

This Week in History

SEPTEMBER 23

1863 - Mary Church (later Terrell) is born in Memphis, Tenn. She will become an educator, civil and woman's rights advocate, and U.S. delegate to the International Peace Conference.

1926 - John Coltrane, brilliant jazz saxophonist and composer who will be considered the father of avant-garde jazz, is born in Hamlet, N.C.

1930 - Ray Charles Robinson is born in Albany, Ga. Blind by the age of six, he will study music and form his own band at the age of 24. A recorded performance at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1958 will establish his career as one of the premier soul singers in the U.S. Among Charles's achievements will be three Grammys and Kennedy Center honors in 1986.

1954 - Playwright George C. Wolfe is born in Tennessee. He will become critically acclaimed for the controversial plays *The Colored Museum*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, and *Spunk*.

SEPTEMBER 24

1894 - E. Franklin Frazier is born in Baltimore, Md. A noted social scientist and author of such books as *The Negro Family in the UK and Black Bourgeoisie*, Frazier will have a distinguished career at Howard University as chairman of its sociology department as well as serving as the first African-American president of the American Sociological Society.

1931 - Cardiss Robertson (later Collins) is born in Saint Louis, Mo. Elected to the House of Representatives in 1973 after the death of her husband, George, she will serve in a leadership capacity often in her Congressional career, most notably as chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Competitiveness.

1954 - Patrick Kelly is born in Vicksburg, Miss. A fashion design student, Kelly will move to Paris, where his innovative and outrageous women's fashion designs, featuring multiple buttons, bows and African-American baby dolls, will win him wide acclaim and make him the first and only American designer admitted to an exclusive organization of French fashion designers.

1957 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower sends 1,000 U.S. government paratroopers to Little Rock, Ark., to desegregate schools. The troops will escort nine schoolchildren to Central High School in the first federally supported effort to integrate the nation's public schools.

SEPTEMBER 25

1861 - The Secretary of the Navy authorizes the enlistment of African-Americans in the Union Navy. The enlistees could achieve no rank higher than "boys" and receive pay of one ration per day and \$10 per month.

1911 - Dr. Eric Williams, former president of Trinidad and Tobago, born.

1924 - In a letter to his friend Alain Locke, Langston Hughes writes "I've done a couple of new poems. I have no more paper, so I'm sending you one on the back of this letter." The poem, *I, Too*, will be published two years later and be among his most famous.

1962 - Sonny Liston knocks out Floyd Patterson in the first round to become the world heavyweight boxing champion.

1974 - Barbara W. Hancock is the first African-American woman to be named a White House Fellow.

1991 - Pioneer filmmaker Spencer Williams's 1942 movie *Blood of Jesus*, a story of the African-American religious experience, is among the third group of twenty-five films added to the Library of Congress's National Film Registry. Williams, best known for his role of Andy in the television series *Amos 'n' Andy*, was, more importantly, an innovative film director and a contemporary of Oscar Micheaux. Williams's film joins other classics like *Lawrence of Arabia* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

SEPTEMBER 26

1867 - Maggie Lena Walker is born in Richmond, Va. She will become a noted businesswoman, civil leader, and founder and president of Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank.

1907 - The People's Savings Bank is incorporated in Philadelphia, Pa. Founded by former African-American congressman George H. White, of North Carolina, the bank will help hundreds of African-Americans buy homes and start businesses until the illness of its founder forces its closure in 1918.

1937 - Bessie Smith dies in Clarksdale, Miss. She was one of the nation's greatest blues singers and was nicknamed "the Empress of the Blues." In 1925 - Smith and Louis Armstrong made the definitive rendition of W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" (See History, Page 18)



BANKING ON THE FUTURE

Louis Connors congratulates Shantee Cooper at the Summer Business Institute's banquet held at the Government Center. She was awarded a \$1000 scholarship by the Black Taverns Association.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

San Francisco schools to diversify

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Under a federal court order to change their admissions practices, school officials are proposing a "diversity index" — ranking students by income, English proficiency, test scores and ethnicity — to determine which campuses to allow students to attend.

A student whose "individual profile will contribute to increasing the diversity of (a) school will have priority for assignment/admission to that school," according to the plan, worked out over the summer by a 27-member committee of district employees.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick will consider the proposal at a Nov. 5 hearing.

Under the 62,000-student district's previous admissions

rules, a school was barred from having more than 45 percent of students from any one ethnic group and required to have at least four ethnic groups represented.

That system, brought about by an NAACP lawsuit, was intended to remedy past discrimination against black and Latino students.

But it also prompted another lawsuit, filed in 1994, in which several Chinese-American families claimed their children were being unfairly excluded from some schools — including one of the city's most prestigious.

School officials, the NAACP and lawyers for Chinese-American students and parents agreed to a settlement in February which said, in part, that "race or ethnicity may not be the

primary or predominant consideration in determining ... admissions criteria."

Under the district's proposal stemming from that settlement, four selection criteria will be used:

— Socioeconomic status: Students' rankings would depend on whether they are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, live in public housing or receive public assistance.

— Academic achievement: Students would be ranked based on their performance on California's annual achievement test.

— Language skill: Ranking would be based on students' English fluency.

— Race-ethnicity: Students would be broken into nine ethnic groups: black, white, Latino, Chinese-

American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, Filipino-American, American Indian and "other nonwhite."

While some parents praised the proposal, critics said considering race in any form violates terms of the settlement.

The proposal is a "blueprint to destroy the concept of neighborhood schools in the name of diversity," said the Chinese American Democratic Club, a group that speaks for families opposed to using race in school assignments.

"The criteria are supposed to be race-neutral, but this proposal includes the use of race," said David Levine, an attorney representing the Chinese-American families in their class-action suit.

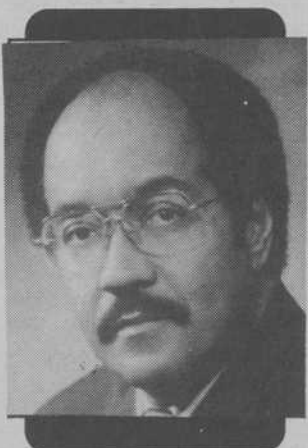
Couple donates \$1 billion for minority scholarships

SEATTLE (AP) — Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates and his wife are donating \$1 billion over the next 20 years to finance college scholarships for minority students.

"It is critical to America's future that we draw from the full range of talent and ability to develop the next generation of leaders," Gates said in a statement issued before a news conference at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The gift — being made through annual investments of \$50 million a year — is the couple's largest single philanthropic contribution and one of the largest ever, matching a \$1 billion commitment by CNN founder Ted Turner to the United Nations.

The Gates Millennium



WILLIAM GRAY

scholarship program, which will begin next fall, will provide assistance to 1,000 students each year.

The Gates' goal is "to provide financial assistance to high-achieving minority students who are in severe financial need and otherwise would be excluded from higher education."

The program will be administered by the United Negro College Fund with support and participation by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and American Indian College Fund.

"This is truly a historic day. It's a wonderful moment," said William Gray III, president of the United Negro College Fund, at a recent news conference. "Not only will we change individual lives, we will change the educational landscape."

The Gates Foundation focuses on programs in global health and education. The scholarships will be in education, engineering, math and science.

Eligible students will be required to have a 3.3 grade-point average and be nominated by a teacher or

principal. They must also write an essay about their goals, and commit to performing community service.

Winners would get enough money to cover tuition, room and board, and other expenses through college and graduate school. They must maintain a 3.0 grade point average.

Gates, whose company is the world's largest producer of computer software, has a net worth of more than \$90 billion.

Last month, the William H. Gates Foundation and the Gates Learning Foundation merged into the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It is the largest philanthropic foundation in the United States, with assets of more than \$17 billion, and second- (See Donation, Page 18)