

Celebrate Black History

MELOYE MICERE STEWART

In the spirit of Ma'at



Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950), father of African American Heritage Month, created the observance to publicize the contributions, achievements and struggles of African Americans to the world.

The observance began in 1926 as an extension of the work Woodson initiated through his Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, founded in 1915. Woodson, a Harvard graduate with a doctorate in history, dedicated his life to the study and promotion of African Americans as self-determined people who were robbed of their autonomy and needed a plan to regain their liberation.

In his seminal work, "The Mis-Education of the Negro," published in 1933, Woodson proclaimed, "In the first place, we must bear in mind that the Negro has never been educated. He has merely been informed about other things which he has not been permitted to do." According to Woodson, "Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better, but the instruction so far given [African Americans] in colleges and universities has worked to the contrary."

Modern day examples of our mis-education include our indiscriminate spending of money and resources, the unraveling of race unity for the sake of integration, the persistence of intra-race prejudice, e.g., "colorism" and anti-African attitudes.

Many race-oriented scholars have noted that "consciousness precedes unity" and is a necessary pre-requisite to group self-determination. Consciousness is an awareness that compels people to act in their own best interests. The near complete process of mass mis-education, performed in educational institutions around this country, has left the African American community in a state of disarray which has reached epidemic and criminal proportions. Scholar activists such as W.E.B. DuBois, Mary McLeod Bethune, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X all wrote passionately and eloquently about the need to understand our historical sojourn in America.

Historical understanding is multi-layered and considers the role that religion, economics, politics, social organizations, creative production and psychology play in our ultimate quest for liberation. Woodson understood this, writing, "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 [African American's] mind has been brought under the control of his oppressor."

Reform deserve attention

Continued from page 1A

encourage you to be a part of the process."

Braun, who did not support the bill, said it represents a departure from the government's commitment to serve the needs and interest of the people and is a step towards "the triumph of pessimism. It represents some of the worst motivations that we as a people can buy into."

Braun said that the bill was dictated by "myths and images" that have nothing to do with the realities of welfare. Instead it was based on stereotypes of black women having babies for the sake of qualifying for assistance; black men not taking care of their children and poor people, "mainly black," who take

advantage of the system and hard working honest citizens.

"These images have shattered a 61-year commitment to supporting the poor and children," said Braun.

According to Braun, of the current 22 million welfare recipients, 9 million are children and 60 percent are under the age of 6. She blasted Republicans who said the bill they drafted would make recipients "get out of the wagon" and push the country forward.

"How much pushing do you expect a 5-year-old to do" asked Braun.

TANF requires recipients to engage in community service after two months of benefits. After two years, recipients must

engage in work as defined by the state. Required work hours under will rise from 20 hours a week in 1997 to 25 hours a week in 1999. Those with children under the age 6 will be able to maintain a 20-hour work week, and two-parent families are required to work at least 35 hours. TANF exempts no one from working except single parents caring for children under 12 months old.

Braun insisted that extra attention must be focused on those who do not qualify for TANF.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the act will reduce federal spending by \$3 billion during 1997 and \$54.1 billion by the year 2002.

Suit alleges harassment

Continued from page 1A

a leadership institute for chief executive officers, chairmen and board members of the League's 113 affiliates across the country.

On two or more occasions, Butler charges that Porter would "sit on his haunches, squeeze his thighs together, showing the shape of his penis, while telling me he was picking up some vibes from me." Butler cites another occasion when she says Porter asked her to accompany him, "just you and me," on a work-related trip to Michigan. Butler says she always tried to ignore Porter's "unwelcome advances," but it soon became apparent to her that "sexual acquiescence" on her part was a condition for her continued employment at the League.

Butler charges that her refusal to respond to sexual advances by Porter, her immediate supervisor, resulted in "unjust criticism, harassment, and the ultimate termination of her employment" with the organization. "When I adamantly said no and would no longer allow him to sexually harass me beyond his closed office doors I was fired on

June 22, 1995," Butler charges.

In addition to sexual harassment, Butler charges that the Urban League is guilty of breach of contract. She says she decided to include Price and the National Urban League in the lawsuit because Porter is an agent of the organization and responsible for the alleged sexual misconduct and sexual harassment which she experienced. According to Butler, Price did nothing about the situation when she complained and explained the circumstances of her termination.

Porter and Price were unavailable for comment, but Gasby Greeley, a vice president for communications at the League, said that while she couldn't discuss the matter in detail "because it's in litigation," she vigorously denied the allegations. Greeley explained that the National Urban League, which has always been committed to fair and equal treatment of everyone, conducts regular training programs against the practice of sexual harassment for its employees.

Butler said that as a direct

result of being sexually harassed, discriminated against and terminated by the League, "I have lost wages by reason of the League's unlawful employment practices, and have also earned less money in other jobs than I would have earned had I been employed by the National Urban League." She also said she was forced to declare bankruptcy which will remain a part of her credit history for nearly 10 years.

Butler is representing herself in court but is being advised by retired attorney Flo Kennedy.

Drug march Feb. 22

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Another Charlotte minister is taking up the call to rally against drugs and violence.

The Rev. Larry Allen, pastor of the Rod of God Ministries, will gather supporters Feb. 22 at the corner of Beatties Ford Road and Cummings Avenue. Food, toiletries and clothing will be given away during the event, scheduled to coincide with George Washington's birthday and Black History Month. In addition, activists will canvass the area to solicit support for programs in the area.

The "Taking It To The Streets" campaign, which starts at 12 p.m., will include city officials, business owners and ordinary folk to help clean up the Cummings area, one of the city's toughest.

"We will be working with the

people on a daily basis on the fourth Saturday of every month," Allen said. "We will be using our Big Brother and Big Sister format to follow up on every person that needs help."

Allen's march is the latest attempt by a minister to raise awareness of an anti-violence message. Washington's birthday was selected as the event's date because it is in the midst of Black History Month, a fact Allen says everyone should think about.

"It's not about black and white," he said. "It's about drugs. We can win in the war against drugs, crime, violence and killing."



Allen

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