

Civil rights leader rescued from obscurity

Charles Hamilton Houston was the first Black to serve on the Harvard Law Review, the dean of Howard University Law School, the principal strategist in the process that led to the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the teacher of many prominent Black lawyers including Thurgood Marshall, and the developer of a systematic framework for combatting pervasive legal segregation in areas such as education, housing, and labor.

But although he left an indelible mark on American law and society — in fact, he developed precedents so significant that they changed constitutional interpretation — few people have ever heard of Charles Houston. On June 1st, "Ground-

work: Charles Hamilton Houston and the Struggle for Civil Rights" by Genna Rae McNeil was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press (\$21.00 cloth), restoring Houston to his rightful place in history.

As dean of Howard University Law School, in Houston's work with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and at his firm in Washington, D.C., Houston trained the cadre of Black lawyers who would

fight the legal battles of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. He demanded that his students be "not only good but superior" and that lawyers be "social engineers" using the law to improve society. He was a principal counsel in education cases designed to provide equal opportunities for Blacks, housing cases litigated to invalidate court enforcement of racial-discriminatory contracts, and labor cases argued to establish the right of fair representation. He also led fights for voting rights, fair

treatment of Black soldiers, protection against lynching and use of public accommodations. He was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt to serve on the Fair Employment Practice Committee, finally resigning in protest over Truman's order to block an FEPC directive to assure Black access to jobs in the District of Columbia's Capital Transit system.

Charles Hamilton Houston believed in planning and strategy, and he was open to divergent ideas, be-

cause his goal was to move to that society which provided "better and broader opportunities," without racial bias operating against individuals. A society that would "guarantee freedom and justice" was the entitlement of every human being, according to Houston.

"He was a lawyer," Ms. McNeil comments, "but he did not believe that law was the last word. He was seriously concerned about moral conduct, but sometimes the law conflicted with morality. In his time

there was a gross discrepancy between what was moral and what was legal. Houston spoke of 'moral collapse.' He also insisted that the law could not be considered supreme unless it could protect every citizen." Speaking of Houston's views on the uses of law and direct action, Ms. McNeil noted, "Charles Houston warned that the masses of people must 'know their power and apply it intelligently.' The struggle for justice and freedom was and is the continuing challenge."



William Lee, President of the West Coast Publishers Association and publisher of the Sacramento Observer, addressed Commissioner Charles Jordan's noon forum, speaking on the Black Press.

(Photo: Richard Brown)

Seminar addresses business

Why do approximately 90 percent of all new businesses fail within their first five years?

According to Judith Klefman, Satori Associates, it is because the business person is unable to effectively "sell" the product, service, or idea. An integral part of "selling" is image. To help address this program the Education and Training Subcommittee of the Minority Business Opportunity Committee is sponsoring a three-session seminar on "Developing Your Business Image." The seminar will be held in the Bonneville Power Administration Auditorium, 1002 N.E. Holladay Street on three consecutive Wednesdays, September 14, 21, and 28, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Ms. Klefman is a management consultant and designed the seminar. Special focus is on assisting people to polish the first few minutes of their contact with prospective/potential customers.

Ms. Klefman adds that "people make up their minds in the first three minutes of a meeting if they will even consider buying from you." For small new businesses who are competing in our economic realities, it is an economic necessity to make a lasting positive first impression. If the potential customer has a positive first impression, they will transfer that initial acceptance to the product, service or idea being sold.

This three-session seminar is designed to provide the participants with the tools and skills needed to polish their initial presentation. A second focus is to provide the participants with an opportunity to meet business people who provide business image building skills and see a sample of their products. The third focus is to provide an opportunity for minority-owned and operated businesses to set up displays of their business image building products and services.

With the Minority Business Opportunity Day set for October 12, 1983, this seminar provides minority business persons with a timely opportunity to create or update the facets/aspects of their business image.

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