

editorials & comments

Foundation Of Existence

Rewritten From
The Carolina Times

When academicians begin destroying counterproductive concepts and terms, replacing them with concepts and terms that are not racist, and the business community begins promoting this new approach in the mainstream, then the rest of us must accept the challenge.

The challenge begins on the individual and personal levels.

Men must set standards that are productive and successful; that set the type of examples for our children and for others that are both inspiring and encouraging.

Women must set similar standards.

It is not enough to pay these standards lip service. We must live them.

We must teach them to our children, and we must not allow people who cannot shake the habit of being oppressed, who have become chronically black, to take us back to the days of race and racism.

Consider some specifics.

Black men don't act a certain way because they are black. Rather, they act a certain way because certain standards of behavior have not been set.

So why not decide, for example, that every child deserves and needs a resident father as an important member of the team required to produce a successful future generation.

Black women don't act a certain way because they are black, but rather because cer-

tain standards of behavior have not been set.

So, why not decide, for example, that our goal in personal relationships is to establish a joint plan by which both members of the relationship reach the zenith of their individual potential?

Black criminals don't commit crimes because they are black, but rather because they are criminals. Crime is counterproductive, and we must not wink at it, or make excuses for it.

So why not decide that we will be anti-crime, period?

Therefore, when the neighborhood thief offers to sell you stolen items, have him arrested. If your neighbor buys stolen items, have him arrested.

All of this is hard - very, very hard - and none of it can be achieved overnight. But it is better to be striving for these standards and miss them, than it is to not strive because we don't believe we can achieve them.

But the bottom line is really quite simple. If race and racism are to be destroyed in this country, then we must initiate that destruction.

We must build our foundation of existence on the fact that we are human, that we are native born Americans, with all the constitutional significance that fact carries, and that we are the only limiting factor in our quest for greatness.

In other words, as we change ourselves, others must change in order to adapt to these new people on the scene, masters of the American mainstream.

"Mama, I'm Free!"

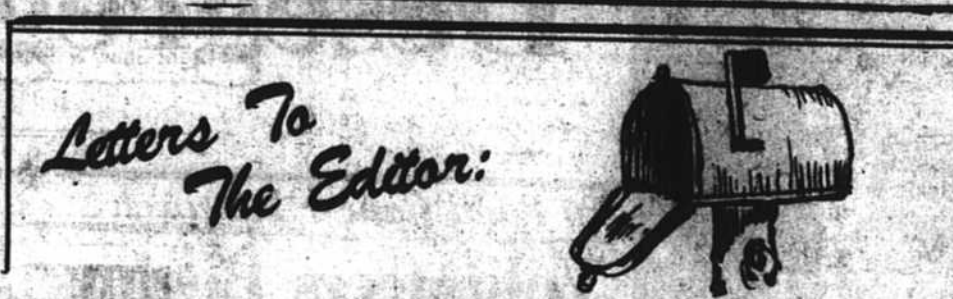
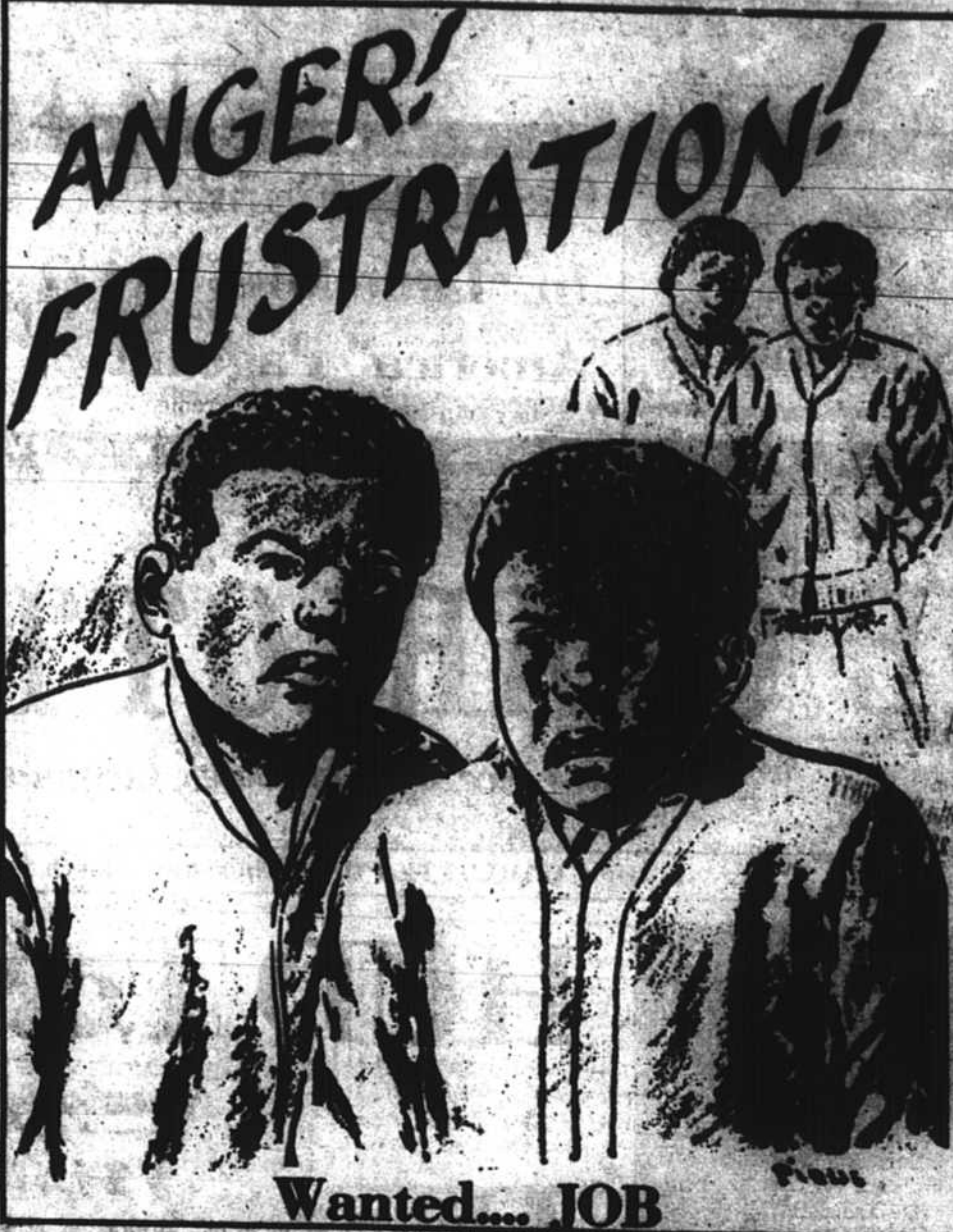
"Mama, I'm free..." These were the words that black engineer Lenell Geter of Denmark, S.C., conveyed to his mother by telephone last week when charges of armed robbery against him were dropped. Mr. Geter is the young man falsely accused, tried and convicted for armed robbery for \$615 and sentenced to life in prison. In spite of numerous eye witnesses confirming that Geter was at his place of employment when the robbery occurred, he was sent to jail on the incorrect testimony of witnesses at the scene.

Lenell Geter spent 16 months of his life in jail for a crime he

did not commit because of mistaken identity, because the rule of law broke down, because a few mistakes are the price we must pay for security, or in the word of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, "This is a Court of law, young man, not a Court of justice."

Since we live in a society that prides itself on the value, rights and dignity of the individual, we cannot accept either of these reasons for Mr. Geter's incorrect imprisonment.

As a nation in our values and in our criminal justice system, it's time to reassess our strength and weaknesses and to find justice.



Poetry Council Offers Five Contests

Dear Editor:

Five contests for the Poetry Council of North Carolina, Inc., which has for its aim discovering and encouraging writing talent, will open on April 1, 1984, and will close on June 15, 1984. The contest categories include the Oscar Arnold Young Memorial Contest for the best book of poetry with more than 20 pages, published by 1983 by a writer who is, or has been, a resident of North Carolina; The Charles A. Shull Contest for any traditional form, except the sonnet, and limited to 24 lines; The James Larkin Pearson Contest for free verse and experimental forms and limited to 22 lines; The Archibald Rutledge Contest for only sonnet entries, of either Shakespearean or Italian form; The Virginia Dare Contest for writers aged 12-18, with any verse form, preferably traditional, and limited to 24 lines. Each year prizes amounting to approximately \$800 are awarded winners on Poetry Day, held annually in Asheville, during the color season in October. The 11

certificates will not be given in the Virginia Dare Contest. Cash and book prizes will be given to each of the seven winners in the contest for teen-agers.

The winner of the Young contest for a book of original poems receives a check for \$100 and a large cup to be engraved with the winner's name and to be kept one year.

Winners in the Schull, Pearson and Rutledge contests receive for first prize - \$50, second prize - \$25, and third prize - \$15. Those winning places of Honorable Mention in each of the four contests will be given a book of poetry. Eleven other winners in each contest will receive Certificates of Merit.

A contestant may enter only one poem in any contest. If the writer submits a poem in a second contest, he must send a different poem. Poems must be original, previously unpublished, and not offered at the time to any other contest or publication. Contestants should avoid bizarre language and pornographic words or images. Each poem sub-

mitted will be accompanied by \$3 to help defray printing and mailing entries to managers and judges, and in sending cash prizes, books, and certificates of award to winners.

For further contest information and rules, the writer should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the contest coordinator: Ms. Lucy M. Walters, P.O. Box 93, Hudson, NC 28632.

Dennis Watts

Dr. Dennis L. Watts of the Watts Chiropractic Center just returned from Atlanta, Ga., where he participated in a two-day workshop on the treatment of neck and back injuries caused by automobile accidents.

The main thrust of the two-day seminar was the seriousness of the whiplash injury and the necessity for early treatment to prevent permanent injury and a lifetime of suffering.

Dr. Watts has practiced chiropractic in Matthews for three years.

Schools That Work

By Daphne Stev White
AFTFNS Staff Writer
Special To The Post

It is difficult to live down a reputation.

That fact is as painfully true for individuals as it is for schools. And it is as true for school districts as it is for an entire educational system.

New Haven's (CT) Hill House High School is a school with a reputation: It changed from a rigorous, college-oriented academic high school in the fifties to a comprehensive high school beset by riots in the sixties and underachieving students, demoralized teachers and a decaying physical plant in the 1970s.

But like many other schools in this country, Hill House School is now undertaking a series of self-improvement measures - aimed at improving student performance and staff morale - that are intended to polish its tarnished reputation.

Even before all the recent reports began to mourn the mediocrity of American education, a large number of schools realized there was a problem and embarked on improvement projects. Some of these programs were initiated at the school level while others were mandated by school districts or state governments. And while the nature of these programs varies, many schools have adopted what is known as the "effective schools" program.

Much of this program is based on research done in the sixties that sought to find ways to improve the basic skills of low-achieving students in inner-city schools. In order to do that, researchers studied the characteristics of urban schools where achievement levels were much higher than average to see what made some schools more effective than others.

Ronald Edmonds, one of the key researchers in the field of school effects, found that there were at least five characteristics that effective schools share:

-there is a clear sense that education is the primary mission of the school and there is a broadly understood instructional focus;

-teachers have high expectations that all students can achieve a mastery of basic skills;

-there is a safe and orderly environment conducive to teaching, learning and human development; and

-there is frequent monitoring and testing of students to see whether they are learning.

Other researchers have added a few other indicators of effective schools, such as a high percentage of time on task in the classroom and parental support for the school.

Effective schools are defined as those that display all five characteristics set out by Edmonds and not schools that display only one or another feature. As for schools that want to start such programs, research has shown that change works best when the principal and teachers work together in the planning and implementation.

As of this year, Hill House students are expected to do at least two hours of homework each evening. Homework notebooks are periodically collected in class, and the principal himself sometimes requests to see class assignments. Seniors are required to take at least five academic classes and pass four in order to graduate, and the number of allowable cuts has been reduced from seven to four, with a move now to reduce this to zero, Crosby said. The school has also instituted an in-school suspension program, which requires students who have disobeyed rules to do their schoolwork in isolation during the school day. The number of fights in the school has also been reduced although not yet eliminated, Crosby said.

"In short, effective schools programs appear to be rather widespread, are being carried out with reasonable care and are believed to be making enough difference that they will probably be an important feature of the school improvement landscape, in both elementary and secondary schools, for the next few years," the study concluded.

No one is claiming that the problems of America's public schools are over. It will take a long time for the system to win back its reputation. But the first steps are now being taken.

Hill House High School, for example, started working on a program during the 1982-83 school year with the help of one of the federal education labs, the Northeast Regional Exchange. DeNorris Crosby, the principal, asked teachers whether they were interested in creating an effective school program and when they said yes, he took a survey to see what the teachers' major concerns were. Then with help from the exchange, the staff began to develop a program that has already resulted in major schoolwide changes.

About half of the 80 teachers in the school are actively participating in one of the improvement committees.

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From Capitol Hill

Name Changes Don't Change Practices

Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

A. W. Harris, a black member of the Virginia Assembly, in the latter part of the 19th century, realized that the State of Virginia had several institutions of higher learning for whites, but not one for blacks. Mr. Harris proposed the enactment of legislation for a black Virginia State College.

In 1882 the State established at Petersburg, Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. In 1902 the name was changed to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, 1930 the name became Virginia State College, 1946 Virginia State College for Negroes, 1979 it became Virginia State University. Through all of these name changes from 1882 until the present, the institution has remained burdened with blatant discriminatory policies.

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund has filed a complaint against Dr. John Casteen, III, Secretary of Education and the Council of High Education for the State of Virginia. This complaint has been filed with Secretary Terrell Bell of the U.S. Department of Education.

The State of Virginia has defaulted on its 1978 commitment to bring Virginia State University (VSU) in compliance with Title VI of



Alfreda L. Madison the 1984 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination in any institution that receives federal funds.

The commitment plan provided Virginia State University with a range of programs, quantity and quality of facilities, student assistance and other resources comparable to the traditionally similar white institutions. It also provided for the completion of all needed improvements and renovations by 1982-83. In 1983, Virginia extended the commitment time to 1985-86. If the recently adjourned Virginia Assembly has failed to provide funds for irradiating these inequities, the State can jeopardize its eligibility for receipt of federal education funds.

The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Education Department appears to have been lax in requiring Virginia to fulfill its 1978 commitment. The Virginia report to the U.S.

Education Department in 1979 admitted: VSU administration presented a construction plan to the State Secretary of Education that required \$79,444,435. Only \$10,204,280 has been received since 1978 and \$2,298,900 of the amount has been frozen. VSU had the highest percentage of unsatisfactory educational and general space with 20.5 percent, George Mason 9 percent, James Madison 8.6 percent, Longwood 1.3 percent and Radford 1.3 percent. Virginia officials explain lack of elimination of these inequities on projection that VSU enrollment will decline in the next decade.

The press reported last spring that VSU's library had to cancel subscriptions for 1983 of 1,600 periodicals, practically no books were added, the library staff was cut and professors were unable to make necessary assignments because of the absence of current journals and reference materials.

Disparities between VSU and Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI), a comparable university are a blatant disgrace. In 1974 VSU ranked 61st in the nation of land grant colleges that received federal funds, VPI ranked seventh. In 1974 VSU received no federal funds at all, while VPI was given \$28.3 million for its agriculture program. For the period

1969-83, VPI was provided \$311,011,405 federal funding while VSU for the same period received \$19,906,913 of federal funding.

VSU faculty salaries are the lowest among state universities. The average VSU salary is \$22,600, which is \$1,300 lower than Virginia colleges of lower classification. The average faculty salary for Virginia state universities is comparable to VSU is \$25,300 and nationwide it is \$36,500.

The 1978 plan promised eight high demand programs at VSU. However, the amended 1983 plan mentions only three. These were enhancing nursing, engineering and business. These are viewed as a token integration face-saving plan hoping that it will attract some white students. Emphasis on these programs has completely neglected basic curricula and science improvements. This complete plan was formulated without VSU faculty having any input. This is the traditional Virginia racial paternalism, "father knows best."

NAACP Legal Defense Fund has recommended dismantling of the dual discrimination system by the fall of 1985.

VSU's funding, programs, facilities and administration inequities leave intact Virginia's racial discrimination policy in higher education.