

# Black males in mid-South states lacking in basics

By Jesse Muhammad  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

(NNPA) — For decades, data about the condition of Black men and boys in America has shown that they fared far worse than their White counterparts in areas

such as economics, education and health.

With the rise of the country's first Black president-elect, many have said such research is no longer needed and the conversation should cease to take place

## Black media soiree will benefit Howard

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Among the string of glitzy galas and balls to kick off the inaugural festivities will be one held by the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation and the National Black Chamber of Commerce — with two big goals in mind.

Other than to of course celebrate the nation's first Black President Barack Obama, under the theme of "A Salute to Change," the Monday, Jan. 19 gala has an educational focus. It is a benefit for an NNPA News Service wing of the new Howard University John H. Johnson School of Communications, slated for construction on the Washington, D.C. campus.

"What better way to celebrate this historic occasion than to assure that those great institutions that helped pave the way for President-elect Obama maintain rich legacies for the future," said Dorothy R. Leavell, chair of the NNPA Foundation. "This is what we hope to accomplish by investing in our educational program to develop outstanding journalism students at Howard University. We are excited about this inauguration and all the other future strides to be documented by those whom we have helped to train."

Howard launched the aggressive \$75 million fundraising campaign last August in Chicago at the late Ebony/

Jet publisher's Chicago headquarters during the largest gathering of racial minority journalists at the quadrennial Unity: Journalists of Color convention.

The School of Communications is currently housed in a converted hospital built after the Civil War. Currently the NNPA News Service runs a Microsoft sponsored internship program through the school's Converged Media Lab.

"This is just an exciting time for everybody," said Jannette L. Dates, dean of Howard's School of communications. "And it's just so wonderful that we're bringing our ideas and our drive and energy together as we move forward toward reaching a goal and realizing a dream for NNPA and for Howard."

University officials are aiming for a five-story, state-of-the-art building that will give students a competitive edge in today's technically savvy ever-changing media market. "It is so important to assess the current state of affairs, such as the economy, two wars, the Palestinian situation and an overall negativity. We must change our direction and President-elect Obama has convinced us that he will lead that change and do it successfully," said Harry Alford, president and CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce and member of NNPA Foundation board.

entering into the year 2009 and beyond. The Foundation for the Mid South disagrees and wants to take action.

"The election of a Black President is a good step in the right direction but it will not change the fact that Black males are suffering in the South and can no longer be overlooked," said Christopher Crothers to The *Final Call*.

The foundation released a report showing that Black males in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi, or the Mid South, are more likely to lack quality health insurance, lose their lives in a homicide or drop out of school.

"Many people, especially Whites and the middle-class, have told us they are tired of seeing these numbers and hearing about racism. They want us to stop bringing this

plight to the forefront as if everything is fine now," said Crothers, who serves as the foundation's communications director.

The report, titled "Black Male: Why the Mid South Cannot Afford to Ignore The Disparities Facing Its Black Men and Boys," was released in early December with a focus on men and boys ages 16 to 44.

The idea was born out of forums attended by the foundation that brought together others to discuss the state of Black men and boys both nationally and in the South. It was also to call leaders and philanthropic organizations to get involved with their resources.

"A lot of these conversations are being held on a national landscape, but not in our region," said Mr.

Crothers. "There is a lot of data out there but we don't have initiatives that specifically focus on Black males. We feel that there should be a field that's developed around these issues because it's serious."

The Mid South is home to nearly 10 million people—roughly 3.3 percent of the U.S. population. The three states, although majority White, possess a high concentration of counties and parishes where Blacks comprise over 50 percent or more of the population.

Poverty was the leading indicator of disparities in the region with a 17.3 percent poverty rate. In just Louisiana and Mississippi alone, non-White households' average net worth is \$5,100. That's 14 times less than Whites, according to the re-

port.

"I think some of us are under the illusion that just because [Barack] Obama is in office that magically our problems as Black men will just fade away," said James Brooks, a resident of Jackson, Miss., to The *Final Call*. "I got laid off this past year, lost a son to violence and have no health insurance. Capitol Hill can't help me, we need to unite in our own region."

Brenda Charles, a resident of Little Rock, said to The *Final Call*, "Our Black boys are on the road to death on a daily basis. Unprotected sex among our young people is out of control. There are no jobs for them so they turn to dealing drugs only to enter the prison system. We already know the statistics.

(See Males, Page 11)

## Your Horoscope Says... Jan. 8-14

### ARIES

Stand up and get ready. Be a public speaker this week. Any subject you choose is ripe for your "rap." Spin the tale. Tell the story. People will be fascinated by the way you see things. They'll be impressed. Watch out for a jealous friend when attention is on you!

Soul Affirmation: I make the first step and the universe will come to my aid.

Lucky Numbers: 24, 32, 53

### TAURUS

Be as sharp as you can be this week. Make being alert a personal challenge. Watch carefully for details that might otherwise escape your notice as you search for the best way to get things done at work. Be steadfast in your determination and don't be pulled into conflict with coworkers.

Soul Affirmation: There are other fish in the sea waiting for me.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 23, 27

### GEMINI

What do you do when you're not as lucky as usual? Slow the game down. Risk less. Bet conservatively in all areas of your life. Restrain yourself. Give the job at hand your attention. Live in the present and enjoy what is rather than in anticipation of what luck might have brought.

Soul Affirmation: Truth is revealed in the smallest grain of sand.

Lucky Numbers: 27, 41, 52

### CANCER

Like-mindedness is going to be hard to achieve among your coworkers, but there are likely to be a few who see things as you do. Choose carefully and find someone to walk with you on this week's journey. Some words of encouragement might be needed to enlist the person you choose.

Soul Affirmation: My needs will

be met if I just ask.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 9, 14

### LEO

Where are you going in such a hurry? What you want you already have. Stop looking around yourself trying to find out what's missing. Nothing is missing. The best kind of discovery this week is self-discovery.

Soul Affirmation: I get because I give.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 18, 45

### VIRGO

Knowing and accepting your love nature is extremely important. Don't try to claim that it is as society says it should be. Acknowledge the fact that your love and friendship are often inseparable. You like to be in an adventure with your lover just as you would a partner or a friend. Create this situation by holding the truth of your nature in consciousness.

Soul Affirmation: I enjoy the love that others have for me.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 24, 47

### LIBRA

Dive into it! Don't be intimidated by the unknown. Your adventurous spirit can take you to a new place of celebration this week. If you can, bring someone along who can celebrate in the same manner with you. Harmony and peace is the motto that you should chant when you accomplish what you want to do!

Soul Affirmation: Communication is a skeleton key that fits many doors.

Lucky Numbers: 30, 31, 32

### SCORPIO

This week would be good for getting your house in order so you can spend the extra time outdoors and enjoying the company of others. With an orderly habitat waiting for you, you'll have a head start for the task you have to accomplish.

Soul Affirmation: I open up to the

universe. The universe opens up to me.

Lucky Numbers: 39, 49, 52

### SAGITTARIUS

Don't spread yourself too thin. But if you'll need to move around in many different circles this week, your spirit should be high and your vibes are strong for meeting new people. You will be receiving a piece or two of great news. Expect the unexpected. You'll be pleasantly surprised!

Soul Affirmation: I give love and love gives to me.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 50, 55

### CAPRICORN

Strong vibrations make for a series of dramatic interactions with others this week. Practice your art with your heart, and let your energy carry you upwards to your best, highest self. Keep emotions calm.

Soul Affirmation: I know where I'm going because I know where I've been.

Lucky Numbers: 32, 38, 43

### AQUARIUS

You'll be energizing others this week as you speak what's on your mind regarding spiritual matters and masters. The quality of your thoughts is very pure; write yourself a love letter.

Soul Affirmation: My imagination is the source of my happiness.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 23, 29

### PISCES

Surprises are in order this week, and you can roll with everything that comes at you unexpectedly. Healing can happen in a relationship if you just show up. That's power! Use it for the good of others.

Soul Affirmation: This week is the week the Lord has made. I rejoice in it.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 16, 18

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