

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

HBCUs need new advocates on UNC board

State-supported historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are under attack.

They are graduating thousands of students who are productive and outstanding citizens. They are employing hundreds of people. They are pouring millions, perhaps billions, of dollars into their local communities.

Yet Republican lawmakers in North Carolina and South Carolina have targeted these stalwarts of the black communities for closure.

Republican lawmakers in both states have introduced bills to close state-supported universities in their respective states. Just last week a bill was introduced to close South Carolina State University in Orangeburg. A measure in the North Carolina Senate to close Elizabeth City State University was taken out of a final bill last year.

These lawmakers say that they are moving to close the universities because of money issues. They say the people running the universities are not using the money wisely.

How many other state divisions are not financially sound? Have the lawmakers moved to close them?

Money seems to be the issue with the HBCUs. However, the entire UNC system has a bulls-eye on it. Just last month the UNC Board of Governors announced the resignation of UNC system President Tom Ross, who has said he does not want to leave his job. Ross, who is from Winston-Salem, has been a friend to the state-supported HBCUs. Who will be there to speak up for them if when he leaves?

In an interesting development, the N.C. Senate announced Thursday, Feb. 12, that it is accepting nominations for eight seats up for election on the UNC Board of Governors. Ross answers to this board. The nomination process closes Monday, Feb. 23 at 5 p.m.

The UNC Board of Governors is the policy-making body legally charged with governance of all affairs of the 17 institutions making up the University of North Carolina system, including Winston-Salem State University.

The 32 voting members of the Board of Governors are elected by the General Assembly for four-year terms.

Citizens interested in being nominated should contact their state senator. In Winston-Salem, one of those would be newly elected state Sen. Paul Lowe Jr. of District 32, who on Saturday, Feb. 14, met in Raleigh with a delegation of about 25 students from HBCUs, including Winston-Salem State University, to talk about issues.

Winston-Salem State University is part of the University of North Carolina system.

The topics Lowe and the students discussed included sustainability, financial management, alumni engagement, state support and HBCU appeal. Lowe noted the significant contributions of many alumni graduating from HBCUs and the urgent need for financial support from private, state and federal sources for sustainability.

Who will apply to serve on the UNC Board of Governors? We hope it will be people who will speak up for the HBCUs and work to stop the move to end a valuable part of Black History.

A list of senators, along with the counties they represent, may be found at <http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/memberList.pl?sChamber=senate>.

The Black Press strives to serve the community

Almost 190 years ago, prominent free black men met in New York City to discuss forming a vehicle to communicate their views on issues that affect the Black community. Up to that time, Black Americans had been denied usual channels of public media.

They decided to publish Freedom's Journal, the first newspaper produced by Black Americans. Rev. Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm, who attended the meeting, became the paper's editors.

While the editors of Freedom's Journal acknowledged that white citizens sometimes defended the honor of Black Americans in public forums, they proclaimed in the first issue, "Too long have others spoken for us ... We wish to plead our own cause."

The Chronicle is proud to be a part of that legacy.

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WE HAVE A PLAN FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HAVING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.



A tale of two cynics: Obama, Harvey share views on slavery



Bill Turner
Guest Columnist

President Obama and popular game show host Steve Harvey both spoke briefly, but profoundly, recently about the subject of slavery in America.

The difference between their views was Dickensian: the best of times/the worst of times, wisdom/foolishness, belief/incredulity, light/darkness, hope/despair.

President Obama's point was a no-brainer; Harvey's was brainless, at best, and perverse, at worst.

Speaking before the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, Mr. Obama reminded Americans - the vast majority of whom are Christians - that terrorism is not something exclusive to some followers of Islam.

"Slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ."

The outrage from some Republicans over the president's remarks, predictably, approached calls for his crucifixion. Mr. Obama's constant critics chafe most when he cautions against the belief that the USA is superior when compared with other countries. He may just as well

have used Scripture to make his very sophisticated point: "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone."

Former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmer, a Republican, said the president's remarks were "the most offensive I've heard a president make in my lifetime," adding, "He has offended every believing Christian in the United States."

The right-wing sharks on Fox News and the echo chambers known as conservative think tanks gathered for their habitual Obama feeding frenzy.

On the same day of the president's comments, comedian Steve Harvey was asked by a white woman on his show for a strategy to handle her discomfort when she is engaged by "somebody who wants to talk about the past."

Of all the people, themes, events and milestones along the long arc of histo-

ry that Mr. Harvey could have latched onto, he suggested she respond to history buffs by telling them, "I don't really care for slavery!"

But, he couldn't stop there; maybe because the

"I don't really care for slavery!"

Steve Harvey

laughs were too stimulating, he pranced around the set and went on to say, next, "I don't give a damn about slavery."

His studio audience erupted in laughter and seat-bouncing applause.

What a great, spontaneous, one liner; a belly-shaking zinger that marks the spot of a polished funnyman. But, what if in his wisecrack Mr. Harvey had used the word Holocaust instead of slavery?

Would it have been as hilarious? Would he be on television mouthing some feeble expression of regret?

Undoubtedly, more

"Slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ."

President Obama

people viewed Harvey's shaky shot at sarcasm than

those who saw or read what President Obama said about slavery and Christianity.

With the exception of a few black-oriented Internet sites, the report of and reaction to

Harvey's monkey business neither made the national news and nor was it the subject topic of commentators.

Steve Harvey not only trivialized slavery, but he disparaged and dishonored those whose hands once picked the cotton

that K&G Fashion Superstore uses to make the suits they target to young black men, using his name as brand.

Mr. Obama will be remembered for the bravery and courage it took to hold the mirror of slavery up to a self-righteous crowd of cynics and skeptics.

Slavery will be long remembered after

Mr. Harvey is enshrined in the hall of jesters, of foolish men who will say anything for a laugh, for a dollar.

Good for clown Steve Harvey, however, that his slave-held ancestors were Christians who will forgive him, just as they did those who held them in slavery.



Harvey



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If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our website,

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