

Activist: I meant no offense by statement

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have not been solved," she said.

Ortega-Moore said her comments were strictly intended to point out how public opinion consistently demonizes communities of color - using ethnic groups as the scapegoat for U.S. social and economic problems.

"Black and Latino communities are all too painfully aware of the prejudice that still runs rampant in the Southeast," Ortega-Moore said. "It is a terrible shame that our society insists upon alienating and dividing racial groups, when unity is the only way we can achieve social justice."

The Latin American Coalition released a statement the day after the article was published in hopes of clarifying Ortega-Moore's comments, stating the quote was taken out of context.

Whoriskey said he stands by his story and said Ortega-Moore was describing how the mood has changed in Charlotte toward Latinos.

"The reason I used the quote had nothing to do with the reference to blacks," he said. "If anyone is angry, they shouldn't direct it toward (Ortega-Moore) but to those who made that statement to her."

Dwayne Collins, president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Black Political Caucus, said he'd reserve comment until he talks to Ortega-Moore, adding he doesn't think her words were meant to offend or belittle blacks.

"I don't think she meant to put anyone down," he said.

Calls to NAACP president Kenneth White were not immediately returned.

The Black Political Caucus is one group that works with the Latin-American Coalition on immigration issues. While often ignored, rifts between African Americans and Hispanics have become more apparent here and nationally. Some blacks express privately that Hispanics have driven down wages and taken away jobs that they would normally receive,

Collins said, adding those issues should be taken up with employers who pay substandard wages to Latinos.

In a 2004 book "The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict Between Latinos and Blacks and What it Means for America," author Nicolas Vaca asserts that Latinos and blacks have had a long acrimonious relationship. He writes that Latinos have no responsibility for the plight of African Americans.

Tanya Hernandez, a writer with the African American political web site Blackprof.com, wrote "social science studies of Latino racial attitudes often indicate a preference for maintaining social distance from African Americans. And while the social distance level is largest for recent Latin American immigrants, more established communities of Latinos in the United States are also characterized by their social distance from African Americans."

A recent study by Duke University revealed the Latinos come into the U.S. with negative stereotypes about blacks.

Paula D. McClain, a Duke political science professor and lead author of the study, said the findings are significant because the South has the largest population of blacks in the U.S. and has been defined more than other regions along a black-white divide. How Latino immigrants relate to blacks and whites - and how those groups relate to Latinos - has implications for the social and political dynamic of the region, she said.

"Given the increasing number of Latino immigrants in the South and the possibility that over time their numbers might rival or even surpass black Americans in the region, if large portions of Latino immigrants maintain negative attitudes of black Americans, where will this leave blacks?" the researchers wrote. "Will blacks find that they must not only make demands on whites for continued progress, but also mount a fight on another front against Latinos?"

In an interview, McClain added "We're actually pretty depressed about a lot of our findings."

All American Miss retires crown

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phy and was advised to continue her pageant efforts.

"Caroline Mack, the lady who went on to win Miss Black USA that year told me, 'At 17, if you can place third competing with grown women, you need to keep going,' so I did keep going," says McDaniel.

While at UNCC, she won the Miss Black and Gold Pageant which was sponsored by the Mu Tau Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. This win allowed her the opportunity to compete in the fraternity area pageant where she won first runner-up.

McDaniel has reigned as Miss Black North Carolina twice. In 2003, she won the Miss Black North Carolina USA pageant. She then competed in the Miss Black USA 2003 Pageant. In 2004, she won the Miss Black North Carolina United States pageant and thereby

competed in the Miss Black United States 2004 pageant.

"In each of those years, not only was it a year of reigning, but it was also a year of getting ready for a huge national pageant with girls coming from 50 states, a huge amount of preparation as far as interviews and onstage questions, knowing your current events, and developing your platform, and all that," says McDaniel. "After doing that for two straight years, I had decided to retire - but then All American came up."

In 2004 as a cheerleader for the Carolina Cobras of the Arena Football League, she tore the anterior cruciate ligament in her knee. The repair involved implantation of donor tissue, which led to her platform of promoting organ and tissue donation. She has worked with LifeShare of the Carolinas, an organ procurement organization serving the North

Carolina area. This involvement has allowed her to interact with donor families and other transplant recipients.

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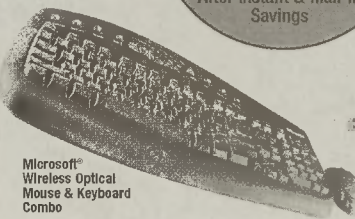


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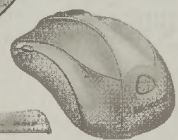
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