

# Editorials & Comments

## Perspective On The Death Of A Marine

Hoyle H. Martin

A great deal of emotion-laden rhetoric has emerged in our community surrounding the death of a marine recruit following a fight with three Charlotte policemen at Douglas Municipal Airport on February 27.

The death of 18 year old Kenneth M. Brown, a 6-3, 180 pound healthy youth from New Jersey, was tragic to say the least. Even more tragic however -- because it could have been avoided -- has been the way community and public officials have reacted to this death.

Elements in the black community seized the opportunity to imply police brutality, make claims that black police officers are discriminated against in promotional opportunities, demanded the suspension of the three officers involved, charged (based on information from black policemen) that the Police Department's Internal Affairs Division is incapable of conducting an impartial investigation of the Brown case, and asked the City Council to investigate the behavior and operations of both the Adam 2 Police Team and the Internal Affairs Division. Furthermore, City Councilman Harvey Gantt and Robert Davis of the Black Political Caucus suggested to the City Council on March 8 that a civilian review board should be established to hear cases of alleged police misconduct.

Taking a somewhat defensive position, and as an indication of how sensitive the Charlotte Police Department is to possible charges of police brutality, Lt. Wade Stroud of the department's Central Investigation Bureau is quoted in published reports as saying, "I wonder whether there would have been all this controversy if one of the officers had been shot to death." Significantly, this comment was allegedly made before demands for the suspension of the officers involved with the Brown case were made.

Police Chief Goodman has expressed strong opposition to the civilian review board idea and argued that the Community Relations Commission partially fills that role. Furthermore, Goodman notes that the officers in the Brown case have not been suspended nor reassigned pending the outcome of the investigation because they used no more force than was necessary to subdue Brown. Councilman Jim Whittington expressed support of Goodman in opposing the review board idea.

The upshot of all this rhetoric was the conflicting statements of eyewitnesses to the clash between Kenneth Brown and the three policemen. Except for a consensus that a hard fought battle occurred, there was disagreement on eight other points ranging from how many times the policemen struck Brown with their night sticks (the police report once, witnesses say 35 to 40 times); to what Brown allegedly hit with -- blackjack or night stick; to the length of the fight, 5 to 15 minutes; to

whether Brown's head injury came from an officer's night stick or whether he struck his head on the floor; and to whether all the officers involved were white (one was black). To add to all of this, has been the failure of the County Medical Examiner, Dr. Hobart Wood to find any possible cause of death other than a blow to the head which he says was not severe enough to have caused death. A Philadelphia physician hired by the youth's parents performed a second autopsy and confirmed Dr. Wood's findings.

Putting this rhetoric in perspective, it appears that the Charlotte Community continues to plague itself with a failure to (1) keep problems in perspective by confining them to the issues at hand, (2) take positive steps to correct certain long-standing policy issues and injustices involving the police department without outside pressure and hostility, and (3) understand reactions to certain events when viewed in an historical context.

Concerned elements in the black community led by Robert Davis of the Black Political Caucus should confine their interest in the Brown case to the facts and not bring up other problems concerning police-race relations or police personal problems. As important as these problems are, to inject them or other issues simply diverts attention from the issues of immediate concern and makes it more difficult to get to the facts. Kelly Alexander took the right approach when he appeared before City Council to pointedly request an investigation to determine the cause of Brown's death and as to whether it was in any way related to his clash with police.

### Policy For Dealing

Secondly, the police department should get on with the business of developing a policy for dealing with allegations of police brutality or cases involving death. Such a policy would be as much in the best interest of the officers involved as it would be in community understanding.

Finally, we are or should be familiar with the general view of how people, both black and white, view the police in North Carolina. This is important to understanding the feeling and emotions of black people when events occur involving the police. An eight year old study revealed that 88 percent of all blacks in N.C. think that policemen treat them differently than they do whites. Only 15 percent of the white people agree with blacks on this point. Furthermore, hard evidence supports this finding even today as data shows that approximately 80 percent of all the people in our nation's prisons are black and blacks are still twice as likely to be arrested as whites. Given such depressing data, and there is more, policemen should understand the sensitive feelings blacks have when any incident occurs involving a black.

**BLACK BUSINESS MEN AND POLITICIANS SHOULD BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR IT IS ONLY THROUGH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CLOUT THAT ETHNIC GROUPS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MOVE UP THROUGH SOCIETY.**

MICHIGAN CHRONICLE



Blacks Have The Tools To Do The Job

## REPORT FROM



## Washington



### Black Lung Payments Liberalized

by Jim Martin  
9th District, N.C.

The House of Representatives has passed legislation to liberalize eligibility for black-lung benefits for coal miners. The present law was enacted in 1969. It provides a disability pension for men who have worked in the coal mines, breathing too much coal dust into their lungs for many years until conditions were improved. But these men had to give x-rays to prove their lungs were congested with coal dust. Otherwise, without medical evidence, they were not eligible for black-lung compensation.

I voted against the most recent attempt to liberalize the law. The bill, pushed by the United Mine workers, would automatically entitle coal miners, with 25 to 30 years of service, to benefits. Every miner would receive the benefits regardless of whether he suffered from black lung. They would not have to show medical evidence or even pretend they had the disease.

When the black-lung benefits program first passed Congress, it was with the understanding that it would cost \$41 million a year. As usual, that proved a low estimate. Taxpayers are currently paying \$1 billion annually to over 500,000 individuals suffering from black-lung. All these men have medical proof with x-rays, that they are disabled with this serious condition. They worked under dirty air conditions that have been greatly cleaned up.

Under the new legislation, the burden of financing the black-lung benefits would come from the coal producing companies. The producers in turn, will have to pass the cost along to the consumers.

You might think that some of the consumer groups, who are always speaking up for what they think the consumer wants, would lock horns with the United Mine Workers over this issue. They haven't. It should be obvious to these groups that the cost will come out of the consum-

er's pocket.

Producers of coal will pass along the cost of any new benefits program to the coal user, the biggest being electric utilities. Power companies have to be given authority to pass along any increase in the cost of coal to users of electricity, or else they can't stay in business. It does not take much imagination to see that you will pay the cost. It is estimated the costs of the program would be from \$2 to \$3 per ton of coal produced. The total dollar figure can be derived by examining what it would cost consumers who get electricity from Duke Power Company in our area. Duke used 11 million tons of coal last year. The resulting expense of \$22 million or more would be passed along to customers if this legislation were applied.

The black-lung bill, which passed the House is misnamed. It should be called a supplemental pension program, or a union pension subsidy. That's what it really is, and nothing more.

## TO BE EQUAL



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

### Young's Marshall Plan

This March marks the fifth anniversary of the death of Whitney M. Young, Jr., for ten years head of the National Urban League, and one of the most creative leaders America has produced. Among Young's most profound ideas was his suggestion, back in the early 1960's, for a Domestic Marshall Plan.

The core of the plan was the reality that black citizens suffered disproportionate disadvantage and thus, a massive national special effort was necessary to bring black people and other minorities into the mainstream of American life.

Young's plan had its genesis in the post-war Marshall Plan of economic aid to war-shattered Europe. After the Second World War, the economies of western Europe were devastated and the U.S. government realized that unless those countries were aided America would lose her natural trading partners and perhaps even lose her political influence on the European continent.

So a hard-nosed decision was made to pump billions into Europe and get her factories and workshops back in operation. This wasn't done for altruistic reasons; Uncle Sam wasn't just playing Santa Claus. Policy-makers understood that aid was necessary if our own economy was to avoid a post-war Depression.

The Cold War had a lot to do with it too. It was decided that the only way western Europe could avoid a Russian take-over was to rebuild stable societies out of the chaos left by the War. That's a lesson true for our own day -- the strongest defense included not only missiles and armies, but a productive economy and society in which everyone has a fair share and a personal stake.

The other source of Young's plan was the GI Bill of Rights, a special effort to aid war veterans resume their place in civilian life. The rationale for that was that citizens had been plucked from their jobs and homes to serve in the armed forces for years and were now coming back to find themselves at a great disadvantage in competing for places in our economy. They needed special help and they got it.

Putting these two together, Young reasoned that blacks and other minorities also needed special help, because while black people face the same problems everyone else faces, "the additional fact of color complicates and aggravates every other hazard."

And the Marshall Plan model of a crash program to achieve specific goals seemed to Young the way to overcome the results of four hundred years of negative special treatment.

He insisted that a Domestic Marshall Plan was a call for "a special effort, not for special privilege." It would be designed to reverse the results of discrimination through public and private efforts that would provide black citizens with the leadership, education, jobs, motivation and opportunities which will permit him to help himself.

Young pointed out that if black citizens enjoyed parity with whites, the total economy would be stronger, urban deterioration would be stopped, and the country would be more stable and just.

He was right. He was right in proposing a plan that would have made our nation more just and more equal. But he was also right in his realistic assessment of the forces resisting a Domestic Marshall Plan.

## as i see it

### Word L-O-V-E Is Defined

by Gerald Johnson  
Post Columnist

There comes a time in every make shift editorial writer's life when he has to get away from the torrid controversial issues of the day and relax with a philosophical topic.

The time has come for me because today I feel philosophical. The topic is love, something I know nothing about, but that has never stopped me from writing before. So, here goes.

The word L-O-V-E is defined by Webster as meaning "unselfish concern that freely accepts another in loyalty and seeks his good; to cherish." The word is used to denote a human feeling between parent and child, husband and wife, girlfriend and boyfriend, Boss and secretary, God and humans, man and car, and practically anything.

The problem is we abuse the word rather than properly use the word. This abuse often leads to hurt and sorrow.

From personal observations few people love. Most people

accept or get use to it. Take as example the parent, child relationship. Neither the child nor the parent knows love initially. The child if brought up properly, becomes attached to parents. This attachment is because of security. The child feels secure because when he is hungry, he is fed; when he is cold, he is clothed; when he is tired, he is given a place to lay his head. This security as a child grows up is eventually interpreted as love but is it really love?

The parent, on the other hand, feels responsible for providing the security for the child. Someone did it for the parent so, the parent feels obligated to do it for the child. Hence, the parent accepts this responsibility and as time passes this acceptance is interpreted as love. But is it really love?

The husband and wife relationship is a classic example of abusive use of the word "Love". Unlike the parent and child relationship where there is hope for love, the husband and wife relationship defies



Gerald O. Johnson

love. The relationship, which is no more than an arrangement, is more often than not mistaken for love. The relationship exists because the partners felt secure either, socially, sexually, or financially. Think about it!

The relationship begins usually from a physical attraction to each other. Sometimes, however, loneliness may take the place of physical attraction. After dating for a while

you both become use to each other. You become so familiar with each other that when you are apart, you can only think of each other. This is when most people think of each other. This is when most people think they are in love. Well...since you can't stand being away from each other you decide that marriage is the answer. Then you realize after a few short years that you can really stand to be without each other. But now there are more variable that have to be considered. There might be children involved, finances might not warrant being without each other, or fear might be in your minds. The fear of change

Almost everyone will say "yes" if asked "do you love God." I personally say no one loves God. They merely accept God. It is impossible to love a belief in something. You can unselfishly give of yourself in the teachings of a belief, but I don't see how anyone can unselfishly give of themselves to a belief itself. Therefore, the question arises

"Does Love exist at all? Is there anything that can be given our unselfish concern that can be accepted freely in loyalty and to the good? Yes.

The love of ones self. Unfortunately this is the extent of love. Because of man's innate nature of self preservation he is incapable of loving anything else. Feelings that are misinterpretations of love are mere

accomodations to another's security. As humans all of our intentions have selfish motivations; if not for man's self preservation characteristics, love in its truest sense would not exist.

So, I say unto you, the next time you have the urge to tell someone...I LOVE YOU; stop, think for a minute and say I'M USE TO YOU.

### Future Homemakers To Meet

"Cherish Yesterday, Live Today, Dream Tomorrow" is the theme of the 1976 State Convention of the Future Homemakers of America to be held March 20 in the Charlotte Civic Center from 10 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. State Representative Jo Graham Foster of Charlotte will welcome the some 3,000 members and advisors from across the State who will be attending.

Jeanne Swanner Robertson, former Miss North Carolina, will highlight the meeting with "An Old Has Been." Mrs. Bette Feezor, Home Economist, WBTV, will keynote fea-

tures of publicity and public relations as an important concept of the FHA-HERO program. Bicentennial notes will be presented on activities being conducted in each of the eight educational districts.

A special program "Music of America" will be presented by the Harmony Group from Hugh H. Cummings High School, Burlington, with Bill Griggs as director. Other high school FHA Chapters making presentations include Richmond Senior, Surry Central, Clayton, Kings Mountain and South Iredell.

**THE CHARLOTTE POST**  
"THE PEOPLES NEWSPAPER"  
Established 1918  
Published Every Thursday  
By The Charlotte Post Publishing Co., Inc.  
2606B West Blvd.-Charlotte, N.C. 28208  
Telephones (704) 392-1306, 392-1307  
Circulation 11,000

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57 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE

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Bill Johnson .....Editor-Publisher  
Gerald O. Johnson .....Business Manager  
Rex Hovey .....Circulation Manager

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Second Class Postage Paid at  
Charlotte, N.C. under the Act of March 3, 1878

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Member National Newspaper Publishers  
Association

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North Carolina Black Publishers Association

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Deadline for all news copy and photos is 5 p.m.  
Monday. The Post is not responsible for any  
photos or news copies submitted for publication.

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National Advertising Representative  
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.

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New York, N.Y. 10036      Chicago, Ill. 60616  
(212) 489-1220              Calumet 5-0200