

# Black males mistreated in local shopping mall?

By Nora Chambers  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I was privileged to recently attend the African American Male National Council and Summit in Charleston, S.C.

This conference addressed several topics, and throughout there were negative statistics with which the black males are often associated. None of us who attended were surprised, but what hurt then and still does now is that too often this negativism often spills over into our own race. We too have bought into what the media says as well as society.

Even the word 'nigger,' which to us should be the worst cuss word ever used, is spoken with affection as a term of endearment. It was once said that if something is said long enough, we will start to believe it ourselves. I beg to differ! "Hatred, when planted in the minds of a people, reaps a harvest of the same, and if you hate yourself, you begin to hate everything that looks like you." And if we are advised to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, what type of behavior do you think our neighbors will see?

My son visited Midtown Mall on Nov. 6 with three family members. All female. All adult. While they shopped for ladies fashions, he went to the Finish Line to look for athletic wear. He was shopping for shoes for the basketball season. His enthusiasm was brought to a shocking halt when he was refused service by the sales attendant on duty. It seems as if she would not allow him to try on

a pair of shoes based on no adult being with him, and because she didn't know if he was going to buy the shoes. Moreover, this lady was then asked by the assistant store manager to allow him to try on the shoes, but she refused, and walked away. My son then went to get my sister and returned to the Finish Line where they were both ignored by the sales attendant. It was my sister's intent to take him back and confirm that he had adult supervision and money for the shoes, but after her behavior, she instead asked for the number to their corporate office. The assistant manager, who gave her the information, was apologetic and stated that this behavior was not the policy of their establishment and that they were to let anyone who asked try on shoes. Afterwards, the sales attendant did apologize to my sister - but never to my son.

This incident happened around 8 p.m. and when I called the store the following Friday, I was told by the store manager, they had "plans" to reprimand the sales attendant. I didn't believe him. I do, however, believe they thought the incident wasn't that important - or that no further action would be taken. It is my belief it was said to appease me when I asked for the corporate address, phone number and CEO's name. To date, I do not have the information I requested, but was given the Raleigh telephone number of a district manager, to which I have had no response. The store manager echoed the assistant manager in his apologies and store policy. He said the sales attendant was probably having a "bad day." He added, "I'm sorry it happened to your son," to which I responded, "My son knows I am his mouthpiece,

and his advocate for injustice. I'm sorry for the other children who are treated this way and have no one to speak on their behalf." By virtue of the fact the sales rep still had not been reprimanded by the time I called shows me the Finish Line establishment perceives black youth in the same negative light as the media. Also the attitude of the Finish Line employees shows they were hired to perpetuate this negativity, after all, employees mirror their company's image.

A recent show aired the Nike sweatshops and the cruel treatment of the employees. My son and I discussed oppression and how it is wrong to even take part in the purchasing of the Nike items. This was especially hard on him because he loves the gear - and is still negotiating with me on the decision. We discussed what would probably happen if only black male teens stopped buying their products. I wanted him to see the power of this group in particular and what they could do when unified. This week I cut up and returned my Texaco credit cards because of racial slurs they openly made. That was hard on me because of the convenience of credit cards.

Today, I sit and write about further injustice and unfair treatment to a black male teen...done at the hands of a black female. Nothing personal - but a matter of principle. I never want my son to think it's not a big deal, because it is. Until people become unified and together oppose injustices done to one, the struggle will continue, and if we choose to remain ignorant once enlightened, we lengthen the progress of all. It is my personal duty to let you know what your youth are in for if they visit the Finish Line at Midtown Mall "on bad day."

## Letters To The Post

### Paul Robeson a model of human decency to all

To all males who recently voted for either Jesse Helms or Strom Thurmond in the 1996 elections, I would like you to become acquainted with a man who lived life as it is meant to be lived. The man is Paul Robeson.

His accomplishments include: two-time football All-American; Phi Beta Kappa, Rutgers University class valedictorian graduate; Columbia University Law School graduate; a great singer and actor for 30-plus years, and fluent in 20-plus languages. Mr. Robeson spoke in strong favor of black American equality/liberation and the freedom of African colonial states. He also praised the Soviet Union.

Mr. Robeson's political/social stances started in the late 1930s and continued until his death in 1976. Mr. Robeson, like his successors, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and countless other black persons was placed under constant FBI surveillance for years. His phone lines were tapped. The federal government claimed that Robeson was either a communist or a communist sympathizer. The government, dominated by anti-labor and racist conservatives, never brought criminal charges against Robeson even though it was able to generate years of mindless fear through "red baiting" which led to the needless destruction of thousands of lives.

It took away his passport which led to an income reduction of about \$5,000 per year. The basis for taking his passport, per legal briefs filed by the State Department, was that Robeson injured the interest of the nation by pushing for the independence of colonial African states and speaking for the liberation of American blacks. The government engaged in many other actions designed to destroy Robeson's livelihood/reputation/life.

Robeson survived these acts in a remarkable fashion in that he maintained his optimism and never surrendered his beliefs. His racist contemporaries, such as Bilbo and Eastland, drowned in their poisons. Other racist contemporaries such as U.S. senators Thurmond and Helms continue to spew their poison. Persons who support either Thurmond or Helms or both are spiritually dead; they just do not know it. Both Thurmond and Helms, when compared to Robeson, are specks of dirt at the bottom of Mount Everest.

So conservative males, look within yourselves; reject the fallacious conservative reasoning which limits your outlook; abandon your mind numbing fears of life, those who are different and the unknown. Look to Robeson's life for guidance and become living men for the first time in your adult lives.

Michael A. Sheely  
Charlotte

### What's on your mind?

Send your comments to The Charlotte Post, P.O. Box 30144, Charlotte, N.C. 28230 or fax (704) 342-2160. You can also use E-mail - charpost@clt.mindspring.com  
All correspondence must include a daytime telephone number for verification.

# To win election, Democrats are going conservative

By Andrew Cline  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

RALEIGH - The mix of Republican and Democrat triumphs in the 1996 elections has caused rejoicing among many critics of conservatism who claim that the Republican victories of 1994 were nothing more than an electoral hiccup.

They rejoice prematurely. This month's elections show that when conservatives of either party stick to a positive, conservative message and clearly communicate that message to the voters, they win. The perfect case in point: the North Carolina governor's race.

Gov. Jim Hunt has loads of charisma and has convinced the public that he's conservative. Robin Hayes, unlike some lower-level conservative candidates, had no clear message other than, "I'm a conservative, Republican businessman." But lots of people are conservative, Republican businessmen. That's no criteria for becoming gover-

nor. Voters want to see serious governing agendas. Jim Hunt had one, Robin Hayes did not. Hayes could have learned a lot from newly elected Wake County district court judge Anne Marie Calabria. Calabria, in her first campaign for office, became one of two non-incumbent conservatives to win election in Wake County this year. She did it by setting an agenda and communicating that agenda to the public.

Calabria created fliers emblazoned with her name across the top and a handful of bullet points outlining what she would work for as a judge. Her message: mediation over litigation. A family attorney, Calabria pledged that if elected she would work to move more divorce cases to mediation and away from litigation, in hopes of keeping families together or at least avoiding nasty divorce court battles. Her opponent had no message other than a party label. The result: women voted for Calabria in droves. During the campaign, women often told

Calabria that she was the only Republican for whom they would vote.

Naturally, this strategy works only if the candidate has a vehicle for getting out the message. Local or legislative candidates often don't have the money to print detailed agendas as Calabria did, and with a generally hostile media, many candidates have a difficult time communicating effectively to the voters. To remedy this, conservatives have two options: spend thousands of dollars each election trying to maneuver the message around or through the filter of the media or become the media.

Those who fund conservative candidates have a tendency to throw all their money into the high-profile races, leaving judicial, municipal and some legislative candidates without a vehicle for spreading their message. The result is that each year many deserving candidates lose to less conservative opponents who receive editorial board endorsements and more positive

coverage in the local press. The answer to this problem is to provide vehicles through which conservatives can spread their message to the public unfiltered. This means funding small, conservative publications such as The Citizen in Raleigh, New Voice/New Generation in Durham, Mountain X-Press in Asheville, The Charlotte Christian News and The Rhinoceros Times in Greensboro. It also means developing better relationships with the small, community newspapers that are not strongly leftist. These little papers are widely read and can serve as an effective springboard for gaining the attention of editors and reporters at the larger papers. If there's one thing a big city editor hates, it's getting scooped by a small town rival.

It is no accident that conservatives have a difficult time communicating their agendas when they have no strong allies on the editorial staffs of most large media outlets. The only way to combat this problem is to estab-

lish alternative sources of information. But doing so requires money, which means that those activists who pump all their money into high-profile candidates must rethink their strategies.

How would that money be better used, by funding one candidate or by establishing a permanent conservative voice in the community? If the candidate is defeated, there will be no one to get out the conservative message until the next election. On the other hand, if activists were to focus their efforts on establishing alternative publications through which conservatives could inform the public on a regular basis, the probability of winning future elections would be greatly increased because the public would have continual access to unfiltered conservative ideas.

ANDREW CLINE is director of publications at the conservative John Locke Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan public policy think tank in Raleigh.

# Evaluate the present, critique the past, plan for future

By Lyle G. Russwurm  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

As we move into the next millennium, I personally feel we must evaluate our present condition and subjectively critique our past.

It is obvious we have made progress during this millennium, but the question is, have we achieved social and economic equality? The answer to this question is "No."

Our collective accomplishments don't compare to the overall condition of most African Americans. Most African Americans are trapped living from check to check, only a few missed checks and they are homeless. We are still the most

abused race of people in the United States. Our justice system clearly discriminates against our people. The point: how long will we allow our children to face these social injustices before we stand together, united. The reason why we are still social pawns and have not greatly improved our social condition during this century is as follows: Poor leadership; lack of unity, and discrimination, which manifests itself through racism.

Most white Americans believe racism exists only in the mind of minorities. Apparently, we feel it is a minor concern because we allow it to continue with little or no protest. For some time I have advocated for an annual national strike day, for all minorities

to protest racism and the long term effect it has caused for minorities, especially African Americans. This protest day would address these concerns: unity, leadership and our frustration with our social system which promotes racism.

To achieve this, our leaders must agree to work together for a common goal, organize and finance this enormous undertaking. The goals are simple. Select one day where we show the world that African Americans are united behind our leaders, to achieve social and economic equality during the next millennium.

Imagine for a second, over 20 million African Americans, other minorities and whites

across this country who refuse to go work or school and who are organized and protesting at each state capitol and all major cities. This would not only shock the world, this would also shut the United States down for one day each year. The power elite would start changing the way they treat minorities in the United States because this would cost Corporate America millions of dollars.

This annual national protest day should continue until all minorities achieve social and economic equality. The journey from slavery to physical freedom took over 400 years, to

remove the shackles of social injustice may take another hundred years. But we must start this journey today, by abandoning our passive and compromising approaches to achieving social equality and adopt more aggressive yet non-violent approaches to solve our social problems.

I am but one man, but collectively we are the foundation of black power. I only hope and pray our leaders have the courage and the wisdom to unite. Anything can be achieved through God, faith and unity. LYLE G. RUSSWURM lives in Lithonia, Ga.

# Citizen review necessary

By Philip M. Davis  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I support the call by several community leaders to have an independent investigation of the shooting of James Willie Cooper. I further call on the Charlotte City Council to set up a citizens panel which will have an input into any future investigations of police shootings. It is at best difficult to accurately investigate oneself, no matter how thorough the investigation may be.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department is no exception to the fact that any organization will "close-ranks" when investigating one of its own.

In light of the recent shootings by officers of the department, now seems to be the right time

to take action and involve outside agencies and citizens in the investigations to eliminate any community perception of a "cover up." With the tensions erupting in Florida, we must realize that Charlotte is not far behind.

Had Mr. Cooper been a white, south Charlotte or University area resident, I believe that white citizens and clergy would have been outraged and would take swift actions to ensure that it never happened again. I call on the white clergy and church leaders of this community to raise a voice for justice, harmony and unity by calling on our police department and elected officials to set up an independent citizens review panel for such cases.

It is easy for us to talk about

racial unity, harmony and reconciliation, however it cannot happen until we take a stand united against obvious injustice. There is no excuse for the shooting of an unarmed black father who was doing the right thing, taking care of his daughter. This type of police brutality cannot be tolerated, by black ministers, white ministers or the churches of this county. True brotherhood means being willing to stand with one another during tough times, no matter what the cost. Just as we stand against the murder of innocent children under the disguise of abortion, we must also stand against the murder of innocent black fathers.

REV. PHILIP M. DAVIS is senior pastor of Nations Ford Baptist Church in Charlotte.

## How much color in Cabinet?

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

How many African Americans will be in the second-term administration?

That's the big question that is being asked by African American leaders who were active and instrumental in the re-election of President Clinton. In his first term, President Clinton emphasized the importance of having a racially and culturally diverse cabinet reflective of the American population. Five African Americans were appointed to his first cabinet: Ronald H. Brown, Secretary of Commerce; Hazel O'Leary, Secretary of Energy; Mike Espy, Secretary of Agriculture; Jesse Brown, Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Lee Brown, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Brown was killed in an air-

plane crash; Espy was forced to resign due to allegations of receiving gifts from a major company and Brown resigned to accept another job.

O'Leary has tendered her resignation, leaving two African Americans in the cabinet: Franklin Raines, director of the Office of Management and Budget and Jesse Brown.

Texas state Rep. Al Edwards, chairman of the Democratic National Committee's Black Caucus said: "The President is very aware that the black vote was a decisive factor again in winning the presidency...we who helped to elect him cannot afford to stand by idly while other constituent groups lobby frantically to get their people in the cabinet. We now must be as aggressive in lobbying the President and his advisors as we were in helping to get him elected. This is part of the same political process."