

Mentoring never out of style

By Amecia Taylor
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA)

Although mentoring has been around for years, it is getting a new push from advocates who see it as an ideal way to provide hope to the hopeless.

"Mentoring is no longer an option, it's necessary," said Marvin R. Dickerson, president of 100 Black Men of Greater Washington, D.C. "Mentoring used to be a nice thing to do, now it's mission critical."

In general, mentoring takes place when a sage or an experienced person provides counseling, guidance and shares life skills with a younger person.

"Mentoring gives children an opportunity to see something they can aspire to. They are always looking for role models. Lots of times the role models in media aren't the real life role models they need so they need more down to earth people to look up to," says James Gatson III, program manager, United Negro College Fund.

The number of mentoring

programs has grown dramatically in recent years. The Education Consumer Guide links this popularity to compelling testimonials by people — youth and adults alike — who have themselves benefited from the positive influence of an older person who helped them endure social, academic, career or personal crises.

Cedric Mobley, marketing manager for the United Negro College Fund, has been a mentor for the past eight years.

"Mentoring helps young people develop goals for themselves, gives them an extra set of people who expect something of them," Mobley said. "They achieve because they don't want to let someone down."

And neither do the mentors.

"I volunteered to take 50 kids to the National Black MBA Conference in Dallas," said Mobley. "That experience showed me how important it was for kids to be involved and see role models. They saw Black professors, CEO's. Once the conference

was over they came back and said, 'Is this it?' They wanted more involvement."

For the past year, Mobley has been in charge of the Black MBA Dallas and Washington, D.C. Leaders of Tomorrow, a network of high school students that are mentored by area professionals.

That means mentors must fit into a youth's world, not just have a young person act like an adult.

"We live in a video age, you have to adapt your programs," Dickerson said. "We've taken the youth to poetry slams, rap concerts, national conventions and museums, because these things keep their interest. Last month mentees sat down with the chairman of the board of General Motors and they enjoyed it."

Although there are a number of organizations that have mentoring initiatives, it's still not enough to meet the demand.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization. The organization served more

than 225,000 youth ages 5 to 18 in 2004.

Greg Hinex, Senior Case Manager at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City practices what he preaches — he is also a Big Brother.

"Mentoring is important because I am helping society by helping a kid become functional in a positive way," Hinex said. "I was matched with my little brother April 19, 2005... I enjoy hanging out with my little brother and remembering what it was like to be 8-years-old and full of energy."

Dickerson of 100 Black Men says African-American males are in particular need of mentoring.

"Black males around the country aren't graduating from high school and [many] are in the criminal justice system."

He explained, "With rising numbers of fatherless households, mentoring is critical. Our programs are designed to expose young people to the possibility of life. What they see is what (See Mentoring, Page 7)

Brown again turns down plea bargain

NEW YORK (AP) - Foxy Brown, for the second time in three months, turned down a plea bargain Friday that would have kept her out of jail for allegedly assaulting two nail shop workers.

Under a deal proposed by the Manhattan district attorney's office, the 25-year-old rapper would have served just 10 days of community service on charges of assault, attempted assault and harassment stemming from the Aug. 29, 2004, incident at the Bloomie Nails Salon in Chelsea.

But Brown, who had turned down a similar offer in May, rejected this one as well, according to prosecutors. "She didn't commit any misdemeanor," said her lawyer, Joseph Tacopina. "That's the bottom line."

Tacopina said negotiations would continue with the district attorney, and kept the door open for a possible resolution before trial. The rapper, known for her revealing outfits and explicit lyrics, was due back in court on Sept. 22. Brown, whose real name is Inga Marchand, was accused of punching and kicking the two employees in a dispute over payment for a manicure. Authorities charged that she attacked one worker with a cell phone clutched in her closed fist, kicking the woman as well. A second worker was struck in the face, authorities said. Brown has repeatedly asserted her innocence in the case.



New York emcee Foxy Brown exits Manhattan Criminal Court on Friday.

Lynching

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shot dozens of times along the Apalachee River with shotguns and pistols until they were unrecognizable to their own families.

According to reports in the *Atlanta Daily World* in 1946, the shootings took place a few days after Roger Malcom went to jail for stabbing a White man who allegedly made advances toward his wife. After years of investigation, the case remained unsolved and eventually was closed by the FBI.

However, in the mind of state Rep. Tyrone Brooks, president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, the road to justice was just being paved and pushed him to assemble a motivated and focused crop of activists that included National SCLC president, Charles Steele, who shared his vision of bringing the events of the past into the conscience of the present.

Through years of careful planning and contemplation, Brooks finally unveiled the fruits of his tireless labor in front of an audience mixed with local residents, media and interested visitors to the area, who viewed a shockingly realistic re-enactment of the events that occurred decades ago in late July.

Several volunteers from the local community, gathered by activist and narrator

of the re-enactment, Bobby Evans, worked in the production.

With no formal theatrical training and direction, they used thick tree branches, gobs of ketchup and toy guns with firecrackers to recreate a scene in front of the Moore Ford Bridge, convincing enough to stun the audience, and powerful enough to draw national attention to a mystery that has yet to be solved.

White theatrical masks or sacks with "KKK" scribbled on the sides and placed over the heads of volunteer actors symbolized the Klansmen of the time. The all-Black cast used racially degrading language and struggled brusquely while portraying the angry mob. Those representing the victims let off hair-raising screams as they were smeared with ketchup resembling blood. "This was awesome," said Monroe resident Sandra Glover, who helped behind the scenes. "I could not believe it — such a heinous crime, and no one was prosecuted."

According to Brooks and other activists, the re-enactment was staged in order to generate support for the re-opening of the case and prosecution of any individual involved in what is regarded as the last public lynching in the United States.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson of

the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, who spoke along with Dr. Joseph Lowery and a slew of other influential civil rights leaders and activists at a two-hour rally held before the re-enactment, cried out for justice and gave those involved with the murders a few religious words to mull over in the coming days.

"You know who you are, and God knows who you are," Jackson declared. "The police will not turn you in, and the prosecutors will not pursue you, but the blood of the lynched cries out."

Rev. Lowery, chair of the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda, added an equally powerful touch when sharing his views on today's criminal justice system.

"The criminal justice system of 2005 ain't that much better than the criminal justice system of 1905... print that," he scoffed.

But Lowery stressed that people should continue to fight for the truth and should not become comfortable with a small amount of progress. "Let's not let this be a one night stand," he said. "Don't get tired. God can renew your strength."

When the presentation of the re-enactment ended, many concerned onlookers were speechless while others could be seen shaking their heads in disbelief. Even though the content was

heavy, it was appreciated by many of the residents because it proved to be such a powerful educating tool.

"I wish I would have brought my grandbabies — my oldest three — just to let them see this," said Annie Ramey from Loganville, a nearby town. "We've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. It won't be any peace around here until there's justice."

Educator Timothy Kemp felt the same way and explained that the historic impact of the event should be emphasized by parents to their children.

"It's history, and it's important to let my son see what's going on—I'm trying

to teach him how to respect life," he said, with son Demek, 9, at his side.

"People still don't understand the impact that this will have on Walton County," Sen. Steen Miles who represents DeKalb County and spoke at the rally survived the sweltering heat and had enough gas left in the tank to praise Rep. Brooks and his supporting cast.

"This is absolutely historic, and I thank God for Tyrone Brooks, Rev. Jesse Jackson and Dr. Lowery," said Miles, who brought her granddaughter, Kellea, with her to witness the event.


"It's hurtful to think that [lynchings] are still occurring, it's just heartbreaking.

While I have a voice, I have to lift it." After devoting his day to a cause that he had worked toward since 1968 and leading a 100-car motorcade through Monroe with the aid of the local police department, Rep. Brooks could only express how shocked he was with the amount of support that he received during the day.

"I was amazed with the turnout and amount of media coverage," said Rep. Tyrone Brooks.


"I did not expect this overwhelming turnout. We had folks from all over the world come out, on a Monday — a work day."

Alexander M. Ford writes for the *Atlanta Daily World*.



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