



A typical Sunday afternoon at Irvington Park . . . fun and relaxation.
[Photos: Ron Sykes]

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John Carlos: The aftermath

by Dennis Hunn
 National Black Register

John Carlos' view of Black America and his thoughts on how white America treats Blacks after they returned home victorious from the Olympic Games forced him to make the most important decision in his life eight years ago. When Carlos saluted the American flag with a raised Black-gloved fist in the 1968 Olympic Games from Mexico City, he physically expressed his thoughts and set-off the movement for Black identity.

"To be frank, I wasn't concerned about being kicked off the team. I felt the games had gone on too long with Black people going to represent a flag instead of themselves," said Carlos. "I was willing to sacrifice my life at that point. I was interested in letting white America know we were tired of its treatment, we didn't want violence but we wanted a change."

"No Black athlete receives any gratitude or appreciation for his participation in the Games. Blacks don't hardly receive a thank you, much less economic appreciation."

Carlos has many memories of the historical event, some of which aren't fond.

"The International Olympic Committee and the U.S. Olympic Committee tried to intimidate us. They told us we had to leave the country (Mexico). I stayed until the games were over."

A few of the Blacks on the Olympic team supported the move before the medals were given out. However, if you remember, it was a year of protest. Several Blacks beside Tommie Smith and Lee Evans had talked of boycotting the games. The movement was spearheaded by Harry Edwards.

The public support about whether the Olympic Games was the correct forum for such a protest was mixed.

"A lot of Blacks came out and identified and a lot said I set Blacks back 400 years," said Carlos. "I got a lot of good mail. But I got as much hate as Hank Aaron got. There are only so many crazy people in the world."

Following the Games, Carlos came back to the United States with a bronze medal for capturing third place in the 200 meters; fellow American Tommy Smith won the race. After several weeks at home, Carlos started sending out resumes. The reply most often heard was "after what he did in the Olympics he couldn't get a job anywhere."

Unlike most white participants and some Blacks - George Forman most noticeably - Carlos couldn't cash in on his prize after working diligently year after year for it.

A one-time proclaimed militant by the press, Carlos has now moved on to a new endeavor. He is presently an Aid to Councilman David Cunningham of the 10th District.

"I've learned a lot about politics since adding Cunningham, but I've always been politically aware," said Carlos.

"Even though Carlos has removed himself from the arena as a runner, he still has strong views about Blacks in America.

"What we athletes need to do is to develop a better understanding with Black kids. I'm happy as hell that Black athletes make it but they should do something for Black kids. They can start some Black youth funds and scholarship funds. And Black people need to make changes in the Black family structure."

"The Black parent needs to deal for their kids like they deal for themselves. One reason why we have so many gangs is because the Black child has no respect for parents," said Carlos.

"Black people have to wake up to reality. We have to draw a correlation between the past and the present. We have to get into Black culture and Black festivities without being lassoed. We've got to stop listening to the beat of Stevie Wonder's songs and listen to the lyrics."

Even though things have been rough on the Carlos family, they have survived because of the family unity, and the past which was dark and dismal is now brightening. Soon there will be a book about John Carlos and a speaking tour across the country is being set up presently.

Memorial honors Louis Armstrong

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH) presented a bronze marker in honor of Louis Daniel Armstrong, located in front of Perseverance Hall at the intersection of Duaine and St. Claude Streets in New Orleans.

The association honored Louis Armstrong, known to millions around the world as "Satchmo," in the third of a series of 100 markers dedicated to Black American pioneers.

An ASALH research committee headed by Dr. Felix James of the Southern University Department of History in New Orleans, reported that Louis Armstrong was "King of Jazz" and "Goodwill Ambassador to the World."

Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong was born in New Orleans on July 4, 1900. As a young man, he played in the famed Storyville "red light" district, on Mississippi steamboats and in the Tuxedo Brass Band. In 1922 he joined King Oliver's band. Before starting his own band in 1924, Armstrong played with a New York orchestra for a year.

This highly creative, innovative jazz musician produced many historic records and was the originator of 'scat singing'. Armstrong traveled abroad as an ambassador of good will for the State Department, played in numerous movies, and presented to the world a trumpet style that has had a lasting influence on jazz artists.

Dr. J. Rupert Picott, executive director of ASALH, stated that the recent honor to Louis Armstrong indicated the extensive nature of the marker program. He said that Black leaders of all occupations and careers across the entire nation would be honored by the history association based on recommendations of the 139 local branches of ASALH.

"In contrast to much of the tinsel, the marker program provides a permanent record of historic commemorative action for our Bicentennial year," said Dr. Picott. "ASALH now faces 'the Third Century,' determined to remind children and adults of the contributions Blacks have made to America," he said.

The plaque was dedicated at the specific requests of the New Orleans branch of ASALH; the ASALH State Director for Louisiana; the M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons for the State of Louisiana and Jurisdiction; the United Supreme Council 33 Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A., Prince Hall Affiliation; and a Louisiana State Senator.

The two year historical project was made possible by a grant from the Amoco Foundation, Incorporated. The first bronze marker was placed at the birthsite of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, founder of ASALH and "Father of Black History," in New Canton, Buckingham County, Virginia. The second plaque was dedicated to American educator Dr. H. Council Trenholm at Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama.

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