

Masks obscure reality

MELODY MICERE STEWART

In the spirit of Ma'at



"We wear the mask that grins and lies, it hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, this debt we pay to human guile; with torn and bleeding hearts we smile..."

Called the "poet laureate of the Negro race," Paul Lawrence Dunbar wrote one of his most famous poems, "We Wear the Mask" a generation after the end of slavery. The imagery of the mask captures the pain of facade; concealing feelings and intentions from view. During enslavement and segregation, "the mask" became an effective tool for deceiving the system of oppression, as blacks appeared to submit on the "outside," but actively resisted on the "inside." Today, with the creation of a "black middle class," many have learned the language of submission on the inside as well as the outside.

Perhaps it is the shared feeling of Dunbar's next verse: "Why should the world be over-wise, in counting all our tears and sighs? Nay, let them only see us, while, we wear the mask." Too many college mis-educated, professional blacks have "the mask" welded onto their faces. They believe they have "overcome" racism with their individual achievements. Never removing the mask's amicable facade, these modern day Negroes have captured a small piece of the individualistic, materialist, American pie and any effort to pry off the mask is greeted with suspicion, denial and hostility.

Carter G. Woodson called them "malcontents," who complain about and despise the race while doing little or nothing to assist the race. Many of our historic organizations are filled with these types, who swell membership rolls but are rarely available to do the actual work required for our own upliftment. (That's why in most organizations, there's usually only a handful of dedicated people who do the real work.) Clearly, today's malcontents feel no sense of race obligation (unless a compelling crisis occurs), hence the incredible amount of misdirected resources, e.g., capital (\$400 billion yearly), skills, talents, that continue to enrich others at the expense and impoverishment of our own race.

As signaled by the Million Man March and confirmed by the revived sport of burning black churches (33 and counting), it is high time that we, individually and collectively, actively study the lessons of our history (lest we become history).

Buffalo Soldiers get overdue salute

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAKE CITY, Utah - It took 100 years, but Sgt. Alfred Rucker finally got the honor he deserved.

Rucker, who came to Utah to serve with the Army's 24th Infantry at Ft. Douglas, was one of seven of the renowned but mostly forgotten "Buffalo Soldiers" known to be buried in Utah.

To the mournful sound of "Taps" and the hopeful chorus of "Amazing Grace" - with rifle reports in between - a wreath was laid at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Salt Lake Saturday afternoon to memorialize the black soldiers history books forgot.

Looking on was 8-year-old Alexander Price, a great-great-grandson of Rucker who died in 1926 and who is buried in a plot

See BUFFALO on page 6A



Charlotte Housing Authority CEO Harrison Shannon accepts a grant for the Learning Centers Program from the Michael Jordan Foundation. Deloris Jordan and Edward Lowery of Conbraco Industries look on.

Jordan Foundation grants

Before Michael Jordan won his fourth NBA championship, the foundation that bears his name made winners of Carolinas agencies.

The Michael Jordan Foundation distributed its final grants as a Charlotte chapter last month. Eleven Carolinas organizations that serve the needs of children up to 21 years of age received funds. Since the Jordan Foundation opened its Charlotte office in 1994, more than \$200,000 has been distributed to agencies and organizations in the two states.

"There are many very strong, solid agencies in the Carolinas which provide excellent services for children and there is a tremendous need for funding resources," said Sonya White, the foun-

dation's grant coordinator. "We are proud to be able to help this year's grantees and only wish we could do more.

Eight of the grants went Charlotte agencies: St. Francis Jobs Program; Save the Seed; Portraits of Color, Metrolina AIDS Project-Agape Family Center; Double Oaks Nursery; Assistance League of Charlotte; Carolina Computer Access Center and Charlotte Housing Authority. The grants mark the end of the foundation's program as it makes the transition to the Institute for Families at UNC-Chapel Hill, Jordan's alma mater.

The transfer should be finished by September.

Herbert L. White

Bingo gets his degree

Continued from page 1A

criminal justice department, said he held the news "until I had the degree in hand.

"I knew for a while, but I didn't want to get anyone's hopes up," Wilson said. "We were going to bring it earlier, but he was still in rehab. We wanted to give it to him at home."

Williams presented Bingo with a yearbook, a check from faculty and students for his medical fund and an alumni mug. He told the crowd: "We really enjoyed having him around. I think part of this is that being from a Christian family is the only thing that could get you through something like this. It was evidenced by some of the things Bingo wrote while at North Carolina Central that he was from a Christian home."

Maseo Bolin, a next door neighbor and childhood friend of Bingo's, was proud for his friend.

"It's been a real fight and he hung in there," said Bolin, who graduated from North Carolina A&T State University last month. "This will really cap things off for him."

Bingo's brother Henri, known to most as Struggy, called the event a blessing.

"I'm very proud. I think it's going to be very uplifting to him that he did have the opportunity to get the degree," Struggy said. "We made it to this day and it's another step toward his recovery."

Bingo's accident occurred in Durham shortly after he picked up a Ford Pinto he purchased. He was on his way back to his dormitory.

Carolyn said she gave Bingo his nickname before he was born.

"I was having trouble with the pregnancy," she said. "We said if this baby makes it he'll be lucky like hitting Bingo."

He still is.

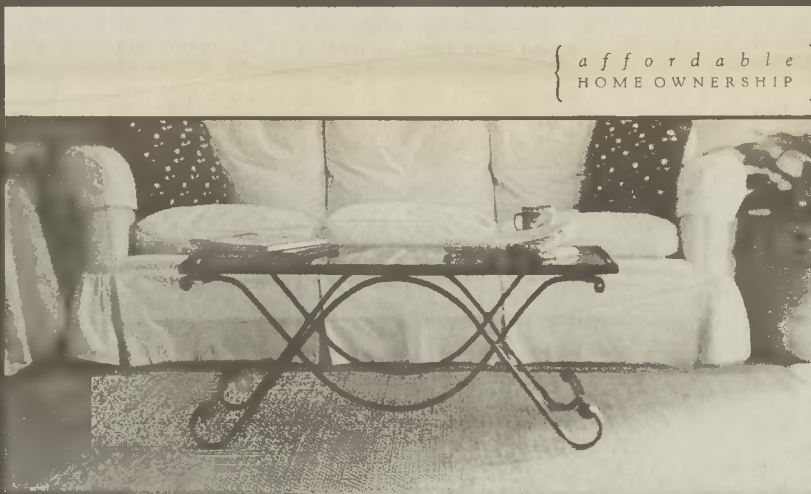
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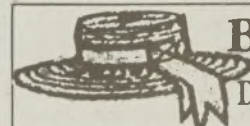
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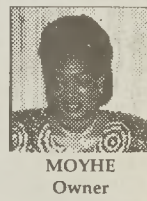
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