

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Hey, can you spare a dime?

Winter's a' coming. As the seasons change and Mother Nature relents — letting Jack Frost do his thing — maybe Las Vegans will go through a change too.

Not a physical change, but an emotional one.

While we hit the stores to get warm clothing or relax with a piping hot bowl of soup or stretch out by the fireplace, we must remember how fortunate we are. Then we must do our part to help those less fortunate.

Countless times we pass by the homeless on the streets of our city. Wary, we wonder if the people standing alongside the roads with signs asking for help really need it. The light changes. That person becomes an afterthought.

Who's to say that person wasn't really in need? Now, you'll never know.

Given today's climate of violence, maybe it's best not to give to every person you see. But you still can help. Just like the Southern Nevada Homeless Coalition did yesterday.

Myriad homeless men, women, children and families were treated like royalty, if only for a day. They received health checks, alcohol and drug counseling, flu shots, foot care advice, school and child care information, children's activities, housing, legal and veteran's assistance, personal hygiene items and hot lunches. In all, 1,800 homeless Las Vegans experience the sense of belonging, like they once knew.

No, your philanthropy does not have to be as extensive as that of the Southern Nevada Homeless Coalition, but it's the effort that counts. If you have helped one person, you have done your part. However, don't stop there.

Most of us have extra blankets we don't use, old clothes we don't wear, furniture we don't like and a few dimes we can spare. Give them to someone who needs them.

Time and time again, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and other entities striving to make a difference have to beg the community to donate food, clothing and other things we take for granted.

In this era of massive corporate downsizing, budget cuts, sexual harassment, racism, cronyism and numerous other things that could lead to homelessness, we should all be more appreciative of the things we have and endeavor to help others.

Many people live paycheck to paycheck. What if those checks stop coming? Think about it.

POINTS
TO
PONDER
BY
PROFESSOR
HARRIS

SHOULD BLACK AMERICANS BE AS VOCAL, DENOUNCING AMERICAN SLAVERY AS JEWISH PEOPLE ARE ABOUT DENOUNCING THE GERMAN HOLOCAUST?



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ARE THE NEGATIVE LYRICS ABOUT BLACK WOMEN IN RAP MUSIC ANY DIFFERENT THAN NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES OF BLACK MEN IN BOOKS BY BLACK WOMAN AUTHORS?

Open up the door already

Special to Sentinel-Voice

"I'll get it myself" goes the title lyric from one of soul-singing legend James Brown's hits of the late 1960s.

It was a song — and a sentiment — that came to me while reading two different kinds of documents last week. One was Jackie Robinson: *A Biography*, the powerful new book on the life and times of that baseball star and American hero by the distinguished Princeton scholar Arnold Rampersad.

The other was a landmark study of the affirmative action program at the University of California at Davis Medical School published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The study, undertaken by two of the medical school's faculty, compared students admitted with lower scores on the medical school entrance tests through the affirmative action program with those admitted through the regular program during the last two decades.

Significantly, the study pointed out, the program was not limited to African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans and Native Americans. Nearly half — 46 percent — of those admitted through affirmative action were white or Asian-American.

The Davis study reported that, while the affirmative action students had lower standardized test scores and grades in key courses in the first years of medical schools, the differences began to narrow in the later years, and that both groups had high graduation rates: 94 percent for the former compared to 98 percent for the

To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price
President
National Urban League



latter.

Perhaps even more important, the report discovered that the post-graduate and career experiences of the two groups "were quite similar."

During their residency training both groups gained honors evaluations in nearly equal percentages, both chose similar kinds of medical specialties, and both had similar kinds of practices — even to the point that both groups said that between 55 and 60 percent of their patients were white.

Both the Rampersad book and the UC-Davis study speak volumes about how closed and unjust — and wasteful of talent and potential — American society was just a short time ago.

Both speak volumes about what happens when the exclusionary barriers are eliminated or narrowed so that doors of opportunity can be opened wider.

Those who'd been previously declared to be too stupid, too lazy, too shiftless, too culturally deprived, too ... show what their "kind" possess talent and determination in abundance, too.

It really is that simple.

What has made realizing

the America Dream for all complicated — and necessary to struggle for — is that some people construct obstacles in order to limit opportunity.

Regardless of the form those barriers take, their purpose has been, as the scholar and poet Sterling Brown so keenly put it in "Strong Men" seven decades ago, to *shout prohibition at you!* "Thou shalt not this! / Thou shalt not that! / Reserved for whites only..."

That some still cling to the old racist shibboleths, as if to a dank security blanket, is evident in the instances of overt discrimination — "as common as commercials on television," in the words of the newspaper columnist Bob Herbert — that continue to demand our

attention.

And it is evident in the surveys by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, which, as writer David K. Shieler recently pointed out, have found that "most Americans still regard blacks as less intelligent (53 percent), less hard working (62 percent) and more desirous of living on welfare (78 percent) than whites."

The heartening thing, however, is that the fight against racism goes on, the will to overcome persists.

Arnold Rampersad does us all a great service in examining at length the abundance and quality of the will Jack Roosevelt Robinson possessed.

He shows that what lifted Robinson to the stature of American icon was not his athleticism, as extraordinary as that was. It was his commitment to social justice.

Juxtaposing these two documents also underscores the ebullient, concluding thought of Sterling Brown's "Strong Men": "That strong men and women keep on coming."

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
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Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association