

Point of View

To Be Equal

COLLEGES CHALLENGED IN HIGH-TECH ERA

by John E. Jacob

America is a nation of change, and in recent years changes have come fast and hard. They are evident in new technologies, a restructuring economy, and a meaner social outlook.

The first of those trends is of special importance to our educational needs. It is generally accepted that we are at the dawn of a high-tech era.

That means the future will belong to those who can work at computer terminals, be comfortable with advanced data processing and communications technologies, and have access to the techniques of an information-based economy.

This trend poses a major challenge to the education community, and especially the black colleges that graduate the majority of blacks. It



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means many will have to retool. They'll have to adjust curricula to the high-tech age and provide students in all disciplines with the fundamentals of technological literacy.

And that challenge is compounded by the financial squeeze faced by most of those institutions, and by the traditional aversion to math, science and other subjects that are fundamental to the high tech era. Some 600 blacks a

excellence has been school prayer, rhetoric about discipline, and tuition tax credits that would undermine public education.

Higher education funding for minority and low income students has

John E. Jacob is President Of The National Urban League

year earn Ph.D.'s in education but only 20 to 30 in engineering and physical sciences, and only about a half dozen in math. In 1982, only one black person got a Ph.D. in computer science.

If you look at undergraduate degrees, similar percentages are obtained. Much as we need educators, social workers, and others skilled in the human and social services, the black future will be limited if we don't have our share of the skills required by a high tech society.

This is a problem that has its roots in social disadvantage, inferior public education, and lack of opportunity in elementary and high schools. Future physicists and engineers come to college with sound backgrounds in math and the sciences. But most black students have been denied the access to those backgrounds and the encouragement to succeed in those fields.

The problem is compounded by national policies that have undermined the little progress that has been made toward greater equity.

Those national policies are widening the gap between black and white, rich and poor. The 1985 budget plans to make more cuts in education aid. The official response to the calls for

already been slashed deeply. The TRIO programs that helped disadvantaged young people make it in college have been a prime target for the budget cutters. And the Department of Education's proposed restrictions on grants and loans to students will inevitably force many black people to abandon their hopes for higher education.

A special target of the enemies of equal opportunity in higher education have been the programs that provide financial assistance to graduate and professional education. And assistance to struggling black colleges has been confined to lip service as the resources made available to them are nowhere near proportionate to the needs.

An educational system can turn out more scientists and engineers than GM does cars. But if they are drawn from a favored elite while the rest of our students are doomed to semi-literacy, the system itself is far from excellent. In fact, it is a failure.

Equity is not an issue that can be sidestepped. For blacks, it is the central issue—equal access to quality education is the prime issue on the black education agenda. I believe it has to be at the core of national educational policy as well.

PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



The politician who runs for public office and happens to be elected gives himself over to service of those who elected him. He is or will be confronted with many problems, some of which he can address. It would take no less than a super human being to meet the needs of all the people all the time.

It does not take a super human being, however, to recognize that all the needs of the people cannot be met. But such a person should be aware that he must be just as nice to those whose needs he cannot satisfy as to those whose needs he does satisfy.

This courtesy was not offered to Carlene Perkins when she called to talk to Commissioner Bob Nolen about a request that the credit union had submitted for Block Grant Revolving Loan Funds, which had been turned down by the Citizens' Advisory Committee. The City Commission was to hear and ratify the Advisory Committee's recommendations on May 16. So, there was nothing unusual about Carlene Perkins wanting to talk with her City Commissioner on this matter. It is done all the time. When Mrs. Perkins called Commissioner Bob Nolen, he allegedly talked down to her, thereby sending the impression that he did not recognize her rights as a citizen, one of which is her being able to freely discuss an issue with her representative.

The arrogance of power should never go unchallenged. Governor Bryan docked his Gaming Control Board Chairman a month's pay and has indicated that he will not reappoint him because he called a female agent to give him a ride home because he was drunk. A citizen cannot dock a Commission a month's pay, but the tool of recall is always available to be used against those public officials who sometimes become lax in their respect for the citizens they represent.

Carlene Perkins has instituted a recall against Bob Nolen for the reason of his not according her the respect she is due as a citizen. Her pride and dignity have been wounded and Mrs. Perkins is determined that Bob Nolen be held accountable. Carlene Perkins has never done anything like this before. But she has been involved in politics for about 12 years. Her first involvement in campaigns was with mine, when she worked to get me elected to the state senate. I can attest to the fact that she is a hard working person and she knows the streets and how to knock on doors. Mr. Nolen, I am afraid you have made a mistake with this black lady!

The arrogance of power must always be challenged. Carlene Perkins is doing just that!

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GREATER VOTES, GREATER POWER