

Point of View

United Church of Christ

Commission for Racial Justice

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Support the Americans with Disabilities Act

On March 12, 1990, a protest reminiscent of the civil rights movement of the 1960s took place in Washington, D.C. A group of persons with disabilities in wheelchairs rolled down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. There they crawled up the steps to bring attention to the need to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act. Rep. Major Owens, an African American, was a key spokesperson for this demonstration of over 500 people.

Some twenty-five years after the passage of the major civil rights legislation of the sixties, it is still legal under Federal law not to provide access to public buildings in the form of ramps for persons with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in the Senate during 1989 and now under consideration in the House of Representatives, is sup-

posed to change this.

African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans should be very concerned about the fate of this bill. Racial/ethnic persons with disabilities suffer a double-barrelled form of discrimination. Studies have shown that African Americans are twice as likely as whites to become disabled. This can be attributed to poverty, poor nutrition, poor housing, poor health care and unemployment. Many racial/ethnic persons with disabilities live in poor neighborhoods where curb cuts, ramps and other necessities are not available. It is outrageous that most working African Americans and Hispanic Americans with disabilities earn less than the poverty level.

See JOURNAL, Page 7

Walter Fauntroy's Time Has Come

By Tony Brown

Jesse Jackson was rumored at one time as a candidate for Mayor of Chicago. The leaks from his followers said he would run for the U.S. Senate to represent South Carolina. In the past year, Jackson has manipulated the media and the hearts of loyal Washingtonians with his on-again, off-again desire to be mayor of D.C.

He even established a condition for not running for mayor. As long as his good friend Marion Barry was interested in staying in office, he was not, he said. Never suspecting that Barry would be allegedly caught buying and smoking crack, Jackson's condition for not running provided him with the necessary armor to play both ends against the middle.



Tony Brown

So non-candidate Jackson kept his crown as king-of-all-the-Blacks-as-far-as-the-eye-can-see without having to demonstrate the skills of governance.

His latest trip to South Africa to enjoy the media spotlight paid for by 27 years of Nelson Mandela's life

See BROWN, Page 7

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POLITICAL POINTS

By

Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

And a Child Shall Lead Them



Assemblyman Williams

"We don't serve Negroes here" the waitress responded to Joseph McNeil on January 31, 1960, at a bus terminal in Greensboro, North Carolina. He had heard it before. It always hurt. Later that evening in his dormitory at North Carolina A&T College, McNeil emotionally recounted the incident to his roommate Ezell Blair, Jr., and fellow freshmen Franklin McCain and David Richmond. The four young men sat together for hours discussing the racial situation. As a result the following afternoon the four freshmen walked into the downtown Greensboro five-and-dime store, sat at the lunch counter and demanded to be served. Four days later they were joined by sixty-two other students at the boycott; and by week's end, over three hundred young African-American students demonstrated. As a result, sit-ins all over the South began. As students were sitting-in, they were actually standing up and standing tall. These sit-ins transformed the young African-Americans' image of themselves into a new sense of self-determination.

I hope this same type of self-determination occurred within the students at Rancho, Eldorado and J.D. Smith several days ago, as students walked out to declare their position of a need for fairness and equality from school administrators.

If you study the progress of African-Americans in America, it has almost in every case been our youth that have stood tall for equality and justice. In 1958, Barbara Ann Posey, a member of the Oklahoma City NAACP Youth Council organized a sit-in which resulted in the desegregation of five stores. Her ideas spread across state lines to NAACP youth throughout much of the South.

Later that year Bayard Rustin and Dr. King organized a Youth March for Intergrated Schools that brought nine thousand young African-Americans to Washington, D.C. The following year the march drew twenty-five thousand. Two thousand youth attended a Pilgrimage of Prayer for public schools in Richmond, Virginia, the first large demonstration in the deep South to decry "massive resistance" to school desegregation. None of these actions attracted national press coverage. None sparked a nationwide movement. Yet, together they revealed a new mood of restiveness, compounded with hope and anger.

Surely no one wants students to abandon their educational responsibilities, but a walkout at local Las Vegas Schools is a clear sign of hope and a clear sign that adults must push them and channel their energy to aid in the struggle for human rights.

What we saw at local schools, and what we have been seeing lately in Selma, Washington, D.C., Nashville and other places throughout America is reflective of what's happening throughout the world. The tumbling down of walls of injustice must continue if the world and America expects to survive. We must commend those students here in Las Vegas for taking a stand and we must stand with them.

Remember, the White House did not decide that we should leave the back of the bus. Those who would be free must strike the first blow. We must lead the engagement. The four students in Greensboro did not get the message from the White House, the White House got the message from the four students in Greensboro. Freedom never comes from the top down, instead always from the bottom up.

Points in History - On April 1st, 31 years ago, scientist Dr Charles Drew, who discovered Blood Plasma, died.

To Be Equal

THE CENSUS COUNTS

By John E. Jacob

The 1990 Census kicks off April 1, and it has to count as the most important event of the year for minority Americans.

That's because the census results will affect just about every area of minority life.



John E. Jacob

The first, and most obvious, result of the 1990 Census will be the use of its population figures to reapportion election district.

Within a year, the Census Bureau will release population data to state and local governments who will use it to reshape electoral districts ranging from congressional districts to local offices.

Many federal and state programs are also based on population figures released by the Bureau. Federal aid programs totaling nearly \$40 billion are distributed every year on the basis of the census data.

Local services will be affected, too. Officials use the numbers to determine whether to close a firehouse in a neighborhood that is losing population and relocate it to another that's gaining population. The same holds for schoolhouses, libraries, hospitals and other services.

That's why this Census is so important for minorities -- it will help to determine their electoral representation and the level of neighborhood services.

And that is why it is so

urgent for every single minority person to make sure he or she is counted by filling out the census forms and returning them, and by being helpful to the individual census enumerators who will make visits to households.

The Bureau estimates that 78 percent of households will return and complete the census forms. Those that don't return one by the April 1

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deadline will be visited by a census worker.

Neighborhood groups, community-based organizations, churches, and other organizations are actively encouraging maximum participation in the census to avoid an undercount that hurts minority communities.

In the past, the Census Bureau has admitted that it missed many minorities.

In 1980, the census undercounted African Americans by about 6 percent, and the undercount for young Black males in some inner city communities is estimated to be in the 30 percent range.

Nationally, observers believe up to five million people don't get counted, and disproportionate numbers of them are African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities.

With the rise of homelessness, it is likely that some of America's poorest people -- those with the most to gain from an accurate count -- will not participate. That's despite the Bureau's efforts to canvass shelters and public areas where the homeless tend to be.

After many years of minority complaints about the undercount, the Bureau

See JACOB, Page 7

On April 2nd, 91 years ago, North Carolina Mutual opened its doors for business.

Point of View: Men who are earnest are not afraid of consequences - Marcus Garvey