

Point of View

FROM CAPITOL HILL

By Alfreda L. Madison

NAACP Keeps Blacks Off Back Of Bus In All Life's Aspects

A permanent home at least has become the official residence of America's greatest organization which has been in the forefront of making the emancipation of Black people not just an ideal document but a reality. This is none other than the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The residence is a large building located in Baltimore, which puts the organization in close proximity to Washington, where laws are made and the NAACP always keeps a watchful eye on the equal enforcement of the constitutional mandates. Dedication of the building was held October 16-19, 1986. At this celebration the history was noted, memorial services for past officials and founders were held, the many achievements were cited and goals were emphasized. Workshops were conducted on the different phases of the goals, with participation by experts and the audience.

At the beginning of the 20th century, freedom of Blacks was a misnomer. They were lynched, beaten and prevented from voting by a combination of laws of poll taxes, literacy tests and the "grandfather clause". Of

course White and Black signs were everywhere, which forced inferior accommodations on Blacks.

One particular story involving the lynching of Blacks and riots occurred in Springfield, Illinois in 1908. William Walling wrote the story of Springfield, and in the story he bore down hard on the attitudes of the residents of that city. This revelation moved the hearts of some White liberal thinkers. Among these was Mary White Ovington, a White woman who was living in a tenement in New York City among some Black people. In 1909 she met with Walling and an aide to the then-Mayor of New York. This meeting became the nucleus of the founding of the NAACP. In May of 1909, 40 outstanding people--White, Jews and Blacks--assembled in New York, and the NAACP was officially formed. Morefield Storey was elected president, and W.E.B. DuBois became publicity and research executive. DuBois brought with him the Niagara Movement pledge--"We will not accept one job or little less than our full manhood rights, and until we get those rights we will never cease to protect and to assail the ears

of America."

The NAACP achieved its first victory when it was six years old. It struck down the "grandfather clause." In 1917, the Supreme Court invalidated segregation of Blacks in residential areas in several cities. This case was argued by Moorefield Storey. In his argument he said, "the question is whether the majority of the people dwelling in any locality may say to the minority 'you shall not have the rights of other men to live where you please.' In their efforts to rise from slavery to equality with their fellow-man, they are everywhere met by the effort to deny them that equal opportunity which the Constitution secures to us all. If this is possible, the prejudice against which the Fourteenth Amendment was framed to defend the Negroes triumphs over it, and the Amendment itself becomes a dead letter. If it does not protect the rights of all citizens, it does not protect the rights of any, since it knows no distinction of race or color."

The NAACP is continuing to use the Constitution in its battle against injustices, inequality and denial of human rights--a fight it has been engaged in for 77 years. The need is just as great today as it was three decades ago. It was the NAACP that broke down the laws of segregation. It integrated schools, was instrumental in bringing about a Fair Housing law, and a myriad of other laws for justice and rights.

Although laws for injustice and equality have now been removed from the books, there are still attempts to implement them in many subtle ways. The NAACP continues to work through the courts and lobbies to eradicate these existing subtleties. It has had many victories.

Executive Director Benjamin Hooks, along with other civil rights organizations, was largely responsible for writing the 1982 Voting Rights Bill. Through its lobbying and testimony before Congressional committees,

To Be Equal

Black Corporate Managers at Crossroads

by John E. Jacob

How serious is corporate America in its commitment to hire and promote black manager?

Some companies are doing very well and demonstrate their commitment by aggressive affirmative action, hiring and by moving talented blacks into the ranks of senior management.

But most are not nearly as well as they should. Black



John E. Jacob

managers are almost universal in their opinion that the companies they work for could do a lot more to provide equal opportunities, and even companies with superficially good records are nowhere near where they ought to be.

A 1985 study of the 1,000 largest companies by the executive recruiting firm, Korn Ferry International, found only four black senior

the promotion of William Bradford Reynolds was denied, and Jeff Sessions of Alabama, who record showed that he had been unfair to Blacks, was prevented from becoming a federal judge.

The NAACP, together with other organizations, testified and lobbied against the confirmation of Edwin Meese for Attorney General, Daniel Manion's federal judgeship and J. Harvey Wilkerson. All three of these were confirmed.

The organization is very

See HILL, Page 12

executives. Six years earlier, there were only three.

That's a disgraceful record, and it indicates that while many companies are committed to equal opportunity they are not implementing their commitment. Too many companies are not aware of the need to intergrate their top management.

There can be little question that a double standard exists, with an expectation ceiling placed on black managers. The widespread feeling seems to be that if a black reaches the top of the middle level or even a vice

has to be addressed by corporate leaders, who have to work tirelessly to eliminate all vestiges of discriminatory effects in their companies.

Corporate America has to keep moving its minority managers into increasingly more responsible jobs -- keeping them on the ladder to the top.

Some companies will nurture their minority managers, but others will fail unless they decide to break the pattern of discriminatory results that have excluded minorities from all levels of corporate achievement.

The decision to

John E. Jacob is President Of The National Urban League

presidency, he or she is doing great.

But a white with the same credentials who was hired the same day can reach those positions and be considered as someone on the way up with bigger things in store.

The first wave of black managers was hired because of the civil rights movement of the 1960's, but companies put them in staff positions or in jobs that didn't lead to the top.

The next wave to come along were MBA's and held line positions, but their progress through the corporate ranks not been as swift or as steady as expected.

Some are in areas like finance and marketing that are the fast-track route to corporate success, and are right at the stage where they are ready to break into the ranks of senior management. But others have seen their career aspirations limited by covert bias, because victims of job-destroying mergers, or have decided to start their own businesses.

That attrition in the ranks of black corporate managers

affirmatively intergrate management is a decision that has to be implemented with top-level involvement and firm guidelines. Corporate chief's can't just assume that all they have to do is put out a written equal opportunity statement and all will be fine. They don't do it for other aspects of their operations, and it won't work in this one either.

Instead, they'll have to constantly talk about it in internal meetings. They'll have to tie managers bonuses and compensation plans to success in meeting equal opportunity goals. And they'll have to demonstrate their seriousness by making sure their own corporate office staff reflects their verbal commitments.

Overcoming old patterns is hard, and it will take work and leadership only chief executive officers can provide.

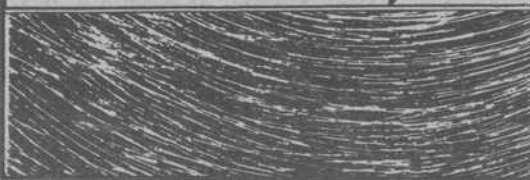
The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice welcomes expressions of all views from readers. Letters should be kept as brief as possible and are subject to condensation. They must include signature, valid mailing address and telephone number, if any. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Because of the volume of 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.

Words of Marcus Garvey

By Kofi Tyus



"Let no man pull you down,
let no man destroy your
ambition,
man is but your
companion."



The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one indicated as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication.