

100 Men

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Smiley first asked, "How worried should Black folk be about losing the gains we have made from Affirmative Action?" Gillum jumped in first by presenting a corporate scenario. "We in the corporate community have to consistently ask what kind of company do we want this to be," he asked? "If corporations want a workforce to look like their customer base, we can't afford to turn a blind eye to what is going on with Affirmative Action."

Vice Chancellor Mitchell followed with an apology for fellow Californian, Ward Connelly, the Black Conservative Republican who pushed Proposition 209 in the state of California. According to Mitchell, "Because of Proposition 209, black enrollment in the university has dropped by about 50 percent. This society needs a diverse educated leadership. We, as a people, must wake up and realize that our rights to an education are slowly being chiseled away."

Proposition 209 eliminates California state and local government affirmative action programs in the areas of public employment, public education, and public contracting to the extent these programs involve "preferential treatment" based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin. The specific programs affected by the measure, however, would depend on such factors as court rulings on what types of activities are considered "preferential treatment" and whether federal law requires the continuation of certain programs.

Gillum expressed that if minorities don't get into flagship schools, then they will be funneled into lower-tiered schools. "We will have a return of the Good Ole Boys Network," Gillum stated.

According to Smiley, President Bush has proposed a statewide 10 Percent Plan. Currently, in Texas, if a student finishes in the Top 10 Percent of his class, that student is guaranteed an education at a Texas state university. Smiley was quick to point out that this type of plan would only work in a segregated school system where black students would have an equal chance at competing against their white peers from other schools.

Mitchell said, "If students do well in the peer groups in which they are competing, they will do well in other environments."

King pointed out that in many of our communities, people don't know how serious this issue has become. "The issue of Affirmative Action was debated in the media, not at the grass roots level in our communities," King said. "Folks need to know that in the last 10 to 15 years, the group that has benefited most from these federal programs have been white women."

"How do you respond to people who say we don't need Affirmative Action anymore," Smiley questioned?

Mitchell responded, "We are not just dealing with prior wrongs. Unless people are called to task, they will continue to adhere to the status quo."

King expressed the following thought: "We, in a sense, create our own con-

crete ceiling. If we keep spending our \$700 billion with just anybody and everybody, we can't complain. Our power lies in our spending and whom we spend with."

Robinson stated clearly, "We, as voters, need to become educated and recognize where these decisions come from. For example, the latest FCC ruling where we are about to see monopolies established by a few purchasers of our radio and television companies. All this starts at the top, the Executive Branch, we need to vote and we need to change the person at the top."

King echoed Robinson's thoughts, "We have got to mobilize and organize, using voter participation. Politics does determine everything and we've got some tough times ahead."

Father

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commanding officer noticed changes in his personality and demeanor and suggested Newsome admit himself to the hospital for evaluation and rest.

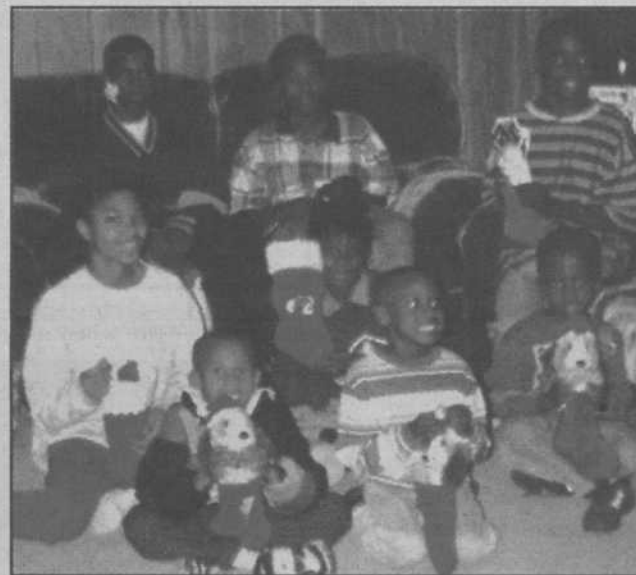
Newsome resisted the direction at first, concerned that no one could care for his children, but persuasion by his mother, Helen Newsome, and grandmother helped him realize it was best. Newsome's grandmother advised him not to give up and to put his trust in God.

She told him that God would see him through any obstacle that came his way and urged him to keep praying.

"Going to the hospital was one of the best decisions I ever made," he said. "I never blamed God for my situation and I didn't want to start drinking and doing drugs, but I was so tired. I prayed to God to please send me some relief and rest. I needed to rest. No matter how much sleep I got I was always so tired," recalls Newsome now 35 and remarried.

Newsome left the hospital after several weeks equipped with coping tools and direction for his family.

Today, he is able to look back over his life and evaluate factors that may have shaped his choices and circumstances. Newsome's life mirrored his fathers to some degree. Both were fathers at the young age of 16 and both stood firm to face their responsibilities. He talked candidly about his father and other family members who abused alcohol and drugs and



died too young.

"I wanted to live a long time, so I knew I had to change," he said. "I didn't want to start drinking, so I prayed to God to hear me and help me hold on. My relationship with my mother, grandmother and God saved me during those years."

In 1994, after leaving the hospital, Newsome met Arlene, a single mother of four sons. She and Newsome dated and married in 1996. Shortly thereafter, he was discharged from the Air force and found work in the private sector.

He was hired by Radio Shack and later landed a supervisor position at the Texas Station. He was promoted to slots shift manager.

In 2000, Newsome was moved to Santa Fe Station as part of the opening management team. Soon after, he became the director of Marketing and two years later returned to the Texas as di-



GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Hip Hop recording artist Ludacris is surrounded by well wishers Xernona Clayton, left to right, Mrs. Johnnie Cochran and Sheryl Lee Ralph. Chris "Ludacris" Bridges received the philanthropy award from 100 Black Men of America during their 17th Annual National Conference at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas on Saturday.

Newsome children wanted readers to know this about their father:

Joseph, 23: "I'm glad he makes my mom happy or we'd have to bust him up, just kidding, Shaun is a really good person and a real man and real father."

La-Steph, 20: "My dad is not just a good parent, he is also a good friend. He is so easy to talk to. He's just a great person overall."

Shaundell, Jr., 18: "My dad would always tell us to set goals, he would tell us that the habits you form now are the habits you are going to keep, if you are lazy now you'll be lazy later."

Tiara, 15: "My daddy is everything, he's all I've ever known, I know he would never leave us, he's hard working and pushes us to be the best we can be."

Thomas, 15: "He's a good dad and he helps me with sports and makes us keep the house clean."

Terrance, 13: "I want everybody to know that you can't ask for nobody better."

Dominique, 13: He's a nice dad, he takes us places and helps me with my school work."

Cornelius: "Shaundell is a hard working man and he has taught me a lot. He is a man who takes care of his family. He's the best thing that happened to our mom and our family. I used to drink and do all kinds of bad stuff, and he kept talking to me and taught me I could change my life too. As a role model, he is the best. I have learned how to be a good father and an all around better man because of Shaundell."

house, La-Steph was motherly toward her siblings, while in Arlene's house Joseph was the troubleshooter.

To make the transition smooth and ensure no one went ignored, Arlene implemented mandatory family meetings as a means for airing grievances.

"I thought the family meetings were boring at first but I still listened, now I like them," said daughter Tiara.

"When we had our meetings Shaundell would always tell us what his next move was going to be, he would say in this amount of time

I'm going to get a promotion or were going to move to a bigger house, or we were going to get a car and then he would do it," said Cornelius, who is now the father of 9-month-old Ebony.

The Newsomes have overcome many challenges and six years later, they continue to enjoy each other's companionship.

They see movies and spend time with their grandchildren. I have a great life, a great wife who loves our children and me. No doubt life was tough before, but now life is great," Newsome said.