

Post Readers Cite Black Personalities Who Had Positive Influence On Their Lives

By Teresa Simmons
Post Staff Writer
One hundred letters sent to Charlotte Post subscribers resulted in diverse admiration for local personalities as well as nationally known black Americans.

The question presented was "What black personality has had a brilliant, positive influence on your life?"

The letters revealed the expected: that greatness is not synonymous with fame. Therefore, some names you'll recognize while others may give you a shock.

Rosa Parks and Malcolm X were both mentioned. Three individuals, including Winfred Sanders, cited Martin Luther King, Jr. while another voted Harriet Tubman. "In that time to do what she did accomplished a lot-getting slaves to the North and to freedom was a great feat."

Two individuals cited their mothers as being the person most influential in their lives. Marilyn Caldwell McClain had this to say about her mother, Mattie Porter Caldwell. "She has always been the motivating force in my life and the lives of my (seven) brothers and sisters. Impressing upon her children the importance of education, all eight attended institutions of higher learning. As a child grow-



Mattie Caldwell
....."Greatest mon in the world!"



Mrs. Esther Hargraves
....."Most admired" personality

ing up, I did not have a lot of the material things that my peers had. I had something more valuable which outlasted those material things-my mother taught me to love and respect others, to have pride in any endeavor undertaken, to let the sky be the limit, and most of all - "Believe in

yourself." Mattie Caldwell is the greatest mom in the world."

For Mae Orr, her mother is also the most influential figure in her life.

"From my earliest years my mother, Odessa Clark, instilled in me the importance of a higher education and the appreciation for beauty and of our heritage and culture. She worked two and sometimes three jobs a day to supplement my father's income. Her contribution was to provide my two brothers and three sisters and me with a warm, comfortable and attractive home. The Charlotte Post Black History Month observance has allowed me to reminisce about the most influential person in my life - she's 84, strong and determined as ever, my mother, Odessa Clark."

Calvin Harris stated that his parents, family, Ms. Marie Smith, Mrs. Coleman Kerry and his daughter DiJuana Harris have all been positive and brilliant influences in his life.

There was also one vote for Dr. Joseph Ben Jochannan author of the "Black Man of the Nile." The most unpredictable answer came from a reader who expressed that Abraham Lincoln was the most influential black personality. Really? "I know that he freed the blacks and I have heard that Abraham Lincoln has some black ancestors," the reply came.

One unidentified subscriber named Esther Hargraves as the person she most admired. "I feel Mrs. Hargraves should be mentioned. When I was in school, she took time out

with students - she cares and she is a lady to be held in awe. I can't say what I really want to say but Mrs. Hargraves is truly "The Teacher." She even taught me how to act like a lady."

Malcolm X was mentioned by Ahmad Daniels. "He had the guts to reach into the lion's mouth and to take his freedom, during the period when other black Americans were simply pleading and begging for their freedom," he commented.

"Thank-you" go to the individuals who responded to the question. Hopefully, their responses give insight into the fact that the black race is one to be proud of and that looking back means going backward. It is important to realize the greatness of one's heritage as well as its present and this takes the simple action of thought.

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A 14-day tour of the great art museums, cathedrals and sites of Paris, London and The Netherlands will be included in a CPCC course, to be offered this summer.

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The tour starts July 7 and ends July 21. The course begins earlier with lectures about masterpieces to be

viewed on the tour, given by Elizabeth Ross, a CPCC art instructor now in her fifth year of teaching "Art in Europe."

Fees are \$13.75 for the three credit hour course and \$1,785 for air and ground travel from New York, lodging, breakfasts, dinners and admission to sites, all handled by a travel agency. To register, call Ms. Ross at 373-6956 or at home, 334-6078.

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