

Connerly at it again: His new target—black universities

By George E. Curry
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It's getting to be axiomatic: If Ward Connerly attacks a program or institution, you can be assured that it is serving a valuable purpose for African-Americans. We've seen this with the Black conservative's anti-affirmative action crusades in California and now he's attacking Black colleges.

Writing recently in the Congressional Quarterly Researcher, Connerly says, "...Directly opposed to the diversity ideal are historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). An HBCU's entire reason for being is to not be diverse."

That's plain ignorant.

Black colleges were established during the Reconstruction Era because many White universities would not accept African-American students. Southern states were so determined to maintain racial segregation that they offered to pay the tuition of Blacks who wanted to attend a northern university. Legally-sanctioned racism caused Black colleges to come into existence.

As Bill Gray, president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund, correctly observes, Black colleges are far more diverse than majority White institutions of higher education.

"Over 13 percent of students at HBCUs are white while fewer than 6 percent of students at white colleges are Black," he wrote in the November issue of the CQ Researcher. "More than 25 percent of faculty at HBCUs are white compared to less than 4 percent of Black faculty at white colleges. More than 10 percent of deans and administrators at HBCUs are white compared to 2 percent at white institutions who are Black."

Connerly — who led the successful movement to eliminate affirmative action from the University of California higher education

system — is even more disingenuous by blaming the existence of Black colleges rather than his actions for the paucity of Black students in California universities.

"...It is hypocritical to support the public funding of HBCUs and then turn around and criticize a 'lack of diversity' at other public colleges and universities, since HBCUs, by their very nature, draw away many Black students who would otherwise attend racially mixed schools and affect their 'diversity,'" Connerly writes.

HBCUs represent only 3 percent of the nation's 3,688 institutions of higher education. More than 85 percent of all Black students attend predominantly White colleges. So, the problem clearly isn't that Black colleges are draining Black students from majority White universities.

What is telling is that although Black colleges represent just 3 percent of the nation's colleges, they produce 24 percent of all bachelors' degrees.

"These institutions also account for nine of the top 10 colleges that graduate the most Black students who go on to earn Ph.D.s, and four of the top five colleges that produce Black medical-school acceptances," Gray writes. "Students select HBCUs for their educational excellence, low costs and nurturing environments."

A larger article in the CQ Researcher on Dec. 12, 2003 also repeated some popular misconceptions about HBCUs.

Responding to those misperceptions, M. Christopher Brown II, the executive director of the UNCF's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute in Fairfax, Va., writes:

"The article suggested that enrollments at



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HBCUs are declining. Please note that student enrollment at HBCUs has increased regularly for several decades, and is in fact at an all time high. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were 190,000 Black students attending HBCUs in 1980; 208,600 in 1990; and 227,000 in 2000."

On another subject, Brown writes: "The article characterized alumni giving at HBCUs as being significantly lower than alumni giving at majority institutions, which is not true. According to the 2002 Voluntary Support to Education report, the average percentage of alumni who give at all colleges nationwide is 13.4 percent. This is comparable to alumni giving at the UNCF's member colleges, which is over 12 percent. In fact, some studies suggest that African-Americans donate a larger percentage of their disposable income."

Brown observes, "The article also stated, 'more than 20 Black colleges have closed

over the years..." He notes, "Over the last 25 years, only three Baccalaureate awarding HBCUs have closed compared to over 60 predominantly white institutions."

Instead of maligning Black college, critics such as Ward Connerly should be praising them for accomplishing so much against tremendous odds. They should also recognize that more students are attending HBCUs by choice.

For example, one of my nephews, Iverson Gandy III, was accepted by Harvard University after he graduated from high school. But he chose to enroll in predominantly Black Alabama A&M University — and he now says he is happy with his decision.

Bill Gray writes, "HBCUs have evolved into diverse institutions worthy of public support, just as Catholic, Jewish, Mormon and Methodist colleges have. Yet no one suggests that those religious institutions hurt diversity in public colleges and should be closed."

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because it will be so fractured.

Anyway you cut it, a victory in the District primary election is a boost for Dean; he can assert that he has strong African-American and White liberal support and can win in a place that both has a significant Black population and a tilt toward the South.

This means that he may be positioned, as he comes out of the elections in Iowa and New Hampshire, to make a strong showing in South Carolina, where John Edwards, a regional favorite has the current edge.

But Sharpton is also positioned well to begin to seriously contest for the nomination in South Carolina. However, since he did not have the strength to win the District primary outright over Dean, it may mean that he might not have the strength to win Super Tuesday over the seven other candidates, especially if the Black vote is distributed among them.

Whether the major media likes it or not, this election result represents the first vic-

tory by any candidate in the 2004 presidential election season, and initiates the movement of the Howard Dean juggernaut down the field toward the goal post of the nomination.

The Dean victory in the District could add important momentum to his campaign. It should also continue to strike fear in the hearts of Gephardt, Lieberman, Kerry and Edwards that Dean beat Sharpton in a place like the District of Columbia that could make him competitive in the South as well.

So, his victory in the District should hasten the frantic efforts by the major Democrats and the media to "stop Dean" as the person who has the lead, but who they think can't win the presidency because he is too liberal. It should give every Democrat pause that the main argument against Dean is that he is too much of a Democrat to win. They should ask themselves: "What is winning for?"

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Overstreet

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preme Court. At this time in Nevada's history, we have a good person serving as governor. Dr. Kenny Guinn's public record is one of fairness and inclusion. Recent arrivals to Nevada may not be aware of the fact that nearly a generation ago "Kenny" was involved in a historical first. In 1978, when he was stepping down as superintendent of the Clark County School District, he strongly supported the appointment of an African-American, Dr. Claude Perkins, to replace him.

Now is the time to let Gov. Guinn know that we are encouraging him to accomplish another historical first by appointing the eminently qualified Chief District Judge Michael Douglas to the vacancy on Nevada's Supreme Court.

You know that I only put the bite on you once or twice a year to support something that is meaningful for our collective progress. Well, this is one of those times that I am respectfully asking for your support by having you contact Gov. Guinn's office to let him know that you are supporting Judge Douglas.

You can write Gov. Guinn in care of the Office of the Governor, 555 E. Washington, Las Vegas, NV 89101, call (702) 486-2500 or e-mail him by entering Office of the Governor, State of Nevada, on any Web site search engine.

It's time to make history by supporting a decent and highly qualified man to become a Nevada Supreme Court justice. If you do, it just might result in a superb man being appointed to a supreme position

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them, is either up to the USA, or in the hands of who ever happens to already have them in sufficient quantity so as to discourage further discussion. Worse yet, it often appears that there is a presumption that good intentions with regard to weapons of mass destruction (or with military matters generally) rest on only one side.

Qaddafi's decision presents the Middle East with a critical moment. Not only might this provide a context to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, but it might as well open

up opportunities to review what steps are necessary to reduce tensions.

Central to reducing tensions, of course, is the resolution of the Palestinian people's right to national self-determination. The nuclear weapons in the hands of Israel, however, must be part of the discussion.

No one and no nation can be exempt from scrutiny if there is to be a just and lasting peace.

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Cops

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in that case.

"There were demonstrations over the James Taylor case, but nothing like what is happening now," Rev. Coleman said.

Mayor Jerry Abramson and the police chief said at a news conference that there would be "zero tolerance" for violence. Police Chief White, according to Rev. Coleman, did visit with area youth to discuss their concerns.

A 19-year-old University of Louisville student told The Final Call, which was not allowed in the meeting, that "this sends a message to the city that young people cannot be ignored and we are paying attention to what's happening."

However, there are some local activists who are looking for some long-term solutions to the problems of the city's Black population.

University of Louisville Professor, Ricky Jones, attended the forum and asked people

to consider a more proactive approach than protests to bring about change, since strategies that have been used thus far have not worked.

Yvonne Woods, president of the Norfolk Community Resource Center, called city police solutions "short-sighted."

She continued: "Residents need opportunities and alternatives. We appreciate the police, but we need to stabilize ourselves. Crime won't go away until people have access to education and services. Talk to the drug dealers—they want jobs."

Michael Newby's mother and father, Angela Bougess and Jerry Bougess, attended the forum, along with many residents who said that after the march and rally they felt they had nothing else to do.

Prof. Jones said that religious organizations, civic groups, business and political leaders can now write the plan that would empower Black people.

Saeed Shabazz writes for the Final Call.