester Jr is a member of Brother/Big Sister of Forsyth County (910)724-7993.)

CHANGING THE ODDS

By WALDO LESTER JR.

sisters: children who craved adult attention and "acted out" to get it, whether the attention was negative or not; or boys he knew when he was growing up, who's fathers were not around to teach them how to throw and catch a ball; and how, although he knew it was wrong, he and his friends teased them because of these shortcomings. He imagined how their lives might have been different had they had more positive adult influences in their earlier years. He went on to say that he admired what I was doing and that I would be rewarded for it later. I told him that I feel rewarded every time I notice a positive change in Ralph for

Who is Doing What for Our Community

The *Chronicle* has afforded us the opportunity to have the Coalition on African American Education name itself, define itself and speak for itself. In sharp contrast, the daily newspaper continuously misnames, mischaracterizes, misrepresents and/or ignores us. If I ever get the chance, I'll ask that papers "education reporter," if she's ever interviewed any school system or school board representative about their "magnet zone redistricting proposal," which began in January and was approved at the end of March. When or if she answers "yes," I'll ask why in the world she hasn't interviewed the Coalition, whose proposal for "high quality, Afrocentric Schools" began in November and was approved by four of the leading organizations in the Black Community (W-S NAACP, W-S Urban League, Ministers Conference, and Citizens United for Justice) by December 1994.

Though unreported by the daily paper, I'm sure the four Coalition presentations had an impact on the School Board March 28. Winston-Salem's African American community has grown beyond individual back door leadership into four cooperative organizations working together. Neither Bill Tatum of the NAACP, "D" Smith of the Urban League, President Joseph Jones of the Ministers Conference, or Dr. John Mender, Rev. William Fails, Mr. Willie Malone and myself of Citizens United for Justice, can be isolated into the private "good ol' boy" networks. Instead, many of the board members of the NAACP and several supporters of the Urban League and C.U.J. were present on March 28. Vitaly important was the pastoral presence of Rev. J.T. Walker of Jones Chapel Missionary Baptist Church; Rev. Sandy Witherspoon of Spencer Memorial Christian Church; Rev. Sheldon McCarter of Cleveland Avenue Christian Church; Rev. Samuel Stevenson of

Grace Presbyterian Church and other African American pastors representing thousands of parish homes, so that the lie can't be told that only Mendez, Fails and Eversley provide Christian concern for public education.

Two weeks ago, I told you "unconscious Afrocentrism" included high expectation of students confined with strict administrative and teacher discipline and the school as a central neighborhood institution. Last week, I began discussing "conscious Afrocentrism" by appreciating ancient

Ethiopia and Egypt, our West African ancestry in Ghana, Mali and Songhay and our resistance to slavery, segregation and racism from 1619-1995. Some of the books which would be helpful to research this history include *The African Origin of Civilization by Cheikh Anfu Diop*, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* by Chancellor Williams; *Stolen Legacy* by George G.M. James; *Black Athena* by Martin Bernal; *A Glorious Age in Africa* by Chu and Skinner; *Introduction to African Civilization* by Jackson, *The Africans* by Ali Mazrui; *Before the Mayflower* by Lerone Bennett and *From Slavery to Freedom* by John Hope Franklin.

More technically and educationally is the conscious Afrocentrism that embraces the research that states many Black children have a different (not deficient) "learning style" in comparison to many white children. Ask Sam of the daily newspaper wanted me to summarize these differences in one or two sentences for him and his audience and I refused to do so. The problem we have in discussing race and/or education in this country, county and city is a rampaging, shallowness and superfi-

ciality. Sincerely interested persons work. They must read. Dr. Janice Hale's book, *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture and Learning Style*, is crucially significant, as are all the writings of Dr. James Kunjufu: *Countering the Conspiracy*, *Destroy Black Boys*; *Building Positive*

GUEST COLUMNIST

By CARLTON EVERSLEY

Image and Self Esteem in Black Children, *Motivating and Preparing Black Youth for Work*, and especially, *To Be Popular or Not? The Black Peer Group*. Dr. Asa Hilliard of Georgia State University and Dr. Mary P. of the University of Georgia have groundbreaking scholarship on Black children and Standardized Testing. Dr. Lomotey of Louisiana State University has been the primary author of articles on and strong Black principals. Dr. Eileen Laran is willing to lead Winston-Salem University's adoption of these schools, creating WSSU's education majors at these schools and offering them guaranteed contracts at least by their junior year. This could be the death of Black male elementary education as well as females.

People interested in hearing Ray Johnson, principal of the high quality Afrocentric Robeson (public) School in Detroit on March 20 should contact the Urban League at 5614 for details.

(Carlton Eversley is pastor of Delta Presbyterian Church)