

## Editorials

### Affirmative Action Is Needed

Two recent developments involving affirmative action that appear to be in conflict indicate how far we have come in gaining justice and equality and how far we still need to go before believing we live in a nation of sincere equal opportunity for all.

We note first William Raspberry's recent Washington Post article in which he quotes a black University of Virginia law student as saying, "Affirmative action was a way to dilute our personal victory. It took the victory out of our hands. I see this well-intended, liberal-white-student-affirmative-action plan as an intrusion." Dayna Bowen Matthew, the first black student admitted to the University of Virginia Law Review, a scholarly journal, reportedly made this statement after concluding that her apparent competitive success against white students for admission to "Law Review" was aided by a "diluted" affirmative action plan of the Law Review members. Until this action, good grades in class work or writing competition were two of the three paths to "Law Review" membership.

The third path to membership on the scholarly journal, and the path that caused "bitterest victory," evaluate students on the basis of "personal statements." This refers to how a particular student's presence would "enhance the diversity of the 'Law Review' on the basis of race, national origin, cultural background, experience, or physical handicap."

Raspberry says that Matthew and two other black students had successfully completed the first phase of the two-part writing competition before the new affirmative action rule was adopted and therefore "they can console themselves that they would have made it without special concession." He then adds that the black students that follow them, particularly those who write their way on, will find out how they might have fared in competition. And more to the point, so will the firms to which they will apply for jobs partly through the honor of being a "Law Review" member.

Mr. Raspberry then offers his punch line: The glaring danger of the new (affirmative action) plan is that it will cast doubt on the true qualifications of all blacks who make "Law Review," no matter how qualified they may be.

### Joy And Sadness

This development and Mr. Raspberry's concluding comment are worthy of both joy and sadness. The joy comes from knowing that justice and equality have advanced to the point that some blacks feel sufficiently confident to compete in the larger society without any special assistance. We certainly respect the feelings and beliefs of Ms. Bowen Matthew, the other black students and Mr. Raspberry. However, it is sad to have to wonder how many have forgotten that it was affirmative action mandates, federal civil rights

laws and similar actions that opened the doors for black citizens to even be admitted to the University of Virginia no matter how academically talented. Again, we reaffirm the right of Ms. Matthew and fellow students to feel that their efforts have been diluted by the affirmative action policy, but what really counts is what they do now that they are "Law Review" members. Good grades, writing competition or affirmative action are only part of the true worth of the students. It is rather what these students as individuals, be they black or white, contribute to the "Law Review" and eventually to the larger society through their employers in the future that really matters.

### Mindful Of Broader View

Ms. Matthews' concern for her individual achievement is admirable but we also must be mindful of the broader value and need for affirmative action. That is, we continue to need such preferential treatment programs because of continued racism in America. A second development involving affirmative action confirms our belief. Last week, in a 5-4 decision the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a plan to require that black applicants get half of all the promotions among Alabama's state troopers. The Court's majority opinion was that such strict measures were needed to remedy "pervasive, systematic and obstinate" racial discrimination in the Alabama public safety department.

Author of the majority opinion, Justice William Brennan, emphasized that the state of Alabama had repeatedly refused to hire or promote blacks. He wrote, "For almost four decades, the Department (of Public Safety) has excluded blacks from all positions, including jobs in the upper ranks. (This) discriminatory conduct...created profound need and a firm justification for the race-conscious relief ordered by the district court." Again, the success of this effort will be best evaluated by how well the blacks who benefited by such job quotas perform their assigned duties.

We hope that Ms. Matthews and her classmates can recognize this real world reality of the significance of and continued need for affirmative action programs. Furthermore, to suggest that affirmative action dilutes the sense of personal achievement for the individual is a narrow-minded, selfish viewpoint. It is also part of an emerging conflict among black citizens concerned with their personal individual achievements and the broader need for the collective achievement opportunities of the national black community.

Affirmative action is no substitute for competence in the University of Virginia's "Law Review," the Alabama state troopers or anywhere else.

Affirmative action programs continue to be needed now and will be for some time into the future.



### As I See It:

### CIAA Tournament Observations

By Gerald O. Johnson

The 42nd C.I.A.A. is over and for all intent and purposes, it was another successful campaign. The tournament has become the grandest Black sporting event in the country. The festivities surrounding the tournament have become bigger than the games themselves. One gentleman explaining how much fun he had during the event was asked how he had enjoyed the games. The gentleman replied "what games?" The questioner responded, "the basketball games." The gentleman responded with amazement, "there is basketball, too - wow!"

Then there is the story of the gentleman who arrived at the tournament early Wednesday and proceeded drinking heavily. By game time he was out. He slept until the next morning at which time he proceeded drinking again. By game time he was out and like the previous night, he slept through the games. This process continued straight through the tournament. At check out time, he was asked by the hotel's front desk clerk how he enjoyed the tournament. His reply, "it was great, I can't wait til next year."

Though the fanfare surrounding the tournament is something to behold, there is a serious side to all this hoo-



pla. The four day extravaganza is about basketball.

Unfortunately, the least organized part of the total event is with the games. Several points of concerns surfaced as I observed what was going on with the tournament

itself.

One fact that stands out like a sore thumb is the advantage area teams have in the tournament. Digging back in my tournament history books, I've found that over the last ten years while the games have been played in Virginia, a Virginia team has won eight of the ten contests, Winston Salem and Elizabeth City were the only non-Virginia teams to get a win over this span of time. However, Elizabeth City is within a close proximity of Virginia and should be counted with the Virginia teams. They are considered a northern division

team. I think it would be fairer to alternate the Cities on some sort of cycle basis between Southern Division Cities and Northern Division Cities. This way southern Division schools could receive some of the advantages of playing at or near home. Charlotte, Greensboro, Chapel Hill, and possibly Winston Salem are all cities capable of handling the tournament from a Southern Division perspective. The logistics of doing this is not easy, but it would fair to give this serious consideration. The Southern Division Schools should insist on a plan to make this happen.

Another shortcoming of the tournament is the officiating. Whether or not the officiating is poor is not the question here. The question is why subject the tournament to negative criticisms when it could be easily avoided. Biased officiating should never be an issue with a tournament of this calibre. To eliminate any arguments about cheating officials, the C.I.A.A. should use non-C.I.A.A. officials for the tournament. Moreover, the time keepers should not be representatives from C.I.A.A. schools. This is not to say the officiating will be any better, but it will remove the biased connotations associated with the games.

Finally, the most disturbing aspect of the mishandlings surrounding the tournament is the handling of the press. There is no organization associated with the issuance of press passes. Non-press people are issued passes to sit on press row. Non-press people are given press packets. When the press people arrive, there are no passes or packets available, and no one can tell you why. This is absurd. Moreover, the black press spends an enormous amount of time giving the C.I.A.A. all year coverage. When tournament time arrives, the responsible individuals for handling press people get amnesia.

This type of organizational flaw is easily corrected. First, you need to assign press responsibility to someone who understands the media. A media directory should be created by asking each C.I.A.A. school to supply those media who cover their sporting events. Then any other media not supplied can be added by the tournament committee.

No later than December notifications about press row seating arrangements, a preliminary tournament itinerary, and other tournament related information should be mailed to the media on the directory. The media should then be given a date by which to respond of their intent to attend. Moreover, the expected time of arrival should be supplied by the media. Press info should be placed in a hold status until the expected time of arrival elapses, at which time the passes can be used at the discretion of the tournament's Publicity Director.

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### Miller Says:

### Black History Month Is An American Celebration

By Sherman N. Miller Special To The Post

Although America's minority group peoples have made great strides in gaining access to her bounty, racial segregation of the heart still remains an American tragedy. But the Methodist Church is experimenting with biracial programs between its predominantly black and white churches to bridge this last great racial chasm.

Churches in both the States of Delaware and Maryland recently joined in the celebration of Black History Month which afforded many white parishioners an opportunity to gain an appreciation for the unique culture of black Americans. The program was hosted by Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Wilmington, DE, a predominantly white congregation. It was called a "Celebration of Spirituals II." Rev. Dr. James T. Seymour, pastor of Esion Mount Carmel United Methodist Church of Wilmington, DE, set the stage. He told the approximately 1,000 people in attendance that they would share in the Black History Month celebration. His tone made it clear that this would not be merely a stodgy gospel opera.

Three black ladies, singing a cappella, got the audience into the mood to hear black music sung with great emotion. Aldersgate's choir



Sherman

shined in to close out these black ladies without a significant loss in soul in the transition.

As the evening progressed, approximately 30% of the people clapped their hands to the rhythm of the music. White people sang stereotypical black songs (e.g., "Ain't Got Time To Die") with great emotion. Black and white choirs sang emotionally together yet they displayed grace and dignity.

The zenith of the evening came when everyone rose to sing "Lift Every Voice," the Black American anthem. It was given the respect of a national anthem.

I wondered what these whites felt about celebrating

Black History Month and listening to Black Spiritual Music. I was taken aback when one lady told me the Spiritual "is part of my heritage."

This lady also pointed out that "Whites have lost the emotionalism. Everything is logical or intellectual."

Another person did not see Black History Month as solely a Black American celebration. "Black History Month is a human celebration."

On my way out of Aldersgate Methodist Church, I heard two elderly white ladies singing the Black Spirituals while walking to their car. I asked them why they were singing these songs. "It brings out the emotions," replied one of them. This lady saw the puzzled look on my face. "It makes you forget any tensions," she continued.

I wanted to probe her more, but she again read my thoughts and went on to explain her comments. She said she came to church with a great mental burden and the emotional experience accompanying the Black Spirituals uplifted her spirit. The gleam in her eyes was as a 10-year-old child who was a birthday girl.

In recounting my discussions with these white parishioners, it was clear that few whites have an appreciation for black Americans' contributions to the general welfare

of the USA. When I told a group that blacks discovered the traffic signal and the gas mask they were in awe.

Let us hope the Methodist Church continues to enhance integration of the heart by using its clout to truly merge Black History into American History.

### Supreme Court

### Removes Doubt

New York, NY - The Supreme Court's opinion removes all doubt as to the permissibility of racially-based numerical goals for promoting black citizens in situations where there has been a past history of severe discrimination. Numerous lower courts have ruled in support of the practice; now it has the approval of the highest court in the land.

More broadly, the decision is yet another validation of the race conscious affirmative remedies which the Reagan Administration has worked so fervently to turn around.

Of special significance is the Court's approval of a numerical remedy whose imposition may exceed the ultimate goal - that is, it's OK to hire black people at the rate of 50% if that is what's necessary to bring about a work force that is 25% percent black. That such a remedy is appropriate indicates the importance of speed with regard to remedies for discrimination. This decision removes yet one more barrier to equal opportunity.