

# FORUM

## Thank and appreciate all teachers



**Nigel Alston**  
Motivational Moments

*"Teaching is the choicest of professions because everybody who is anybody was taught how to be somebody by a teacher."*

— Author Unknown

I live with a teacher. I think she's a very good teacher — one who cares about her students, holds them responsible for their actions and challenges them to live up to their potential and her expectations.

Some days it is not so easy.

A young schoolteacher discovered that in a dream one night. An angel appeared to him and said: "You will be given a child who will grow up to become a world leader. How will you prepare her so that she will realize her intelligence, grow in confidence, develop both her assertiveness and sensitivity, be open-minded, yet strong in character? In short, what kind of education will you provide that she can become one of

the world's truly GREAT leaders?"

That's a tall order, isn't it? The young teacher apparently thought so, waking up in a cold sweat. It is also one that is being met every day a yellow school bus travels throughout the community or a student sets foot inside a classroom.

What kind of education do teachers offer to the thousands of students they encounter each day? The answer lies in the unseen hours of preparation, the money teachers spend on supplies from their well-earned and often insufficient paychecks. It also shows in the lines of frustration on their faces when some students just don't try to succeed, despite the opportunities available today. The list of challenges is endless.

I am who I am today because of the teachers in my life, and I think about the importance of teachers and appreciate what they do daily as the time of year for graduation is upon us. Students are making the transition from one grade to another, from high school to work or college, from college to that first "real" job or the continuation of more educational experi-

ences. The transition is made possible by dedicated teachers who understand the value of education and experience in the preparation of students for a world that is ever changing.

I read the parable of the young teacher, written by Steve Goodier, that began by describing the difference between education and experience: "Education is what you get from reading the small print. Experience is what you get from not reading it!"

I think good teachers provide both, a task often unrecognized and underappreciated. Teachers have probably asked themselves the same question the young teacher thought about: "How might my teaching change if I KNEW that one of my students were this person?"

His thought process illustrates the challenges met daily in this most important of professions, teaching. He believed a student would need experience as well as instruction, problem-solving ability, growth in character as well as knowledge. A student should also understand and appreciate the past, yet feel optimistic about the future; know

the value of lifelong learning; set high standards; learn discipline, yet also need love and encouragement.

His teaching changed as a result. He started to see each student in a new way, "not as they were, but as they could be," according to the story. Each was taught as if the world depended on his instruction.

"Children are living messages we send to a time and place we will never see," writes Goodier.

This story "isn't simply about an unnamed schoolteacher," according to Goodier. "It is a parable about you and me, whether we are parents or even teachers."

As another school year comes to an end, we should all thank and appreciate all teachers. After all, "everybody who is anybody was taught how to be somebody by a teacher." While we can't pay them what they deserve, we should acknowledge that a child's future depends on their influence. That's priceless.

*Nigel Alston is a radio talk show host, columnist and motivational speaker. Visit his Web site at [www.motivationalmoments.com](http://www.motivationalmoments.com).*

The Chronicle's  
new  
e-mail address for  
news items is  
**news@  
wschronicle.com**

The deadline  
for News is  
Monday at  
5 p.m.

## Despite Oscars, Hollywood not colorblind



**Brian Gilmore**  
Guest Columnist

At the Oscars, Hollywood made an attempt to atone for its sins against black America. Yet, despite the awards, it is a bit premature to believe that the situation in Hollywood has changed for African Americans after decades of exclusion and racial stereotypes.

Three black Americans won awards: Denzel Washington for best actor, Halle Berry for best actress (the first African-American woman to do so), and, to top the evening off, a lifetime achievement award was given to the dean of black American thespians — Sidney Poitier. But the situation is still far from perfect. There is simply too much evidence to suggest otherwise.

There are the continued complaints within the black community about the inability of blacks to find work both in front of the cameras and behind them in Hollywood. The NAACP threatened boycotts last year because of this problem. And choices for black actors have often been limited to stereotypical roles such as convicts, servants or athletes. For example, Morgan Freeman has been nominated for an Oscar three times — for playing a pimp ("Street Smart"), a chauffeur ("Driving Miss Daisy") and a convict ("The Shawshank Redemption").

The speeches at the awards from Berry, Poitier and Washington seemed to offer the most compelling truths about Hollywood and race.

Berry's tearful mixture of joy and pain seemed to represent the dreams, hopes and frustrations of all the black women who have struggled vainly to conquer Hollywood's rigid racial mores. Berry's emotional reaction was troubling because she is a well-

respected actress who has been able to find steady work in Hollywood. Imagine what the many talented black actresses who can't find work are going through each day as they watch their careers pass slowly before their eyes.

Washington and Poitier took the edge off the awards with their speeches. Washington was affable and content simply to pay tribute to Poitier. However, Washington's cynical opening remark to his acceptance speech — "two birds in one night" — was subtle humor with a powerful message to Hollywood: Don't think that one night of awards can reverse decades of exclusion and exploitation.

Poitier, who won a best actor Oscar in 1963 for his work in "Lilies of the Field," chose a conciliatory tone as well. He paid tribute to all those in Hollywood who gave him a chance, and accepted his lifetime achievement Oscar "in the name of all the African-American actors and actresses who went before me in the difficult years." Poitier's message to Hollywood was clear, as well: You know you can do better.

And ultimately, that's what it will come down to: what Hollywood does next. There has been some progress. Black actors and actresses have received six awards since Louis Gossett Jr. won best supporting actor in 1982 for his role in "An Officer and a Gentleman." There have been 12 nominations for blacks in acting categories since Whoopi Goldberg received the best supporting actress Oscar for her role in "Ghost" in 1990. This is in contrast to only two Oscars for African-American performers from 1927 to 1981 (Poitier and Hattie McDaniel, who won a best supporting actress for "Gone With the Wind") and 22 nominations from 1927 to 1989.

But there will have to be more because receiving awards and nominations is not the only measure of progress. There have never been as many aspiring



**Trailblazer Sidney Poitier holds the honorary Oscar he received at the most recent Academy Awards ceremony.**

black filmmakers, screenwriters, directors, producers, actors, actresses and technicians as there are now. Spike Lee showed a generation of young black artists that you can make films and get them distributed internationally.

And then there is the most important category of all that desperately needs to be addressed: those coveted decision-making jobs within the industry. This is where the real change can happen in Hollywood — at the executive level. Not only will a presence of more blacks in decision-making roles in Hollywood likely alter the inequities

that are so disturbing, it will also make possible a more honest and varied depiction on screen of black life in America. For an industry that seems to be finally trying to put its sordid past behind it, that would make this year's Oscars truly a watershed moment.

*Poet-attorney Brian Gilmore is the author of two collections of poetry, including his latest "jungle nights and soda fountain rags: poems for Duke Ellington" (Karibu Books, 2000). He can be reached at [pmproj@progressive.org](mailto:pmproj@progressive.org).*

**GAIL ARNEKE**  
Attorney at Law

Free Initial Consultation

- Bankruptcy Protection
- Debt Problems

3600 Country Club Road  
Winston-Salem, NC 27104  
(336) 760-1434 phone (336) 760-6149 Fax

**TWANDA M. STALEY**  
Attorney & Counselor at Law

\* Free Consultation With This Ad \*

**Practice Areas:**

- Child Custody
- Child Support
- Divorce
- Traffic Tickets
- Personal Injury
- Misdemeanor Criminal

Phone: (336) 723-6626 • Fax: (336) 723-7372  
545 North Trade Street, Suite 2 L  
\* New Address Beginning June 1, 2002 \*  
515 West 2nd Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101

**FAIRWAY HOME CARE**  
"Quality Service Is The FairWay"

Helping The Elderly Keep It Together After Retirement

- Health Screening
- Household Chores
- Meal Preparation
- PCS
- Errands
- Insurance Information
- Private Pay/Medicaid Certified

WE STRIVE TO MAKE IT BETTER ONE CLIENT AT A TIME.

OFFICE: (336) 724-3390  
FAX: (336) 724-3392  
545 NORTH TRADE STREET, SUITE 1-L  
WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27101

### THE CHRONICLE

The Choice for African-American News

617 N. Liberty Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

The Chronicle was established by Ernest Pitt and Ndubis Egemonye in 1974, and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co., Inc.

The Chronicle is a proud member of National Newspapers Publishers Association • North Carolina Press Association • North Carolina Black Publishers Association • Inland Press Association

National Advertising Representative:  
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., 45 West 45th Street, New York, NY 10036 212/869-5220

### CONTACT US:

phone number: **336 / 722-8624**  
fax: **336 / 723-9173**  
Web site address: **www.wschronicle.com**  
email address: **news@wschronicle.com**

**Sports Editor 723-8428** SAM DAVIS  
**Copy Editor 723-8448** PAUL COLLINS  
**Circulation 722-8624** VICKIE WARREN  
**Sales Staff 722-8628** ANTHONY TUCKER  
**NIE Coordinator 722-8628** SYBIL LYNCH

**Business Office** ERICKA ASBURY  
PAULETTE LEWIS

### THE CHRONICLE

#### HOME DELIVERY SUBSCRIPTION ORDER

YES, Please send me *The Chronicle*

2 years: \$40.95  
 1 year: \$30.72  
 6 months: \$20.48

Out of County/State	Rate
2 years	\$45.95
1 year	\$35.72
6 mos.	\$25.48
3 mos.	\$15.24

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 VISA®  Mastercard  American Express  Check enclosed  Please bill me  
Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

SEND TO: *The Chronicle*, P.O. Box 1636, Winston-Salem, NC 27102