

Editorials & Comments

Support King Statue Drive

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. contributed a great deal to the cause of justice and humanity at a time when our nation was racked with a cancerous racism, violence, hatred and global conflict.

He helped to restore a degree of sanity to our nearly insane society. He preached racial tolerance, non-violence, love-thy-neighbor and peace. For these efforts King was attacked by the lunatic-fringe in that "he was," as one writer said, "stoned, stabbed, reviled and spat upon when he lived, but in death there was a shattering sense that a MAN of ultimate goodness had lived among us."

King's quest for peace and justice, as this column has noted before, was so strong that he gave his life for it and in so doing gained more respect for black Americans in a little more than a decade than had been done in all the preceding 100 years.

The deceased civil rights leader's impact was not limited to black Americans. Through probing the consciousness of the white man's mind, he altered the realization that to degrade blacks and deny them justice required denying themselves the same justice. President Carter

made this very clear when he said the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did as much for southern whites as it did for blacks and made it possible for himself, a southern, to be elected to the presidency of the United States.

We have made these few remarks about Dr. King to remind us - black and white - of the importance of giving financially to the MLK statue fund drive effort. We won't dignify any of the reasons for not supporting this worthwhile effort except to say that none of them are equal to the full meaning of what Dr. King's statue will symbolize - honesty, justice, peace and goodwill - for our community and to anyone passing through our city.

It's time to stop the petty discussion about whether black folk or white folk should carry the leadership or make the greater commitment to the statue effort. King will be remembered not as a black man, but rather as a man among many shadows of men.

Support the King financial drive not simply with your dollars, but with an act of a renewed commitment to humanity, brotherhood and love, yes, love and respect for the humblest of human beings. Let your support be reflected in the King legacy.

Higher Minimum Wage Essential

It is ironic that some black leaders around the country are reportedly opposed to raising the minimum wage on the assumption that such a raise will add to the already deplorable high unemployment rate among blacks.

Undoubtedly these opponents of a higher minimum wage have been listening to the advice of Jack Carlson, Chief Economist for the conservative Chamber of Commerce of the United States. He said a minimum wage increase would raise the unemployment rates among teenagers, minorities, lower-skilled, inexperienced and marginal workers. In fact, since 1938 the minimum wage has risen 12 times and each time the Chamber of Commerce has argued that a higher minimum wage would cause not only unemployment, but also renewed inflation.

However, a review of U.S. Department of Labor statistics tells a different story. Following raises in the minimum wage in 1938 and 1939 unemployment actually dropped respectively 2 percent and 2.6 percent in the immediate years to follow. Furthermore, the majority of the 12 minimum wage increases were followed by declines in unemployment. This points out the fact that minimum wage laws are based on the fairly accurate assumption that employers generally can afford to pay the new higher minimum wage.

The Chamber's second argument against a higher minimum wage is that it is inflationary. No one can honestly question the truthfulness of

this danger, however, "it is also possible," Vernon E. Jordan Jr., has noted recently, "that increased income will be translated into higher spending and thus, into expanded production." Jordan said further, "why should low wage workers (always) bear the brunt of efforts to hold down inflation?"

Such low wage workers are already carrying the burden of the nation's fight against inflation. Furthermore, even with the minimum wage increase to \$2.65 currently proposed by the Carter administration and acceptable to the AFL-CIO, upwards to 3-million full-time workers may be locked into a sub-poverty income level that will need to be supplemented by relief payments. Our assumption here is based on AFL-CIO research which says that a worker earning as much as \$2.92 per hour is at the poverty level. In addition, since an average urban family of four living on a subsistence budget in 1976 needed an income of \$10,041, the \$2.65 per wage proposal is hardly adequate.

Thus, the working poor have little incentive to keep working and the unemployed see little need to seek work since both are locked into endless poverty.

Let us encourage our law makers to give that always forgotten element in our labor force an adequate living wage and let the rest of us commit ourselves to sharing any unfortunate consequences - inflation - that may occur from such a higher minimum wage.

"WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS? IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME," SAID A HOUSE WIFE.

N.Y. TIMES

"WHAT DO YOU DO IN A CASE LIKE THIS, ARREST THE WHOLE BLOCK - I MEAN, ASK A POLICEMAN."

ROSEDALE, QUEENS, N.Y.

NO ARRESTS TO DATE



"Whites Stage Their Own Riots"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Responses To The Dr. King Memorial

To: The Charlotte Post
From: Leon C. Riddick, Minister, Mount Carmel Baptist Church 3201 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28208
Date: July 18, 1977
Re: Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

I would like to commend Gerald O. Johnson for his comments in the July 14 edition of the Post, "As I See It." I most certainly agree that this memorial statue to the late Dr. King is a most inappropriate way to honor him. His life was about helping people, to set the captives free from inhumane, legalistic, undemocratic, and unchristian encumbrances. His work was not accomplished by erecting statues for the dead but by collecting money from the living for the support of a movement that changed the course of human events for the nation and especially the South.

A more appropriate memorial for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., would be a perpetual scholarship fund that would aid students in our universities and colleges in the area of the Social Sciences who need financial aid in order to secure an education. As Black people we have already put too much money in the ground for the dead and not enough to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. A statue costing \$50,000 or \$100,000 is not in keeping with the priorities of the Christ who said:

"I was hungry and you gave me meat, I was thirsty and you gave me water, I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, I

was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came unto me."

A statue in the park would be strictly "for the birds," and the Lord Jesus Christ, nor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., gave their lives "for the birds."

Dear Sir:

In answer to the article in the Charlotte Observer on Sunday, June 12, 1977 where Rev. Barnette "admonished the black community collectively for not supporting the Martin Luther King Memorial Fund I would say that the idea was untimely."

Obligation to give is an individual decision and like any other organization, "The Fund" can only solicit for money not body and soul.

Before you place bronze, etc., in the park for people to view, one should consider the following:

The United Negro College Fund slogan states "The mind is a terrible thing to waste," agreed? Johnson C. Smith University, a black university of higher learning, has two historical sites on its campus recognized to be worthy of restoration. Fact!

Would this not be more in keeping with "feeding the mind and more accessible to the black community and aid to a black institution by selecting an onsite location memorializing Dr. King?

What would be better? Pigeons resting or minds expanding.

If this is not enough to

consider think about all that money leaving our black community.

Mrs. Ethel Watermann

Post Is Gift To

Church Office

First Baptist Church
1801 Oaklawn Ave.
Charlotte, North Carolina
Phone: (704) 372-1075
July 18, 1977

The Charlotte Post
2606-B West Boulevard
Charlotte, N.C. 28208

Gentlemen:

Enclosed is a check for a subscription to The Charlotte Post. Please send to the above address. This is a gift for the church office. Please begin as of July 23.

Thank you sincerely,
Cedric H. Jones

Children's Theatre

Says Thanks

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Children's Theatre wishes to thank you for your support of our plays and workshops through public announcements and advertising. Because of your help, we have had a most successful year.

I would like to meet you this summer and discuss our new plans for next season's productions and the revised education plan program we will offer in the fall.

Again, thank you for your encouragement and support.

Sincerely,
Carol Alexander
General Manager

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Blackout, 1977

When the lights went out in New York City we came face-to-face with urban anarchy in its most terrifying form. Large sections of the City fell prey to looting, burning and lawlessness.

New Yorkers were horrified, not least among them the poor people in whose neighborhoods most of the outrages took place. Innocent people found themselves burned out of their homes and terrorized by the breakdown to order in the streets.

After the crisis passed, they were faced with essential neighborhood services gone - food stores, cleaning establishments and clothing stores burned or looted. Lives already made difficult by poverty and hardship became significantly harder.

That's a part of the New York story that has been neglected by the media focus on the acts of looting and on the arrests. All of the attention has been placed on the violence and little on the victims of that violence. The storekeepers whose businesses were lost or damaged were not the only victims - their customers and employees and neighbors will suffer from the blackout looting too.

It would be a mistake to assume that this was just a repeat version of the riots of the late 1960s. Racial violence was absent this time - black and Hispanic-owned stores were not immune from looting, and there was no overt racial conflict behind the attacks.

Many people in other cities should not be smug about the New York tragedy. It's a national past-time to downgrade New York and to exaggerate its problems. But what happened in New York could easily happen in any of our cities.

For national policies of neglect have led to the creation of an urban wilderness peopled by victims of poverty, discrimination and joblessness. We have created a large underclass of people with no stake in our society, embittered people whose exclusion from the mainstream has led them to reject society's values and principles of behavior.

Many of the looters were young people. In the affected neighborhoods, up to two-thirds of minority youngsters who want to work can't find jobs. At the same time as they despair of finding work and live in substandard housing, they are exposed by a consumer-oriented mass society to a constant barrage of ads encouraging the good life, a life they know is beyond their reach.

So when, as in the blackout conditions, the opportunity presents itself to walk away with the color t.v.s, the appliances, and clothes our society values so highly, they do so. The bonds of conventional behavior are broken, and anarchy reigns.

To explain is not to condone. For every looter, there were many dozens of people, equally poor, who stayed off the streets and who shared the horror at what was happening. Those people, as I've said, are the real victims of the tragedy, for it is their neighborhoods that were ravaged.

But it is too easy just to condemn the looters. It goes without saying that punishment must take place if we don't want a repetition of that night of shame. At the same time, we've got to understand the social conditions that gave rise to the lawlessness and do something about them.

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as i see it

Athletes And The Hardship Cases

By Gerald O. Johnson

I am sure many of you read about the hardships a great athlete is now facing. I am talking about the bankruptcy Joe Caldwell, former Carolina Cougar standout, is currently going through. Although the entire situation is bad there is some good that can come out of Joe's hardships. The good is the lesson to be learned from all of this.

The circumstances that surrounds Joe's downfall, two points stand out as upper most in my mind. First, Joe left college as a hardship case thereby never completing his education. Second, Joe is no longer a young man.

These two points are the reasons Joe is in the trouble he is in. To the aspiring young athlete, it is important to realize that athletic ability is a temporary asset. Its intrinsic value depreciates as your age appreciates. Therefore, it is not enough to be athletically inclined to be successful in our society. You must have something else to offer to society once your athletic ability is valueless.

That something else more

often than not can be gained through a college education. With a degree you can reshape your lifestyle and still make it. Joe Caldwell has no degree. It is obvious that he could at least make a valuable contribution to a school's athletic program. But he can't get a job in any school without a degree. He is a wasted resource. Ironically, it is his own fault.

It is cases like Joe's that cause me to be opposed to the hardship draft.

The hardship draft exploits the poverty situation a hardship athlete has been exposed to.

A poverty stricken youth sees the opportunity to leave the ghetto environment through athletics. He will play a few years in college, make a name for himself, and wait to be drafted as a hardship case. Overnight he finds that he has become a rich man. More often than not his mental maturity has not grown as rapidly as his wealth. Consequently, his wealth vanishes almost as rapidly as it appeared.

Some people have suggested that if they were in this



Gerald O. Johnson

situation, that they would go with the hardship case and return to finish their education later. Not a bad idea, but one that the facts will not bear out.

Once a hardship athlete starts drawing a paycheck, that's it. He feels that since he is making more money without a degree than most people make with a degree, why bother. Moreover, he is spending too much time living the life of glamor. Consequently, he will never return. Yet year after year athletes continue to

file for bankruptcy.

A simple calculation can show that being a great athlete will leave you with nothing but memories if you can't carry on in something else. Let us take an athlete at age 18 and barring any injuries or the like, let us say he will last until 38; Two unlikely hypotheses. Let us further assume that through this 20-year career that our athlete averages \$100,000 a year; another unlikely hypothesis. If our athlete lives to be 65 he would have made enough money to have an average yearly income of \$42,553.20. Not bad! But it is not bad if our athlete realizes this and lives his 20-year career based on a yearly income of \$42,553.20. Instead, making \$100,000 a year he will live like a king on a yearly based income of \$100,000. Consequently, when he reaches age 40 his glamor years are over and so is his financial stability. Note, that our example was extremely generous. Most athletes will last only 10 years at most. Most will not earn \$100,000 a year. Therefore, our figures will change drastically. On a ten year career leaving every-

thing else constant our athlete will only earn \$21,276.60 a year based on age 65.

Lou Hudson of the Atlanta Hawks said it best when teammates ridiculed him about being cheap. Lou replied "I live a lifestyle that I can sustain and maintain." Lou lives in a modest home, drives simple cars, and dresses modestly. Lou is an intelligent athlete.

Hence, if you are a young aspiring athlete and you are going to use your athletic ability to lift you out of the poverty stricken environment you are now in, remember these points:

- 1) Athletic ability is not forever.
- 2) A college education is forever.
- 3) Budget your earnings while being an athlete on age 65.
- 4) Hire a good firm to manage your money.

It is not much that can be done or said to make Joe Caldwell's situation any easier to bear. But Joe Caldwell's hardship can be used to help others gain success.

Vernon Jordan has recently attacked President Jimmy Carter on unfulfilled promises

the President has made to black people. Jordan has said this administration is more concerned with balance budgets than balanced lives.

Carter is not God and his wants are not automatically turned into action, Jordan knows this. Moreover, Jimmy Carter is President of the entire U.S. not just the black folk. I think the man is doing one heck of a job and I take personal offense to attacks on how he is doing his job. Yes, I have found some Carter decisions questionable, but Carter has the facts and I only can go on heresay and what I read.

But I pay close attention to little subtle points that go unnoticed by most. For instance, Carter's press conferences are filled with black reporters. I never once saw a black face in a Ford or Nixon press conference, let alone a black reporter getting the chance to ask a question. Look at the number of blacks in key positions going unmentioned by Carter. Look at the programs that have his approval which, if passed in congress, will benefit black people.

Name me a President that spent so much time with the people.