

National Urban League supports affirmative action

American colleges and universities, and America itself cannot afford to do away with affirmative action for both moral and economic reasons, a panel of legal experts and educators concluded Monday during a panel discussion sponsored by the National Urban League at the National Press Club in Washington.

Instead, the panelists said that institutions of higher learning should tailor their affirmative action efforts to insure they meet both legal standards and the institution's commitment to building an inclusive environment for learning.

The comments of the panelist were underscored by the ruling of the Supreme Court in the

Hopwood v. State of Texas affirmative action case, which was handed up at mid-morning while the panel discussion was occurring.

The Court declined to hear the case, which involved the affirmative action admission program at the University of Texas Law School in Austin, a decision which Hugh B. Price, the National Urban League president and moderator of the panel firmly supported.

Price said that the National Urban League was "relieved" that the Court chose not to hear the case, asserting that it had clearly recognized that the "underlying ruling of the U.S. Court of Appeals in the Fifth Circuit endangered the fundamental

principle of inclusion in higher education by outlawing the use of ethnicity among the factors in admissions."

Price and the panelists said that effort — the use of ethnicity as part of the range of factors considered in the admissions process — was clearly needed if America is to become a society where equal opportunity is a reality, not merely a theory.

"Affirmative action is access to opportunity," said Georgina C. Verdugo, regional counsel of the Washington office of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. "It's part of the mosaic of remedies to achieve equal

opportunity." Given that census, projections show that people of color will constitute a larger share of the American population, and thus, the American work-force — by 2050 half the population will be Latino, black, and Asian — Price said it would be "economically suicidal for society to backtrack from the underlying principle (of affirmative action) of inclusion."

The four panelists, in addition to Verdugo, were: Christopher F. Edley, Jr., a professor at the Harvard Law School, former special advisor to President Clinton, and author of a new book on affirmative action, "Not

All Black & White;" Dr. Nancy Cole, president of the Educational Testing Service, the nation's largest educational research and measurement organization; Dr. Charles A. Kiesler, chancellor of the University of Missouri-Columbia, and Dr. N. Joyce Payne, director of the Office for the Advancement of Public Black Colleges of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

The panel's wide-ranging discussion covered such matters as the legal and political strategies that proponents of affirmative action need to employ in order to build support for those

policies. Underlying their words, however, was the moral notion expressed by Prof. Edley; that those in higher education who favor affirmative action must find ways to instill in their institutions "a value of luxuriating in diversity with all of the material and moral benefits that promises."

Founded in 1910, the National Urban League is the premier social services and civil rights organization in America. The mission of the League is to assist African Americans in the achievement of social and economic equality. The League has affiliates in 114 cities, in 34 states and the District of Columbia.

Pap smears save women's lives

(Part two of a two part series)
By Nichole Davis
Sentinel-Voice

Although the Pap smear is widely regarded as an effective diagnostic tool for finding cervical cancer, a high probability for false negative results has spurred new technologies and governmental intervention.

Studies suggest as many as one in five Pap smears give false negative results, and in some cases, women have reported receiving multiple false readings.

In the case of Karin Smith, a 25-year-old Wisconsin accountant, she received two Pap smears and two biopsies, before a third 1990 Pap smear turned up abnormal cells. Smith had visited numerous doctors over a three year period because of unexplained bleeding after intercourse with her husband.

When a third biopsy came up normal, her doctor cauterized an aggravating blood vessel. But

15 office visits later, she went to a doctor outside of her insurance plan who in turn sent her to a specialist.

A biopsy later confirmed Smith had cervical cancer which had already spread "to her bowel, bladder and six lymph nodes," author Leslie Laurence wrote in a May *Ladies Home Journal* article.

"The stunning blow" came when an independent lab examined all three Pap smears and biopsies. They had all "clearly indicated cervical cancer," Laurence said.

Karen Smith died four years later after settling a \$6.3 million lawsuit with her insurance company, a laboratory, a lab technician, a laboratory director, two pathologists and one gynecologist.

While numerous human errors contributed to Smith's death, in 80 to 85 percent of fatal cervical cancer cases, women

have not had Pap smears within the last five years.

And advancements have been made, including PAPNET and AutoPap, two automated systems which help technicians and pathologists to better find abnormalities.

PAPNET shows technicians potentially abnormal cells; while AutoPap tells them the likelihood of a slide containing abnormal cells.

Of the two systems, PAPNET is the only one shown "to increase the total detection of abnormalities by up to 30 percent," said experts at Neuromedical Systems, the manufacturer of PAPNET.

Used upon request by the Las Vegas-based Associated Pathologists Laboratories, the PAPNET system has also "been proven to detect missed abnormalities on Pap smears from women who otherwise had negative histories but who later developed biopsy-confirmed, clinically significant disease," they said.

This is how the system works: it gathers the 128 fields on the Pap smear most likely to contain abnormal cells from samples with "normal" results. The images are put on-screen for further review by cytotechnicians, who then re-examine the sample.

Associated Pathologists, which evaluates 80 to 90 percent of Pap smears in Southern Nevada, has been using the newly FDA approved system since 1992, said Jim McCaleb, APL director of cytotechnology.

One of the largest on-site

cytotechnology facilities in the country, Associated Pathologists was the only private lab to participate in PAPNET trials. They do approximately 500 screenings a month on the system and have handled more than 18,000 cases to date.

"We probably have more experience (with the system) than any lab in the country," McCaleb said.

So well regarded is APL, Cornell Clinical, one of the nation's largest laboratories, contracts out some of their services to facility.

The one drawback of the PAPNET system may be the time it takes to get results. Because negative slides must be mailed to New York before analysis for digitizing, it takes a week to 10 days to have PAPNET screening done, McCaleb said.

Another drawback may be the cost. While Stapleton said, the average cost of a Pap smear, minus the office visit, is about \$10 to \$15, PAPNET screening alone costs \$30, and in addition there is the cost for the office visit.

At least one local doctor said the additional cost may be prohibitive for some of his patients.

Dr. William Dugan, an obstetrician/gynecologist, said he has been advising his patients to get PAPNET screening but so far no one has done it.

"Most insurances don't cover it, and MEDICAID especially doesn't cover it," he said.

(See Pap Smear, Page 6)



That's my dad

(Left to right) Leslie Long, a participant in Life Line's "First Time Father Program", enjoys dinner with his son Jaylin and Michelle Hayworth, administrative assistant for the program, at Sister's Cafe and Grille courtesy of The Stratosphere. The program consists of weekly classes and support groups for first-time fathers between the ages of 14 and 24.

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