



## Tony Brown's COMMENTS

### How Negro Mis-Education Works

I first became angry, then stunned and finally tearful and hurt. Mostly hurt.

How can we continue to psychologically abuse ourselves? Is it possible that one race can possibly hate itself this much? Searching for an excuse, I desperately latched on to The New York Times report that she was from Jamaica.

That didn't work as an excuse either. Too many great black leaders—proud of their blackness and heritage—came to the United States from Jamaica. No. Marcus Garvey and the impeccable historian J. A. Rogers gave African-Americans too much to be confused with this Negro lady from Great Neck, N.Y.

The photograph of Mrs. Mavis Stephenson accompanying The New York Times story was the epitome of a well-heeled, educated, classy, very attractive black woman. Looking at her, you felt pride and fantasized that somehow magically the entire race could present such an image.

But her words in one of America's most influential journals, if you had any pride in yourself as a black person, cut deeply. The wound was deeper than the ones inflicted by racism; after a point, they just roll off. But from a member of your own tribe? There is no defense.

The black community in the ghettos all across America supported the NAACP's fight against restrictive covenants that prevented blacks such as Mrs. Stephenson from moving from New York City to the Great Neck, Long Islands of the country.

The sons and daughters of Afro-American slaves fought and died in every American war, rebuilt the South after the devastation of the Civil War. Even Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers gave their lives, and Ida B. Wells-Burnett started the subsequently successful movement against lynching in 1895 (at a that time one black was lynched every day in this country) to pave the way for other blacks to work, go to school or live anywhere in America they choose.

Mrs. Stephenson did not like the idea of a black college. She had been pleased many years ago when they moved from New York City to an apartment in Great Neck because it meant that Shoney would attend integrated schools.

"She has grown up in this environment, she has a mixture of values... I'm from Jamaica. I do not feel angry about racial tension, as many American blacks feels. You grow up in a white community, you won't have as much bias and prejudice against whites."

Shoney, the daughter, was subjected to a process of being "worn down and tamed" when she insisted on going to Howard University in Washington, D.C., to become a doctor. Said her mother, "I just kept ignoring Shoney. She'd bring it up and I'd ignore it."

She also told her daughter, according to the story, that "there would be a better chance for medical school" at a "state (white) school."

Mrs. Stephenson's engineer-brother added more racist myths to her argument. "He's not impressed with all

black schools.... He says it's a white world and you never know what employers will think."

You can really tell what white employers think of black engineering schools each year when they decide to recruit the very best trained Afro-Americans in the field. Where do they go? They make an average of 17 job offers to each engineering graduate at Prairie View A&M University, a black school near Houston, TX.

No black engineering graduate at a white school can expect that kind of reception into the professional world. Neither is the world a "white world." It is a world dominated by people who are well-trained and who finish (not attend) college.

But Mrs. Stephenson's daughter has a better grasp on reality than her mother and uncle. "At these other schools they try to get you to fail. They weed out the weak people, while at Howard they want you to succeed."

Overall, only 20 percent of all black college students attend a predominantly black college, but more than 50 percent of today's black graduates are produced by them. Conversely, while 80 percent go to white colleges, less than 50 percent of the black college graduates come from them. About seven out of 10 blacks at white colleges never graduate.

Neither does this mean that black colleges sacrifice academic achievement. A recent study comparing the graduate school performance of 210 blacks with degrees from black colleges with 140 black graduates of white colleges found that "black colleges turned out students whose grades in advanced-degree programs matched those of blacks who were grads of white universities."

But more importantly, 80 percent of all blacks with advanced degrees from white universities received their undergraduate degrees from a black college, dispelling the notion that black colleges are inferior. They are simply specializing and do the best job of educating black students.

The 114 black colleges are Afro-America's biggest bridge to success. More than 80 percent of all black college graduates finished one of these institutions.

That includes 85 percent of black lawyers; 85 percent of all black physicians; 75 percent of all black Ph.D.s; 75 percent of all black officers in the American armed services; over 50 percent of the country's black executives; and 80 percent of all black judges, including Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Somehow Shoney Stephenson got the message, probably by living in a community of 9,168 where only 5.7 percent is black. The Times said that Shoney felt "a little worn out living around people with such different tastes from hers."

The struggle to preserve black colleges is not aimed at either preserving segregation or forcing all black students to attend one, an obvious impossibility.

### Panel To Discuss Parallel Paths

A panel of women and black leaders will discuss the parallel directions taken by the civil rights and women's movements at the 7:30 PM Wednesday June 6 meeting of the Charlotte Women's Political Caucus. Members of the Black Women's Caucus have been invited to join the discussion at the Uptown YWCA, 418 E. Trade St.

Kelly Alexander Jr., president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP, and former Charlotte Mayor Pro-Tem Betty Chafin

Rash will discuss similarities in the two movements. Lewis Myers and Doris Cromartie, directors of N.C. Department of Commerce departments overseeing the development of minority and women's

businesses, will discuss services their departments provide. Attorney Yvonne Mims Evans will introduce and moderate the panel.

A question-and-answer period and social time will follow the discussion.

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