

Editorials

Which Way Civil Rights?

Recent Ku Klux Klan activities in the Charlotte area and its undeserving media coverage has caused us to give some thought to where we are as a nation in the field of civil rights.

The federal Commission on Civil Rights is in disarray. John Buzel, a President Reagan appointee, is quitting the Commission when his term expires this month arguing that the Commission has "lost its credibility" and "moral strength." A "member" of the Commission's majority group is opposing hiring quotas for women and blacks and resists busing to desegregate public schools. Buzel has criticized liberal civil rights supporters for what he calls unfair prejudging of the commission's work. He has also had harsh words for the conservative Republican Commission Chairman Clarence Pendleton for creating a "crisis of credibility." Many of Chairman Pendleton's public views over the past two years make Buzel's charge valid. Overall, whether we agree or disagree with Buzel's conclusions, no one can take issue with the fact that the Commission's status of disorder and the insensitivity of many of Pendleton's public statements.

The Civil Rights Commission's declining image appears to personify growing concerns about the status and possible direction of civil rights across the nation. These concerns are emerging from a number of developments. First, federal workers are being hit with a tough policy on illegal drug use. The policy allows agency or department heads to fire employees in so-called "sensitive jobs" who do not pass an initial drug test and are mandated to dismiss workers who fail a second test. In

addition, the drug test program represent an invasion of privacy of many employees, a fact that undermines individual civil rights.

On another front, the civil rights of children may be threatened with the disarray that has erupted in the much publicized McMartin child molestation cases in Los Angeles. The disorder has arisen as a result of information provided by a former prosecutor who quit the case and said he believes the defendants are innocent.

The Los Angeles district attorney's office is upset about the disclosures because of its possible impact in their prosecuting the McMartin cases. The former prosecutor, Glenn Stevens, reportedly gave a 2,000-page transcript about information related to the case to a movie producer hoping to make a film about the case. This unexpected development could severely damage the prosecutor's cases possibly leading to a mistrial. Such a development could free the defendants while leaving a shadow of doubt over them and possibly leave the alleged molested children and their parents without justice and thus a denial of their civil rights. In summary, a breakdown in the judicial system resulting from personal greed has placed in doubt fair and adequate due process of law for the alleged molested children and the adult defendants.

This should remind us too that the struggle for equal justice and civil rights has many faces, many forms and arises from many sometimes seemingly unrelated issues but they are related to sharing fully in what makes America what it is.

NOW Celebrates 20th Birthday

In yet another development, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has a 20th birthday celebration this past Monday amid a growing concern among some of the 150,000-member feminist group that it's time for some "new thinking" said Betty Friedan. Friedan, a NOW founder, its first president and author of *The Feminine Mystique*, says "new thinking" is necessary. "We've made it into the man's world," she says. Then she adds, "Now, 20 years later, women are making 62 cents for every dollar a man makes... Then there is the other issue: How to put it all together, home, work, and family?" This is "the dilemma that the anti-feminists are playing to."

In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) Friedan focused on the discontent of some millions of female homemakers were believed to be feeling a sense of personal unfulfillment and little appreciation for their roles. Today, Friedan says, "the gains are taken for granted." Combined with a sense of complacency and conservatism among some women, Friedan says "we now face a

different set of problems. We face a backlash of people trying to push us back." This "backlash" runs parallel to the backlash in the broader and ever ongoing civil rights struggle with efforts being made to eliminate affirmative action programs and public school desegregation plans, just to name a few.

Friedan added, "We've got to have parental (work) leave and we've got to have child care so women can choose to have kids before they're 40. It's got to be a very diverse (women's) movement. And there are new avenues for alliance with men."

One measure of the progress that women have made since the birth of NOW 20 years ago can be seen in the job training area. Women then comprised three percent of law schools, eight percent of medical schools, one percent of engineering schools and an unknown but small percent of divinity schools. Today, woman make up about 40 percent of the law students, 30 percent of medical students, 25 percent of engineering students, and an unbelievable 60 percent of seminary students in the Protestant faiths.

Miller Says:

Socioeconomic Progress Means Presenting Unified Front

By Sherman N. Miller
Special To The Post

The classic adage, "A house divided cannot stand" typifies the importance of presenting a unified front in gaining socioeconomic progress. Yet, the comments of Ron Reese, chairman of the Pennsylvania Black Republican Council suggest that Pennsylvania's black Republicans (PBRC) see little value in this unity adage.

Reese claims PBRC are trying to win blacks' loyalty to black organizations versus being mere flunkies for the white power structure. His comments imply the existence of black Republican leaders who are selling out the black community, so I encouraged him to explain his contention.

"In past history when blacks strategized, there (has always been) one black (who) runs back and takes it to the white system," purports Reese. "Presently we have in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg those blacks who are only in the Black Republican Council, to be...the spy for the powers to be."

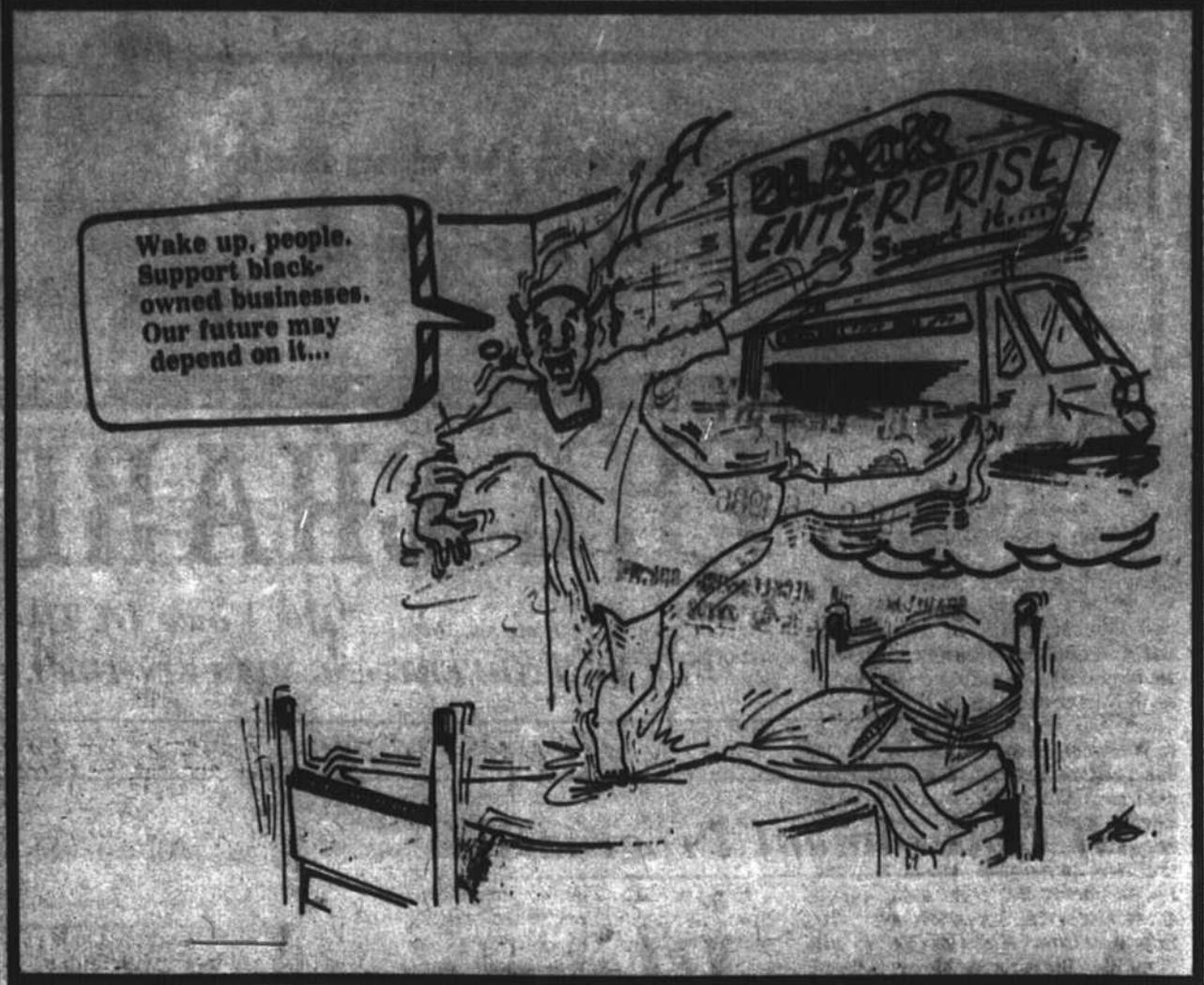


Sherman

This being a venomous assertion about the membership of the PBRC, I felt compelled to challenge Reese to reveal his program to bring dignity back to black Republicans.

"I would hire those blacks who have been shut out by that old line black," replied Reese, "who pretend (they) want to allow young blacks to come along in the professional positions. I would get rid of the type of leverage from that old line black in Pennsylvania and probably across the country."

Reese continued with



As I See It

District Representation Revisited

By Gerald O. Johnson
Special To The Post

This past election marked the first time in my recollection that we elected all officials through some form of District Representation. The State of North Carolina has gone to the District plan. We now elect State Senators and State Representatives by Districts. Furthermore, we elected our County Commissioners for the first time using a combination district-at-large plan much like the one we use to elect City officials. District Representation was sold as the panacea to get more black representation in Mecklenburg County Government at all levels (City, County, and State). To this end, the plan seems to show signs of success. However, some people are beginning to question the quality of Representation we are getting through District Representation. I have some major concerns myself.

I felt that District Representation would create an environment that would allow more people to get involved with the political process. Hence, we would get more new faces in local politics, thereby new ideas. This is not happening in the Black community. Moreover, we aren't even getting a field of people interested in



Gerald

running for office. Case in point: Bob Walton - County Commissioner, ran unopposed; Howard Barnhill - State Representative, ran unopposed; Pete Cunningham - State Representative ran unopposed; James Richardson - State Senate ran unopposed. All of this was in the last election. Ron Leeper and Charlie Dannelly ran unopposed in the last City Council election.

This is a dangerous precedent to be setting for the political future of Charlotte in general and the black community in particular. This is not to say that the individuals running unopposed are not qualified for the positions. It is to say that we never got

the chance to find out. Without strong opposition none of these individuals ever have to campaign. They never have to win our confidence. They never have to earn our respect. We can't realistically hold them accountable for their political record because the record never gets tests. The question seems no longer to be Black representation, but rather Black representatives. This is not why I supported District Representation.

We must stop treating our politics like it's some elitist social club that only a few can participate in. We must encourage our best people to get involved with running for office. We must educate them to the political arena. Our career politicians must help educate others to the system and more importantly encourage competition. They must put personal aspirations aside for the community's well being.

Moreover, I find it extremely important that we get more Blacks involved with the Republican Party. Our failure to have an active two party system within the Black community stifles our political effectiveness. Also, having several Black factions within the Democratic Party would be a healthy situation. These points are important because they help develop strong, responsive representation. The campaign trail gives candidates an opportunity to know you and likewise you an opportunity to know them. We are missing this from our elections. Remember, if we don't force our candidates to stand for something, then they will fall for anything.

Neurologist In

Search Of Tubercous

Sclerosis Families

Dr. Raymond S. Kandt, pediatric neurologist at Duke University Medical School is in urgent need of families affected by tubercous sclerosis for a genetic marker research program. What the gene is found, accurate diagnosis for questionable cases and far more effective treatment of tubercous sclerosis will be possible.

The major stumbling block to getting this kind of research started is the difficulty in finding families affected by tubercous sclerosis.

If you know of or are a member of a family affected by tubercous sclerosis, please call Debbie Murphy, NC Chapter of the National Tubercous Sclerosis Association, collect at 919-747-8892 or write 5005 Indianhead Circle, Snow Hill, NC 28580.

Tubercous sclerosis is a genetic disease characterized by tumors in the brain, heart, lungs, and kidneys and skin signs including a rash across the nose and face and white skin spots.

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