

A Series: THE BLACK FAMILY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE 80's

PART VI - OUR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION IN THE '80s

By Maudra Jones

Editor's Note:

In last week's article, Maudra Jones shared with the readership thoughts from a speech she had written on "The Importance of Education" and gave background information on Black education in America from Pre-revolutionary Days through the period of Reconstruction. This week she continues that history, bringing it up to the present time, and then explores the difference between the black educational dream and its reality.

(Continued from last week)

A number of things happened. While the seeds were being sown for the development of Black institutions of higher learning, education for Blacks still remained inferior to that of whites. Also, the dominance of industrial education over liberal arts was seen as a means of progress for Blacks without threatening the power structure.

While Black advocates of education agreed on the goal of dignity and respect there were differing views on the direction that educational pursuits by Blacks should take.

Booker T. Washington's view was that of accommodation and compromise.

Frederick Douglas' famous quote, "Power concedes nothing without demand," demonstrated his position of protest and

ceaseless struggle while Dr. W.E.B. duBois insisted that there was an equally important need for higher education of an academic nature. It was Dr. duBois who, in collaboration with prominent white liberals, founded the NAACP and it was then that the instrument to pursue educational equality in America became full blown.

Many of us know where the history goes from there - the "separate but equal doctrine" and the court fights by the NAACP and other Black organizations - all leading to the idea of desegregation for equal educational opportunity.

The "Brown vs. the Board of Education" decision of 1954, which led to desegregation "at all deliberate speed", was the fountainhead from which all subsequent activity toward



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equal education in America flowed.

Martin Luther King's dream of equality had become the common dream of the Black experience in America.

The 1954 euphoria spread like wild fire; but in the last two decades, the harsh realities of today's educational problems have dawned.

Langston Hughes' poem "What Happens To A Dream Deferred" carries a poignant message for us in the lines: "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? or does it fester like a sore - and then run? Maybe it sags like a heavy load, or does it explode?"

I would agree with James Farmer, who wrote: "Today's realities have not eclipsed the dream, but they have awakened a realization that a long haul lies

ahead."

The reality is that -

1. Blacks have been lulled into complacency - we are in fact beginning to lose the capability of

level to pursue a course of study). This has forced major institutions to reevaluate their missions; thus, their capability to work with students, who

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educating the next generation; and

2. While the Brown Decision was sound in theory, in practice many school systems by and large remain segregated. A dramatic example of that fact is the fact that the woman who was the plaintiff in the Brown vs. Board of Education decision had to sue the school system in St. Louis, because her children were being segregated.

Currently, most research in education is indicating a decline in the general scholastic abilities of today's students.

Major testing agencies have signaled that the basic communications and computational skills necessary to survive in college and in life are worsening (it has been stated that students today see no real value between their education and the world of work; hence, there is a lessening of the necessary motivational

by standard measures are not considered "college material."

In a stimulating article for the BLACK COLLEGIAN, Dr. Gerald Durley, Director of Curriculum and Faculty Development of the Institute for Services To Education, wrote: "Since 1970, until today Black people have developed a psychological state of being comfortable. Issues affecting welfare, housing, employment, political realities and education are not being discussed to even give rise to the possibility that all is not well."

A study written by Charles Silberman had major impact on educational debate in the U.S. In what was termed an unusually outspoken indictment of the nation's public

schools, the report stated that most schools not only fail to educate children, but also are "oppressive", "grim" and "joyless". It also contends that most schools are preoccupied with order, control and routine for the sake of routine; that by practicing systematic repression, the schools create their own disciplinary problems; and that they promote docility, passivity and conformity in their students.

One result of all this, it is reported, "is to destroy students' curiosity along with their ability - more serious, their desire to think and act for themselves." Thereby it is charged that the schools deny students sufficient ability to understand modern complexity and to translate that understanding into action.

Understanding the history and the reality, what then is the challenge to us in behalf of Black students, and moreover, in behalf of students everywhere?

(To be continued next week.)

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decision saved the event after Warren Hirsh, the original benefactor allegedly pulled out after a big dispute with her over a dress. Guess he wanted her to wear Jesse Jeans, which is his trade mark. The former Supreme delineator will also donate a chunk of cash to N'York's green acres, but should come out of it to deposit more than she will have to withdraw. Paramount will tape the proceedings, arrange for TV, cassette, etc. and sell distribution rights to Showtime Cable for worldwide live b'cast at 6 and 11 PM. All this

should add-up to some hefty profits for the lovely, and in this case, generous superstar, who's sharing her talent and wealth with the Big Apple...The screen version of the Pulitzer Prize winning, "A Soldier's Play," has a camera date in Arkansas the end of Aug...Martha Louis jetted to the Apple as the guest of Mayor Koch who spearheaded the 2nd Annual Joe Louis Memorial Scholarship Award ceremonies. The first \$2000 a yr., for 4-yr of college, was won by an outstanding young man, Robert Ellis...Speaking about young folks Bever Leigh Banfield was never prettier or better suited to a role than her TV make believing in "Perfect Match," a CBS-TV

flick...

EYES WRITE: His medic ordered it so Cab Calloway, his Highness of Hi de ho, has dropped 271lbs., and is looking good...Benny Carter who deserted the "Apple" yrs ago to find more fame, riches and easy living about H'wood, was in N'York for a gig at Sweet Basil. He marked the occasion celebrating his 75th b'day and introducing his book, "Benny Carter - A Life in American Music." And what a life it has, and continues to be...Rosetta LeNoir, currently featured in the B'way hit, "You Can't Take It With You," is preparing to produce a show for her Amas Repertory Theatre which she hopes will also make the illuminated lane. It's

dubbed "The Buck Stops Here," and will be a musical about the late Pres. Harry Truman. Stem talk is that she's trying to get Jason Robards, one of the stars of the play she's now featured in, to play the lead role. Go for big, girl...July 13 will be a lucky day for the Shireless who must have had a lot of them. On that date the singing group will celebrate its 25-ann'y and you can count the groups on one finger who have stayed together that long...Gridiron great O.J. Simpson and lovely Nicole Brown are linked together so often and at so many coast hispots it wouldn't surprise this corner at all...STAY LOOSE. Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

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JAMES ENUS

James has been a resident of Las Vegas for several years and a real estate licensee since 1978. His expertise lies in residential property. James has been associated with Toler Realty for over two years and has served his clients with professionalism. James, his wife Cluadette and their two children are active within our community. His hobbies are quite varied.



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