

# Education

## ASSAULT ON ILLITERACY PROGRAM ORGANIZED

Editors Note: The LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE reported the organization of the Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP) in Las Vegas in its May 9, 1985 issue. We repeat that report for this special AOIP issue.

By Betty Brown

On Thursday, May 2, the first organizational meeting of the National Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP) was held at Heritage Hall in the Nucleus Plaza.

As a result of invitational letters sent to organizations, churches, fraternities and sororities, a number of interested community representatives gathered to hear and learn about AOIP and to discuss the feasibility of organizing a local chapter.

The Assault On Illiteracy Program is a non-profit umbrella of participating organizations, whose goal is to work toward eradicating the 47 percent functional illiteracy rate among Black Americans. Its 3 main arms of communication are the Black Media, Inc. newspapers (known as the BMI

Cooperative), the National Black Monitor (the BMI national monthly newspaper insert) and the Advancer (the AOIP Family and Community Reading Newspaper), which is a reading motivational and comprehension-enhancement supplementary tool published weekly in the BMI newspapers.

Participating organizations in AOIP include A.E.A.O.N. Mystic Shrine, Academy on Human Rights and Peace, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, American Association for Affirmative Action, American Health and Beauty Aids Institute, American League of Financial Institutions, American Women's Clergy Association, American Association of Black Sociologists, Association of Corporate Professionals, Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Auxiliary to the National Medical Association, Inc., Booker T. Washington Foundation, CME Church, Conference of Grand Masters Prince Hall Masons, Council of Construction Professionals, Council of National Alumni Associations, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Drifters, Eta Phi Beta Sorority, Federation of Masons of the World,

Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Gospel Music Workshop of America, I.B.P.O. Elks, Imperial Court, Daughters of Isis, Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority, Inc., National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Association for the Southern Poor, National Association of Black Airline Employees, National Association of Black Reading and Language Educators, National Association of Black Social Workers, National Association of Black Women Attorneys, National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc., National Association for Market Developers (NAMD), National Association of Media Women, National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., National Association of Negro Musicians, National Association of University Women, National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., National Black MBA Association, National Black Police Association, National Black Republican Council, National caucus and Center On Black Aged, National Coalition of Title I, Chapter 1 Parents, National Committee of Black Churchmen, National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc., National Council for Black Family and Child Development, National Council of Negro Women, National Dental Association, National Movement To Boycott Crime, Inc., National Naval Officer's Association, National Pan Hellenic Council, National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., National Student Business League, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Operation PUSH, Inc., Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Order of Eastern Star, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Progressive National Baptist Convention

U.S.A., Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, United Black Fund of America, Women's Missionary Society of AME Church, and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority (partial listing only as of 3/19/85).

The meeting, organized by Winnie Palmer of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. and National Chairperson of AOIP's The Advancer, and Ed and Betty Brown of Brown Publishing Company (a member of the BMI Cooperative), was spearheaded by Dr. Calvin Rolark, newspaper publisher and radio-TV talk show host of Washington, D.C., who is also Chairman of the Black Media, Inc. Cooperative and the founder of AOIP and the United Black Fund of America.

The group was also privileged to hear dynamic Carrie Ayers Haynes, the retired and renowned school administrator of the Grape Street School in the Watts section of Los Angeles, on whose educational approaches to solving the problems of illiteracy the AOIP is founded. As AOIP's National Vice Chairperson in charge of interorganizational liaison, she is credited as being the "mother" of AOIP's reading-motivational and comprehension-enhancement process. Also participating was Dr. William H. Rumsey, consultant to the United Black Fund of America, from Washington, D.C.

As a result of Thursday's meeting, a local chapter of AOIP was organized. Officers elected to spearhead the local group are: Willa Bywaters, President; Margaret Crawford, Vice President; Debbie Franklin, Secretary; and Atty James Oran Porter, Treasurer.

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### About the AOIP President.....

Willa Bywaters, mother, educator, Social Worker and School Psychologist, was elected President of the newly organized AOIP last Thursday.

Born in Institute, West Virginia, the daughter of Louise and the late educator, James Piscomb, she attended the public schools of Institute. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from West Virginia State College with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Sociology.

When the family moved to Baltimore, Maryland, Willa continued her education at the University of Maryland, where she earned a Masters Degree in Social Work.

It was in Baltimore, while serving as a Recreation Director in the city's Community Centers, that her interest first began in the problems of illiteracy and this interest grew as she later became a supervisor of case workers for Baltimore's Department of Public Welfare.

She later moved to Princeton, New Jersey, where she worked in Family Therapy Services and as a case worker and therapist at the Princeton University Counseling Center.

In 1973 Willa came to Las Vegas, at

which time she became the first director of EOB's Child-Family Resource Program. The Fall of that year, she was hired as a Social Worker by the Clark County School District. After receiving her Psychologist Certification at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, her title became that of School Psychologist with the District.

Willa's interest in furthering the basic literacy skills of young Black children is exemplified through the community and school activities with which she has been identified. She has conducted numerous workshops for the EOB Head Start Program, has given lectures to pregnant girls, has identified and worked with the academically talented, has given free group counseling sessions for Westside students and has worked with the school district's Child Find Project for handicapped children.

A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, she has served as the Basileus, Secretary, Treasurer and Publicity Chairperson for the local chapter. She also served as the first director of the sorority's Reading Experience Program.