

# Editorials

## Black Leaders' New Challenge

In the cover story of Black Enterprise magazine (Sept., 1985), a report is given on the "weakened state of many of our black institutions (colleges and universities)." The story notes the reduced level of student aid, inadequate tuition fees, declining enrollments and overall poor fiscal management. The story observes that many such institutions are following the example set by Hampton and Fisk by tapping the resources of corporations and foundations and by competing for research grants.

In like manner, during the past month, three of the nation's major civil rights organizations held conventions that included agendas on major issues confronting black Americans in every imaginable area of our national life. A central thought emerging at each of these meetings was the recurring concern with the need for funds to support the programs sponsored by three of these organizations.

For example, the NAACP has begun a campaign to raise \$4 million needed to relocate its national headquarters from New York City to less expensive facilities in Baltimore, Md. The National Urban League (NUL) has launched an effort to establish a \$34 million foundation to undergird the financial support of its activities on behalf of black people. Jesse Jackson expressed concerns about raising funds to support the Rainbow Coalition which he hopes to make into a major force on the national political scene in the years to come.

Like the traditional black colleges and universities, these civil rights organizations are looking to corporate America to support their program, goals, and objectives. Some refer to support provided by the private business community as corporate social responsibility and a part of what they should give back to the community. Some, too, have viewed such business support as a new form of corporate welfare. The old or more traditional form refers to large government contracts granted to private business particularly in the area of national defense.

Regardless of the name given to corporate assistance or aid to black institutions and organizations, it is, in fact, ironic and regretful that such financial support, especially for civil rights organizations is sought from the very establishments with which it must challenge on such things as job opportunities and promotions for blacks.

### Measure Of Success

The significant point is that the responsibility for preserving black colleges and universities does not rest on the back of corporate America. Black alumni - those who have achieved a measure of success as a result of the education received at black colleges - have the primary responsibility for contributing to the efforts necessary to maintain or reestablish such institutions on a strong financial footing.

Likewise, but unfortunately not quite as clearly visible, black Americans who have benefited from the efforts of our civil rights organizations should be the main source of

financial support for such organizations.

The publishers of Black Enterprise wrote, "I have often said that it is disgraceful for a black American to achieve wealth and personal clout and not use some of it to support the organizations and institutions that made the achievement possible. That means giving whatever you can afford...to black institutions... Without them (black institutions), many of us would not be where we are today."

### Welfare Dependency

Unfortunately in our opinion, too few black leaders - politicians, educators, civil rights workers, ministers and, yes, even some business people, have spent too much time telling or reminding blacks that they don't have the ability to bear a fair share of the burden required to sustain the very organizations dedicated to fighting their battles. There has been instead too great an emphasis on the welfare dependency from the federal government mentality that has crippled the initiative of far too many blacks to make any effort to help themselves through helping black organizations.

It is high time the nation's black leadership began to reassess its role as leaders in offering a sense of direction as to what organizations and institutions black Americans should support with their money, their time, and their talents.

Equally important, black leaders need to set the stage for a re-examination of our values toward self-help and the realization that the world, the nation, or white America owes black Americans nothing. Slavery and its aftermath notwithstanding, black leaders have a moral obligation to more aggressively tell black people that the road to an improved quality of life can only begin and succeed through individual initiative and an "I can do anything" attitude.

Likewise, some black leaders must stop feasting on misfortune of black people and being dependent upon them for their survival.

Thus, it is time for every black American to reassess for himself or herself what black institutions and organizations have done for them directly or indirectly to improve the quality of their lives or the lives of their loved ones and then say, "Lord, help me to give something back to what has been given me." As it has often been said, it's time to put up - give, support - or shut up - because you don't give support.

### 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.

Letters to the editor must include your signature and address, both of which may or may not be used per your request.

Please limit letters to 500 words.

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### Miller Says

## Racism Or Upward Mobility Misunderstanding?

By Sherman N. Miller  
Special To The Post

A short time ago a New York professor, whose roots are in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands, contended that some black police officers were overzealous in their handling of other blacks to appear favorable in the eyes of the economic mainstream. This chap's comments troubled me until I realized that they begged two questions, "Are middle income blacks overly tough on lower class blacks to win favor in mainstream America? Or are middle class blacks merely following an evolutionary course similar to other groups?"

When I thought about the professor's comments, I wondered whether the problem might be black-on-black racism. This new form of racism had been indelibly etched on my mind from a conversation with a black Georgian chap. This Georgian felt that black supervisors at his place of employment made every effort to look good in the eyes of the whites at the detriment of black workers. He felt these supervisors were racist against blacks.

I challenged this Georgian to define black-on-black racism. Willie Moore of Augusta, Ga., responded, "Black folks who cannot stand other blacks."

I wanted to better understand the frustrations that Moore was venting when I discussed this same issue with Elizabeth Moody of Wilmington, De., who had been a black activist during the 1960s. She saw black America hell-bent on adopting white America's value system.

Moody poured forth, "Blacks are brainwashed into believing that the middle class is the only way in this



Sherman

country. If you don't totally accept the white way of doing things - type of way you dress, how you think, the home you live in - then you'll be trapped in the ghetto."

I asked Moody to say whether there was a black class struggle underway or speak to the existence of black-on-black racism. She felt that many upwardly mobile blacks' careers were on a fast track upward but these people had failed to come back to the ghetto to lend a helping hand to others. She argues that upwardly mobile blacks, "...take off like a rocket and do not come back to earth."

Moody believes that "Numero Uno" thinking pervades the upwardly mobile black community. She feels upwardly mobile blacks must think, "...I have made it and if you don't that is just tough!"

Moody postulates upwardly mobile blacks will do whatever it takes to live the good life. She saw the emulation of white America's value system as the key to acceptance in the American economic mainstream. "If I do exactly what white America does, I will now be accepted," declared Moody.

# BLACK AMERICA

## ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES



**"BLACK FOLKS THEMSELVES ARE GOING TO HAVE TO WORK OUT MANY OF THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, INSTEAD OF LEAVING IT UP TO THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS."**

ROY WILKINS

Blacks' Destiny In Own Hands

## Prognoses For Medicare Not Optimistic

Twenty years ago this week a health insurance plan was enacted by Congress for the elderly. It was called and is called Medicare. Doctors called it socialized medicine. They, the doctors, blindly predicted that Medicare and its sister plan, Medicaid, would kill private medicine. They felt that patients would not be able to choose their own physicians. In a nut shell, doctors blatantly refused to help the government plan the health care benefit program.

Although the program was criticized, it began to work and continues to do so. And the critical doctors benefited. Almost all hospitals and doctors in the United States receive some income from the programs. About one-third of all doctors' salaries come from Medicare and Medicaid.

The people who benefit from the programs are the nation's elderly and indigent patients who are cared for by some of the best doctors in the best hospitals. With the onset of new medical technology, elderly citizens can also have major medical problems corrected. As a result, on this 20th birthday



Sabrina

the elderly are getting quality care with dignity from fine doctors who are well paid for their services.

In addition to all the great things the health programs are doing, signs of misuse of the system taint the pallet. In the last 20 years the cost of health care has soared from \$1 billion in 1965 to \$70 billion in 1984. During the past 10 years, Medicaid costs escalated about 25 percent each year.

In addition to rising costs, scandals of doctors robbing the system via overcharging the government.

The main concern is the increase in the amount of money the elderly must pay

out of their pockets directly for medical costs. At present, the USA's elderly pay about \$1,500 out of their pockets. That cost is estimated to be \$2,500 by the year 2000. In an effort towards cost control, the administration imposed a policy of paying the bills on a flat, per case fee. The effort has helped in some ways.

Statistics have it that by the year 2030 there will be more than 60 million people over the age of 65; which is almost double the over 65 population at present. The increased population will put an incredible financial strain on the system fundings. Thus, the government will be forced to take further control costs. And for those people who will be able to work past the age of 65, it will be necessary that they do so. The medical establishment will have to discipline its levels, dissolve unneeded expensive treatments, cut out overcharges and suspend fraud. The insurance industry will have to move into this market place with a stronger, more adjustable arm.

The prognosis for Medicare is not optimistic. As the system continues to suffer, Americans may not be able to afford Medicare, which will bankrupt the nation and socialized medicine would take over.

After refusing to help plan the programs 20 years ago, it is high time that doctors join the government and others in the health care industry to develop a new drug to help Medicare stay healthy.

Currently, there are 254,000 millionaires in the United States eligible for Medicare coverage. Conversely, the workers who pay the taxes for the program are not all eligible. As a result of studies done to find out ways to offset the inequality, the National Center for Policy Analysis has devised an alternative route for those under 65. The organization proposes to allow workers to make tax-free deposits into medical individual retirement accounts (possibly to be called MIRAs) during their working years. Upon retirement the funds would be released and allow the people to pay for their own medical costs from the account. The proposal would cut down Medicare's financial crisis.

Many Americans, the medical profession included, view Medicare as a love-hate relationship. While it does allow for good, dignified medical care, it also affords the medical profession to take advantage through overcharging.

Moody's remarks suggested that the real problem is upwardly mobile blacks' apathy. I wanted to know if this problem was unique to blacks. L.F. Volf, a white chap from Moncks Corner, S.C., told me that women are harder on other women in the real estate industry. A white lady from Wilmington, De., corroborated Volf's contention. She feels that women are harder than men on other women so as to be perceived positively.

When I recount everyone's comments, I am satisfied that black

Americans are on a similar evolution curve to other American groups. However, one issue that surfaces in my mind is "Is the black community expecting upwardly mobile blacks to get an extraordinary manner?" I have had to warn several blacks against placing extraordinary expectations on upwardly mobile blacks. I firmly believe that black Americans are like all other races and one should expect them to act like all other ethnic groups throughout their evolution into the economic mainstream.

### How To Examine Your Breasts

Breast cancer is a frightening topic for today's women. Early detection by self examination is simple and should be done monthly. Yet, I am surprised by the number of women who still are unaware of the procedure or how to do it. This is unfortunate because this simple procedure is so easily performed. In the United States, one in 11 women will develop breast cancer, all women can and should do this examination on themselves regularly.

A simple three-step procedure, which could save your life by detecting breast cancer is listed below:

Examine your breasts during a shower or bath by placing your right arm across the back of your neck. With your left hand check your breast for any lumps, hard knots or thickening. Repeat the same procedure for the left breast.

Before a mirror, raise your arms over your head, check for any swelling, dimpling or changes in the nipples. Then rest palms on hips

pressing down firmly. (Left and right breasts will not exactly match - few women's do.)

Lying down, place a pillow under your right shoulder and right arm over your head. Using the left hand-fingers flat, gently press using small circular motions. Imagine the face of a clock - begin at 12 and move on until you are back around to 12. Now move in an inch towards the nipple - keep circling every part of your breast. Repeat the same procedure on your left breast. It is important to notice how your breast structure feels. Finally, gently squeeze the nipple of each breast - using your thumb and index finger.

Any discharge, clear or bloody, should be reported to your family physician immediately.

Editor's Note: The above was written by Charles S. Davidson, M.D., Kill Devil Hills, N.C., family physician; as a public service of the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians.

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