

# Black women mixed on Imus

By Shari Logan  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Offended, passive, forgiving and degraded are just some of the sentiments shared by Black women around the nation after radio talk show Don Imus called the Rutgers' women's basketball team "nappy-headed

'ho's.'  
"As an intelligent man, he knew that would be offensive," said Tonya Henderson, a professor of business communication at Howard University.  
"He did not know any of those girls or their activities off the court. So, why would he choose the term 'ho'?"

On April 5, Imus and his producer Bernard McGuirk began talking to sports commentator, Sid Rosenberg, about the Women's NCAA Championship game between Tennessee and Rutgers. According to MediaMatters.com, which posted a transcript on its site, the "Imus in the Morning"

conversation escalated until Imus said, "That's some rough girls from Rutgers. Man, they got tattoos..."  
"Some hard-core 'ho's," responded McGuirk.  
"That's some nappy-headed 'ho's there. I'm gonna tell you that now, man, that's some— woo. And the girls from Tennessee, they all look cute, you know, so, like — kinda like — I don't know—"

It was the last straw. MSNBC viewers, CBS radio listeners, activists and activist organizations called for the firing of Imus who had become known for his racial slurs.

The day after, Imus apologized for his comments. But, he was fired from MSNBC. He met and apologized to the basketball team. But, CBS also wiped out the show.

The fallout leaves Black women discussing and debating not only the Imus issue, but the portrayal of Black women in day-to-day life.

Henderson continues, "We just celebrated the 30th anniversary of 'Roots,' and we think we came a long (See Women, Page 14)

# Sharpton attracts Dems to meeting

NEW YORK (AP) - Civil rights activist Al Sharpton, whose profile soared in his recent push for dismissal of radio personality Don Imus, is attracting all the major Democratic presidential candidates for his annual convention this week.

John Edwards addresses the National Action Network convention this week at its convention in New York through Saturday. Edwards is the first of the White House hopefuls. The other candidates, as well as Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean, are slated to address the group subsequently.

Top candidates Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama are scheduled to appear Friday and Saturday.

NAN is a New York-based political, social and activist organization and Sharpton is its founder and president. The 2004 Democratic presidential candidate has emerged as an influential player in the party's nominating process. He has openly questioned whether Obama, who hopes to become the first Black president, has the necessary credentials for the job. He also made a well-publicized trip to Washington earlier this year to interview Obama and other candidates to gauge their commitment to civil rights issues.

Last week, Sharpton grabbed the spotlight during the controversy surrounding Imus' derogatory comments about the Rutgers women's basketball team. Sharpton interviewed Imus about the matter on his own radio show while leading the campaign to have him taken off the air, which did happen within days of the show.

Many observers have criticized Sharpton for refusing to apologize for his role in the Tawana Brawley case two decades ago. Sharpton served as a high-profile spokesman for Brawley, a Black teenager who claimed she was abducted and raped by six White police officers in 1988.

# Principal proud about report on bias epithet

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - A high school principal who was placed on administrative leave while district officials scrutinized a student newspaper report on the use of a racial epithet said she is back.

Benson High School Principal Lisa Dale said she was placed on leave Friday but district officials reinstated her over the weekend. A district spokeswoman could not be immediately reached for comment on Sunday.

Titled "The N-Word," the report in the *Benson Gazette* quoted students discussing why they used the epithet and other derivatives. It also contained a question-and-answer transcript of an ethics studies class's discussion of the topic.

"Far too many students think the casual use (of the n-word) is okay," Dale said.

Dale said she was proud of her students' report because of its thoroughness and the consideration that they had put into the issue.

"What they've done is handed us this tremendous opportunity to talk about an issue that is important to them," Dale said.

Omaha Public Schools initially called the decision to publish the story unacceptable and said the report violated standards to "appropriately guide and educate our students." A spokeswoman said the district received calls from district employees, students and community members who were offended. The edition has been taken down from the school's website. The section contained a special letter on the front page warning readers about some of the language printed inside.

# NUL

(Continued from Page 2)

some cities, more than half of all Black boys do not finish high school, and by the time they are in their 30s, almost six in ten Black high school dropouts will have spent time in prison. Half of all Black men in their 20s are jobless, and one study a few years ago found more Black men in prison than enrolled in college. The typical Black household earns only about 60 percent of the earnings of White households and has a net worth only about 10 percent that of Whites.

The HIV/AIDS rate is highest for Black Americans and Blacks are more often the victims of inadequate healthcare and preventable health maladies."

This year's SOBA focuses on the Black male, but it says Black America in general has made little progress since last year.

Last year's SOBA reported that Black America's "equality index" was at 73 percent of Whites. This year it's at 73.3, the report states.

"In other words, Blacks made minimal progress on the equality front in the past few years," the report states, but it was dismal for Black males.

"While there are Barack

*"The absence of the Black man in the Black family will only lead to greater poverty for our community as a whole."*

— Mark Morial  
President and CEO  
National Urban League



Obamas and Lovie Smiths out there to prove just how far Black men can go, there are many whose futures are far from bright," said Morial. "The equality index shows us that Black men continue to lag behind their White counterparts in every major category; a disproportionate number of Black men are underperforming in our society in a variety of areas for a variety of reasons."

Despite the obvious crisis among Black males, there were key positives pointed out in the report.

"A higher percentage of young Black children are enrolled in early childhood education programs such as Head Start than young White children — 66 percent compared to 64 percent," the report states.

"And the youngest Blacks have made strong improve-

ments in the areas of school readiness — scoring at 94 percent of that of Whites, up from 81 percent in 2006."

But, then something happens after elementary school as Blacks — especially males — begin to fall behind Whites.

"Disparities in writing proficiency scores widen as Blacks grow older. At fourth grade, they perform at a level of 87 percent of Whites. By the time they reach 12th grade, their scores are at 74 percent of Whites. And after they reach adulthood, they're the most likely to have dropped out — 15 percent compared to 12 percent of Whites. For Black males, the percentage rises to 18 percent compared to 14 percent of White males."

The report outlines five specific solutions for the problems facing Black

America; especially Black males:

—Universal Early Childhood Education especially helps give children "from disadvantaged backgrounds a leg-up when they start school."

—Greater experimentation is needed with all-male schools, longer school days and mentoring.

The combination of "mentoring and longer days help keep young boys focused on their education and away from distractions that could lead them down the wrong paths," the reports

states.

—More second chance programs for high school dropouts and ex-offenders are needed. These kinds of programs would bring "ex-offenders and disadvantaged individuals who are out of school and out of work back into the mainstream."

—Restore the Federal Summer Jobs Program to its previous state. A major scaling back of this program resulted when federal lawmakers changed the program from mandatory for states to an optional program. The Urban League proposes its

restoration.

—Drive home the message that education pays dividends. "Parents need to instill into their children the value of education in achieving their dreams and improving their financial prosperity."

Concludes Morial: "Empowering Black men to reach their full potential is the most serious economic and civil rights challenge we face today. Ensuring their future is critical, not just for the African-American community, but for the prosperity, health and well-being of the entire American family."



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—Ms. Kris, Las Vegas Class of 2002