

# editorials & comments

## 63 Years Of Changing Times

Sixty-three years ago the social fabric of the nation added a new ritual to its annual agenda called the Miss America pageant. In each of these years young women with beauty and talent danced, sang, and paraded on stages in evening gowns and bathing suits before a panel of judges and well-wishers in a quest for the honored and financially rewarding title of "Miss America."

Historically, too, the contestants were asked some generally insignificant or social butterfly questions to determine their intellectual powers. Also historically, for over 35 years — until the late 1950s — the pageant was limited to "whites only" young women. However, in the 1983 pageant to select Miss America traditions were shattered as Miss New York, a 20-year-old black woman, Vanessa Williams, was crowned Miss America and Suzette Charles, the 20-year-old Miss New Jersey, who is also black, made history as the first runner-up.

### Barriers Fall

While Americans, and black Americans in particular, were undoubtedly pleased to see another racial barrier fall, other significant traditions were also shattered. In initial comments to the news media Miss Williams has let it be known that she does not fit the mold of the docile, smiling beauty who will avoid controversial issues as most previous pageant winners have done, undoubtedly upon the advice of sponsors. For example, Miss Williams told reporters that she is a political independent who is against legalization of marijuana, supports the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and favors the right of abortion as a right that each woman should have.

On the question of race, Miss America said, "Just because I'm black doesn't mean I'm going to favor every black position. I'm my own person with my own opinions." Furthermore, the pageant queen expressed some discomfort with the fact that too many questions by the media focused on her race. She said, "At times I get annoyed because it seems the people and press aren't focusing on my accomplishments."

The focus on race arises from the fact that only 17 black women have survived state pageants allowing them to compete for the

Miss America title since the "white-only" rule was abandoned in the late 1950s. Even then, it was not until 1970 that Cheryl Brown, Miss Iowa, competed in the national pageant. This year a total of four blacks and one Hispanic represented five of the 50 states in the Miss American Pageant. In addition to Miss Williams and Miss Charles were Deneen Graham of North Carolina, Dalia Garcia of South Carolina, and Maryland.

### Focus On Race

We share Miss Williams' concerns about the excessive focus on race as opposed to concentrating on her accomplishments. However, the hard fact is as a price for her success race will be a central concern to many whites and blacks during her one-year reign. Many whites will view the first Miss America, who happens to be black, as over due compensation for many years of denial to black Americans. This, too, will ease their consciences a little by reaffirming their belief that there truly is opportunity in America for all, regardless of race.

Black Americans' joy at seeing a panel of all-white judges reassess the meaning of beauty, even though Miss Williams rejects the notion of a "beauty queen" as a stereotype that she opposes, will help keep a focus on race. Furthermore, black Americans will undoubtedly hold Miss Williams up as a symbol of many of the good qualities of black women in America, qualities too often overlooked by the stereotypes reinforced by television, social welfare, and some aspects of our history.

In addition, as a "new breed" confident woman Miss Williams will probably find herself as a symbol of the causes and issues that many women's rights organizations support simply by her own commitment to self-independence.

The Post salutes and congratulates Miss Williams for her commitment to independence but with a knowledge that her success was not achieved alone. If she has that sense of awareness with whatever else she achieves, Miss America 1984 will be a darling of all America long after she passes on her crown in 1985.

May God Bless You, Miss America 1984.

## BE APART OF THE NEW AWARENESS



## Appalled And Shocked At Editorial

September 14, 1983

Mr. Bill Johnson, Editor  
The Charlotte Post  
1531 Camden Road  
Charlotte, N.C. 28203

Dear Editor:

I was appalled and shocked to read your edi-

### Supporting Black Business

Dear Editor:

I am 100 percent for Blacks patronizing their own businesses. However, I have one question. How can we patronize our businesses if half of us don't know who and where they are. I have gone into several stores on occasions and asked if it was a Black-owned business and the salesperson gave me a look as if to say, what difference does that make. So I stopped asking.

The point I am trying to make is why not list the Black-owned businesses in The Charlotte Post so we will know. I obtained a list of the minority-owned businesses in Charlotte from the Chamber of Commerce, but I am only interested in Black-owned businesses. What better way to build our Black community than to advertise our services for our people.

Sincerely,  
Florence D. Woods

torial criticizing the presidential aspirations of Rev. Jesse Jackson. If he loses the first time he runs so what? Since when is success a sure thing? How many times did Nixon run before he was elected President? As you know, the late Sen. Scoop Jackson ran twice for the office of President of the U.S. and lost. Was he less a man for running and losing?

The most important point is that Rev. Jackson's presidential campaign will be a learning experience for him and for his supporters. It will be a chance to strengthen the alliances between minorities, white, labor and women. Harvey Gantt lost the first time he ran for mayor, but it was a learning experience for him and his staff and he is now a much smarter candidate. Again, I say shame, shame to the editorial staff of this great newspaper for your audacity and tunnel vision in criticizing the presidential aspirations of Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Sincerely,  
Richard Ellis, MBA

### Judges Were All Men!

August 24, 1983

Editor, The Post  
P. O. Box 30144  
Charlotte, N.C. 28230

Dear Sir:

Today I picked up your paper for the first time to enjoy a relaxation and reading. I was both shocked and angry to read that you were having a "Churchwoman of the Year" contest and the judges were ALL MEN!

It is beyond the comprehension of the human imagination WHY IN THE WORLD YOU WOULD ASK MEN TO JUDGE THIS CONTEST! YOU WOULD NEVER ASK WOMEN TO JUDGE A CONTEST THAT ONLY

MEN WERE ALLOWED TO ENTER.

There are so many PROFESSIONAL black women in Charlotte who could have done a super job—Charlotte Price of WBTB, Vivian Nivens of Channel 18, and Dr. Bertha Maxwell of UNCC. There is certainly no lack of good, intelligent WOMEN to judge their own sex. This is certainly a sexist affair!

Mary Rose Smith

### SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?

Do you have something to say? Then do so for everyone to read. The Charlotte Post, the only other voice in town, welcomes all letters on various subjects.

## From Capitol Hill

# Unaccountable Officials Must Be Remembered In The Voting Booths

Alfreda L. Madison  
Special To The Post  
The Coalition of Conscience which drew just about the largest crowd that ever assembled in Washington, for the purpose of impacting on government officials, is sending out information from its headquarters on specific legislation which the people around the country should pressure their members of Congress to work for passage.

The August unemployment rate remained at the high figure of 9.5 necessitates congressional and Administration action. The Bureau of Labor Statistics report is as follows: white adult males, 7.7; white women, 6.7; white youth, 19.8; white overall, 8.2; black adult males, 18.4; black women, 16.4; black youth, 33; and black overall unemployment 20 percent. The Bureau has only the overall Hispanic figure which is 12.9 percent.

While the Administration is saying, we are in an economic recovery, unemployment remains at an all-time high. With more than 12 million people jobless, immediate congressional and Administration action is required to alleviate these inhumane conditions, in this the richest country in the world.



Alfreda L. Madison

These conditions prevail because the Federal government has abdicated its responsibility to stimulate job creation, to protect the victims of economic dislocation and transformation and to sufficiently invest in job training. As a first corrective step, the Coalition is asking citizens to urge their Congress persons to push for passage of the Hawkins Community Renewal Employment Act, H.R. 1036. This bill will provide one million jobs for the long-term unemployed persons in areas where unemployment is exceptionally high. This will be done through grants to states and local governments for rehabilitation of public facilities, public health, safety, education, social services and conservation and improvement of public lands. The recent Soviet de-

struction of the Korean Flight 007 with the loss of 269 innocent people aboard, is proof that the Coalition of Conscience's advocacy of "a change in our nation's peace and foreign policy is needed." The Soviets' action must be condemned. Yet, this exemplifies an extreme nervousness of both super powers' powerful military build-up. Especially, this is true when the goal of each country is to be militarily superior to the other. Irrational actions are bound to occur.

The Coalition gives two reasons which necessitate a change in our policy; the militarization of our foreign policy will cost \$2.3 trillion over the next three years. This has caused cuts in education, job training, health and nutrition programs. The proliferation and stockpiling of nuclear weapons have created a climate of perilous nuclear annihilation. The nuclear weapon destructive power today triples the 1963 power. The 1963 nuclear power would have killed 48.5 million people while in 1983 it will kill 140 million.

The Coalition is requesting constituents to impress upon their members of Congress to vote for the following bills that will effect our foreign and peace policy: H.R. 3023,

Dellums Defense Authorization for Appropriations Bill, which reduces strategic nuclear weapons, refuse to build the B1 bomber, reduce surface Navy and reduce American forces in the Third World. This will save \$56 billion. H.R. 425, Weiss Defense Economic Act, which converts some defense money into social programs. S.J. Res. 2 Nuclear Freeze Resolution, H.R. 1392, Gray Bill, blocking new investments by U.S. firms in South Africa. H.R. 1083, Dixon Prohibition of U.S. Support of International Monetary Fund loans to South Africa. S. Res. 688 Hatfield-Kennedy Resolution calling for unconditional negotiations toward a peaceful solution of growing conflict in El Salvador.

Vote against H.R. 1510, Simpson-Mazzoli Immigration Reform and Control Act in its present form. It places penalties for hiring illegal aliens, revises the present immigration laws for allowing aliens to enter the U.S., and gives illegal aliens who entered prior to 1982 permanent alien resident status.

Attention is called by the Coalition to the erosion of civil and economic rights, by the aura of conservatism, and retrenchment.

WITH SABRINA JOHNSON



Sabrina

## Beauty Pageants

On Saturday, September 17, NBC featured the "Miss America" Pageant and what made this pageant so special is that a black won the crown - her name is Vanessa Williams of Milwood Westchester County, N.Y. Sunday, September 18, the Philadelphia NBC affiliate KWTN-TV featured a pageant not so popular and not so prime time - the "Miss Black America" pageant 1983-84: won by Sonya Robinson of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Like any other pageant the ladies got to their crowns through hard work and perseverance. Miss Robinson and Miss Williams are beautiful, talented, intelligent and can smile a lot!

"Miss America," Vanessa Williams, won the first place \$25,000 scholarship, \$2,500 prize for the talent competition, \$1,500 prize for the swimsuit competition and numerous other prizes and appearance fees.

"Miss Black America," Sonya Robinson, won a 1984 Ford Mustang, \$1,000 Gentle Treatment cash prize, at least \$3,000 in guest appearances, \$2,000 in cash prizes and a trophy.

Both ladies were judged on beauty, talent, intelligence and poise. The point system was used by the judges of both pageants - which were tallied to name the winner. Miss Williams and Miss Robinson won talent and swimsuit competitions and were judged highly on their abilities to answer different types of questions.

Putting all similarities and differences aside, it is most disturbing that the "Miss Black America" pageant is grossly understated. Black Americans spend billions of dollars each year on clothing, entertainment and cars but do not support, in large amounts, functions such as the "Miss Black America" pageant.

With the enormous amount of money spent by blacks less than two percent is spent supporting black-owned businesses and black-oriented functions. Unfortunately too much emphasis is put on the garments worn and the transportation to the function rather than on making the function successful. For example if dollars in the black community turned over at least three times in that community before leaving, more money would be available for black concerns such as charity or organization and the "Miss Black America" pageant.

One person or a hand full of leaders cannot change the world for blacks, they are merely the trail blazers. It is the people who cut and permanently make the way that bring about change. Cohesiveness of the people can cut those trails. Blacks presenting themselves as "together" people can pose a threat to all people - whites, Jews, Puerto Ricans - everyone.

The "Miss Black America" pageant should offer large scholarships, numerous guest appearances, meetings with major leaders - black and white - and a new car. Large companies should advertise during the pageant because black technology and dollars have helped to build the company. However, now upon approaching these companies they will say they support black culture because they supported the "Miss America" pageant and she is black. Buffalo chips! Push on, people, despite excuses.

Blacks have got to get back into the running in the civil and equal rights fight or gained territory will be lost. The years protest will be lost in complacency. Creature comforts are fine and wonderful but what is the use of having them if men are treated differently outside of the home.

Now is the time to donate money or time solicit support and raise money for black concerns such as the "Miss Black America" pageant. By starting now her prizes can be as glamorous and rich as the "Miss America" pageant. "Miss Black America" can be used as a symbol to represent the composit of young, black ladies aspiring for professionalism, security, happiness, equality and love.

With support and demand support, the "Miss Black America" pageant will have a prime time spot with prime time sponsors. The pageant will be featured on the front pages of the New York Times, Philadelphia Inquirer, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and the like.

Congratulations to Miss Vanessa Williams and Miss Sonya Robinson. May they be role models for young girls - black and white - to strive for personal perfection and community involvement. Positive images are needed today because intelligent women are becoming too masculine. These

young ladies are proving that beauty and intelligence do work hand in hand in forming a career-oriented lady.



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