

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

PART VII - CHILDREN AND THE 1983-84 SCHOOL YEAR: THE QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

by Maudra Jones

"THE FACT IS THAT EXCELLENCE HAS NEVER BEEN FOREIGN TO BLACK AMERICANS. IT IS A PART OF OUR HERITAGE. NOT TOO LONG AGO, IT WAS CLEAR TO BLACKS THAT THEY HAD TO BE BETTER IN MOST FIELDS TO HAVE ANYTHING APPROACHING AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WITH WHITE AMERICANS...WE SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THIS HISTORY...THE TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE, OF STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE, WAS BEQUEATHED BY OUR FATHERS AND MOTHERS, AND BY OUR AUNTS, UNCLAS AND GRANDPARENTS - FOR THAT IS A PART OF THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA. PERHAPS WE NEED TO RE-DISCOVER THAT TRADITION AND WIN ITS FRUIT ANEW..."

Bernard C. Watson

The gripping truth found in the above quote signals one of the most important challenges we face as Black families in this decade. It is a challenge to parents, students, teachers and school administrators. We are all challenged to promote excellence among our youth and to develop a new sense of confidence and expectation-the future of our country and the world demands it. The complex choices of the 21st Century will require this generation to develop alternatives, direct even-

ts, categorize information and reach decisions. Our children today must be prepared with a new vision, with interpersonal skills, creativity and moral principles. They should know about themselves, their heritage and the tradition of excellence out of which their people came. They must be able to "decide for themselves what has value".

Parent involvement, at every level of the school experience, is crucial to the struggle for excellence. In addition to sharing their children's

school experiences on a day-to-day basis, there must be a conscious pursuit of excellence in every Black home, church, club house and meeting place. In the words of W.E.B. DuBois: "Black people must impress upon their children the fundamental facts of the relationship between education, work,



Maudra Jones

legitimate wants and appropriate creative activities...Black people must inculcate in the minds of their children new ways of looking at old problems...". We must help them to value learning and humanity - to reach beyond the limitations of society and environment and to

believe that excellence is attainable - that excellence requires discipline, diligence and purpose. Children who are slow learners must be inspired to work harder to reach their highest capacities. We must continuously encourage, motivate and praise our children. Our homes must become extended learning institutions; our community must be one in which we all join hands to insure our

that "the basic obligations of the teacher's role are simple: competence and a belief in the ability of children. Teachers must accept the fact that most parents want the best for their children, and they should respond to these aspirations positively and constructively rather than with warnings or prophecies of failure. Teachers must insist upon high standards for their students,

if they will combine the "cognitive with the compassionate". W.E.B. DuBois said it this way, more than 40 years ago: "The proper education of any people includes sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil; knowledge on the part of the teacher, not simply of the individual taught, but of his surroundings and background and the history of his class and group." Out of "sympathetic touch" comes mutual love and respect - trust and confidence - a vision of humanity that propels one toward excellence. If education is to prepare our children to live their lives in a creative, humane and sensitive way, there must be a balanced curriculum that is "close to life". Education must provide the tools necessary for our children to understand modern complexities and to translate that understanding into their own life values and goals.

(Continued next week)

MAUDRA JONES, who has served educational institutions and community organizations in the field of Human Resources Development for over 30 years is Regional Director of the National Association of Family and the Religious Community.

children's chances for achieving excellence. Thus, we must be involved in the decision-making processes of the education system; we must support school personnel and programs that are dedicated to improving the quality of education; and we must be involved in monitoring the performances of our children, of school personnel and elected officials.

Dr. Watson suggests

and teachers must accept the responsibility for insuring that those who pass through school know more and can cope better as a result of the experience. Teachers have a responsibility to teach students about the world as it is, but they may also give students a vision of what the world can become. He further contends that teachers can make a significant contribution to academic excellence

GUIDE

from page 7

The Governor's Commission of Educational Excellence will hold its first meeting in late September.

The commission's tasks are multiple. It will review education standards in Nevada and specific ways to improve them.

It will review ways to

attract and keep quality educators in the system.

The commission will work with the business community to make sure the educational and employment needs of the private sector are met.

"The goal is to take the recommendations of the commission and translate them into action, including any necessary legislative changes," the governor

CPB, OHIO UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCE FELLOWSHIP, ASSOCIATESHIPS.

CPB and the School of Telecommunications of Ohio University have awarded one fellowship and five graduate associateships to public broadcasting professionals for study in the School of Telecom-

said. "I believe Nevadans want the best possible education for their children and this commission will work to achieve that goal."

munications under CPB's Minorities' and Women's Graduate Training Program in Public Broadcast Management.

The CPB fellowship went to Chiquita Bernadette Mullins, a graduate of Vassar College who has worked with WDCN-TV in Nashville for the past six years. Most recently she has been a producer-director.

The Ohio University graduate associateships went to--

• Fredessa Denise Hamilton, for the last two years a secretary with The Annenberg/CPB Project at CPB. A graduate of Duke University, she previously worked at a radio station in Wilmington, N.C.

• Daniel Ricardo Trujillo, a producer-writer-editor and previously a master control technician with KNME-TV, Albuquerque. He has bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of New Mexico.

• Lolita Lowe has been educational services coordinator at South Carolina Educational Television since 1977. She has degrees from Pepper-

dine University and North Carolina A & T State University.

• Jane Sheridan, program manager of KTOO-TV in Juneau, Alaska, a graduate of Evergreen College. She was previously director of media services at Colorado Mountain College Community Center.

• Amelia Stringer, who has worked in both public television and radio in Washington, D.C., and Miami. She is a graduate of Howard University.

This program funds minority and women employees in public broadcasting for a one-year master's degree in radio-television management and business administration.

(702) 642-8047

PROMPT
PROFESSIONAL
SERVICE

Wally's Repair-It-Shop
LAWN MOWERS - APPLIANCES

WALLY WALKER
Owner

300-B E. LAKE MEAD
N. LAS VEGAS, NV 89030

*Our success depends upon how well
we satisfy you*

NELLIS
FURNITURE

(702) 649-4200

Harold L. Johnson
USAF SMS Retired

2666 Las Vegas Blvd. North
North Las Vegas, Nev. 89030