

# EDITORIALS

## "Smoothing" An Insult

When state Rep. H.M. "Mick" Michaux, Jr., D-Durham, predicted following Super Tuesday's returns that the failure of the Democratic Party's leadership to support the black community's presidential candidate "will be smoothed over down the line," he accurately described how blacks are to be treated politically.

Smooth them over and get their votes.

Or get their votes and then smooth them over.

There is little need for blacks to be upset over Sen. Terry Sanford and former Gov. James B. Hunt's recruitment of a candidate with whom "conservative Democrats would be comfortable." Bring upset will not change how Sanford, Hunt and the Democratic leadership views and uses the black vote.

Tradition, habit, affection and allegiance to the Democratic Party is so strong among blacks in North Carolina that they will continue to tolerate any kind of insult thrown their way.

Sanford, Hunt and hundreds of other liberal, moderate and conservative Democrats have continuously been elected in recent decades across America just by wrapping themselves in the mantle of the Democratic Party. The general understanding in many areas has been that if a candidate wants to be electable, he or she must be a Democrat. Blacks have interpreted this to mean that if the candidate is a Democrat, he or she is acceptable.

Knowing this, all that the

Democratic Party needs to do is select a candidate that its majority is "comfortable with," and smooth the blacks over. The Jesse Jackson campaign pays a price at the bargaining table for such insults because the party establishment knows the black votes are not going anywhere else.

Black candidates are continuously categorized and ignored because they are seen as short-termers with no real or lasting influence.

Anger is often temporary. Being upset is for today and probably gone tomorrow.

The Jackson candidacy and its movement may be viewed as the phenomenon of 1984 and 1988. But the Democratic Party wants the conservative non-black support in 1988, 1992, '96, etc.

The party has the black vote and is seeking more of the non-black conservative vote. That's the party's winning strategy.

Sanford and Hunt are seeking to play a winning hand for the power that can come with it.

The black political establishment seeks power also.

The Albert Gore, Jr. promoters in North Carolina will probably not pay a price for their insult. One of their spokespersons has said that their disinterest in Jackson was "nothing personal."

With a Jackson supporter having predicted the matter can be "smoothed over," we're essentially back to politics as usual—blacks voting and others progressing.

Oh well, what else is new?

## Checking The School Bus System

Bureaucracies respond very slowly to needs unless prompted by crisis.

The school bus problems of the Wake School System have been the subject of attention on several occasions in recent years. Now these problems are commanding front page.

First, it must be understood that any system operating thousands of buses operated by 7,000 employees will include a real possibility for errant behavior or negligence.

Second, under such conditions, there is a need for checks and monitoring for any and all types of problems.

Third, the first occurrence or avoided occurrence of any type of problem should set into motion a system to prevent future problems.

Fourth, in a highly politicized and socially conscious environment, one would best be on guard for any embarrassing problems.

Fifth, understand that all such problems will be presented in light of the Robert Bridges administration and the accompanying usual innuendos.

School bus problems—faulty

equipment, old buses, poor drivers, accidents, unruly student riders—all combine for an explosive system waiting for another explosion.

We doubt that all these problems can be erased. We would urge, however, that measures be implemented within the school system to ferret out problems before they reach the crisis level.

We must understand that many in the community expect a perfect system and anything short of such is grounds for serious corrective measures.

If perfection cannot be attained, we do hope an exhaustive effort would be made to prevent problems.

This will cost. But so does handling a crisis following an incident and the resulting corrective measures.

Raising the driving age to 18 might help some, and randomly checking the driving records of the drivers would help additionally. School administrators may also undertake other preventive measures to avoid the next crisis.

We might need almost as many checkers to check on the checkers as there are being checked.

## As We Shape The Future

Two news stories this week point to the return of student power in America to the forefront of shaping national issues and events.

The week-long protest over the selected new president of the nation's sole college for the deaf resulting in her almost immediate resignation was an illustration of student ability to mobilize institutional, community and national pressure.

The success of the Rev. Jesse Jackson for President campaign on Tuesday was also in part the result of student involvement.

It was student action which helped usher in the civil rights era of the 1960s.

Students drove the Vietnam War issue in the early 1970s and helped end a presidential administration.

Student movements around the world topple governments and force the reshaping of government policies.

Student activists are described as short on responsibility and long on idealism. They are seen as the quick-tempered and impatient sons and daughters of the well-to-do with nothing to do.

Black students do not fit this pattern. They are usually the bright, concerned, dissatisfied, hungry—and impatient—sons and daughters of all groups and sectors of the black community.

The students who participated in Tuesday's election also sought to play a role in the shaping of our nation's institutions and history. They saw the opportunity of making a direct contribution to changing a political system and influencing national policy.

In addition to the impact of Tuesday's participation, these students received an impression and political lesson which will remain a lifetime and will serve as the cornerstone for efforts and movements to come.

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# OPINION

## MILLER SAYS

BY SHERMAN N. MILLER  
AMERICA'S BRAIN TRUST EMPIRES

"Black Power," the once brash battle cry of black America, has been relegated to a mere charged connotation, which signalled mainstream America that the black community lost sight of its economic empowerment objectives. Furthermore, black America's leadership has become skewed toward high-visibility political office-holders.

Counter to black American leaders' high-visibility modus operandi, mainstream leaders often shun fanfare. Mainstream leaders move quietly to achieve their objectives. This dichotomy may explain why some key mainstream power positions remain unscathed by black upward mobility rhetoric.



MILLER

Let me highlight the importance of one of these power positions. Many national black leaders may consider the appointment of judges in the State of Delaware to have minimal national civil rights significance. This parochial view would have credence if Delaware were not the Corporate Capital of the United States.

Furthermore, Delaware has a Chancery Court which settles disputes between multinational corporations. Thus, Delaware Chancery Court judgeships are international appointments. Yet there are no black Chancery Court judges in the State of Delaware.

I discussed the black Chancery Court judgeship issue with two Delaware black attorneys and a layman who is well recognized as a civil rights attorney without portfolio. One attorney is a long tenured employee in the legal department of a major corporation. The other attorney's background includes practice in the public sector.

The corporate attorney recognized the international significance of the Delaware Chancery Court. This person sees the far-reaching impact of this court and would welcome the opportunity to serve on it.

On the other hand, the public sector attorney responded that a Chancery Court judgeship is not a priority item for him. Nevertheless, he felt my premises on the significance of Chancery Court are correct and admitted that he had never considered the civil rights significance of a Chancery Court judgeship.

My layman readily recognized that Delaware Chancery Court judgeships will send subtle messages to corporate America on the value of black American judgement. That is, black judges' decisions will affect billions of dollars in American and international business transactions.

Since this is a gubernatorial election year, Delaware's black leadership must take the initiative to challenge Republican Gov. Michael Castle to appoint a black person, at the first hearing, to the Chancery Court. Delaware has a host of black private and public sector attorneys, so the dated response, "We cannot find anyone," is balderdash.

It would be foolhardy for Delaware's black leadership not to cover all of the bases. They must, therefore, also gain a commitment from the Democratic gubernatorial candidate once this person emerges.

There is no doubt that the final stage in the black American equal opportunity struggle is to change mainstream America's ill perception of black Americans' mental capability. This will only be accomplished when black Americans are afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their competency in America's brain trust empires.

**ERNIE'S WORLD**  
BY ERNIE JOHNSTON, JR.

GREENSBORO—In this city where so many championships are born, from "presidents to astronauts," every year about this time there is a big event that is perhaps the best-kept secret in town.

For a couple of years now Greensboro has been the scene of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference basketball tournament after the event had been held unsuccessfully in Philadelphia.

Throughout the years the CIAA tournament had been the powerhouse event of black college basketball. The teams that now make up the MEAC had been an integral part of the CIAA.

But there was a break of teams from the CIAA and those schools went into another conference thereby forming their own tournament.

And just like anything else that is new, the MEAC had to go through a building process. Since the CIAA is such a well-known tournament, tickets to the games are hard to come by and getting adequate lodging is even more difficult.

The CIAA attracts people from near and far, professional athletes, basketball fans as well as the non-basketball fans and it's understandably so since it's the "granddaddy" of black college basketball.

The mere mention of the CIAA brings an immediate response because it's a known commodity.

So on this March weekend, some 6,000 to 8,000 people (mostly A&T State University alumni, students, friends and supporters of the institution) crowded into the Greensboro Coliseum for the two-day tournament.

Up until this year there had been three days of the event with the final game being played on Saturday, but there had been elimination contests in various regions, thereby cutting down on the numbers of teams to come to Greensboro.

Every year A&T comes out the winner, not because the tournament is held on its own home turf but because the university has been able to field a good team for the past several years.

Therefore the MEAC is a good local attraction. There are the buses from other schools but not enough to overflow the coliseum and to cause a backlog of hotel rooms, something that could be adequately met by the City of Greensboro.

But this "grandchild" of black college basketball tournaments is slowly gaining its identity. There is a lot of press coverage on the tournament and it is beginning to attract a large audience and the corporate sponsorship (Miller Lite Beer) is in place.

And through Miller Lite such sports personalities as Bob Lanier (the player who had the biggest shoe in the NBA) was on hand for the tournament.

As I walked away from the final game on that Saturday night, a friend of mine said to me, "Wouldn't it be wonder-

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## CHUCK STONE

## SATs and con man Bennett

By Chuck Stone

All of us have grown up, safe and secured by certain eternal verities.

Among them is the arrival of spring, announced by the first robin hopping across our lawns, squirrels nibbling tender sprouts at the end of tree branches, and a young man's fancy lightly turning to thoughts of aroused passion.

No more.

The arrival of spring is now proclaimed by the unveiling of Secretary of Education William J. Bennett's annual "wall chart," which purports to be a report card on U.S. schools. It is the biggest con job since Attorney General Edwin Meese promised to uphold the law. If Bennett's "wall chart" belongs on any wall, it is the wall of a latrine.

Bennett's chart doesn't tell us what causes educational deficiencies, how they can be remedied, or why schools in some states perform better than schools in others. Instead, he uses 15 indexes to rank the schools. You — the parent, the consumer, the voter — don't have the slightest idea how Bennett's 15 indexes interrelate. You simply hear fulminations by Bennett, who resembles, on these occasions, a chimpanzee in heat.

Bennett's report card fails to earn a passing mark because its starting point is the annual state-by-state scores of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing program (ACT).

SAT scores tell us five things: Wealthy kids are smarter than poor kids; New England kids are smarter than Southern kids; white kids are smarter than black and Hispanic kids; Asian kids are smarter than all other kids in math; and male students are smarter than female students.

According to the SAT scores, the six New England states whose SAT scores are in the top 12 have smarter students (on the average) than the six southern states of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas whose SAT (and ACT) scores are in the bottom 12.

Part of the reason may be the South's smaller per capita expendi-

ture on its students. And because blacks are disproportionately poorer than whites, they also (on the average) perform poorer in school.

After that, though, you'd be hard put to find any correlation between standardized test scores and Bennett's other indexes.

New Hampshire, for example, had the nation's highest SAT scores, but New Hampshire teachers rank 42nd in average salary, and the state ranked 26th in spending per pupil. Alaska, on the other hand, pays its teachers the highest average salary in the nation (\$43,970) and ranks No. 1 in per capita student spending, yet its statewide ACT scores rank in the bottom third!

I repeat what I wrote last year when the annual P.T. Barnum psychometric circus was held. Standardized tests should be abolished. Like IQ tests, SATs are misleading, misused and misinterpreted. And they unfairly punish minorities.

The only thing a standardized or norm-referenced test tells you is how your child is doing in comparison to children in other cities, states or schools. But if you want to know whether or not your child is mastering what he or she is supposed to know, a criterion-referenced test will tell you that. You don't need to lay out large sums of hard-earned money to support the psychometric moguls at the Educational Testing Service.

Economics exposes the futility of using SATs to rank states. Since students have to pay to take the exam, wealthy students are more likely to take the exams in the first place, and they also can afford prep courses designed to raise their scores. This self-selection process determines what percentage of students take the exam and widens the gap between rich and poor.

Twenty years ago, the Kerner Commission Report lamented that we were moving toward two societies — separate and unequal. The SAT is a drum major in that movement.

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# CHILD WATCH

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN  
A MAN WHO LIVES IN THE FUTURE

Within about five seconds of meeting Edward Roberts, you forget that he cannot move his arms or legs, that he sits in a wheelchair and breathes through a respirator. You are simply enjoying the company of a warm and truthful man, a humorist, a savvy politician, and a terrific teacher. Roberts dares to live in the future, when our society, we hope, will have finally figured out how much people who happen to be disabled have to give us all.

"I was told, 'forget about life,'" Roberts remembers. He grew up hearing a consistent drumbeat of negativism, a litany of all the things he could not possibly do because he is disabled. Not surprisingly, he went through times of hating and doubting himself.

But a crucial change happened when he decided to leave the protective shelter of his home to attend high school for the first time. When he arrived at school in a wheelchair, "every head in that place turned." But instead of feeling embarrassed, he recalls, he felt "like a star."

This knack for converting problems into opportunities has taken Roberts a long way. When the school balked at awarding his diploma because he had not satisfied arbitrary requirements for physical education and driver education, he took the issue to the school board, and won his first political victory. He attended the University of California at Berkeley and went on to become a teacher and political activist and commissioner of rehabilitative services for the state of California.

Roberts is now a forceful and effective spokesman for disabled Americans in California, the United States and around the world. On behalf of the World Institute on Disability, he is urging Congress to fund programs that will help disabled people function independently, not those that put them in institutional settings that only make them feel helpless and useless. He points out that changing our approach to helping the disabled does not necessarily mean spending a lot more money—just thinking harder about how we spend it.

Roberts reminds us that disability will strike all of us, for many of us when we grow old and begin to lose our hearing, sight, and freedom of movement. He says this is a challenge to all of us to stop distancing ourselves from individuals who happen to have a disability. As a positive example of a more healthy approach, Roberts proudly mentions his own nine-year-old son: "To him, I'm not crippled. I'm Daddy."



## THE CONSERVATIVE ADVOCATE

William A. Rusher

## And now: the service society

By William A. Rusher

If nothing else, the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination is proving a rich source of new formulations for the old Democratic themes.

As far back as 1983, Gary Hart recognized that his party desperately needed to come up with some "new ideas." He even went so far as to claim that he had a couple — although, as some wit remarked, the only new ideas he ever actually came up with were his name and his age.

By the time the current campaign got under way, it had been pretty well conceded that genuinely new ideas are rare in politics, and that the Democrats would have to settle for re-hotting their traditional snake oil: taxing money from any source that had some and handing it out to various

constituencies that could be counted on to vote right.

For rhetorical purposes the tax target was always referred to as "the rich," though in practice it was invariably the middle class and quite often, in various subtle ways, the poor. The lucky recipients of the Democrats' largesse tended to be any bloc capable of shouting loud enough — and willing, or course, to join the Democrats' bulging coalition.

And that is still the basic play. What the 1988 nomination race has contributed is some fancy new ways of saying the same old things.

A couple of years ago the uproar du jour was over "hunger in America." A liberal Harvard professor (forgive the redundancy) got a tremendous amount of attention in the media for his assertion that hunger was rampant

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