

(Continued from Page 21)



As chairperson of the Black Business and Professional Support and Involvement Committee of the national Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP), Grand Exalted Ruler Donald P. Wilson made the following remarks in terms of community building:

For too long we have depended on White businesses for our goods and services. Look around your own homes. We are awakened in the morning by a clock radio from Westinghouse; we get up from between two sheets made by Cannon Mills; walk across tile by Armstrong Cork Company; turn on shower controls made by American Standard; use soap by Proctor & Gamble, a Gillette razor, High Karate after shave; put on Hanes underwear, a Van Heusen shirt, a Brooks Brothers suit and Florsheim shoes; pick up our attache case made by American Luggage Company; walk out of our house built by a White contractor; get in our Cadillac or Buick built by General Motors and drive down the street singing "We Shall Overcome."

We will overcome only when we are able to finance and control our own businesses and thereby control our own destiny. We are the only ethnic group in this country that is basically a consumer group and until we become a group of producers we have not overcome anything. Therefore, we suggest that there be a concerted effort by the Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP) and all of its affiliates to encourage Black support of Black businesses and Black professionals. It has been reported that the Black income in this country is approximately \$200 billion. If just 50 percent of that remained within the Black community by supporting Black businesses and professionals, our position in this country would change drastically and we would secure for ourselves first class citizenship.

Black businesses, however, must be competitive and recognize that Blacks require the highest quality of consumer goods and services. We cannot accept anything less of our Black businesses and professionals than A-1 consumer goods and services.

There is a need for pooling of resources by Blacks and the education of Blacks in the proper use of needed resources. This would require a joining together of the various organizations to establish a pool wherein funds can be drawn upon to assist in the creation of Black entrepreneurship and training centers in financial management to ensure the survival of Black entrepreneurs.

As the Grand Exalted Ruler of the I.B.P.O.E. of W., we pledge our full support in strengthening and ensuring the success of Black business and professionals throughout this nation. And further, we remain committed to the efforts and goals of AOIP.

The New Era of Elkdom

The story of Elkdom is never more beautifully told than by its own. One of these is William Driver who is an Elk of many moons. The other is Grand Exalted Ruler Donald P. Wilson. We are privileged to end this account of Black Elkdom with their summaries of its glorious past and promising future. First, William Driver:

Eighty-six years of the 20th century having passed, Elkdom now internationally is known as the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World. It was born under a cloud just about the turn of the century, surviving the storm of strife from within that temporarily created two factions,...plus forceful and delaying persecution from the White Order B.P.O.E.

The same I.B.P.O.E.W. from 1922 to 1952 rose to the highest height of membership both male and female in the history of Black organizations in this century.

I was very pleased to see that our Grand Exalted Ruler Donald P. Wilson had committed our great organization to the support of aiding in the elimination of illiteracy and to bring up to equality the status of our Daughters, as well as continue changing the guard of old or converting it to newly focused commitments of fair play.

Over the years, the Elks have sponsored annual scholarships and much more can be done, and I am sure will be done locally with the support of our State Association President Earl Chapman. As a past Grand Lodge Officer and Past Exalted Ruler of Imperial Lodge No. 127, New York City, I am a long-time advocate of just such a program as the national Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP).

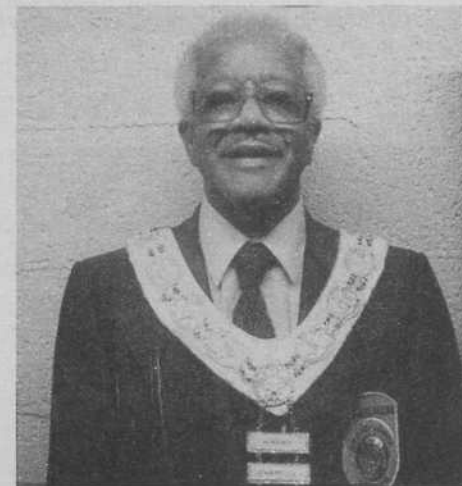
As we revamp our ideas and hopes for the future, let our guidelines be Education, Unity, Money, Power, Recognition.

Driver concluded by saying,

"Every organization that grows can do so in a lasting way only through more and more service and by joining hands with those of like minds.



WINSTON C. ROLLE, Bahamas State Association President



ALFRED BELL, Michigan State Association President



M.M. SITTON, South Carolina State Association President



VOLLIE JOHNSON, Northwest State Association President



WILLIAM S. FOUNTAIN, Tri-States Association President (Marilyn, Delaware and D.C.)

Thus, within this context, we are inviting every reader of this and succeeding articles about Elkdom to visit one or more of our lodges and consider joining with us not only with your physical presence, but also with your ideas on and commitment to service so that together we truly can complete the unfinished work of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. well before the year 2000.

Dr. Donald P. Wilson, after reviewing the beginning of this story said,

"I, too, love a parade! However, the parade march for Elkdom must first equal and then go far beyond our most glorious past. The time to which we march will be the beat of unity, justice and fair play with our arms outstretched and beautiful lodges open fully for all in our communities.

With these accomplishments under control, we will march into the new century, the year 2000, singing:

Say it loud—I'm Black and I'm proud!