

Blacks view careers in optometry

Less than one per cent of U.S. optometrists are Black, a recent government study reveals.

Nor is the situation expected to improve much in the near future, with Blacks representing less than two per cent of today's students of optometry, according to a survey of optometric students by the American Optometric Association's Council on Optometric Education.

The results of the government study, conducted by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Bureau of Health Resources Development, came as somewhat of a shock to the American Optometric Association, which has devoted much effort in recent years to recruiting Blacks and other minorities into the profession.

One reason more young Blacks do not enter the profession of optometry may be that they do not know about the many career choices and opportunities in this segment of the health care field.

Doctors of optometry are health care professionals who specialize in the examination, diagnosis and treatment of conditions or impairments of the vision system. They compromise one of the nation's primary health care professions. It is a

relatively young, growing profession in need of science minded men and women, of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, who are seeking socially satisfying and financially rewarding careers.

Too often, young Blacks think of the optometrist as a person who sells eyeglasses because this is the image often projected in urban and inner city area. First impressions are difficult to change and many young Blacks on their way up probably never consider optometry as a career choice.

Those who do will find that optometry offers careers in research, teaching and administrative work, as well as in the delivery of vision care. Optometrists who choose optometric practice—as most of them do—have a further choice of entering general practice or of specializing in other areas as pediatric vision, low vision, contact lenses, and others. In addition, there are optometric careers in the military and the U.S. Public Health Service.

Whatever career they choose within the profession, doctors of optometry are dedicated to helping people preserve and protect their vision from cradle to grave. At the same time, they gain a professional

status in their community and earn a good living. According to an American Optometric Association survey, the middle 50 per cent of optometrists can be expected to earn between \$12,000 and \$24,000 in their first full year of practice. The middle 50 per cent of all doctors of optometry earn between \$30,000 and \$55,000 a year.

Optometrists develop special vision aids for the partially sighted; work with psychologists, educators and other professionals to help children with learning disabilities; research the development of new optical aids (contact lenses came out of such research); serve as consultants to industry; aid in the reduction of automobile accidents through study of how vision relates to driving, highway design and automobile design; and make other contributions to the visual welfare of others.

A minimum of six or seven years of college-level education, four of which must be in a professional college, are required for the doctor of optometry degree. Pre-optometry education is available at any accredited university, college or junior college that offers a pre-professional laboratory science curriculum.



THE NEW MOVEMENT—Some 4,000 demonstrators joined SCLC in protesting the shooting death of 20-year-old Bonita Carter by a Birmingham policeman last week. SCLC president Dr. Joseph E.

Lowery said the large turnout signifies a mood on the part of Black people to sustain a new movement against violence and injustice. (SCLC photo: Elaine Tomlin)

SCLC threatens to boycott businesses

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.—Ignoring a steady rain some 4,000 Blacks joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in a march through downtown last Friday to protest Mayor David Vann's refusal to fire a white policeman who killed an unarmed Black woman by shooting her three times in the back.

The protestors threaten to stage an economic boycott of local businesses unless the mayor fires officer George M. Sands and makes the policeman stand trial for the murder of 20-year-old Bonita Carter.

"We'll stop the cash registers from ringing and pretty soon you'll hear the Chamber of Commerce singing the Klan and Sands have got to go," said SCLC President Dr. Joseph E. Lowery.

Lowery agreed with other Black leaders, including Representative Thomas Reed, State President NAACP; Reverend C.T. Vivian, SCLC Executive Director; Reverend John Nettles, State SCLC President; and Reverend R.B. Cottonreeder, Field Secretary, that the shooting hurt Alabama's proclaimed pioneer role in establishing goodwill between the Black and white races in the "New South." He said, "Alabama is in the forefront" of an increase of violence towards Blacks and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan throughout the South. But, he said the people of Birmingham should make a choice as to which image they would prefer to have, adding Blacks would non-violently fight a return to the racist ways of days gone by.

"The decision is yours Birmingham. You can choose Vann, Sands, or the Klan. But, if you do you've got hell on your hands," preached the SCLC leader.

Lowery brought the crowd to a frenzy by waving through the air a key to the city, which was given to him last summer by Mayor Vann when Birmingham hosted the SCLC's national convention. Speaking over shouts of "throw it away," Lowery said he wanted the key to open up the doors of justice, economic process, love and reconciliation.

He further stated that the souls of the people of Birmingham were lost as long as they allowed police to kill innocent Black people and then reward them by taking them off the streets and putting them behind a desk, which is what Mayor Vann did after ruling that Sands shot Miss Carter as a result of his police training. The mayor refused to fire Sands despite the ruling of a citizen review committee that the June 22nd killing of Miss Carter was not justified.

Since then the Kingston neighborhood, where Miss Carter lived and died, has been the scene of racial turmoil, punctuated by gunfire from night-riding Ku Klux Klansmen. The night before the march two white men were arrested for shooting into the homes of Black Kingston residents.

The shooting caught Vann in an election year. Blacks are critical to his political future because he only got 20 per cent of the white vote in the 1975 election. But the Fraternal Or-

der of Police, which represents the whites that compose 90 per cent of the force, threaten to strike if Sands is fired.

It is Vann's fear of the FOP, which many SCLC officials feel is another name of the Klan, that may cause him to lose his re-election.

Reverend Abraham Woods, President, of the local SCLC Chapter, said "that Black people of Birmingham are disappointed in Mayor Vann's decision. He has turned his back on the Black and poor."

Dr. Lowery said the huge turnout for the demonstration should prove to Vann, Sands and the Klan that Black people are tired of the disregard for the lives of minorities and the poor. "The march," Lowery said, "sent a message to Birmingham and the nation that Black people will not tolerate the killing of their women, their children, nor their men nor their sons. We must have an end to this reign of terror against Black people by the Klan, and by the police department."

The SCLC president believes that the Birmingham protest, which was the largest in the city since the 1963 demonstration led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the internationally observed Decatur, Alabama march signify the beginning of a new movement. "Black people are tired of the hostility, tired of the terror, tired of the murder of Black people. We don't intend to tolerate it, but we intend to engage in a non-violent movement against it. There is a mood to have a sustained movement against this kind of violence," Lowery said.

World War II vets lose farm, home funds

World War II veterans currently eligible for the Oregon Veterans' Farm and Home Loan Program will lose all eligibility to receive funds under the program on January 31, 1980, according to a recent opinion issued by Attorney General Jim Redden. The opinion was issued in response to questions posed by Elmo Mills, Director of Veterans' Affairs.

The first question asked was whether a World War II veteran could receive an additional loan, such as an improvement loan, after the January 31, 1980, cutoff date. Citing specific language in the Oregon Constitution, the Attorney General ruled the answer was a definite "No."

The second question asked whether a World War II veteran could receive a loan after January 31, 1980 if the veteran had applied for that loan prior to the deadline. The Attorney General ruled a loan could be granted "if eligibility for the particular loan has been established and a commitment to loan has been made no later than January 31, 1980."

According to Mills, this indicates a World War II veteran should apply for the loan at least a few days in advance of the deadline so the Department of Veterans' Affairs can process the loan to the point of commitment.

The entire issue, of course, would

be somewhat solved if voters approve a measure set for the May, 1980, primary ballot. The measure would extend World War II eligibility for another five years, to January 31, 1985, and make other changes in the loan program eligibility standards. A vote is required because eligibility for the program is outlined in the Oregon Constitution.

Mills cautioned, however, that if the measure is defeated at the polls, the January 31, 1980, deadline will be final. He said if a World War II veteran wants to be absolutely certain of using his veterans' loan rights, he should apply before January 31, 1980.

The measure on the ballot will also make other significant changes in the eligibility standards, including changing requirements, requiring at least 210 days active duty in the armed forces, and revising eligibility deadlines for Korean and Vietnam Era veterans.

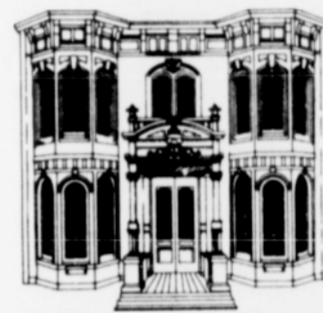
Veterans' loan offices located throughout the State can provide additional information on the proposed changes, Mills said.

"Let there be spaces in your togetherness." Kahlil Gibran

"It is difficult not to be unjust to what one loves." Oscar Wilde

"Ridicule is the test of truth." William Hazlitt

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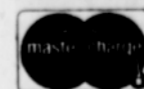
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Regardless, when you call us we will arrange for an initial consultation at your convenience. Cost: \$20. We probably can't solve anything in this meeting, but it is a chance for you to explain your particular problem and for us to give you some idea of what it'll take to reach a solution. If you want us to proceed, we'll give you an estimate of the fees you should plan on. In writing.



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