

HEALTH

POSITIVELY BLACK

Understanding times key to solving problems

By Junious Ricardo Stanton
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When we examine most socio-economic indicators, the facts are disheartening.

While middle class incomes amongst African-Americans rose 19.4 percent during 1990-96, the income gap between European and African-Americans remains substantial. African-American unemployment remains high.

Among African-American teenagers it hovers between 55-57 percent nationally. The median income for Blacks is \$23,500 while for Hispanics it is \$24,900.

Infant mortality for Black babies is higher than for Whites and HIV-AIDS still claims an inordinately higher percentage of African-Americans.

As African-American suicide and homicide rates continue to escalate especially amongst males, our incarceration rates also continue to climb.

Meanwhile, when future trends or projections are discussed, we are either ignored or we are pigeonholed as the permanent undercaste.

As more immigrants come into this country, people of African descent whose fore parents were brought here centuries ago are being pushed further down the socio-economic ladder.

Even other groups of color are leapfrogging over us numerically and in many cases taking on blatantly racist attitudes. Pluralistic America is becoming more competitive and acrimonious.

Despite calls for diversity, fairness and co-operation, White male dominance remains rigidly entrenched. Various interest groups are fighting for what in many cases is an ever shrinking piece of the pie.

How will Africans in America fare in the new millennium?

What are our prospects for survival and prosperity?

When we examine ourselves, what do we see? Are we organized, poised and equipped to enter the 21st century as a cohesive, viable and productive community?

Or, are we floundering about comatose, still clinging to moribund ideas, strategies and notions of what it means to be an American?

Do our leaders offer viable goals and programs for our survival in a New World Order, which is merely a repackaging of White supremacy and Neocolonialism?

Will we choose to use our

innate intelligence to uplift and benefit ourselves or will we continue to engage in divisive, sabotaging and self-destructive behaviors?

Why do we cling to a "leadership" that offers no agenda other than the tired, worn out routine of begging for acceptance, validation, freedom, justice and equality?

The fact of the matter is that we are surrendering ground in

every conceivable area.

At this point, we are our own worst enemy.

We undiscerningly and enthusiastically relinquish our assets and loyalty to others, garnering little or nothing in return!

African-Americans consume over \$469 billion worth of goods and services.

A percentage of this money could be used to build a survival

infrastructure (essential food, clothing, shelter, goods and services) to empower and benefit our communities. Incredibly, 97 percent of our discretionary income flows out of our hands into the coffers of every other ethnic group in America but us.

Our dollars don't remain in or turn over in our communities and we wonder why we lack wealth?

Every other ethnic group conditions its members to recycle their dollars in their communities.

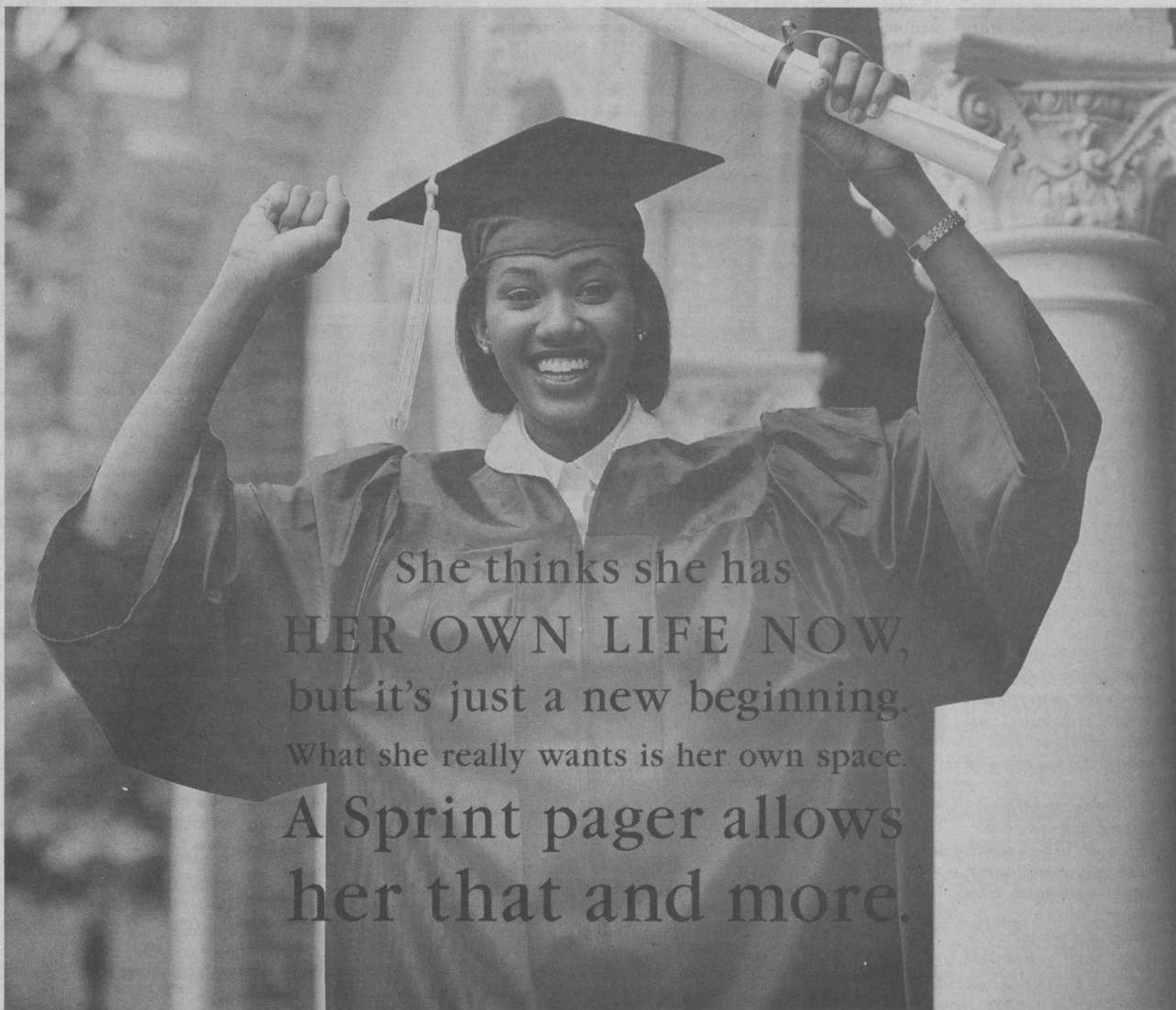
As an undeserved bonus (most do absolutely nothing to earn our patronage and loyalty), they divvy 97 percent of our money.

Insanity is doing the same things over and over again with the same people expecting things to turn out differently.

We have the ability to change. Change can be gradual or profoundly radical.

We need both. Lasting change begins in consciousness. Changes in consciousness lead to changes in action and behavior.

Race conscious thinking leads to group cohesiveness. We need to alter our thought processes to begin thinking in (See Health, Page 20)



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