

# Point of View

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## TO BE EQUAL

# PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

By John E. Jacob

The world is charging ahead to the twenty-first century, and while all Americans face the challenge to make it in that brave new world, African Americans face a special challenge.

That's because four hundred years of racial oppression have

taken their toll. Four hundred years of being told we are inferior have settled into too many of our souls.

Many years ago, the great African American historian, Carter G. Woodson, put it this way:

"When you control a man's

thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education

makes it necessary."

Woodson identified a key element that keeps many African Americans from excelling.

We see it operating when some of us retreat into drugs and crime... when some of our young people see academic achievement as a "white thing"

and failure as a "black thing" ... when some of us don't take the risks necessary to get ahead because we think the system of "The Man" will stop us.

Many African Americans have risen above that racist garbage to demonstrate that black excellence is widespread even in a society governed by negative racist stereotypes.

But many others of us are joined in a demoralized community of despair instead of a renowned community of resolve.

The pervasive sense of hopelessness and helplessness in so many of our communities requires a radical regeneration of the way we think and act.

It requires that we expose the Big Lie of Black inferiority by confronting the institutions in our society to demand that they get rid of the negative stereotyping that holds us back.

We'll need to challenge those who hold us to the lower standards and lower expectations that reinforces that all African Americans take control of their own lives, and develop their individual potential to the fullest while marshaling our resources as a community.

There's a recent precedent for that: the civil rights revolution that swept the world was made by black people who had been stripped of their basic rights.

They shook off hundreds of years of racist propaganda to demonstrate their moral superiority and their ability to come



JOHN E. JACOB

together as a people behind a vision of a new future.

The spirit that led those proud African Americans of barely a generation ago to stand up for a goal that was right has to be recaptured.

What was done in the past can be done in the future.

In the 1990s we need to build a movement for excellence that reaches into every black community and every black home.

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In the 1990s we need to recognize that our very existence as a people is on the line in the new, challenging world that's being born.

In the 1990s we need to ensure the continuous development of African Americans as a self-confident people whose effective efforts can change our lives and our nation.

That will require new ways of thinking, new grass-roots cooperative coalitions, and a new spirit of unity and resolve that replaces despair and insecurity with hope and self-confidence.

We need to start with our children, and in my next column I'll discuss some of the things that need to be done to prepare our children to take their place as leaders in the next century.



## POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams



# LIBRARY CARDS

There comes a time when a person has to come face to face with the reality that you cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today. Our responsibility of tomorrow is the most worthy responsibility that we can face, because it involves our preparing for our children. This is something that most of us understand, but the challenge comes in finding solid, strong and long lasting approaches, combined with people with enough backbone to execute these plans. Plus, there are too many people who don't care what happens so long as it doesn't happen to them.

However, the reality of it all is that children learn more from what they see us do opposed to what they hear us say. They learn more from how they see us handle situations than how we talk about how things should be handled. They become better and more fruitful citizens when they have a blueprint created by example, because a people seldom improve when they have no other model but themselves to copy after.

It is important to say however, that if we bow down like handkerchief heads and not provide for our future the things that they deserve, we'll have

no future. The resources that we as a community deserve and need to build a strong nation cannot be compromised. We must take every opportunity and turn it into a positive.

We must remember that small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises. I guess this is what is meant by the term seize the time! Keeping in mind that opportunities multiply as they are seized; they die when neglected.

One of the best ways to seize the time and at the same time build for our future, is to realize that our doors of opportunity should be marked both "push" and "pull;" and we cannot allow anyone, anywhere at anytime, to deny us our just do.

A generation of warriors will only produce a generation of warriors. A generation of people who are afraid to take a stand and claim the things that secures a good value system will in turn, produce a generation of complacency and neglect, and be absolutely sure, whether you believe it or not, there are some that are encouraged and are pleased to see such weak and low self-reliance.

As a community, it is the present generation that has the responsibility to maintain an uncompromising position to demand that factors in our

community will bring and assure the basic opportunities for our children to be productive and strong, be kept in place, and is of top quality, by any means necessary. Community resource centers that are vital, such as schools, churches, and health centers, are places that children only appreciate when they see us properly use and appreciate.

When children see us appreciate our health, they become health conscience; when they see us show a love for good schools and quality education, then they will adopt education as a value. When they see us respect each other and work together, they adopt these actions as well, as a value. However, more importantly, when they see us ignore and refuse to stand up for those things that enhance our value system as a community, then everything else we say to tell, no matter how right it is, really won't matter to them. Children are very perceptive; they know when we are behaving like spineless fakers.

There are many things that need to be protected for our children and it's a tough job but its no time for retreat or excuses.

One such facility in our community here in Las Vegas that is at a crossroads is the West Las Vegas Library. The founding of a library is one of the greatest



Assemblyman  
Wendell P. Williams

things we can do. It is one of the more valuable resources that we have. Everyone able to read a book becomes a wiser person. He becomes a similar center of light and order, and just insight into the things around him. Maybe, just maybe, these are the reasons the Las Vegas - Clark County Library District is sticking the shaft to the West Las Vegas Community so blatantly and uncaringly. It is our responsibility to act now and act fast. If you want to be a part of the solution and not the problem when it comes to providing a good library for this community, we need your help. First, please make the time to attend a very important community meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, October 16th at Mable Hoggard School. The second thing that you can do is to show that positive value system to the children by reorganizing our priorities and letting our children see us use our library cards more than they see us use our credit cards.

See you Friday night and please bring your library card with you. I promise it will be the most important time that you have ever used it. Do it for all of us. Do it for the future.

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Betty Brown, *President & Publisher*  
Lee Brown, *General Manager / Editor*  
Ramon Savoy, *Advertising & Marketing Dir.*  
Lourdes Cordero-Brown, *Office Mgr.*  
William G. Ramirez, *Assistant to the Editor*  
Willis Brown, *Production*  
Ulysses Palrose, *Distribution*  
Don Snook, *Graphics*

**Contributing Writers:**  
Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams  
Ray E. Willis (CCSD)  
Rev. Jesse Scott (NAACP)  
James S. Tate, Jr., M.D. (NAARPP)  
R. K. Brown  
Gwen Walker  
Kimberly Bailey

Members:  
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(608) 238-7550

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