

# Point of View

## Editorial

The voice is gone but the memory will linger on — the voice, the energy, the concerns of Dr. Thomas E. Wilson, Associate Professor of Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas and Editorial Director of The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice. His life's work, while not widely publicized, dealt with the inequities of the Black Family. He was a powerhouse in his quiet, forceful way.

After his arrival in Las Vegas during 1969, these were a few of many projects in which he became involved: He was president of the Las Vegas Alliance of Black Educators, a member of the Gideons International, the College of Education Curriculum Committee, Phi Delta Kappa, NSP, NAACP, Desert Hills Baptist Church, and other educational committees at the University and in Southern Nevada. He was a World War II Army Veteran, active in St. Marks Masonic Lodge No. 1, a former editor of the Las Vegas Voice newspaper before its merger with the Las Vegas Sentinel and later as the Editorial Director of The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice. In addition to these regular on-going activities and functions he always found time to write one of the weekly thought-provoking columns, Education Is Power.

Dr. Wilson stood tall among men. He was a great crusader and educator. According to one of his students at the Mary Bethune School in Phoenix, Arizona, he was a man we 'looked up to — he was such a good example of mankind'.

Dr. Wilson, a graduate at the Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, where he received his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, also served as an Education Specialist in Phoenix for Operation Leap and as Principal of the Booker T. Washington Elementary School, Phoenix prior to joining the staff at UNLV.

The voice may be gone but the memory will live forever. May he rest in Peace.

## Letter To Editor

Dear Editor:

To show their appreciation for all the love, generosity, skill and energy of local Girl Scout leaders, the Girl Scouts of Southern Nevada will join with sister Girl Scouts in thousands of communities across the U.S.A. on April 22 to celebrate the fourth annual observance



## To Be Equal

# POVERTY PROGRAMS WORK

by John E. Jacob

There are vocal calls for eliminating - not just cutting - essential federal social programs. The guru of those who would end all government props for the poor is Charles Murray, whose book, *Losing Ground*, has become the Bible of the extremists.

Murray argues that social programs not only don't work - they positively harm the poor. The only trouble with that thesis is that it's dead wrong.

In an important article in the March 25th New Republic, Robert Greenstein, director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, totally demolishes the Murray thesis and demonstrated that the statistics supporting it are misused or faulty.

For example, a pet theory of Murray's is that welfare benefits discourage work, encourage illegitimacy, and create poverty. But Greenstein shows that it's just not true.

Murray says that welfare benefits are an incentive not to work, but since 1969 there have been a twenty

percent decline in purchasing power for welfare families while incentives to work, primarily through the earned income tax credit for the working poor, have risen.



John E. Jacob

Even in the example Murray cites of a 'typical' welfare family in a high-benefit state, it was economically more feasible to work at a low-paying job than to remain unemployed and on the welfare rolls.

And Murray's correlation of children in black female-headed households with welfare doesn't hold water either. The number of child-

ren in those households increased 20% from 1972 to 1980, but black children on welfare declined by five percent.

able advances in the nation's health and in the nutritional standards of the poor.

School aid for disadvan-

## John E. Jacob is President Of The National Urban League

If welfare is to blame for illegitimacy, then, as Greenstein pointedly asks: 'How can welfare be encouraging more single black women to have children if many of those same women do not collect welfare when their children are born?'

Rather than encourage the growth of poverty, social programs cut the incidence of poverty and enable the poor to survive. Greenstein points out what I and others have been saying for years - that in the period when social benefits were being increased, poverty fell sharply.

The elderly poor, for example, fell from 35% of all older Americans in 1959 to less than 16% in 1980, thanks to the rise in Social Security.

Medicaid is directly responsible for better health among the poor. Before 1965, health statistics were stable. After Medicare and Medicaid however, life expectancy rose and infant mortality declined.

The advent of food aid brought similar measur-

taged children improved math and reading scores and narrowed the black-white gap in test score results.

Why the rise in poverty in recent years then, and why the rise in unemployment?

It's not, as Murray argues, because social programs act as disincentives to work. It's because of such factors as: increased automation wiping out low-skill jobs, an economy that seesawed between boom and bust, eliminating more jobs than there were people available for work, and the enormous influx of women and immigrants into the job market pushed younger black workers to the back of the line.

The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice welcomes expressions of all views from readers. Letters should be kept as brief as possible and are subject to condensation. They must include signature, valid mailing address and telephone number, if any. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Because of the volume of mail received, unpublished individual letters cannot be acknowledged. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice, 1201 S. Eastern Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89104.

of Girl Scout Leaders' Day.

Frontier Council Girl Scouts are hoping the whole community will join them in this day-long salute. On April 22, extend a warm hello and hearty congratulations to the Girl Scout leaders you know. They deserve it!

Joyce Salor  
President  
Frontier Girl Scout  
Council

Letter to the Editor:

For a number of years the Black community has been faced with a unique kind of crisis. While there are thousands of self-proclaimed, self-appointed leaders, very few, if any of them, are willing to accept the responsibility of leadership when things go wrong. Usually they are nowhere to be found. If they are found, they generally offer a thousand and one excuses.

Factually, there are no shortages of leaders in the Black community. They are here and they will remain here. The community has so-called leaders of every description, many of them are sunshine leaders. They are nowhere to be found, or they are too busy when it rains. It is easy to allow the responsibility to be shifted to others when things go wrong.

This community is sadly in need of down to earth,

good, strong, solid leadership instead of glory-seekers and men and women who are just out for what they can get...any way they can get it.

Whoever the leaders are, it is time for them to stand and speak out on some of the pertinent issues in this community. Good or bad, the blame remains on the same shoulders. When they are good, the credit is spread among all.

Yours truly,  
Elder George Ward

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