

# Editorials & Comments

## Gantt Demonstrates Sound Judgement

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.  
Post Executive Editor

In the aftermath of Watergate, the American people have become increasingly skeptical about integrity in government at all levels and the extent to which elected officials are truly responding to public concerns. It was undoubtedly because of such skepticism that Harvey Gantt was elected to a term on the City Council after having admirably filled an unexpected term by appointment.

Since first assuming a council seat, Mr. Gantt has demonstrated an ability to critically but objectively analyze issues and make sound judgments on behalf of the Charlotte Community that the POST believes most people find easy to support. This, of course, is no more than the citizenry should expect from any elected officials.

However, what many may have overlooked is the extent of Mr. Gantt's commitment to public service and the extraordinary personal sacrifices that he and his family have made in order for him to be a public servant.

We are referring here to two issues that bear directly on Gantt's personal and business life. These are the land that he purchased in Fourth-Ward for the purpose of building a home and the possibility of his architectural firm contracting with the county to draw plans for two new satellite ambulance stations. Since both of these could have placed Gantt in a situation of possible

conflict of interest, he exhibited a degree of integrity and a pledge to fulfill a commitment that many a lesser person of character would have felt impossible to do.

Specifically, Gantt told his fellow council members on Monday that he did not want to put them in a questionable position and that "the way it stands now (the law forbidding public officials from buying redevelopment property), I'm being denied the right to live where I want to live..." He added that he had no prior knowledge of the law but that he'd decided to sell the property "at a great personal sacrifice to my family" because he felt a strong obligation to complete his term as an elected council member. With regard to his firm's contract with the county, Gantt responded to Commissioner Booe's criticism by saying, "I don't have any comment. If that's his feeling, all right. The commission has the right to decide what to do with (the possible contract)." Again, this was an expression of personal and financial sacrifice in the interest of being a public servant of the highest integrity.

The POST salutes Councilman Gantt for his honesty, good character and his faithful commitment to public service at a time when such commitment is so desperately needed. The POST hopes that Councilman Gantt's degree of honesty and commitment will serve as a model for others to follow.

## Black Leadership?

An article in a recent issue of the CHARLOTTE magazine titled, "Who Speaks For the Black Community?" or the nearly 90,000 black citizens of Charlotte leaves much to be desired.

The article, written in a business oriented magazine that probably few blacks read, mentions about 35 blacks by name and says "You'll find him (or her) among these pages," that is, the black(s) who supposedly speak for the other 90,000 blacks.

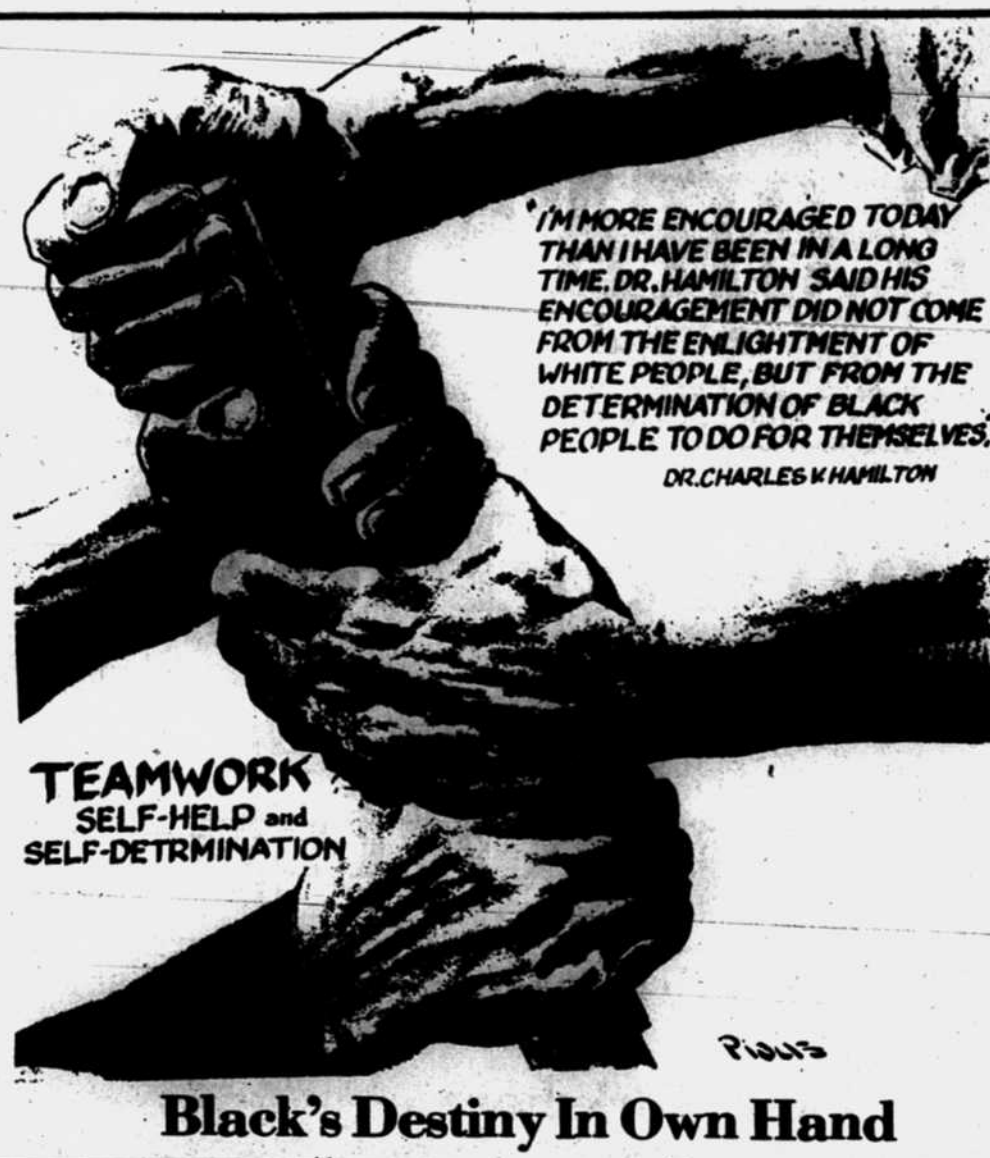
The POST takes exception to the article's assumption that white folk can necessarily locate the community's black leaders from among a list that they have compiled and to the view that "blacks are showing leadership in areas other than politics." The problem with these assumptions is that they show a gross misunderstanding of what the term "leadership" means and appears to imply, as whites have done in the past, that if you want to know what blacks are thinking just ask anyone of those listed in the article.

Community leadership must be thought of in terms of those people who are members of policy-making

groups or those who are in a position to influence the policy-makers. Therefore, a position of political leadership may or may not be one of real leadership.

Traditionally, policy-maker leaders came from the upper level of the corporate community. They set the pace with regard to jobs, political contributions and the general welfare of the community.

This does not mean that there are no black leaders or persons with influence in the community. However, such leadership is largely limited to the sub-structure of power that comprises what is called the black community. Furthermore, Charlotte's black leadership is as varied as there are issues of concern to specific groups of blacks. Socio-economic difference, values and life styles make black as uniquely different among themselves as would be any other ethnic group. Even on the common problem of racism, blacks have different views and approaches to attacking such problem. Thus while there is often strength in unity, there is also strength in varying approaches under different leaders to attack a common problem.



## Black's Destiny In Own Hand

### To Support Wilmington 10

## Blacks Begin Letter Writing Drive

A boycott of white merchants in Wilmington, N.C., letter writing and petitioning campaigns to Governor James B. Hunt, and demonstrations and marches have been announced by supporters of the Wilmington 10 to build the pressure to free the Wilmington 10. The step up in activity follows a denial of a new trial for the Wilmington 10 by Special Superior Court Judge George Fountain.

The Wilmington boycott, although eventually to include all white merchants in the town is scheduled to begin with relatives of former New Hanover Prosecutor Jay Stroud. Zora's fish market, located in the town's Black ghetto is Stroud's great aunt, who insists she is only a distant relative. Her business, which has been operated for 22 years in the Black community is one of the targets of the boycott.

Kojo Nantambu, a boycott leader, said Stroud's family were chosen first to pressure Stroud to confess he induced witnesses to lie against the Wilmington 10 in their 1972 trial.

The purpose of the post conviction hearing was for Judge George Fountain to consider the testimonies of the State's witnesses who now say they lied against the Wilmington 10. Fountain was to consider if there were constitutional violations of the civil rights of the Wilmington 10 in the convictions. Jay Stroud was the prosecutor accused of perjury witnesses.

Zora Singleton, Jay Stroud's great aunt, said to a reporter that she can't understand why Blacks are going to boycott her for "what they said Jay

did." One boycott leader said the boycott would begin soon, but did not specify when.

The town's officials are very sensitive to the fact that the Black citizen's are now outwardly organizing and may use civil disobedience as a tactic to increase pressure on public officials. Typical of Wilmington's leadership is Mayor Ben Halterman, an employee of Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company. Questioned how the city would respond to demonstrations and civil disobedience, Halterman said he would meet demonstrators with force if necessary, but he didn't believe civil disobedience would occur. Asked if there was much concern for the Wilmington 10 in the town, Halterman said, "certainly everyone is sympathetic for anyone who has had problems, or is in trouble, but it has not created an emotional crisis in any way that I know of, nor is there that great a concern."

Another city official, Human Relations Director William Jessup, said the boycott of Zora's would probably not get widespread support because Zora hires three black employees out of a total of seven working there. According to boycott supporters, the market is patronized by "ninety-nine percent Black."

Kojo Nantambu said that the patrons of Zora's would be influenced to shop at Friendly Fish Market on Queen Street and others in the city. Friendly's is Black owned.

Mrs. Delores Moore, mother of Wilmington 10 defendant Wayne Moore, said along with the boycott of Zora's, parents and supporters would present

demands of students at New Hanover High and Hoggard High. Those schools were boycotted in 1971 by Black students for removal of police officers from hallways, end of suspensions of Black students, termination of racist teachers, and implementation of a Black Studies curriculum. The school administrators did not answer the students demands.

Ms. Moore said that pressure now to change those conditions at the schools would increase the pressure on Governor Hunt and state officials to release the Wilmington 10. The Klu Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations retaliated to the Black students with violence

and gunfire. A response to the attacks on the students by Blacks resulted in night riders and Blacks clashing around a church that students were using as a meeting place.

While the supporters of the Wilmington 10 seek their release through demonstrations and boycotts many whites in Wilmington think for the safety of the town they should remain in jail. One former Klu Klux Klan official Tex Gross responded to a reporter saying "If you want to get rid of any buildings with fire insurance then let them out."

The Chief defense attorney, James Ferguson of Charlotte, has been investigating a pardon of innocence for the Wilmington 10. Ferguson said that before the post conviction hearing he sent Governor James Hunt a letter asking clarification on Hunt's position not to consider a pardon of innocence for them until all legal avenues are exhausted.

## TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

### Minimum Wage Hike Needed

If you are working full time at the national minimum wage of \$2.00 per hour, you're making less than the government itself says a family needs to earn to keep out of poverty.

That's the biggest argument for raising the minimum wage, but the idea is meeting plenty of resistance.

It's been argued that a hike in the minimum wage would be inflationary, would discourage hiring of new workers, would lead to lay-offs, and would worsen the already serious problem of youth joblessness.

Now these are very dire predictions, but fortunately, they're not likely outcomes.

Take inflation, first. While it is entirely possible higher labor costs in the form of a higher national minimum wage might be inflationary, it is also possible that increased income will be translated into higher spending and thus into expanded production. There's enough slack in the economy to accommodate increased demand.

Besides, why should low wage workers bear the brunt of efforts to hold down inflation? Every time there's a danger of inflation the answer is to encourage lay-offs, cut wages, or otherwise make the least favored in our society pay for price stability for the most favored higher-income groups.

The effect of a higher minimum wage on the job market is more difficult to determine. Studies have been made attempting to measure the effect of such raises, but those studies have been inconclusive. They usually provide the sharp edge to whatever axe is being sharpened, but they don't really give us the kind of objective guidance needed to frame social policy.

There's little reason to assume that hikes in the minimum wage will lead to lay-offs. Employers hire workers when they're needed, whatever the minimum wage. If the minimum wage was actually the obstacle to hiring it's supposed to be, then we should expect to see expanded job opportunities in the labor sector not covered by the minimum wage. About a quarter of all non-supervisory jobs are in that category, but unemployment is still high.

Some people think there ought to be a youth differential, a wage lower than the legal minimum, for young people to help spur youth jobs. But that's a dubious concept too, since many employers, including schools, states, and local governments are exempted from the minimum wage law, or can apply for exemption.

It's not a happy prospect for the world's richest country to say that the minimum wage has to be held down to below-poverty levels. A rise of about fifty cents per hour would just about make up for the effects of inflation and restore the buying power lost since 1974, when the minimum wage was last raised.

Nationally, some ten million workers would be immediately affected by a rise in the minimum wage to \$3 per hour, and about two million of them are blacks and other minorities.

Typically, their jobs are the hardest, dirtiest, and least rewarding. The minimum wage has traditionally been a figure representing our society's consensus about the least anyone should be paid for his work.

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## THE VIEW FROM HERE

### Who Are Charlotte's Black Leaders?

By Gary Gregg  
Post Staff Writer

Who are Charlotte's black leaders?

As I've asked that question in Charlotte, responses have fallen into two broad categories.

A lot of people snort indignantly that Charlotte has no real black leaders, then they give me several examples that they say prove there is a leadership vacuum in this community.

They mention the struggle to raise \$50,000 for a Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial. They cite the recent absence of organized black rage over the Civil War memorial on the courthouse lawn. They speak of what they term, "the overall ineffectiveness of black people here to solve critical problems."

On the other hand, a significant number of people, in response to my black leadership question, name two or three of their favorite persons, saying they are local black leaders.

Mostly they name black elected officials, or others who are politically active. Almost as often they name ministers, and sometimes community workers and persons involved

in civic work.

It is obvious that none of these respondents are totally wrong. But neither are they totally right.

My view is that the so-called black community leadership crisis is not a problem of identifying leaders, but rather is a problem of the definition of the word "leader."

For long years a black leader was defined as: a charismatic individual, usually a man, who speaks eloquently against discrimination and oppression. He must be able to gain the confidence of the masses of black people and unite them under a common desire for freedom and equality. This man whom we crown leader must undauntedly and sometimes single-handedly take on the system, challenging it on every turn. Astride his black stallion of righteous, armed with his club of historical indignation, this leader must gallop unafraid into the varied bastions of racism and single-handedly wipe out every vestige of that cancerous evil.

But this definition of leader doesn't allow for human frailty, because we do not allow our black leaders to be human. They must be paragons



Harvey Gantt

...Political leader of moral virtue, uncompromising in principle, perfect in deed and image, always straightforward, ever vigilant, and on 24-hour call to fight for us battles we're content to ignore.

Our definition of "leader," asks too much of a mere mortal.

Therefore, I propose a new approach to leadership, something different from the messiah syndrome we've labored under for many generations.

The messiah syndrome, according to a very good friend of mine, is that ardent desire by black people for a Christ in

black face who will appear in the clouds of black power to deliver us from the living hell of racism and carry us whole body and soul into the heavenly promised land of 40 acres and a mule, or a ranch style and an Eldorado, or a dozen foxy sisters and unlimited stamina.

But most proponents of the messiah syndrome cry, "Not I Lord," when asked to become a leader.

We want to leave the fighting to others and slink in afterwards and reap the spoils.

I propose we change this idea. Every individual black person, male and female should be black leaders.

Leadership, like charity, begins at home.

So it is time for black men to grow up and for black women to grow up with them.

This goes back to a point I made in this column last week, that we must pay for our development. That price isn't always money. Sometimes it means SACRIFICING a cherished fault for personal

improvement.

So as cool as it might be, all black men have got to get off the corner and go to work.

Surely, I know about skyrocketing unemployment. I know that about 15 percent of all black people are out of work and that about 40 percent of all young blacks, particularly teenagers, can't find jobs.

But I also know that hanging on the corner, waiting for a change of heart in Washington isn't going to solve the problem.

Black Alabama millionaire, A.G. Gaston has an interesting success formula. One point he makes is, "find a need and fill it." That is the first step to success and it is the first step to race-wide black leadership, the crucifixion of the messiah syndrome.

There are many needs in our community. Here's just a few suggestions right off the top of my head.

What about a delivery service that caters to the elderly and the handicapped? What about a small company, contracting with local government to stockpile wood during the summer for the poor for next winter? What about a 24-hour nursery for working

couples who work odd hours, or who travel a lot or who just want to go out at night?

The list could go on ad infinitum. All we have to do is think, because in our growing, complex society, there are hundreds of needs.

What about a black think tank to identify the needs, locate the resources and hook the resources up with the talent to perform?

Does all this sound idealistic? Sure it is, but why not? Why can't we turn the ideal into the real?

What does all this have to do with developing individual black leadership? Everything!

In my opinion the first step in developing individual black leaders is to take control of one's self. Develop the discipline necessary to become successful and the desire to never stop driving for the best.

Next week, I'll continue this idea of individual leaders, showing how women assume a definite leadership role in this process.

Keep your out-of-town friends informed on what's happening in Charlotte by sending them a copy of the Charlotte Post each week. The cost is only \$8 per year.