

Editorials

A Tribute To Pete McKnight

Less than two months ago the quiet, shy but perceptive publisher of The Charlotte Post, William "Bill" Johnson, died at the age of 68. Last Saturday C.S. "Pete" McKnight, who served as editor of The Charlotte Observer for 21 years, also passed from this life. Thus, the heavens above have become enriched with two of the best journalists it has been our privilege to have known and admired.

We have been pleasantly surprised to observe some previously unknown similarities between "Bill" and "Pete." While coming from quite different backgrounds, both men were shy, intense men with keen insights to human behavior and the drift of human events. "Pete," Jack Claiborne wrote in The Observer (August 17) "was a man who understood the racial changes that began sweeping the nation after World War II and urged his readers to accept and even welcome them." Because Pete spoke out on racial issues, as much as 20 years before the civil rights revolution of the 1960s, "his views ... were often denounced in corporate offices and the halls of government, but his influence was important in promoting the peaceful transition to equal rights in this part of the Carolinas."

In a like manner of courage and determination, Bill Johnson was forceful in his editorials over the past 10 years to remind and encourage black people, especially those in positions of leadership - political, civic and religious - of the responsibilities they had to assume with the privileges and new opportunities that the new civil rights laws and the moral changes that had begun in the 1960s. While not nearly as publicly known as Pete's conflict with the white power structure, Bill endured a measure of opposition too from different black leaders at various times for not endorsing or supporting certain viewpoints of such leaders.

McKnight's influence did not end with the printer's ink, he was a force in the creating

or founding of several organizations including the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, UNC-Charlotte, and the N.C. School of the Arts.

However, McKnight will undoubtedly be best remembered for the fact that he was constantly on the cutting edge of social change and racial justice when it was not only unpopular in the white community to express such views but was in fact dangerous. In editorials as far back as 1951, "Pete" supported decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court that ended segregation in railroad dining cars, the Oklahoma University graduate school and the University of Texas Law School. Getting closer to home, Claiborne quotes from a McKnight editorial that said, "And let us not be lulled into thinking that our public school facilities for Negroes are equal to whites...No, North Carolinian with any sense of justice can be happy over that...Segregation as an abstract moral principle cannot be defended by any intellectually or spiritually honest person." Let me remind you again that while such rhetoric may be considered the norm in 1986, in 1951 such talk was considered radical and down right un-American by many people.

McKnight's crusading pen personifies the power and influence of the individual and he the value of a free press. It is said that his voice and viewpoint influenced the powers that be to avoid a lunch counter sit-in confrontation in 1961. Then, undoubtedly influenced by the slums and blight he saw in old Brooklyn from his office window in the old Observer building, Mr. McKnight made urban redevelopment an election year issue after the City Council had expressed opposition to slum clearance programs.

Thus, as the history of our city over the past 40 years is recorded, we should be ever mindful of Pete McKnight, a man of great courage, insight, commitment and a passion for social and racial change.

Charlotte is a better place because God allowed "Pete" McKnight to live among us.

Say "No" To Sex And Drugs

In a one-hour segment of "Phil Donahue Examines The Human Animal," a five-part special aired on NBC-TV last week, attention was given to the conflict in values we have as Americans about sex. The segment, while moving at a pace that offered little depth to its issues, did, nevertheless point out our conflicting values about sex, particularly as influenced by the commercialization of sex.

Everything from automobiles to cigarettes, motor oil and men's shaving cream is advertised on television and in color newspaper ads with a long-haired, beautiful woman provocatively half-dressed. The fact is, the ads are more preoccupied with selling sex than the products they claim to be talking about.

Jane Brown, a 35-year-old Ph.D., has watched a lot of music videos and has 112 such shows on tape. A UNC-Chapel Hill journalism professor, with a concern about the impact of televised "sex" on children,

believes television may be merely a scapegoat for society at large.

She says, "While it's taboo to talk about sex in many family situations, we allow our media to talk about it, to show it to us all the time. If we are going to allow (this to happen) we need to educate our kids about the potentially dangerous effects of sexual behavior."

Unfortunately, Dr. Brown suggests that TV contraceptive advertising would be helpful. This in our view is equally as ridiculous as placing so-called health clinics in the public schools. Such approaches to the solution of sexual behavior or the use of drugs don't appeal to moral values of what is right, but rather sends the message if you can't contain yourself at least use protection. The best protection for our youth against uncontrolled or uninhibited sexual behavior is home and church training in moral values and value judgment. Let us as adults begin to provide by example and lecture this kind of leadership.

TEAMWORK CAN STOP DIS-INTEGRATION OF THE BLACK COMMUNITIES



"While the rising incidence of crime has been a source of embarrassment to many black leaders, far too many have remained ambivalent toward the problem. Perhaps through fear of providing comfort to racists masquerading behind a mask of law and order, I recognize

these risks. But I also recognize an even greater risk that blacks themselves may confuse the right of black people to protest their unsatisfactory condition in the United States with the opportunity for criminals to prey on exposed citizens."

-Dr. Andrew E. Brimmer

As I See It

Should More Blacks Consider Becoming Republicans?

By Gerald O. Johnson
Special To The Post
Since the 1984 Republican landslide victory over the Democrats, black folks have found themselves pretty much out of the political arena. In fact, for the last six years we have been isolated from the political process.

The Republican party seems insensitive to the needs of minorities and as a consequence they legislate accordingly. Hence, I have to question, is our loyalty to the Democratic party with the isolation when Democrats are not in power?

A good question to ask, indeed. I feel (remember, however, that my opinion and a quarter will get you a cup of coffee) that being so committed to the Democratic party is playing a game of political Russian roulette. The Democratic party has begun to take the black vote for granted. The best game in town these days for Democrats seeking office is to go after the black vote during primary elections. However, during general elections it is assumed that



Gerald

the black vote will support the Democratic party. Therefore, Democrats ignore blacks during general elections. Statistics have proven that Democrats can successfully apply this theory. No other group supported the Democratic party like the black voters. Jesse Jackson's running for office somewhat blurred the truth of this fact, but it is true.

In spite of our undying loyalty to the party, the political issues of concern to the black community are not taken seriously during the drafting of the party platform. Still, we vote straight ticket on election day. Interestingly enough, the support is beginning to have a negative effect on the Democratic party. The political support given by blacks to the party gives us political clout that has frightened many whites to either switch parties or vote Republican. Our strength is becoming the party's weakness.

The Republicans on the other hand have no allegiance to the black community once they get in office. Just by the mere fact they got in office without any black support is a mandate in itself to ignore issues of black concern. They have clearly used the overwhelming black support of the Democratic party to sway white voters to vote Republican. Black support carries the stigma of liberalism with it. Liberalism is associated with entitlement programs. Entitlement programs are associated with higher taxes. Higher taxes loses votes. After persuading whites to the Republican side of conservatism, it wouldn't make sense for the Republicans to be sensitive to the black community.

Consequently, black folks are left in the cold when Republicans take office. Whose to blame for all this? The Republicans? No. The black community? Yes. We have aligned ourselves politically to one party. The treatment we receive from both parties is a consequence of us allowing it to happen. We need to become smarter with utilizing our voting power.

I am a firm believer that black political strength can only be maintained if we participate in the two party system. We cannot afford to be taken for granted by one party and completely ignored by the other. We cannot afford to sit on the sidelines for so many years until the Democrats can come back in fashion. It is of vital importance that we have a strong voice in both parties. We need to participate at the primary level for both parties. Some of us need to register as Republicans.

"Constructive Engagement" Is Unconstructive

Rewritten From
The Carolina Times
By John E. Jacob

There are plenty of rivals for the title of the world's worst nation - sad places where tyrants oppress their people either through excess devotion to ideology or to pure greed for money and power.

But South Africa is the clear winner. It is different from all the others.

Nowhere on this globe are the elementary principles of decency, civilization and freedom more trampled upon than in the racist state of South Africa. Nowhere else is the majority denied citizenship. And no other country is in imminent danger of terrible racial warfare.

The Administration's policy of constructive engagement has given South Africa's rulers a blank check to continue their racist policies and to destabilize their region.

After years of constructive engagement we have nothing to show for it. Nelson Mandela is still behind bars. The government refuses to negotiate with the opposition and issues emergency decrees that throw even moderate



Sherman

leaders into jail. Constructive engagement has failed. It is now time for constructive pressures.

This Administration has not hesitated to impose sanctions on Poland, when it oppressed its workers; on Nicaragua, when it threatened our interests in Central America, and on Libya, when it engaged in terrorism.

So it now should impose sanctions on South Africa, which the Secretary of State says is a moral, strategic, economic and political burden on the West.

The claim that sanctions are unworkable is not

persuasive, since sanctions have worked in the past and can cripple a target nation's economy. Sanctions also register moral indignation and demonstrate support for the victim's of oppression.

The British Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group tried to negotiate but South Africa refused. They conclude that sanctions are the only alternative - that unless the West acts boldly to put maximum pressure on South Africa, that country could go down in the flames of a race war that leaves it in the hands of those hostile to our interests.

The stakes are high. Our government has the moral stature and the experience of a pluralistic multi-racial society to take the lead in bringing a peaceful solution to South Africa.

By failing to exercise its leadership it has left U.S. corporations swinging in the wind. Washington's failure to identify America with the aspirations of black majority permanently endangers our economic interests in that country.

In effect, the Administration is forcing U.S. companies there to choose between voluntarily with-

drawing from South Africa now or being expelled later.

Time has run out on South Africa. U.S. corporations should now leave that nation and the U.S. government should align itself with the black struggle for freedom there.

If our nation is to remain true to its ideals, if it is to fulfill its world leadership responsibilities, if it is to live up to its traditions of liberty - it must change sides and support the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

We can no longer celebrate the symbols of our liberty - as we did at the centennial of the Statue of Liberty - while being neutral in the fight for the liberty of black South Africans.

...Sherman N. Miller's column will return next week.

Charlotte Transit

Service improvements, additional buses during peak hours, and a fare increase went into effect on Charlotte Transit buses recently.

Thirteen of Charlotte Transit's 22 routes will have improvements to existing service. Service expansion will be possible by the addition of 10 buses to the peak hour fleet, bringing the total to 94 buses during rush hours.

THE CHARLOTTE POST	
North Carolina's Fastest Growing Weekly	
704-376-0496	
"The People's Newspaper"	
107 Years Of Continuous Service	
Bill Johnson	Pub. Emeritus
Gerald O. Johnson	Publisher
Bernard Reeves	Gen. Mgr.
Loretta Manago	Mng. Editor
Fran Farrer-Bradley	Adv. Mgr.
Dannette Galther	Office Mgr.
Published Every Thursday by The Charlotte Post Publishing Company, Inc. Main Office: 1531 S. Camden Road Charlotte, N.C. 28203	
Second Class Postage Paid at Charlotte	
Member, National Newspaper Publishers' Association North Carolina Black Publishers Association	
National Advertising Representative: Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.	
One Year Subscription Rate One Year - \$17.76 Payable In Advance	
USPS No. 965500 POSTMASTER Send Change of address to: Charlotte Post 1531 S. Camden Rd. Charlotte, N.C. 28203	