

Editorials

The Charlotte Post

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Gary Hart's Self-Demise

While much of the nation, and Charlotte in particular, is still waiting for the news media printer's ink to dry on the Jim Bakker sex scandal allegations and the free-wheel spending of megabucks for salaries, along comes Democratic presidential candidate Gary Hart with his own sex scandal soap opera.

After reading very carefully Mr. Hart's statement ending his presidential campaign, we have to really wonder why all the fuss? Setting aside for the moment the question of whether The Miami Herald exceeded the bounds of legitimate investigative reporting, we have concluded that Mr. Hart, by his own words, has "made some mistakes" and therefore did the only honorable thing he could, withdraw his candidacy for the nation's highest political office.

The emerging debate over media ethics seems hardly worth the time in the Hart case because any person who offers himself or herself for public office must accept the fact that he or she is no longer a private citizen pursuing private, personal interests. A candidate for public office at any level is asking people to trust them to hold office in which they the candidate, if elected, would act in the public's best interest at all times, under any circumstances.

Significantly, a part of this trust can only be developed if people can have an insight into the private lives of such aspiring public figures. After all, it is only by knowledge of a public office candidate's personal life that the general public can begin to gain any in-

sight into the character, sense of morality, family stability, values both religious and secular; judgement and decision making skills. The typical marketing or making of a presidential candidate today does not provide the most valid picture of these qualities.

Mr. Hart appears to have forgotten or seems not to have known that as a public figure seeking the nation's highest political office that his private life was therefore among the things that the public "has a right to know" if he expected them to trust him with a position that can and will affect their lives and welfare and that of their children.

It is insignificant as to whether Gary Hart did or did not have an affair with Donna Rice, a former South Carolina beauty queen, and another woman in Washington. What is significant is that Gary Hart did, again in his own words, "make some mistakes...Maybe big mistakes." He made two "big mistakes." First, Mr. Hart challenged the press to "bird-dog" him then criticized them for doing so. Secondly, and most important, Mr. Hart failed to recognize that the perception of evil doing can be as damaging to a public figure as evil acts themselves.

Gary Hart has been his own worst enemy. With irresponsible mistakes in matters of personal emotional feelings, Hart has demonstrated to the nation, or at least left the perception, that he lacks a sense of good judgement and questionable morality, characteristics that rank high in what the American people expect in their candidates for public office.

Colored, Negro And Black

Last week in our editorial, "Jackie Robinson, A Pacesetter," we wrote about the lingering problem of discrimination in Major League baseball. Among the additional research material that came to our desk after we went to press was an article in "Sports Illustrated" magazine by Reggie Jackson. Jackson, in his 20th Major League season and back with the "A's" or "Athletics," the team he started with, then of Kansas City and now at Oakland, is seeking to also be a pacesetter of a different nature.

In a preface to the article, Jackson tells the magazine publishers that this will be his final year as a player but that he does not want to leave baseball. He says, "I would like to give something back to the game. I can have some impact on the status of minorities in baseball, and that's what I plan on trying to do." It was for this reason that "Sports Illustrated" sought out Jackson for an interview on what he calls "our problem."

Interestingly, Reggie Jackson's viewpoints have meaning for us all, both black and white, far and apart from the baseball diamond. In fact he says correctly, "The problem isn't limited to baseball..." It is for this reason that we want to quote from the article a few of Jackson's thoughts and comments.

Reggie Jackson begins: "Al Campanis' statement about blacks lacking the 'necessities' to be major league managers

and general managers is the best thing to happen to minorities in baseball since Jackie Robinson. Campanis is not...a racist, but he made a stupid, irrational statement that brought the problem into a sharper focus than we could have ever asked for.

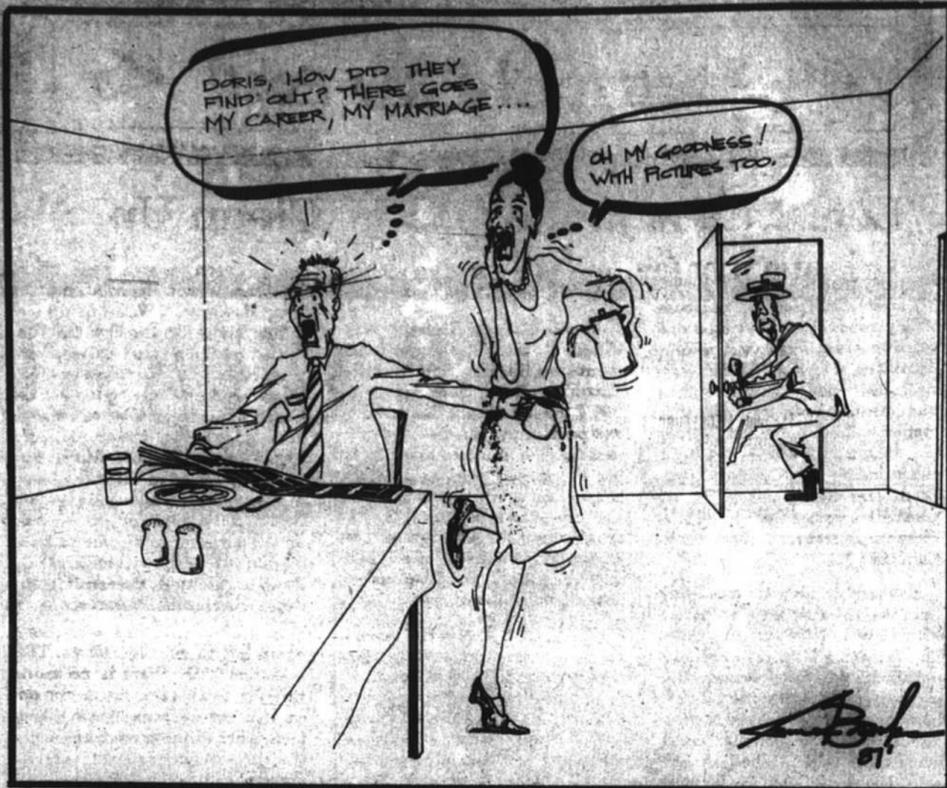
"I was 'colored' until I was 14, a Negro until I was 21 and a black man ever since. In other words, I've lived through all the post-World War II stages of the black man's emergence into supposed freedom. Now that I'm about to retire as a player, having reaped significant economic benefit from baseball, I want to do my part through ownership and management."

Jackson adds, "Here we are at the end of the '80s and we have a serious problem that isn't going away...unless something is done...bad feelings will only get worse."

He says that while a few people have spoken out on this issue "people haven't responded as they are responding in the wake of the Campanis affair. I don't like words like racist, bigotry, and prejudice because they evoke hatred. They are negative words, and the more we can stay away from them, the better."

"I don't believe blacks should be given anything...there are blacks who are qualified to work as managers...coaches, accountants, etc., and all I ask is that qualified blacks be hired to fill some of those jobs."

Think on Mr. Jackson's words, they may help you in whatever your career pursuits.



As I See It

Setting Local Black Community Agenda

As a race we have not made significant progress in getting our piece of the American dream. Our current plight is much like the fertilization of an egg in the birth process. Millions of sperm cells are released with a mission of reaching the egg for fertilization. Nearly all of the sperm cell are destroyed before they come close to reaching their goal. For the one that makes it to the egg, there is no guarantee that it will be successful with fertilizing the egg. On occasion, however, a sperm will successfully reach the egg and accomplish the mission.

The egg represents the American dream. The sperm is the Black community. Our society represents all of the obstacles standing in the way of reaching the goal.

Probably the biggest obstacle standing in our way is ourselves. Once a goal has been mutually agreed on, instead of concentrating on that goal, we spend the rest of the time fighting over who is going to be the 'house nigger' and who is going to be the 'field nigger'. When the fighting finally stops, we've lost sight of the original goal. We all end up just 'plain niggers'.

This situation has precipitated the formulation of so many Black groups and organizations setting their own agen-

das for helping the Black community. Consequently, we end up with a piecemeal approach in dealing with community issues.

If we are serious about helping the Black community, then we should be about setting a Black community wide agenda that the majority of the community can buy into. Then the community can put forth collective efforts to reach these goals. The manpower and dollars wasted by everybody doing their own thing is something we can ill-afford as a community. We have to pool all of our resources and focus them on what the community feels are the priority issues facing us.

Any community agenda must include the following three items:

1. Education, 2. Economic Development, and 3. Politics.

I really feel that this is all the agenda need include. Each agenda item should be subdivided into short and long term goals. Then objectives should be developed to reach those goals. Periodic meetings could then be set up to measure progress of each objective. Churches, civic organizations, 'Greek' organizations, political groups, and social clubs could then be responsible for various objec-

tives. All of us would then be working in unison getting things done.

It doesn't make much sense to me having a Charlotte Business League that is trying to promote Black entrepreneurs and a Beatties Ford Merchant's Association for West-side community development and neither is involved with helping get the Minority and Woman Business Enterprise (MWBE) program passed in the State Legislature. For that matter, neither is directly involved with helping the other. This is an ineffective way of using some of the community's best minds. We aren't working collectively. We have Optimist clubs, Lion's clubs, Fraternities, and Sororities, nickel and diming the community to death for minimal impact activities. Collectively, these groups could support a project like the Urban Leagues' Educational Initiative program and have significant impact on the community.

To get all of this started will require the heads of the various organizations to start meeting and brainstorming on priorities for the community. If this can be done, the rest is easy.

If this can't be done, then we will never be more than a sperm cell.

Appreciating New York City's Mystique

Business persons can be heard jokingly expressing serious reservations about visits to New York City. "We sponsored a contest where one week in New York was the first prize, two weeks the second prize, and three weeks the third prize."

My daughter helped me to see New York City beyond its stereotypical image. She wanted to ride on a train for the first time, so we agreed to spend a single day vacationing in New York City. As the Amtrack Metroliner approached the city my anxiety heightened because I did not have the slightest idea of what to do to keep a nine year old girl happy all day.

When the city came into view, my nerves calmed a bit at the sight of the Empire State Building. I immediately convinced my daughter to see New York City from the building's lookout level. The impact of the weak American dollar was readily apparent because many people waiting in line with us at the Empire State Building were tourists from other countries.

I had always thought of New Yorkans as fast moving people with little compassion for their fellow man. This erroneous belief was quickly dispelled when my daughter had to use the restroom and a guard explained to us how



to use it without a special pass key. Also ladies who were working in the Empire State Building looked after her for me.

A short time later we stopped in a small restaurant for breakfast. One of the waitresses there told us about a world class toy store called F.A.O. Schwartz that was located in walking distance from the restaurant, and we set out to find it.

On the way we ran across a mime whose sidewalk show was very good. A few blocks farther we ran into three fellows doing a break dance routine. There was a unique act where two of them interlaced their bodies to appear as a very short person.

We finally arrived at F.A.O. Schwartz. My daughter was spellbound as the store had about every toy a child could imagine. The

prices we found to be extraordinarily high.

I had convinced my daughter to delay any purchases until we started back towards the train station. She had, therefore, carefully kept track of her favorite retail stores. Now we shopped between listening to an orchestra in Central Park and a violin concerto on the steps of the New York City Library.

The American Express Card symbol in the window at these retail outlets initially offered me some solace. Our first purchase forced me to question the validity of American Express' famous advertisement, "Don't leave home without it." This credit card was a real kiss of death. One chap complained that he would lose all of his profit if the sale was on an American Express Card.

We found that we could negotiate prices with cash. One chap waived the City tax on a cash transaction. We did have to demand receipts in these tourist traps.

In recounting our one day vacation, I've decided that many New Yorkans are compassionate people. I further feel that walking is one of the best ways to appreciate the mystique of New York City.

