

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

## Part VII: Our Children and The 1983-84 School Year

by Maudra Jones

### "The Learning Process, The Participants, The Methodology

Who is the pupil? A child of God, not a tool of the state.  
 Who is the teacher? A guide, not a guard.  
 What is the faculty? A community of scholars, not a union of mechanics.  
 Who is the principal? A master of teaching, not a master of teachers.  
 What is learning? A journey, not a destination.  
 What is discovery? Questioning the answers, not answering the questions.  
 What is the process? Discovering ideas, not covering content.  
 What is the goal? Opened minds, not closed issues.  
 What is the test? Being and becoming, not remembering and receiving.  
 What is a school? Whatever we choose to make it."

Submitted to Neighborhood Adult Participation Project, Inc.  
 by Gloria Curtis

As we seek new answers and solutions to life problems - and particularly those problems which beset Black children, Black families and Black communities - we must recapture the strengths and traditions of our heritage. Our heritage "must be used to energize us and transform us." We are challenged to create the will and develop a new vision to match the "dimensions of the hour". We must re-dedicate ourselves to the meaning of education and the pursuit of excellence. We must re-new our commitment, as Black families, to make education the "keystone in the structure of (our)

freedom house." We must do as Charles V. Willie urged in a recent Crisis article: "...hold on to the old treasures of religion and education..."

Young Blacks should be encouraged to hold on to original treasures - the virtue of religion and the wisdom of education - as they strive to conquer new fields." We all know what those "New fields" are the challenges they will face in a rapidly growing age of technology. One writer makes the challenge clear in a recent issue of "Black Collegian" when he says: "The 21st Century will be a time of rapid scientific and technological change, especially as we move

beyond the frontiers of outer space. Black people will need competent and capable leaders to detect the currents of change and to provide direction." Those leaders in the 21st Century are the Youth of today.

The 80's are challenging Black families to renew the spirit of education - to direct more attention to the intellectual capabilities of our sons and daughters - to find new options and alternatives for helping to create a learning environment that will enable each child to reach his or her highest potential toward

becoming a productive member of society - to give our children our very best efforts "to insure that their part of the dream will indeed become a reality."

In its series of booklets, the Neighborhood Adult Participation Project shares ideas for motivating students, parents,



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teachers, educators and the community to assume their responsibilities in the education process; and, further, to increase their involvement and participation in the educational activities and programs of the schools where their children are in attendance.

The following introduction and text are offered for your prayerful consideration:

"I Wish More Parents Would..." is dedicated to those adults whose children are attending pre-school, junior and senior high school, Adult Evening School, Colleges, universities and vocational schools. It is also especially devoted to those parents who seldom participate seriously in any of the activities which are an on going part of the curriculum at the school in which their children are members of the student body, and the parents whose general attitude is - 'Let the teacher do it.'"

### I WISH MORE PARENTS WOULD...

- ... Assist in organizing a School-Community Council at the school in which their child is enrolled.
- ... help other parents to become better informed about the schools in their neighborhoods.
- ... develop communication between students, parents and law enforcement agencies.
- ... visit the school at least once a month and learn about your child's teachers and how to assist them with your child.
- ... invite your child's teacher to your home, organization meetings, church and neighborhood meetings.
- ... help your child's teacher to identify meaningful community resources so that he or she might have knowledge of the issues and the position of the people in the community.
- ... work for the total involvement of all parents in the activities of the schools which are attended by

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- their children.
- ... campaign for equal educational opportunities for students from low-income families.
- ... join the school-community council at your child's school, or help parents to organize one at your child's school.
- ... become cognizant of the school programs that will raise the educational levels of all children.
- ... familiarize themselves with the function of the State Department of Education, Board of Education and Advisory Councils.
- ... bridge the communication gap between students, parents and teachers by demonstrating appreciation for an individual's worth as a human being.
- ... seek to destroy the myth that Black and Brown children from low-income families are inferior.
- ... become aware of the fact that very few effective school programs can truly be successful without parent participation.
- ... challenge all programs that fail to provide equal educational opportunities for all students.
- ... really understand the value of genuine parent-school relationship.

In the immortal words of Edward "Abie" Robinson: "Every parent must become involved the very moment his child enters a pre-school - and must continue that involvement, in the same form or fashion, until that child leaves the school and completes his education at the college or university level. A parent can effectively assist his child to acquire a better educational experience as he becomes involved in his training at the very earliest stages of the child's life."

We have the will, it is our duty to change the foregoing "wishes" to blessings.

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