

UBF

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"that Blacks and Whites do care and will contribute to a caring group such as ours." Surely the need for and the viability of UBF had been demonstrated in the short span of its first two years.

UBF had to overcome reservations among some Blacks as well as the antagonism of the White-dominated charitable establishment. Some Blacks understandably feared that the funds, however small, that had been received by Black organizations through UGF would be taken away if they identified in any way with this "uppity" Black charity fund that had the audacity to challenge the powerful, traditional White organization.

"There was that type of talk," said Rolark, "that you just shouldn't disturb those White folk, because after all, 'they're doing the best they can.' We could get very few people of certain types even to be on the board of directors." Personally, Rolark couldn't see why Blacks should be satisfied with the "crumbs that fell from UGF's table when they could have the whole loaf of what is rightfully due."

Fortunately there were others who reflected the "total dedication and commitment of a new breed of community leader" like Dr. Philip J. Rutledge, chairman of the Board; and Board members Vanders Baccus, J. Arthur Peyton, Dr. Peggy Brown, Lillian Wiggins, Cora Rice, Rev. Henry C. Gregory, Helen Chaffin and Theresa Jones. "These men and women," Dr. Rolark said with pride-filled voice, "are the unsung heroes of our community."

UBF Goes to Court

THE fight for tax-exempt status consumed most of the year 1969. The year 1970 ushered in the long and frustrating struggle for the fledgling philanthropic organization in its attempt to establish itself as an autonomous fund-raising body. Robert Hampton, head of the Civil Service Commission (now the Office of Personnel Management) tried to forestall UBF's efforts to secure "solicitation privileges"—the right to solicit federal employees' payroll deductions via the Combined Federal Campaign.

In March 1971 and again in August, Hampton denied UBF's application for solicitation privileges unless UBF became a member agency of the United Givers Fund.

On September 8, 1972, UBF lawyers, led by the indomitable Attorney Wilhelmina Rolark, filed suit in U.S.

A. Dick Gregory, political activist, poses with Dr. Rolark.

B. Attorney Wilhelmina Rolark, President, National Association of Black Women Attorneys and UBF's General Counsel.

C. Mobile Testing Lab, operated by Health Care Specialists at Howard University, was donated and supported in part by UBF.

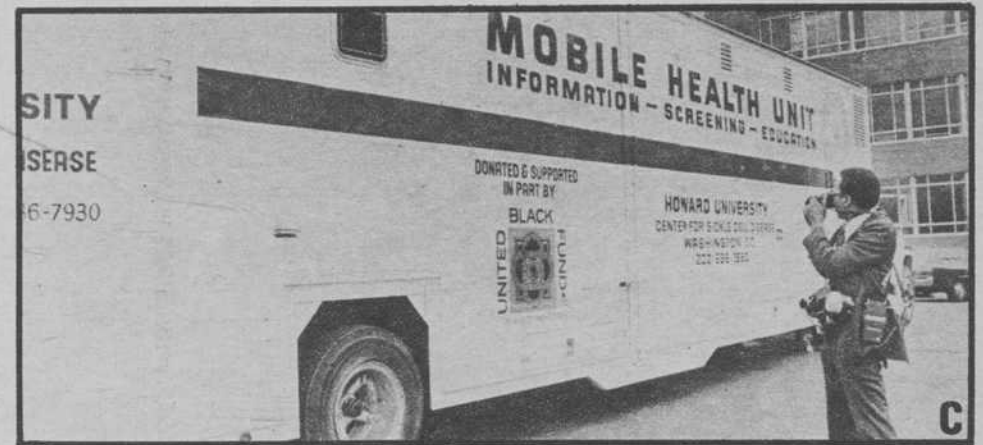


District Court asking either to be authorized to collect donations from federal employees on a check-off basis similar to that in the Combined Federal Campaign or a court-ordered delay of the rival charitable fund (UGF) drive.

In court briefs, UBF described itself as "a group set up to meet needs unmet by any other single fund-raising group." UBF, the brief stated, "is a nonprofit, charitable, umbrella organization whose member agencies are predominantly Black or agencies that serve the needs of Black and poor inner-city residents of Metropolitan Washington."

By 1972, beneficiary organizations of the United Black Fund included the Howard University Medical Center for the study of sickle cell anemia; the Blackman Development Center (for a second time); Efforts for Ex-Convicts, Inc. (EFEC), which provides assistance to ex-offenders in transition back to the community; the Meriweather Home for Children; and Teen Corps.

Attorney Rolark ably argued that UBF was formed "precisely because Blacks in the city felt that UGF was not sensitive enough to the needs of Black organizations." Although the two organizations "serve different constituencies," she asserted, "we think we have equivalent status."



Despite the valiant efforts of UBF's legal team, U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Gasch upheld Commissioner Hampton's decision to deny UBF the check-off privileges that UGF enjoyed in soliciting contributions from federal employees (UGF usually received about 75 percent of all funds collected).

The UBF Board of Directors voted unanimously to appeal the decision of the district court. At the same time, a committee was established to coordinate an effort in the community among federal employees urging them to exercise their privilege of authorizing that a percentage of their pledge be made to the United Black Fund.

At a press conference held in front of Washington's Martin Luther King Library, Dr. Rolark forcefully explained UBF's position in light of the Gasch Decision:

The United Black Fund is here to stay, regardless of this decision....This insensitive opinion affects not only the lives of Black and poor people in the Nation's Capital but in the entire 50 states wherever the federal government operates. The case is not over and, in the words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, whose edifice we stand in front of at this press conference, "We Will Overcome."

"We Simply Sat Down And Talked Things Over"

FACED with the prospect of an ap-

peal that would most likely be successful, both sides recognized that they would have to live together, and that it would not further either of their causes to have a split within the community. After reaching an agreement with the United Givers Fund, Dr. Rolark said, "We simply sat down and talked things over."

A million dollar deficit and the continuing pressure exerted by UBF contributed in no small way to bringing the two groups together. The agreement—a major victory for the small, struggling, Black-led organization—entitled the United Black Fund not only to share in the millions of dollars collected annually, but also to enjoy payroll deduction privileges, the same as the United Givers Fund. The agreement inaugurated a partner relationship between the two charitable organizations.

Thenceforth, the campaign for funds was to be conducted as the Combined United Way/United Black Fund Campaign. Contributors could designate to which fund they wanted to give their money. Undesignated donations were to be shared and neither group was able to solicit funds solely for itself.

By the terms of the partnership, UBF became entitled to any funds designated to it by employees through the joint campaign, plus 12½ percent of any funds in excess of the \$14 million United Way was raising before the partnership was formed. Fund raising and administrative costs, which UBF was to share with United Way, ran about 10½ percent.

This accord, between the United Black