

Blacks Can Help Dinkins

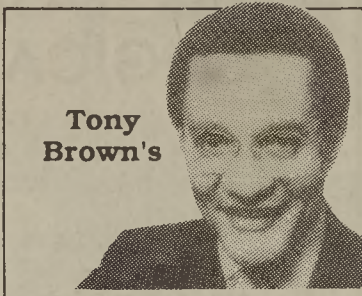
Although I am not a Democrat, I have a great interest in the Democratic race for mayor of New York because of its impact on blacks nationwide.

One in 10 blacks (3.2 million) in America live in the New York metropolitan area, the Census Bureau announced recently. That fact alone makes David Dinkins' run for mayor of particular significance.

As a black man, Dinkins' strategists have had to be ever mindful of race and racism in a city that has become in recent years more notorious than Alabama and Mississippi for racially driven incidents.

One news report says that the Dinkins strategy is cautious and conservative: solidify his base among blacks, union members, white liberals and Hispanics who voted for Jesse Jackson in 1988. Then he must go after enough moderate Jewish voters and white Catholics "to win 40 percent of the primary vote needed to avoid a run off... Dinkins would win easily if he received 75 percent of the black vote, 50 percent of the Hispanic vote and 25 percent of the white vote," speculated the New York Times.

Race and racism are givens in today's New York. Even the numbers tell the story. A poll showed that 37 percent of registered Democrats will vote for



Tony Brown's

Commentaries

Dinkins and 24 percent for Mayor Edward Koch. But in a one-on-one with Mayor Edward Koch, Dinkins gets 32 percent of the white vote while Koch carries 46 percent (only 14 percent of blacks are for Koch).

But black and white New Yorkers do agree on one thing; they see drugs and crime as the number one and two problems, respectively. Dinkins should see this finding as the possible solution to the race problem that is almost inevitable.

"As racial tension builds, both blacks and whites are more likely to vote for people of their own race," commented a white political consultant. That means that the first full-blown controversy over black anti-Semitism or a violent incident of a black against a white during the hot, summer months could devastate Dinkins' chances.

Dinkins can't control that factor because some fool somewhere is going to do something foolish. Therefore, to move the focus away from race (and racism), Dinkins should concentrate on drugs -- a legitimate concern and equally devastating to all racial and socio-economic groups.

The magnitude of the problem is staggering and obvious to everyone, it seems, but the politicians. In 1985, only four percent of New Yorkers said that drugs should be the number one concern for the mayor. This year, 37 percent feel that way. Crime is a distant second at about 25 percent.

Dinkins could penetrate this fertile market by explaining that while whites generally regard drugs as a black problem, drug usage is more prevalent among whites. And blacks could be appealed to on the basis that they are more frequently the victims of crime which is drug related. These two issues, properly articulated, will appeal to 62 percent of the voters and avoid the entrapment of racism.

Blacks can help Dinkins most by being cool.

TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL TV series can be seen on public television Sundays on Channel 42 at 5 p.m. It can also be seen on Channel 58 at 1:30 p.m. Saturdays. Please consult listings.

Hate Flag-Burning, But Keep It Legal

Flags and firecrackers on the Fourth of July.

They almost made us forget about the furor about the Supreme Court and flag burners. Almost.

Some of us are still hot. Too many of us fought for the flag. Too many of us lost loved ones who came back in coffins wrapped in the flag. It means too much to us. We can't forget it.

I guess that I am a nut about the flag. Maybe it is because of all my years in the Boy Scouts and the Army. I get angry if the flag gets too close to the ground, or if it is folded improperly, or if people don't take it down at night like they should, or if people don't stand up straight and put their hand over their heart when the colors are presented.

I checked the rules about the flag. In my mind, a lot of people who claim to love the flag show the most disrespect by ignoring all the regulations and customs about its display.

Listed below are some of those rules. Look around today and see how many of them are broken.

The flag should never be used for advertising purposes. (Check the giant flags at some



D.G. Martin

One-On-One

gas stations that fly all the time to attract the attention of customers.)

The flag should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs.

It should not be printed or impressed on boxes.

It should not be used as a costume or athletic uniform.

It should not be displayed on a car except from a staff.

It should not be displayed at half staff except during times of official state or national mourning.

It should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.

And when a flag wears out and is no longer suitable, it should be destroyed in a dignified way.

Ironically, the preferred way is by burning.

My pickiness about the flag should put me in the camp of those who want an immediate amendment to the Constitution to modify the First Amendment so that we can put flag desecrators in jail.

But I confess that, as much as I love the flag, I love the Bill of Rights more. In fact, one of the reasons I love the flag so much is because it represents our country's freedoms that the Bill of Rights protects.

Flag desecrators can never destroy our flag, no matter how many copies they burn. But we can desecrate our Bill of Rights. We can lose what we really treasure if, in a rush to prove our patriotism, we carelessly tack on amendments each time the Supreme Court interprets the Bill of Rights to protect conduct that offends us.

Let true patriots stand up for their country and its Bill of Rights. "Be cautious," let them say. "Be careful and thoughtful before you tinker with our Constitution."

In the meantime, the flag desecrators and others who misuse the flag get what they really deserve--our disdain.

Letters To The Post

Pick Up The Ball Of Civil Rights

Dear Editor:

"This American nation of ours is great because of its diversity -- because it is a people drawn from many lands and many cultures, bound together by the ideals of human brotherhood. We must remember these things as we go forward in our efforts for world peace."

"Today, as we reach a fuller understanding of the brotherhood of man, we are laying aside these old prejudices. We are working with the new nations of Asia and Africa as equals. Anything less would be a betrayal of the democratic ideals we possess. Better than any other country, the United States can reach out, through our diversity of races and origins, and deal as man to man with the different peoples of the globe."

"In this way -- in this spirit -- we can help other peoples to build better lives for themselves. And we can show that free peoples working together can change misery into happiness."

Jesse Jackson in 1988? Harvey Gantt in 1987? Jimmy Carter in 1976? Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968? President John F. Kennedy in 1961?

No, actually these words came from the commencement address at Howard University back on June 13, 1952. The speaker: President Harry S. Truman, who is popularly remembered for his "plain-speaking" Midwestern approach to government and politics but whose record contains many prominent statements of support for civil rights and human rights both in our country and around the world.

In fact, in his 1948 presidential campaign, Truman declined political advice to downplay his civil rights commitments and, instead, gave this platform a top priority.

The purpose here is not to single out the Truman civil rights stand of 40-years ago but rather to remind ourselves that commitments to equality of opportunity and human dignity reach back many decades in this century.

The problem has been that this march toward equality under the law has been interrupted many times along the way and it has taken such leaders as Dr. King, Sen. Robert Kennedy, Jimmy Carter,

Coretta Scott King and Jesse Jackson to get us all back on the path to promise and fulfillment.

Why? Because too often the Republican Party, despite many good people at the local level as here in Mecklenburg, has dropped the ball on civil rights in Washington where it really counts. Or as Harry Truman said in 1952: "They wavered on civil rights."

So with a backsliding on civil rights in the last two Republican administrations, what course are we to follow?

Should we have a "black rights" group over here, a "white rights" group over there, a "women's rights" group on the other side, and splinter groups all over the place?

No, we must not let ourselves be scattered here and yon. Even though the Administration is just coasting along on the achievements of others, we should keep the broad banner unfurled before us.

By working for equality for all, we won't lose sight of where we're going.

DAVID P. MCKNIGHT
Nashville, Tenn.

Congrats To Golfer Jim Dent

Dear Editor:

On behalf of all African-American golfers of Mecklenburg County and the state of North Carolina, we salute and congratulate Jim Dent on his first professional golf victory.

Eighteen years is a long time

to watch your peers experience the joy of victory while you experience the agony of defeat. To wait until you are 50-years-old to experience victory is a long time.

I quote, "unless a man believes in himself, makes a total commitment to his career,

and puts everything he has into it, he will never be successful at anything he undertakes."

Congratulations, Jim Dent. You have made it.

ROOSEVELT MASKE

Plagiarizing Is Unforgivable

Dear Editor:

We do not as individuals, as professionals, or business people, or families have the right to steal and use another person's written work without giving them proper credit and recognition.

When I opened the June 18, 1989, Lifestyles section of *The Charlotte Post* and noticed the title of one of my favorite poems -- *Children Learn What They Live*, by Dorothy Law Nolte -- my first thought was what a fitting tribute for Father's Day.

In a split second, I felt as though someone had dropped a ton of bricks on my head. I could not believe that an individual by the name of Laura Leiden was claiming authorship to this poem.

To Laura Leiden, I simply want to say authors spend

many lonely and sleepless days and nights putting their thoughts and ideas on paper, pulling papers in and out of typewriters, rewriting, pulling hairs out and chewing on dirty pencils, all in an effort to present their written work to its audience.

You have absolutely no right to steal and sign your name to Dorothy Law Nolte's poem. Hopefully, you and other individuals who consider stealing another's written work will remember and appreciate all the labor that goes into the author's final written product.

It is a lazy, heartless, thoughtless, rude, inconsiderate and monstrous person who attempts to claim ownership of another individual's written work. In fact, this is one of the most dishonest acts one can commit. I put plagiarism in the same category as thiev-

ery. To *The Charlotte Post*, this is a very popular poem and I am sure you will agree that a reprint is necessary noting the correct author's name -- Dorothy Law Nolte.

MATTIE B. MARSHALL

Editor's note: We are greatly dismayed that we printed *Children Learn What They Live* without giving credit to the author. The writer of the article was misled by Ms. Leiden, who in fact had signed her name to the poem which she had printed in calligraphy and was selling. Because Ms. Leiden's name was the only name on the poem, we did not realize the poem was written by someone else. Our deepest apologies to Dorothy Law Nolte.

Say No To Four-Year Terms

Dear Editor:

Article I Section 9 of the Constitution of North Carolina reads, Frequent Elections:

"For redress or grievances and for amending and strengthening the laws, elections shall be often held." For more than 200 years, this basic philosophy has been the very basic foundation of our state.

Never in the history of the General Assembly have we ever seen as many proposed amendments to the state's Constitution.

Among the 29 proposed amendments are two Senate passed amendments that would change the terms of political offices, including four-year terms for legislators and one six-year term for its governor and Lt. Governor and we would be one of only four states (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Maryland) in the nation with four-year terms for both houses. But North Carolina would become the only state with four-year terms that would not elect the

legislature in the same year as the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the members of the Council of State.

This proposed change is not in the best interest of the people. Voters would be giving up one-half of their ballot, one-half of their right to re-elect those legislators who were doing a good job, and reject those who were not. Four year terms won't make a good legislator better, but it might make a bad legislator worse.

For government to be fairly responsive, it must permit the electorate to participate regularly.

Our forefathers understood the potential for legislative excess. They wisely decided to hold legislators accountable by putting a two-year term for U.S. Congressmen in the constitution. James Madison felt so strongly about this issue that he affirmed that "biennial elections will be useful to the affairs of the public as we have seen that they will

be safe to the liberty of the people."

Madison, Jefferson, Jackson and others were deeply concerned with the tendency of lawmakers to become too powerful and remove themselves from the people.

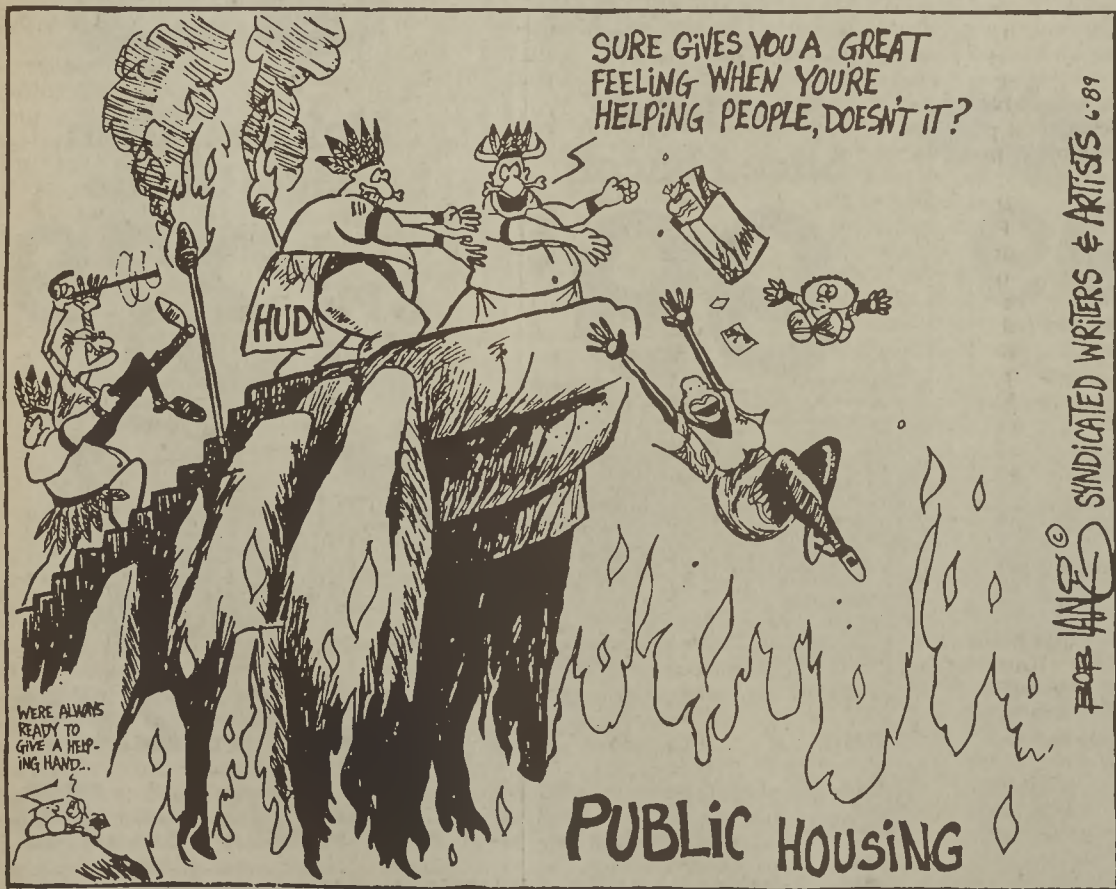
I would urge the tax payers of this state to demand a public hearing on this issue to urge members of the N.C. House to say "No" -- loud and clear.

We do not need a full time professional General Assembly but we need to continue accountable and responsive government.

As a former member of the General Assembly and a candidate for congress, I understand the high cost of campaigning and the enormous amount of time and energy it takes. But I stand firm in my opposition to the four-year term.

Let's keep the two-year term.

TOM GILMORE
Julian, NC



While Politicians Profit From Housing Deals, Poor Americans Can't Get Homes

Guest Editorial
By Cong. Gus Hawkins

A Congressional committee is now probing into the mismanagement at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD) during the Reagan Administration, and from the looks of it, the scandal is not a pretty picture. At the center of the controversy is the influence peddling, abuse and favoritism in HUD's administration of the Section 8 rent subsidy program to rehabilitate housing for low-income families.

It is ironic, in a sense, that the Reagan Administration almost succeeded in abolishing the

Section 8 Rehab program while at the same time many former top officials profited from it. In some instances, a few minutes of conversation of talking to the "right people" yielded thousands of dollars to consultants from these scarce housing funds. One consultant, who was a former special assistant to Secretary Pierce, received \$1.3 million in consulting fees. As Chairman of the Congressional Investigating Committee Tom Lantos stated, "the game played at HUD headquarters in Washington was 'Let's Make A Deal.'"

This scandal is particularly disturbing because it surfaces

at a time when housing and homelessness are serious national problems. Low income people today face an unprecedented housing crisis due to the severe lack of affordable housing. A 1983 housing survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, found that 8.4 million renter households earned less than \$7,000, or little more than 50 percent of the renter median income of \$12,000. But just as difficult as it is to afford housing, it is equally difficult to find it.

How serious is the lack of affordable housing? In 1970, there were almost 15 million

housing units affordable for a family earning \$5,000 or less a year. By 1980 this number had shrunk to less than 3 million. Most of the focus of federal housing assistance is now placed on subsidizing rents in existing housing...and very little, if any, on building new structures. Added to this housing shortage, is the displacement factor. In the Section 8 program, displacement can be caused by the simple refusal of the project owner to renew the Section 8 contract with HUD. In other HUD assistance programs (Section 236 and Section 221 (d) (3) the housing stock is threa-

tened by contracts which make it easy for owners to pre-pay their mortgage and then convert the property to a condominium or demolish the project to put the site to some other use.

Decent housing is a human right. We simply can not afford to drop this enormous responsibility. Whether its the federal government, a state economic development entity, or a local community redevelopment agency, this right must be upheld. Hopefully, the HUD scandal will motivate political leaders to take an acute interest in the problems of affordable housing in our nation. We must

"Decent housing is a human right."

champion the rights of those who live in congested ghettos, or have no home at all, as much as those who live in comfortable housing. If we are to live up to our national ideal of fairness and "promoting the general welfare" then we must begin this task now.