

News Briefs

Charges against Williams dismissed

Both parties in a 1997 sexual harassment case against Armstrong Williams, the conservative talk show host based in Washington, D.C., have asked the court to dismiss the case. In the consent decree, the plaintiff, Stephen Lee Gregory, and the defendants, Armstrong Williams and Stedman Graham, asked the court for a voluntary dismissal on three grounds: 1. That all parties to the matter have conferred and decided to dismiss this matter with prejudice. 2. That the plaintiff is no longer represented by counsel in this matter, and the plaintiff makes his request for dismissal both knowingly and voluntarily. 3. That the defendants are no longer represented by counsel in this matter, and the defendants make this request for dismissal both knowingly and voluntarily. Akili West, spokesman for the Graham Williams Group and Williams, confirmed that a motion for voluntary dismissal with prejudice (meaning that all parties have agreed to such action and that this suit can never be brought up in court again) was filed Jan. 19 in a D.C. Superior Court. The case was resolved without monetary compensation, and both parties await the signature of a judge to put an end to the matter, said West. Gregory announced the sexual harassment law suit against his former employer, Williams and his company, The Graham Williams Group, at a well-attended press conference held April 13, 1997 in D.C.

Simpson wares to be auctioned

More than 75 lots of sports memorabilia, furniture and decorative arts, rugs and paintings seized from O.J. Simpson's home will be put up for bid Feb. 16 at Butterfield & Butterfield in Los Angeles. The property will be available for public viewing Feb. 12-14. The property, consigned for sale by attorney Michael D. Myers, the state court receiver, is to be sold on behalf of the Brown and Goldman families, who are still trying to collect on the \$33.5

million judgment against him. Simpson was found liable for the deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. The lots comprise about 90 sports trophies from Simpson's college and professional careers, including his 1968 Heisman, the certificate inducting him into the NFL Hall of Fame and a "Player of the Year" award from ABC Sports.

Meharry receives \$1.5 million gift

The Columbia/HCA Healthcare Foundation of Nashville has pledged to give \$1.5 million to Meharry Medical College for the endowment of an academic chair in primary care medicine, according to Dr. John E. Maupin, Jr., president of the academic health center. Dr. Thomas F. Frist, Jr., chairman and CEO of Columbia/HCA, announced the gift Jan. 15 at a dinner for Meharry's Board of Trustees. At the donor's request, the gift will establish the Frank Royal, Sr. M.D., Chair in Primary Care Medicine. Royal is chair of the Meharry Board of Trustees, on the Columbia/HCA board and a long-time friend of Frist.

Black farmers to ink deal

The signing of a trade agreement between nine African nations and African American farmers was the highlight of the first African and African-American Mississippi Delta Economic Development Summit held Feb. 6 in Yazoo City, Miss. The signatories were ranking members of the African World Network Organization and representatives from Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Congo, Mali and South Africa. A representative of Trinidad and Tobago also initialed the pact. In a news release to PANA, Lloyd Moore, chairman of the Moore Group and host of the historic summit said, "We must engage in constructive efforts to help these countries, while at the same time, we help ourselves." The president of the Mississippi Family Farmers, Eddie Carthan, said the needs of both Africans and African-Americans

would be well served through the import and export of agricultural goods between African-American farmers and African nations.

U.N. to look at Iraq sanctions

The U.N. Security Council ended weeks of bickering about Iraq on Feb. 2 with an agreement to form three review panels to analyze U.N.-Iraqi relations. It has set up a timetable which, in effect, postpones most tough decisions until April 15. Although Iraq immediately criticized the Security Council's decision, Iraq's allies on the Council cautiously embraced the plan as a way to move forward. The first panel would deal with disarmament and weapons monitoring; the second would evaluate the current humanitarian situation; and the last panel would address complaints, supported by the United States, about the fate of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and property since the short-lived 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Nigerian government urged to raise wages

The new leadership of the Nigeria Labor Congress has called on the government to keep its word and raise the workers' wages. However, negotiations collapsed after the military government of General Abdulsalami Abubakar reneged on its September pledge to increase wages by more than 300 percent, citing the drop in crude oil prices. Following the collapse of the talks, the government offered a minimum of 3,000 naira, a package labor refused, demanding 3,740 naira, according to one union leader. One U.S. dollar is equal to about 85 naira. Government officials deny that the administration of General Abubakar is dragging its feet over the issue.

"The government, I can assure you, is working assiduously to ensure that the price comes down, but as you know, the sale of petroleum products is now in the hands of the independent marketeers," said one official in the commercial capital of Lagos.

With FHA's new
higher loan limits,
you can buy your
dream home.

How's that for a housewarming gift?



Since 1934 we've helped over 26 million Americans get into new homes. And starting this year, HUD can help you get a home loan for up to \$208,800. Be sure to check with your lender to find out what the FHA-insured loan limits are in your area. We can also help you with any questions you might have. Just call 1-800-HUDS-FHA and ask for our free 100 Questions and Answers brochure. It'll tell you how to get an FHA loan for as little as 3% down. How to choose the right lender. How to prepare yourself for the homebuying process. And much more. In fact, if you're looking for a home, it's all the information you need.



HUD and FHA are on your side.



1-800-HUDS-FHA



A report released last week shows challenges still remain for black businesses.

Credit gap still exists between black and white businesses

By SHARON L. LYNCH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — A decade after the Federal Reserve Bank's groundbreaking study of discrimination in lending, a group says challenges still remain in closing the credit gap between white- and minority-owned businesses.

A report released last Thursday by the Organization for New Equality concluded minorities were less likely than whites to own their own businesses, and if they did, they were less likely to finance them through commercial banks.

The group cited census data showing minorities made up 27.8 percent of the U.S. population in 1998, but owned only 16.3 percent of domestic businesses.

It follows findings from the Treasury Department and the Small Business Administration's 1995 National Survey of Small Business Finance. The survey found that while commercial banks are the most prevalent source of funding for small businesses nationwide, only 41 percent of minority business owners get their financing there. That compared to 51 percent of whites.

Analysts for the Organization for New Equality said the discrepancies are costing the nation some \$8 million jobs, positions they believe would have been created along with the founding of more

minority-owned businesses.

The group acknowledged the banking industry has made great strides in standardizing loan criteria to factor out race, but said certain credit scoring practices are still problematic.

For example, it is illegal for a bank to consider race, color, religion, national origin, gender or marital status in lending decisions, but they can still consider the location of the applicant's residence or business.

Since minorities are more likely to be from inner city or low-income neighborhoods, their chances of credit approval may be hurt when those locations are considered.

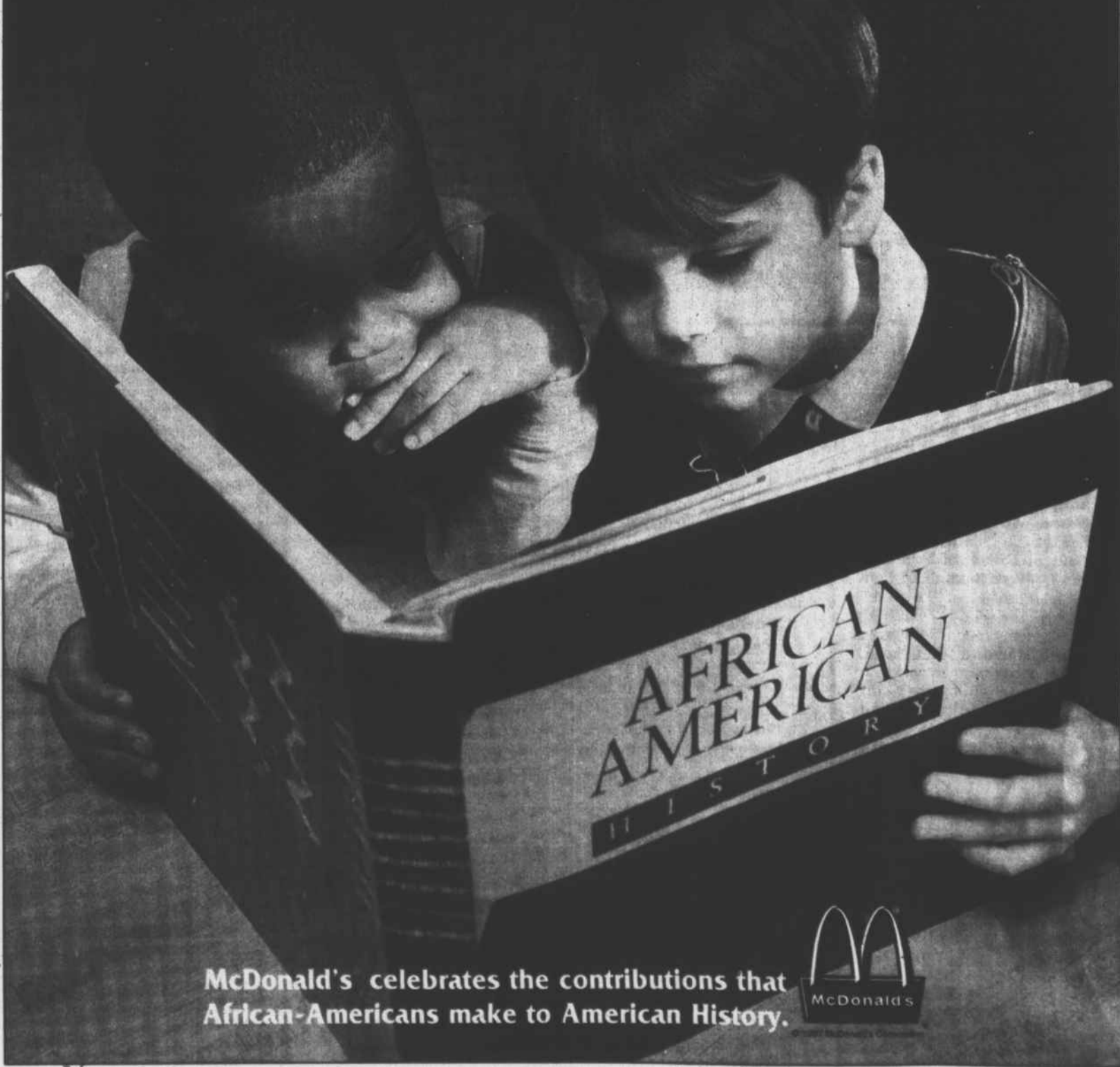
The organization also conducted a survey of its own in 1998. Of 200 minority business owners, they found 89 percent had applied for bank credit but only 43 percent of those applicants received it.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents resorted to alternative financing and paid an average of 59 percent more interest.

To help remedy the situation, the organization suggested that banks be allowed to collect data on the race and gender of credit applicants so research can be done about how well their financial needs are being met.

The group also wants banks to do a better job of informing applicants about credit requirements and how to improve their chances of being approved.

It's not just African-American History.
It's American History.



McDonald's celebrates the contributions that African-Americans make to American History.

