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HILTON

Quality Writers
and the African
American Press



KEITH O. HILTON

According to George A. Gladney, a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois, "Part of the lore of journal is that all newspapers, large and small, are expected to conform to the same standards.

In fact, the editor of a Pulitzer Prize winning weekly also expressed this sentiment when he remarked, "I never thought that just because a publication was small, the journalistic standards were different."

It has been my experience via HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION that publishers from across the country strive for journalistic excellence, some more than others.

However, if there is one major criticism that I have about the African American press, it is that the outstanding roles of its star writers are often ignored or downplayed.

This does not negate the overall positive nature of the African press. At the same time, these journalists need to be saluted every chance the African press as a body convenes.

These writers work for rural as well as urban publications. For example, in my opinion, one of the best young writers/feature editors in the press presides right here in the Inland Empire. Not LA, not Chicago, not New York, but the Inland Empire.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association, the West Coast Black Publishers Association and other trade associations serving as advocates now need to pick up the ball.

For the last two years at the West Coast Black Publishers Association Conventions (Las Vegas and Los Angeles), I have put forward a workshop entitled, "How Higher Education is Portrayed in the African American Newspaper Press." During this time, I have also stated that time also needs to be devoted to presenting writers and staff with awards at this and the NNPA convention.

The following are just some of the writers making an impact. This is not the entire list. Space does not allow me to include everyone. This will not be the last time that I will tip my hat to these and others.

Patricia Rogers Gordon, Ron Daniels, Tony Brown, Lenora Fulani, Charles Faulkner, Conrad Worrill, Michael St. John's, Al Sharpton, M. Lee Stanley, Matthew Stelly, Rudolph Harris, Eva Doyle, William Reed, Lisa Collins, Manning Marable, Marian Wright Edelman, Ben Chavis, John Jacob, Bob Rodgers, Billy Rowe, Mable Finney, and Jesse Jackson are just a few.

They represent the professorial of the African Press. They represent quality in the African American Press.

Although numerous studies have been done and there is considerable evidence that many industry standards of newspaper excellence are empirically biased in favor of larger daily newspapers, the fact still remains that dailies are losing readers while weeklies are gaining.

TEST SCORES CONTINUE ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGE

Clark County third and sixth graders continue to score above the national average on standardized tests measuring achievement and ability.

Third grade test scores increased in all three performance areas from 1990-91 to 1991-92, while sixth grade test scores held steady or declined slightly. Scores reflect the ability level of current third and sixth graders as well as their performance in reading, math and language.

Students were tested last October using the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills and the Test Cognitive Skills.

Third graders districtwide scored at the 56th percentile in reading, up from the 53rd percentile the previous year, at the 59th percentile in math, up from the 53rd percentile, and at 53rd percentile in language, and declined from the 55th to 54th percentile in reading and from the 66th to 63rd percentile in

Every African American newspaper is a weekly with the exception of three.

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math. Testing director Judy Costa attributed the increase in third-grade scores to extra instructional resources, such as after-school tutorial programs, being provided for at-risk students. Providing more appropriate testing conditions, including optional small group testing and practice tests, also likely contributed to the increase, she said.

The slight decrease in sixth-grade scores was caused primarily by curriculum changes,

Costa said. District officials are adjusting the elementary curriculum to establish a better balance between the acquisition of concepts and skills. Superintendent Brian Cram said he was pleased with the increase in third-grade scores and the fact the students continue to perform above the national average. "We are encouraged by the extra effort put forth by students, staff, parents and community to achieve these positive test results," Cram said.

DAY CARE TO HELP KEEP TEEN MOTHERS IN SCHOOL

Teen mothers are receiving extra assistance to help them remain in school—so that they graduate rather than drop out—with the advent of day care at Horizon High School.

Currently, Horizon is using grant money to pay for day care services at three neighborhood centers so that the teen mothers are able to attend school. That effort began in mid-February, said Glinda Bullock, administrative specialist in family relations for the Horizon Project. The district is negotiating with a local cab company to transport the teens to the centers, where they will be picked up and taken by school bus to campus.

By this August, licensed day care will be available at both Horizon campuses. A portable classroom is in place at each of the campuses, but the buildings are being refurbished for use as a day care facility, Bullock said. Horizon North is located at Area Technical Trade Center and

Horizon South is located at Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center.

The day care program will be unique in the Clark County School District. While Sunset High School offers babysitting, Bullock said, the Horizon program will offer full day care services, along with classes in parenting, nutrition, infant care and related topics. Transportation will also be available. The serv-

ices are free as long as the teen mother attends school.

Such a program will make a difference for many teen mothers, who often cannot afford commercial day care and lack access to other babysitting options, Bullock said.

Already, 15 teens have signed up for the program, and Bullock expects those numbers to grow. She also hopes to recruit teen mothers who have

dropped out of school to return to the classroom.

Funding for the program comes from a \$750,000 federal grant to the Las Vegas Plan and a \$25,000 Success by Six grant from United Way.

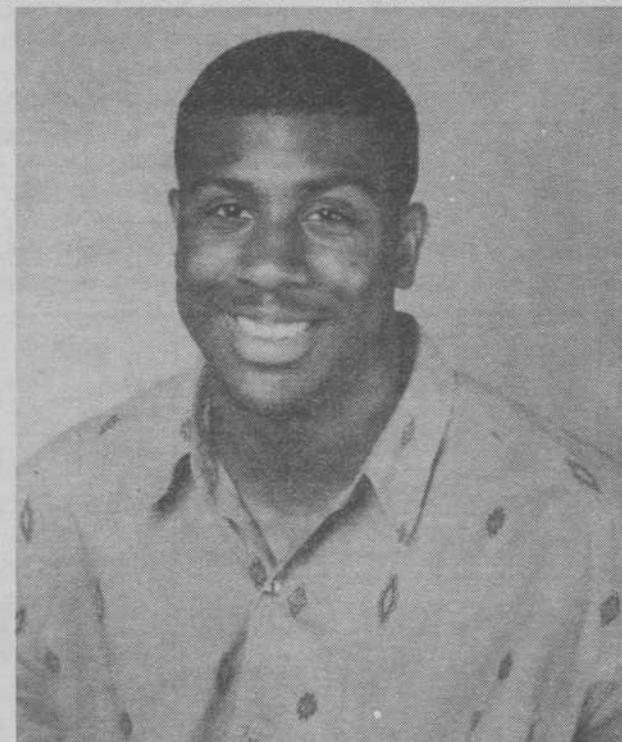
Horizon, an alternative high school, is part of the Las Vegas Plan to reduce the dropout rate by offering programs and services that encourage students to remain in school.

HORIZON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WINS FIRST PLACE IN WELDING COMPETITION

Steven DeLong, a senior at Horizon High School North, won first place in the Welding Division Competition sponsored by the Area Technical Trade Center Vocational Industrial Clubs of America.

DeLong now represents Clark County in the state-level VICA Skills Olympics to be held in Reno, April 2.

The winner of the state



STEVEN DeLONG

competition will go on to national competition in Louisville Kentucky later this Spring.

DeLong is involved in student activities at Horizon North.

He served as president of the Student Advisory Council and is a member of the Close-Up Club. He plans to attend a junior college after graduation.

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