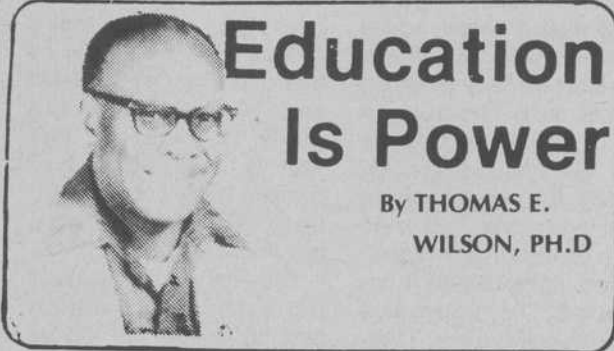


# Education



## Education Is Power

By THOMAS E. WILSON, PH.D.

This writer has just finished reading a book called *Education and Poverty*. The first thought that came to mind after finishing the book was *how*, and the second thing was *why* does America become so concerned about the education of the poor when the poor have been here for such a long time?

The answer is simple. We have learned that poverty and ignorance go hand in hand. We have learned that the modern variety of "hard core" poverty has something in common with the elegance and security of established wealth. It is inherited.

Educators have known for a long time that in school districts with large enrollments of the poor, there is a high incidence of school dropouts. They know, too, that among children too young to drop out of school the early signs of probable failure are painfully visible to their teachers. The teachers recognize that a child of poverty is a child of a world separate from the prosperous aspiring mainstream of American life. Teachers in first through third grades feel that the child is slipping away. By the fourth grade when abstract concepts based on the building blocks of reading and arithmetic become important in the curriculum, the child falls further behind.

By the time the child of poverty reaches the eighth grade, he may be as many as three grades back, his mind closed, and his behavior rebellious. By high school age, he is already headed for unemployment and dependence, sometimes disdaining the 'outside' world of success that already disdains him. Worst of all, he has secretly become contemptuous of himself, conditioned to failure. A potentially successful being has become a waste both to himself and to his country.

Children suffering from poverty of ordinary experiences pose problems for the teachers. These children are everywhere, but they are found in appalling concentration in neighborhoods of poor uneducated parents. They may be children of laborers or of isolated farmers in the dirt-road backwoods. Often children of such rural background live in the big cities to which their parents were driven

when their land would no longer support them. In large numbers, they may be the children of Blacks who are seeking new opportunities and hope in big cities where they often do not find them.

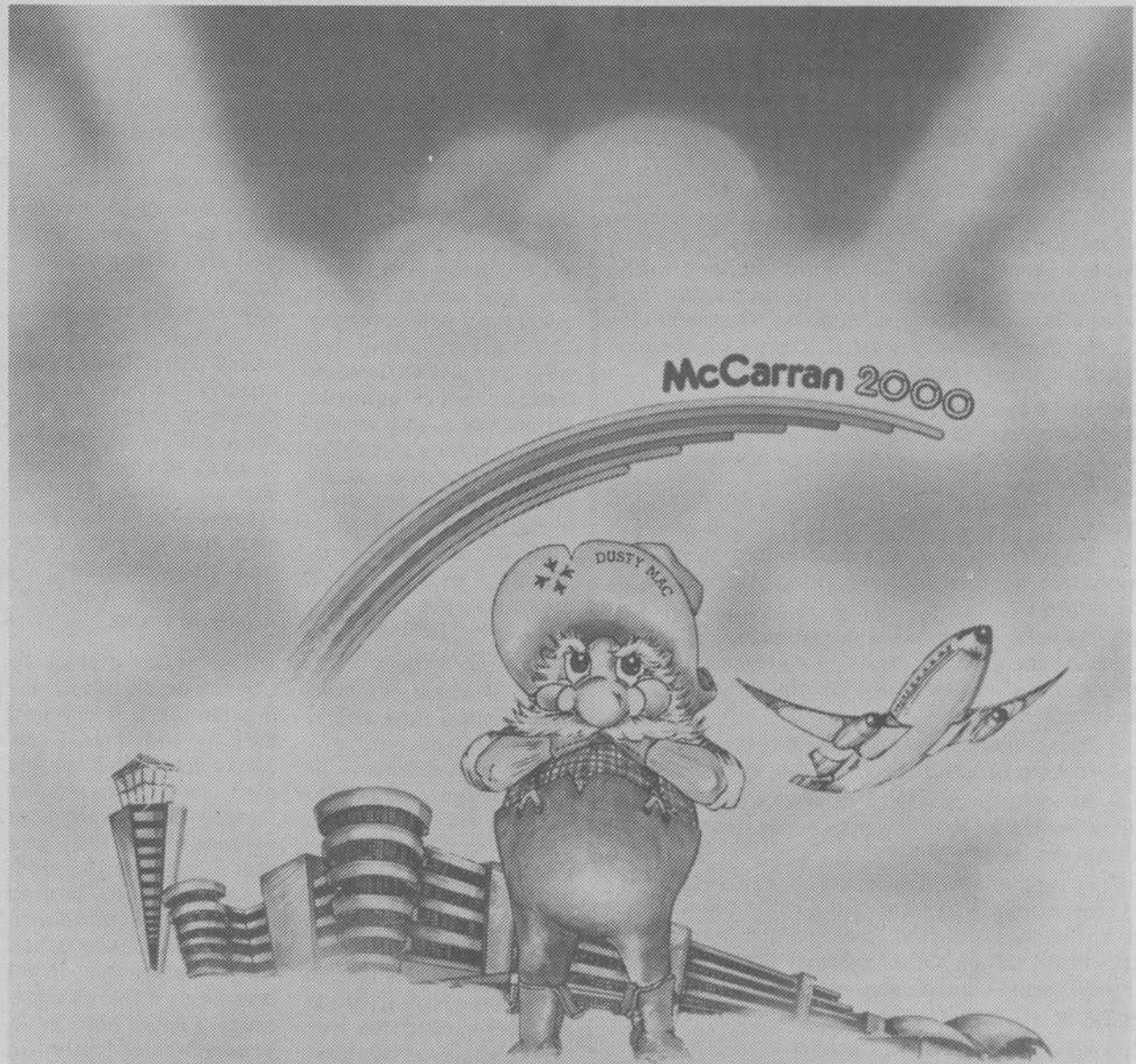
When such children enter school, their teachers, who often have different backgrounds, are astonished to discover the children's poverty of, or differences in, experiences. Besides, the children may be unaware of shapes, blocks, circles, squares, or the idea of short and long. The teacher was trained in college to assume a knowledge of these things.

As these children somehow manage to progress through school, their teachers in the fifth and sixth grades discover that inadequacy of early preparation has increasingly deeper implications.

What does all of this mean to the Black parent and/or teacher in our town? It means that we must be sure that our children know the basics before entering school. These are shapes, colors, long and short, big and little, etc. The child should also know likenesses and differences in as many objects as possible. It

means that the child should be able to talk in complete sentences, should be able to say his name and complete address if necessary, should know his telephone number, etc. Talking with the child at home and allowing him to talk with you, the parents, helps.

If one finds this difficult to do, if at all possible enroll him in a good nursery school or day care center. Our Black children need all the help they can get in order to survive in modern-day America.



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For Dusty Mac, our pesky Nevada sourdough Miner, it's a dream come true. He's been tearing up the place for so long looking for his legendary "lost McCarran Mine," we had to practically build a new airport.

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And the good news is that Dusty Mac has "thrown in with us" to make McCarran International Airport bigger and better. He's advising people who use the airport where there might be some construction going on and

how to best use the facility (actually, we think Dusty is still diggin' around, but we don't want to call him out on that).

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