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HILTON

The College With The Shiny Mercedes (Revisited)



KEITH O. HILTON

A few miles back, I wrote a column titled "The College With The Shiny Mercedes."

At that time I said that there were sacred and borderline sacred cows in the African American community, i.e. the church, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the NAACP, our historically African American colleges, EBONY, Greek letter organizations, etc..

I went on to say that it was the policy of HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION that constructive criticism is healthy for the African world, in which these and other important institutions and people are most appreciated.

Criticisms and disagreements are normal and can be unifying.

For example, three of the brightest voices that the world had during the early twentieth century were Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois and

Marcus Garvey.

Their differing philosophies and approaches are well documented - and perhaps exaggerated in some instances.

Also during the 50's and 60's, contrary to contemporary belief, Dr. King was often viewed as too non-traditional by the traditional African American leadership. His positions often placed him against the grain of some (borderline) sacred cows.

But these institutions and in some cases, even prominent personalities deserve our respect and support when they produce and our feedback when they fall short.

This leads back to my point about "the college with the shiny Mercedes."

A few years ago, I noticed this predominantly African American college located in the heart of one of this nation's poorest neighborhoods and was

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struck with one incredible contradiction — key educators were gleefully driving Mercedes while local students were walking and taking the public transit.

Don't get me wrong, it is not that I have anything against a Mercedes Benz — Engineered Like No Other Car In The World!

It really is a fine automobile and many of the owners are not so bad either.

It is just that I have more faith in those students — with the

potential to be enlightened like no other people in the world!"

My criticism then and now is with the subliminal signals being sent to this predominantly African American student body and community; that of "haves and have nots" and of distancing vs. bonding.

Well recently, I came across a press release from that college's public relations office that showed the president going one on one in basketball with a

group of elementary school students. Great PR shot, right?

The president issued a challenge to the group of boys that if he won the game, they would have to promise to go to college.

If he lost, they would get basketballs autographed by a very famous professional basketballer. Well, who do you think won the game — and walked away with autographed basketballs — and with more incentive to play b-ball than go to college?

Fortunately, most African American colleges don't project this imagine or outlook. In the interim, HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION will keep you posted on developments from the "Mercedes College."

HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION is designed to dialogue with college and world readers. Education is ongoing and certainly not limited to classroom study.

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REGISTRATION UNDER WAY FOR SECONDARY MAGNET SCHOOLS

Registration is under way for three new secondary magnet programs that will be offered at two different high schools beginning with the 1993-94 school year.

The three programs are the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies and Performing Arts, both of which will be housed at the existing Las Vegas High School but will operate as two distinct programs, and the Academy of Mathematics, Science,

Engineering and Applied Technology at Clark High School.

Following are brief descriptions of the programs:

- The International Studies Program offers several opportunities to students: to become proficient in Spanish, German, French, Japanese or Russian;

to study governments, technologies and cultures from around the world; to gain an understanding of a culture in all areas, from language to philosophy, literature to commerce and geography to technology; and to hear mentors and speakers from the international, educational and

business worlds who will bring the global perspective to the classroom.

- The Performing Arts Academy provides the opportunities for students to develop artistic skills and an appreciation of the arts; to prepare for successful competition in arts careers or to qualify for post-secondary studies; and to participate in advanced study and performance in the arts. Additional opportunities exist as students elect to pursue dance, orchestra, musical theater or voice/instrumental music.

- The Academy of Mathematics, Science, Engineering and Applied Technology (AMSEAT) will feature two components. The math/science component will prepare students to enter and succeed in the most competitive colleges and universities. The engineering and applied technology component will challenge students who want to discover the practical application of science and engineering. It will feature hands-on work that encourages designing and building, while developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Students will be able to fulfill their graduation programs by participating in any of the three magnet programs. Transportation will be provided for all participating students.

Applications are available by calling either school, Clark High School at 799-5800 or the current Las Vegas High School at 799-7800. The enrollment effort is focusing on current eighth and ninth graders.

These three programs are in addition to vocational magnet programs at Area Technical Trade Center and Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center.

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NOTES FROM THE SCHOOL OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

This week's column is dedicated to those Afrikans throughout the diaspora who are committed to the struggle but at times get frustrated at the lack of understanding and/or enthusiasm that often Afrikans display when confronted with the realities of our situation. Whether we admit it, deal with it or plain just ignore it, the simple fact is that war is being waged against us. And there are those of us who are not disillusioned by the American dream (the Afrikan's nightmare), that have made it our life's mission to wake up the masses. But as I eluded to earlier, we sometimes get frustrated and feel like throwing in the towel. My message to those of you dedicated to Afrikan freedom is this: You can not and must not give up for our survival is at stake. It is said that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. You can give an Afrikan all the books in the world about himself, but you can't make him read. You can tell an Afrikan everything that he needs to do for himself to improve his condition, but this may not inspire action. I implore the dedicated and committed few to continue your work of educating the masses. Understand that there are those who will take heed to your message and those that simply will not. If we give up the struggle who will take up our slack? Until next week this has been the Minister of Information.

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