

OUR VIEW

Johnson Left Media Legacy

By now, the story of John H. Johnson's rise to fame in publishing, media, cosmetics and Black history should be the stuff of American lore:

Denied a loan by various banks, he used a \$500 loan, secured by his mother's furniture, to start *Negro Digest* (later known as *Black World*), the first magazine to truly chronicle Black America. Johnson introduced *Ebony* magazine three years later, selling 25,000 on the first press run in November 1945, which set the stage for the next 50 years—for the past half century, *Ebony* has been the largest-circulated Black magazine in the nation. (By the late '90s, circulation reached nearly two million).

Next came *Jet* magazine. Launched in 1951, the small, slick glossy instantly became the nation's largest Black newsweekly, as popular for its coverage of African-American news and issues (it published, in 1955, pictures of Emmett Till's beaten and disfigured body) as for the *Jet* Beauty of the Week, which featured a female centerfold. The final link in the Johnson publishing family tree was *Ebony Man*, a monthly men's magazine that debuted in 1985. (In addition to publishing magazines, Johnson published books and delved into other media mediums—producing television shows and buying radio stations. Diversifying his empire even further, he created Fashion Fair Cosmetics in 1973. A line of cosmetic supplies for darker-skinned women, it is still the nation's largest Black-owned cosmetic company. (Johnson was also the first African-American to erect a building in downtown Chicago—his home office).

It wouldn't be a stretch to say that without Johnson, we might not have *Black Enterprise* magazine to convey the importance of achieving economic self-sufficiency, or *Essence* magazine to give a voice to African-American women, or *Upscale* magazine to cater to upwardly mobile and uniquely cosmopolitan Blacks, or the *Source*, *XXL* or *King* magazines to chronicle the hip-hop nation, or *Infinite Greek* magazine to apprise us of what's going on in the world of Black, Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities, or *Black Voices Quarterly* to serve as the vessel of record for Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) or any of a slew of Black-oriented magazines that have come and gone (*Honey*, *Emerge*, etc.). Because Johnson dared to dream and dared to give Black Americans a fuller, more complete picture of their experience and existence, the way was paved to have web sites like www.blackcommentator.com and www.blacknews.com to bring African-American-oriented news to cyberspace, and for folks like Aaron McGruder, whose "Boondocks" comic strip can be found in many of the nation's largest newspapers, and for Black Entertainment Television's Arabesque book series. As you can see, the Johnson media family tree has branches, which makes the following quote from the Rev. Jesse Jackson, a longtime friend of Johnson's, so poignant. "The tallest tree in the history of African-American journalism has fallen, but has fallen gracefully," he told the *Chicago Defender* a day after Johnson's death. "The tree that stood tall for over 60 years and a tree that planted a forest, a tree with widespread limbs and full of fruit. He connected to Africa and African-Americans."

Building on a Legacy

In its short existence, Desert Sky Media, owner of 107.9 (V108) and Oasis 105.7, has made a tremendous impact in the community. From the social events, such as the V108 Cannery Concert Series 2005 to the Tuesday after-work mix and mingle to the old-school and R&B jams at Club Tequila at the Fiesta, to its civic activism—public service announcements, corporate sponsorships, publishing community calendars, etc.—the radio stations truly made a difference.

As new management prepares to take over the stations on Sept. 1, here's hoping that the essence of the radio stations remain unchanged, that both stations continue to be active and vital parts of the community.

COME ON,
WHEN I WAS
YOUR AGE,
I HAD TO WALK
SIX MILES
THROUGH SNOW
TO GET TO
SCHOOL...

SO, YOUR
PARENTS
COULDN'T
AFFORD
GAS
EITHER...

Lung cancer top killer of women

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

A disease thought to mainly afflict men mainly has become the number one killer of women and will kill more than 70,000 women this year alone — more than breast, uterine and ovarian cancer combined. That disease is lung cancer. The disease in American women has reached epidemic proportions. Yet, for the American public it remains under the radar and out of sight. This is surprising when you look at how staggering the numbers are. Between 1930 and 1997, women's death rate from lung cancer increased six-fold. In just the last 13 years, between 1990 and 2003, there has been a 60 percent increase.

Lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as the No. 1 killer of women in the 1990s and has been wreaking greater havoc on women's lives ever since. According to the American Cancer Society, lung cancer deaths among women rose 150 percent over the last two decades while the number for men increased only 20 percent. Women are overall 1.5 times more likely to develop lung cancer than men regardless of whether they smoke or not. Women that do not smoke are more likely to develop lung cancer than men that do not smoke.

What is lung cancer? It is



ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

a group of diseases in which the genes of the cells in the lung are damaged. Genetic damage occurs before a cancer forms. The damage usually happens over years. Cigarette smoking is the chief culprit but not the only culprit. Smokers are continually bombarding their cells and their genes with carcinogens, substances which cancer causes. An estimated 80 percent of lung cancer cases in women and 90 percent in men are linked to smoking.

What has contributed to this sharp rise in lung cancer deaths among women? The two major factors are biology and society. Women are considered to be physically more susceptible to carcinogens. Even after many studies, this question still goes unanswered. However, there was one discovery about lung cancer patients: women lack certain enzymes that can neutralize toxins from cigarette or environmental smoke such as asbestos, radon, household cleaning products and other toxins. It was most notable that the liver was an organ most lacking the essential protective enzymes.

Some women and men

may be genetically predisposed to contracting lung cancer. If you have a first-degree blood relative who gets lung cancer, then there is a marked risk you can get it if you smoke. If you don't smoke, there is less risk.

Because women have a greater chance of developing lung cancer, even if they don't smoke or never smoked cigarettes, secondhand smoke poses a significant danger. While cigarette smoking is responsible for an estimated 87 percent of lung cancer deaths, 37 studies show that passive smoking raised a non-smoker's chances of getting lung cancer by 26 percent. The new

cases of cancer among non-smoking women have doctors alarmed. They are indicating that this disease, among nonsmoking women, is on par with leukemia.

Lung cancer is a particularly horrible disease with a five-year survival rate of about 15 percent; it is among the deadliest of cancers. Only liver and pancreatic cancers have worse survival rates. Why? Lung cancer is extremely hard to detect. Its foremost symptoms of fatigue, shortness of breath and weight loss are vague and fit those of a host of illnesses. Because the lungs are internal organs, small tumors cannot be easily detected by doctors during a routine exam.

Furthermore, the lungs are large, each is about the size of a football; therefore, a tumor can lodge in the walls of the lung and grow for months, even years, before it

(See LaGrande, Page 11)

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