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HILTON

Rodney King and College Students - (Part One)



KEITH O. HILTON

As most of you know, although I am originally from the East Coast, I am currently a college administrator based in LA County. One week after LA erupted, I was invited to speak at a college forum which was designed to reflect on the situation.

The following were some of my thoughts and comments. Some time has passed, but I offer this two part column as another point of reference for an important period that college students are entering.

What I have to say today will take up more than my allotted introductory five minutes, nevertheless, I will try my best not to use up all of my "15 minutes of fame and glory" that everyone suppos-

edly experiences at least once in life - at least I will attempt not to today.

Just prior to the rendering of the King verdict, a colleague of mine said to me, "Keith, you know, I have worked with you for nearly three years and I finally realize that you seem to always try to find a positive in any situation. That you seem to look for that silver thing."

I said to her, "Yes, that is true. I am very optimistic, however, that is not unique in the African community. In fact, optimism has been an important instrument that Africans have used consistently to navigate the U.S. waters."

In fact there are many instruments, tools and rules that we have used to maintain the course in addition to optimism. In fact one of the rules that I will mention may initially seem to run counter to that of optimism, but nevertheless has been essential for us.

African Americans are very optimistic. Africans are also very loving and forgiving people - collectively, most of the time. Now I don't claim to have the final word in African Affairs, however, I am basing these comments on many personal experiences and observations.

However, there is another equally important rule that has been handed down from generation to generation and it does not matter if one lives in the Caribbean, Africa, the U.S. or anywhere else on the planet and that is "that certain people have declared war on people of African descent. And that we unfortunately need to be reminded of this in order for some of us to get busy."

In fact one of my mentors, who is a college president in the Midwest, has continued to say that "to be Black and paranoid in America is in some ways healthy. You see, just because a person is paranoid, that does not mean that someone is not following him."

Yes, we are at war. Some of you may not like to hear this, and this statement is not intended to be a blanket indictment of all non Africans, however...And I know that in the old days they used to shoot the messenger. That is okay because in my position as dean, I am used to the shots now. I am also used to honesty. (End of Part One.)

HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION is designed to dialogue with college and world readers. Education is ongoing and certainly not limited to classroom study. Let's talk. (714) 899-0650.

DAVE A. DRAGGON HONORED

Dave Draggon was one of two African-American students recently honored at a luncheon sponsored by the UNLV Alumni Association to recognize the top graduating students in each academic department. Draggon is a May 1992 graduate with a B.S. degree in computer engineering. He also received the UNLV Alliance of Black Professionals' Outstanding Black Student Award in May 1991 and, recently, the Outstanding Minority Engineering Program Student Award.

Draggon served as the first president of the local student chapter

of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and was instrumental in establishing the chapter at UNLV. NSBE has a membership of 6000 in 150 chapters on college and university campuses throughout the United States.

Over the past two years Draggon has worked as a trainee with the Environmental Protection Agency.

He plans to begin work this Fall on a master's degree in electrical engineering at UNLV.



DAVE A. DRAGGON

High School Graduations Scheduled

Approximately 6,000 Clark County high school seniors are slated to graduate this spring as part of the class of 1992.

The graduation schedule begins Thursday, May 28, with ceremonies for Horizon High School and concludes a week later, Thursdays, June 4, with ceremonies for Clark High School.

There will be no graduation ceremonies for the three new high schools that opened in August 1991 because they do not have a senior class for the 1991-92 school year. Those high schools - Cimarron-Memorial, Cheyenne and Green Valley - will be added to the graduation schedule in spring 1993.

This year's graduation schedule is as follows:

- Thursday, May 28 - Horizon High School, 7 p.m., Valley High School theatre
- Monday, June 1 - A.T.T.C., 7 p.m., Cashman Field Theatre; Indian Springs High School, 7 p.m., Indian Springs; Variety

School, 7 p.m., at the school; Boulder City High School, 7 p.m., Eton Field; Moapa Valley High School, noon at the school; Charparral High School, 1 p.m. Thomas & Mack Center; Western High School, 4 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Laughlin High School, 7 p.m., Laughlin; Rancho High School, 7 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Adult Education, 8 p.m., Cashman Field Theater.

- Wednesday, June 3 - Valley High School, 1 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Las Vegas High School, 4 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Basic High School, 7 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Helen J. Stewart School, 8 p.m., Cashman Field Theater.

- Thursday, June 4 - Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center, 10:30 a.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Eldorado High School, 1 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Bonanza High School, 4 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center; Clark High School, 7 p.m., Thomas & Mack Center.

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