

## Knowledge for our self-empowerment

MELODY MICERE STEWART

In the spirit of Ma'at



"We have worked too long and too hard, made too many sacrifices, spent too much money, shed too much blood, lost too many lives fighting to vindicate our manhood as full participants in the American system, to allow our victories to be nullified by phony liberals, die-hard racists, discouraged and demoralized Negroes and power-seeking politicians."

While this speech excerpt could have been uttered yesterday, Bishop Stephen G. Spottswood spoke these words in 1970 as board chairman of the NMCP. As we have seen various civil rights gains nullified by sociopolitical and economic policies, our lack of historical knowledge has contributed mightily to the problem.

The toil and determination of our ancestors led to the creation of an educated black middle class, more opportunities in education, employment, the arts, etc. Yet if we compare numbers, African Americans owned more businesses during the yesterdays of segregation than the todays of integration. Who told us to abandon our own businesses in pursuit of integration? Our mis-education.

In 1933, Carter G. Woodson wrote, "The Negroes of today are unable to employ one another, and the whites are inclined to call on Negroes only when workers of their own race have been taken care of. For the solution of this problem the 'mis-educated' Negro has offered no remedy whatever."

Educated African Americans range the spectrum from architects to zoologists, yet it is our most "educated" blacks who are too often alienated (demoralized Negroes) from the masses of black people. African Americans generate \$425 billion yearly, yet we have not been able to harness our considerable group economic power to our collective community gain. Who told us to get a good education to get a good job (instead of getting a good education to create our own jobs)? Our mis-education. Again, the words of Woodson, "No systematic effort toward change has been possible, for, taught the same economics, history, philosophy, literature and religion which have established the present code of morals, the Negro's mind has been brought under the control of his oppressor. The problem of holding the Negro down, therefore, is easily solved."

With the dawn of a new millennium, it's time to shake off Negrohood and learn the empowering lessons of African American history.

## Moving on up



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Five residents of the Charlotte Housing Authority public housing communities recently graduated from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Urban League's Employability Skills Training Program. Through CHA's Section 3 program, students received training to prepare them for construction jobs as a part of the HOPE VI/URD Grant renovations to Earle Village. Shown are (left to right) Karyn K. Lindsey, CHA economic development coordinator; Donna E. Krider; Alfred Victor Riley III; Brenda Lindsay; Betty Guy; Evangeline A. Perry and Ardrey Y. Massey, Urban League placement specialist.

## Students bring international culture to JCSU

Continued from 1A

students to new ways of looking at the world.

"This is a learning experience for me," junior Tracy Parker said. "I enjoy having the Russian students here. They're nice and friendly, and being at a school that's predominantly black, it gives us a sense of diversity."

Shimizu is on the university choir, where she has had the opportunity to travel and appear on a magazine cover.

"Having Fumika in the choir is great," said junior Crystal Little, a junior. "She is a great addition to us and we'll miss her when she leaves."

For Alexei Denisov, Smith impresses him as a close-knit community.

"I like it here, the way the students live," he said.

"In Russia, many students do not live on campus," says Denisov's classmate, Nikolai Tsatsyne. "They live at home. They rather commute. The university (Mgimo) is an hour away from their houses. It's very comfortable here. I like that students live on campus."

As one would expect, there are major differences in cultures. Eugene Zhelobanov says Americans have to live with a lot of rules that he hasn't been able to figure out.

"There are too many restrictions in America compare to Russia," he said. "You are not allowed to smoke in your room, you have to be 21 to enter a club or buy a drink."

The students at Smith are generally nice, although none of the visitors have made close friends. "They do not like to get close. They will wave and say hello, but that is about it," says Shimizu.

Food plays a big part in the foreign students' experience. They love American supermarkets because of the variety of choices. "They are so many makers of one brand and that's interesting," says Zhelobanov.

Mgimo's cafeterias compare favorably to Smith's, although

it doesn't stay open long enough. "When you eat dinner at 6 p.m. you are generally hungry later," Denisov said. "Our cafeteria stays open until 10 p.m. in Russia."

But the food is good, especially those Southern delicacies.

"I love grits" says Shimizu. Learning about America and Americans has been a good experience, Zhelobanov said. He encourages Americans to become more

worldly and visit other countries.

"You must visit Russia, how great it is," he said. "Many students here have not visited other countries and do not know about them."

Everyone is taking a piece of the U.S.A. back home when the semester finishes.

Shimizu loves shoes and will take some back to Japan. Zhelobanov will take back a pair of western boots for his nephews, as well as a carton of cigarettes.

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