

An interview with Lee Brown

PART I
by Lenwood G. Davis
In a recent telephone conversation, Dr. Lee P. Brown, on leave from Portland State University, where he is now Associate Director of the Institute for Urban Affairs and Research and Director of the Administration of Justice Program at Howard University, granted me this exclusive interview.

Interviewer: Dr. Brown, you have been at Howard University for eight months and I would like to know what you consider your biggest accomplishment so far?

Dr. Brown: As you know, I came to Howard to assist in the development of the Institute for Urban Affairs and Research and also to develop an Administration of Justice Program within that Institute. Although I have been involved in a number of projects, I guess my biggest accomplishment has been the development of a focus for the institute. I highlight this point because what we are

doing and plan to do in the Institute has significance for the University, as a whole, and Black people throughout the nation, in general. Specifically, we are in the process of directing the total resources of this Black University toward finding solutions to the problems that confront Black America. For the past three months, I have been serving as Acting Director of our Urban Studies Master's Degree program. As a result, much of my efforts, in addition to building the Institute and developing an Administration of Justice Program, have been devoted to developing a viable Urban Studies Program.

Interviewer: What do you hope to accomplish before you leave Howard University?

Dr. Brown: Our goal in the Institute is to develop a viable mechanism for Howard University to meet its

challenge of finding viable solutions to the problems of the urban environment, in general, and the Black community, specifically. We hope to do this by involving the Institute and the University in the kinds of research that influence social policy. To accomplish our research goals, we will be developing a Social Policy Research Center and Survey Research Center in the Institute. Also, we plan to develop a viable non-traditional educational component in the Institute, including an Urban Studies Ph.D. program. Third, we plan to provide a number of services to the community, again drawing on the total resources of the University.

Interviewer: What is your reaction to President Nixon's budget cut?

Dr. Brown: My overall reaction is that it exhibits a lack of sensitivity to the social needs of the nation. The change in emphasis in federal funding will have a drastic impact on the health, education and welfare of Black and poor people.

Interviewer: It has been said that Washington is like a military state. Do you agree?

Dr. Brown: I guess you are referring to the large number of policemen in the District. There are probably more police per thousand population in D. C. than in any other city in the nation. Granted, there is a crime problem in D. C., but all empirical evidence suggests that more policemen will not solve the problem. There is a need to focus attention and resources on the root cause of crime, e.g., poor educational systems, unemployment, poverty, racism, etc. Also, we need to focus on reforms in the criminal justice system. For example, placing more people in the system serves to make more criminals. We need to develop programs to divert people out of the system, and not place them in it. This is particularly significant for Black people. A recent study conducted in Philadelphia, for example, showed that over 50 per cent of the Blacks born in that city in 1945 were arrested by the police before they reached adulthood. The project also showed that rather than helping those juveniles arrested, the juvenile justice system more likely had a deleterious effect on their future behavior.

Interviewer: Do you plan to return to PSU, and if so, when?

Bill brings applause

Oregon Common Cause applauded the passage of SB 15, the Open Meetings Bill, as "a definite step in the direction of making public business really public." Co-chairmen, Dolores Hurtado and Blanche Schroeder in a joint statement explained that SB 15 would go a long way to strengthen citizen access to governmental decision making and represents a substantial move toward greater openness of government.

The bill provides for the public's right to attend all meetings of any governmental body at state, county or city level where discussion or decision on public business takes place with the exception of a few special instances—areas concerning labor negotiations, personnel and disciplinary action.

Common Cause, which has a membership of over 3000 households in Oregon, has supported a strong open meetings bill for Oregon and has worked toward the passage of SB 15 through its citizen lobbying efforts.

The Open Meetings Bill is the first of four priority issues in a legislative package backed by the organization concerned with growing influence of money and secrecy on government. The three remaining bills sponsored by Common Cause are:

1) Conflict of Interests - requires virtually full public

Voice of the NAACP

by Ellis Casson, Pres. NAACP, Portland Branch

This week I'd like to share with you my testimony before the Alcohol and Drugs Committee chaired by Senator Bill Stevenson of Portland on SB 475 which I wrote about a few weeks back. The reason for my sharing this is because people from time to time ask, "what do you say down there in Salem?" It's not always what you say - the important thing is that you are there to say it.

The NAACP has been involved this session - giving testimony, writing letters, etc., but there are times when they need to see and hear many voices expressing concern from our community.

So I hasten to add - if you are not willing to take part don't sit back and talk about those who do. (It takes no brains to find fault - but it takes guts to stand up and be counted.)

I, as President, will speak out when I think it is the right thing to do - whether anyone likes me for it or not.

Statement on SB 475
After decades of segregation, discrimination, and deprivation, we can no longer allow it to exist in the 70's in any shape or form.

Let me begin by saying that we are living through a very dangerous time. Everyone in this room is in one way or another aware of that. The society in which we live is desperately in need of your help as lawmakers to get us back on the right track. So any citizen of this country who figures himself as responsible - and particularly those of you who have to make decisions which affect the lives of all citizens in this State - must be prepared to "go for broke". Or to put it another way, you must understand that in the attempt to correct so many generations of bad faith, when it is operating not only in clubs and facilities, but in society itself, you must do what is right to restore the "faith".

The NAACP totally and completely supports Senate Bill 475 and urge you to do the same for many reasons.

Dr. Brown: I took a year's leave from my position at PSU and that year will be up come September.

Interviewer: What is the present status of the Law Enforcement Center at PSU?

Dr. Brown: I have kept in touch with the PSU Program and it is progressing very well. The student enrollment is up, the classes are over-flowing, and all seems to be going well.



The home of the brave, and the land of the free. Free? Who said free? Not me. Surely not me. Yes, I say it plain. America never was America for me. But by this oath I swear, America will be.

but for one particularly - because it's the right thing to do. Please don't get me wrong - we (the NAACP) are not saying people should not get together and socialize. Do your own thing if you please. But we do oppose them doing it at the expense and denial of others.

We do oppose them having a State liquor license (which for the most part is their main source of revenue) and refusing me service because of race, color, sex, etc. If the State issues a license to places that discriminate, then they are guilty of a great injustice to mankind. If we are to make this a great State for all its people - we must do it together.

What we are requesting is not for any great miracle, but for me, as a "Black man" to enjoy all the rights and privileges of others. And if it means the denial of a liquor license for me to have those rights - so be it.

This State can no longer afford the high cost of segregation and discrimination. You now can do something about it and I pray you will.

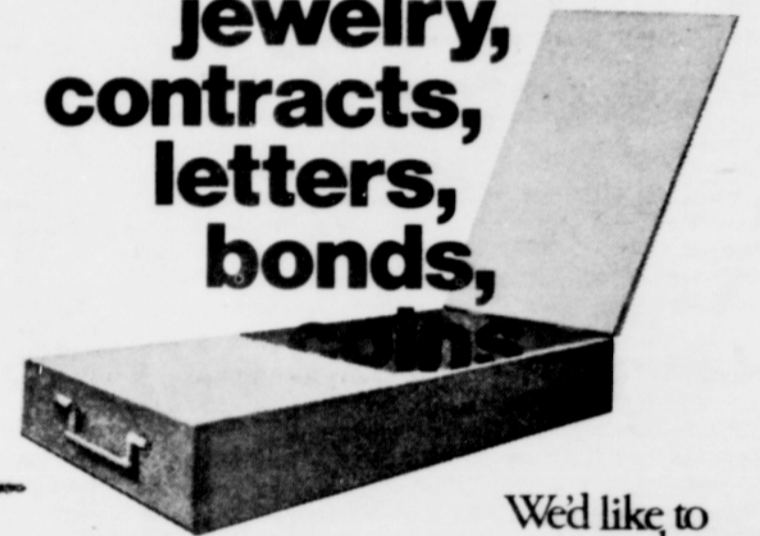
Your children will ask you after this session, "Daddy, what did you have to do in making this a better State for all?" Will you answer, "I supported equal rights and opportunity for all people?" Passage of Senate Bill 475 will enable you to "stand tall" before your children.

Langston Hughes:
"Let America be America again."
It's never been America to me.

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