

Fulwood tackles black and middle-class



SAM FULWOOD III

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Sam Fulwood III knew calling myself an "angry black man" would cause problems.

In his new book, "Waking from the Dream: My Life in the Black Middle Class," Fulwood seeks to understand the source of his frustrations and those of thousands like him - the African American success stories.

Fulwood's book, like the author himself, is intensive and thoughtful. Written after Fulwood's stint at the Baltimore Sun's South African Bureau, it begins in Charlotte,

with Fulwood's initiation into integration and ends with his reflections on how integration affected his thinking.

Fulwood will be in Charlotte Wednesday at the Barnes & Noble on Independence to discuss "Waking from the Dream: My Life in the Black Middle Class."

Fulwood remembers a Charlotte that most would want forgotten, a Charlotte fighting to integrate quietly.

Images of Birmingham and Montgomery were burned into the minds of Charlotte leaders who sought to make integration as swift and painless as possible to preserve

Charlotte's image as an up-and-coming financial and cultural center.

A ninth-grader when court ordered busing was enforced in Charlotte, Fulwood was sent to McClintock Junior High seeing for the first time whites and blacks from different social classes. Integration, in spite of its problems was positive for Fulwood in that it allowed him opportunities that had long denied blacks, but it also had its drawbacks.

"Integration is a an ongoing experiment...we should not give up on it," said Fulwood. "We simply do not have the stomach to really try."

Fulwood, categorizes his experiences as "positive" overall but it marked the beginning of what he calls his major defense mechanisms for coping with a world where he would have to make all of the advances for change.

"I, like many other blacks developed what I call an 'isolationist courage,'" says Fulwood, explaining his loneliness, even in a room full of people. "I was always cautious...not really ever developing any real friendships with my colleagues."

Fulwood believes that many African Americans develop the same strategy for coping with the pressures of functioning in society that largely accepts them only on the surface.

Society has integrated to a degree, but whites have failed to share power and make the workplace less hostile. Faced with subtle racism, blacks become easily frustrated and home becomes a refuge.

"African Americans' move into insulated communities where home is comfortable, because work is not," Fulwood said. "We (African Americans) are not there, so we move to all

black communities where we can commune with others in the same struggle.

"It is a mirror image of white flight. The real issue is race and the failure of integration."

Fulwood believes that success has left African Americans discouraged. Although many have achieved financial success, there the cost has been high. There is a frustration that borders on sadness that in spite all of the successes, blacks still are not viewed as equals.

Fulwood believes that the "horrendous" failing of integration is that it did not include whites in every major integration "project" meant that blacks were integrating white establishments. Whites, as constructors of the system, never had to take any major steps in integration. The onus was exclusively on African Americans which means that blacks are at fault for the failure and success of it.

Also at fault is the media and its portrayal of the black experience.

"The media has corroded racial relations, and reduced blacks to card board cut-outs," said Fulwood. "I wrote my book to show another experience and allow for commiseration for other blacks who feel the same since of frustration and segregation."

"The book grew out of my awareness that the world is not what I thought - it is an internal anger, a sadness."

Fulwood believes that the system can be salvaged but this time whites must take steps to integrate as well as blacks.

"Until this happens," said Fulwood, "until whites give up some of their white-skinned privilege, there can not be true integration."

Book shows black man's plight

Continued From 1B

Fulwood has led a rich and varied life and conveys it. He never glorifies his accomplishments, instead concentrating on what effect mainstream success has had on his life. Fulwood is caught between two worlds, as are many African Americans who grow up in the middle class.

"Waking from the Dream: My Life in the Black Middle

Class" delves into the psyche of a misunderstood and misrepresented group, African Americans. The book is bold, searching and guaranteed to make the reader think, both about what it is to African American and the high price of success.

Fulwood holds nothing back and often expresses his own confusion about his role in society as a black male professional. He also explores his

own male/female relationships from his first high school love through his marriage to Cynthia Bell, a Columbia native and alumna of Johnson C. Smith University.

From beginning to end, Waking from the Dream is thought provoking and real. Fulwood III will be in Charlotte on April 10, 1996 at Barnes and Noble to discuss his work.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
(704) 376-0496

PUT YOUR BUSINESS IN THE STREETS WITH
The Charlotte Post!

The Parker Ellington Group



Proudly Presents
A Celebration of
Black Women in The Arts
Featuring...

Jazz Vocalist, Sunny Sumter
"BET ON JAZZ DISCOVERY FINALIST"



Friday, April 12, 1996
7:00 pm and 9:00 pm
\$10.00 Per Person

THE AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER
401 N. MYERS STREET
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA
FOR FURTHER TICKET INFORMATION CALL
(704)882-1565

COCA-COLA "STUDENT" OF THE MONTH

TAHIRAH FARRER-BRADLEY
5th Grader at
Brisbane Academy
Math & Science Preparatory



Tahirah is 10 years old and an honor roll student at Brisbane. She is student government secretary.

"She is hard working and willing to accept a challenge, she always shares a smile, says Headmaster, Geraldine White. Tahirah is a member of the "Pre-Algebra Club", received the 1995 Math Protege Award, Citizenship Award, honor-roll certificate and several others.

Her favorite past times are playing basketball and taking karate, she is an orange belt.

She is involved in her church, Simpson-Gillespie United Methodist, as a member of the youth choir and grades 4-6 Sunday School class.

Tahirah is the daughter of Fran Farrer & Thomas Bradley, and has a big brother Touré.



Congratulations Tahirah From Coca-Cola Consolidated Bottling Company of Charlotte

Do you know what's up?

If you do, send a post card to the Charlotte Post, c/o Winfred B. Cross, 1531 Camden Road, Charlotte, NC, 28203. Or fax the information to 342-2160. Include date, time, place and cost of the event.

C.W. Williams Health Center

3333 Wilkinson Blvd. • (704) 393-7720



"We Provide Primary & Preventive Medical Care for the ENTIRE FAMILY"

On Site Pharmacy, X-Ray & Laboratory Services

Call For Appointment or Information
Hours: Mon. & Fri, 8:30am - 5:30pm, Wed. 10am - 5:30pm,
OPEN TWO EVENINGS FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE
Tue. & Thur. 8:30am - 8:30pm

Medicare • Medicaid • Maxicare • Sliding Fee • Costwise/PCP • Private Ins..

"WHERE CARE AND COMPASSION COMES TOGETHER"