

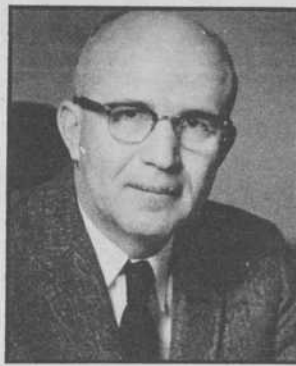
Addressing:

Our "Togetherness" Needs In Rebuilding The Black Family

A Legislative Perspective

By Augustus F. Hawkins

(A Guest Columnist From Congress)



Editor's Note: This space is donated monthly primarily for use by our Black members of Congress and by the National Black Leadership Roundtable (NBLR). Its purposes are 1) to report to us on their stewardship in "completing the unfinished community-building work" of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and 2) to challenge every member of our AOIP-affiliated—and other—organizations to assume far more responsibility in addressing the literacy enhancement and/or "community-building" needs of our long-denied masses.

Are you helping to "complete the unfinished work" of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by being a registered voter?

National Conference on Educating Black Children

Last September, a national representative group of Blacks—consisting of teachers, school personnel, students, administrators, community persons, and others in the field of education—met at Hunt Valley, Maryland, near Baltimore, to discuss the education of Black children in America. The purpose of the conference was clear: identify what is important to the education of Black children; specify ways and means to meet the needs of Black children by identifying successful educational programs; and draft a "Blueprint for Action" which could be used as a vehicle to translate the findings into real action.

On May 29–31, 1987, in conjunction with 25 national organizations, I sponsored the Second National Conference on Educating Black Children. Consistent with the previous conference, we focused on the roles of school administrators, teachers, parents, student policy makers, and community forces in addressing and acting on problems confronting Black children with particular reference to successful programs and schools that have "made a difference." Among other educational issues, we discussed what progress and actions have been taken by the conference participants to implement the various educational recommendations in the "Blueprint for Action."

The progress so far has been highly encouraging. One of the participants, a member of the New Jersey Education Association, established a survey about the needs of children in urban school districts (predominantly Minority/Black) in the New Jersey/New York area. Another participant, from a community-based organization in Los Angeles, has started a project working with students and their families, thereby getting the families involved in the students' education.

There are numerous other examples

Are you joining in the Black Family Reunions of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)?

whereby teachers, superintendents, researchers and education advocates are getting into the act and integrating the action ideas of the "Blueprint for Action" in their respective communities. The progress and results so far indicate that we can make a positive impact if we work together, shed petty institutional differences, and move forward to save our children from a life of limitation and despair.

The educational reform movement has not addressed the specific problems facing Black children and may have, in fact, worsened them. Without the intervention of an especially concerned group, these problems confronting Black children—and those of other disadvantaged groups—will become worse. An example of private efforts at the community level for reducing the "root causes" of illiteracy is the national Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP).

Yet, a substantial number of effective programs and schools have demonstrated that Black children—or any other children—can learn if properly taught and enough concern is expressed in their behalf. There is, for example, 20 years of research that have formed the basis for what has become known as the "effective school concept." It is based on specific identifiable characteristics of the learning environment, which in summary and simplified form, include high expectations of student achievement; strong instructional leadership; reading emphasis; good school atmosphere; and continual assessment of student progress. We know what works—let's use it.

Lyndon Baines Johnson once said that education is a "passport out of poverty." Our goal at the Second Conference was to strengthen the existing "Blueprint for Action" with the goal-oriented task of ensuring that every Black child, regardless of their economic or social position, receives a passport that will give them an equal chance in our society.



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Lodge No. 459 of Boston, through Philadelphia to Ohio to Kansas to Colorado. There have been fifty Grand Masters of the Jurisdiction.

Rocky Mountain Lodge No. 1, the first of several lodges in Colorado, was organized on November 17, 1867 by a warrant from the National Compacy System of Kansas. Western Lodge No. 2 and Mount Olive Lodge No. 3 were organized on January 11, 1876 from the same source.

Rocky Mountain Lodge No. 1 worked under the National Compacy System of Kansas until 1876. On January 17, 1876, in accordance with a previous call, the delegates from Rocky Mountain Lodge No. 1, Western Lodge No. 2 and Mount Olive Lodge No. 3 met in convention in Denver for the purpose of organizing a Grand Lodge in the then Territory of Colorado.

The first recorded session of the Colorado Grand Lodge was held in Denver on September 4–7, 1882. Seven lodges were represented.

The Grand Lodge Today

The Colorado Grand Lodge has been privileged to have many outstanding guests such as Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James Jr., commander-in-chief, Aerospace Defense Command/North American Defense Command.

Currently, there are 12 subordinate lodges under the Jurisdiction of Colorado with a membership of approximately 900. Recommendations have been made three times for a grand lodge home in the city of Denver.

The Scholarship Fund has increased in value to help send needy students to college. Contributions are still being made to the NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense Funds. The Prince Hall Housing Project was completed and maintains a 90 percent or better occupancy rate.

The current Most Worshipful Grand Master is Rufus L. Ikner.

The Grand Lodge of Connecticut

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL Grand Lodge of the State of Connecticut became a de facto body on November 3, 1873. The first Grand Lodge Communication was held at the Masonic Temple on Webster Street in

New Haven on October 5, 1874. William H. Layne Jr, was elected the first Grand Master.

At the second convention in 1874, six lodges were represented: Widow's Lodge No. 1, New Haven; Eureka Lodge No. 2, Norwich; Excelsior Lodge No. 3, Hartford; Doric Lodge No. 4, Bridgeport; Kellogg Lodge No. 5, Waterbury; and Oriental Lodge No. 6, New Haven.

The members of these early lodges were well grounded in the principles of Masonry. Their interpretations of the institution were based upon the highest ideals of life and brotherhood.

The early reports of the Committees of Foreign Correspondence indicate that these brothers were in communication with all regular Prince Hall Grand Lodges in the United States and those of Haiti, Liberia and the Gold Coast.

With the turn of the century, the fortunes of Prince Hall Masonry moved upwards and expanded to include many of Connecticut's outstanding Blacks. By 1911 the number of subordinate lodges reached 14. Danbury, Middletown, Ansonia, Norwalk, Meriden, New London, Stamford and Torrington were new centers of Masonic activity.

The first center for Masonic activity in Connecticut was the Lodge Hall of Widow's Son Lodge at 76 Webster Street in New Haven. This site was purchased in 1870 and became the central meeting place for the new Grand Lodge. For 70 years, this edifice served all branches of the fraternity until it was sold to the New Haven Housing Authority as part of the location of the city's first low-cost housing project.

Over the years, with limited resources that were bolstered by the spirit of right and integrity, the Grand Lodge has made an impact on the life and culture of Connecticut's Black community.

The current Most Worshipful Grand Master is Horace Blue.

The Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia

THE HISTORY of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia is truly a venerable one—for the tap roots of its origin reach deeply into the virgin

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