

Garlington fund

Page 6

Moments in Black History

Pages 3 & 4

Cawthorne guest speaker

Page 9

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Two Sections

Blacks Should Demand Equal Schools in Their Own Neighborhoods

John H. Clarke

By Jerry Garner

"Blacks should not allow their children to be force bused out of their neighborhoods." This statement was made by Dr. John Henrik Clarke, a noted historian, scholar and writer. Not only has Dr. Clarke traveled throughout Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, he has published more than 21 books.

Recently, I was granted an interview with Dr. Clarke, we talked about South Africa and the plight of inner-city schools.

Garner: Dr. Clarke, you stated that Africa has always been exploited by other nations for its natural resources. Do you think this is why the United States, West Germany, Great Britain and other countries are against disinvestment in South Africa?

Dr. Clarke: Yes, but they aren't the only countries who are against disinvestment. They are the ones who are obviously against disinvestment and are vocal enough to say so. There are other countries such as France who is against disinvestment; they are not saying it in the same way. Also, France has fewer investments in South Africa, therefore, France can be bold. For if they lose all their South African investment, they haven't lost that much. The big investors such as the United States has the most to lose from disinvestment.

Garner: Could you explain what you meant when you said that the present unrest in South Africa was not about Apartheid, but about Western control of that nation's mineral resources?

Dr. Clarke: The developed minerals and many of the resources that are used in South Africa are controlled by South African companies. The companies that control the wealth in South Africa

(gold and diamonds) also control the copper in Zimbabwe and part of the copper in Zaire. You have inter-lacing companies overlapping borders. Control extends beyond South Africa, it extends to a combine, you have companies owning each others which extends to other countries. Another factor is this, even if Africans were in charge in South Africa, Whites control the world markets. They control the ships that take minerals to the markets in the world; they control the dispensing, refinement and distribution to the markets of the world. They control the networks of all these things. For example, suppose the Africans controlled the diamonds, if they did, the networks which cut the diamonds is controlled by Westerners. Africans don't have a diamond cutter. What good is a diamond to you if you don't have a cutter. Africans are kept out of certain professions, because once they master these professions, they will not need the Europeans anymore. Therefore, you have no method to prepare yourself for the world market. So monopoly means complete monopoly.

Garner: Given the fact that those who suffer from Apartheid are Blacks or mixed race people; do you feel that racism plays a role in the refusal of countries to disinvest in South Africa?

Dr. Clarke: Yes, it plays a role, along with the minerals and resources. Racism provides a life line for Western control and image. There is an image of Western dominance they intend to maintain. It is the whole concept of divine White rights, which is a nineteenth century concept into the twentieth century.

Garner: What do you think is going to happen in South Africa in the future?

Dr. Clarke: I believe the Whites in

South Africa will attempt to hold on to power as long as they can. The situation will reach a stage where Blacks will have no choice but to fight them (Whites). There is nothing they can do but to fight.

Garner: You believe that force busing has had a negative affect on Black children. Why?

Dr. Clarke: Because Black kids who are bused forcefully must go into schools where the teachers and the students have nothing but contempt for them. Psychologically it has a negative impact on their minds; they feel unwanted. Instead, Blacks should demand quality education in their own community and the right of any child to attend any school that is available.

Garner: What are the problems facing inner-city schools?

Dr. Clarke: The shift in the tax responsibilities shifts with the population. Middle-class Whites and Blacks are moving to the suburbs. If the people who pay the most taxes are in the suburbs, and the people who pay the least are in the city, then the city tax level becomes lower to a point where the city and the so-called ghetto area has no choice but to accept second-class education.

Garner: Do you feel that the federal government is doing all it can to address the problems facing inner-city schools?

Dr. Clarke: No, the federal government isn't doing all it can in an effort to address the problems facing inner-city schools. Furthermore, the representatives of the federal government are saying the wrong things. They are misinterpreting the role of the government on these matters. I don't see it getting any better, unless people become aware of the needs and take some responsibility to try to bring about changes.



John H. Clarke (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Experts Make UVW Recommendations

by Bob Lothian

First, rid the community of prostitution and street crime, then remove or redesign the median strips on Union Ave., clean up the trash, work with owners to upgrade the appearance of blighted storefronts, know local financial institutions, and hold a community-wide forum.

There were just a few of the recommendations made Thursday night by a five member team of experts that spent three days observing and talking to business owners in the Union-Vancouver-Williams business district.

The team presented their findings to a meeting of the UVW revitalization project board at the Ramada Inn. All experts on community development in their own cities, the team walked and drove through the area, interviewing merchants, meeting with business and community groups, and talking to neighborhood representatives.

A 30 page report on the team's findings will guide the UVW project in its efforts to revitalize the area.

Team members included Brian Scott, executive director of the Oregon Downtown Development Association, Stanley Lowe, of the Landmarks Development Corp. in Pittsburgh, Sharon Blevins, representing the Main Street Corridor Development in Kansas City, MO, Randolph Hester, an architect from Berkeley, Calif., and Wesley Hester, city council member from Berkeley.

The team members agreed that getting rid of prostitution should be of the highest priority and one of the first steps in transforming the area. Wesley Hester suggested that the mayor and city council should meet regularly with the community to discuss ways "to rid this cancer from your community."

"Nothing should deter you from this goal," Hester said.

Showing a slide of a prostitute in front of a boarded up Union Ave. storefront, Blevins said, "This picture looks just like a Kansas City picture." She described the Main Street area of Kansas City as "a run-down strip with crime and prostitution and the kind of problems you have in your community."

Kansas City business owners turned fire hoses on the prostitutes and the community kept the pressure on city

government, and now the prostitutes are gone from Main Street, paving the way for future development, Blevins said.

One strategy that worked in pressuring city officials, she said, was to pull together city council members and police officials with community leaders. "When they were all sitting there together, they couldn't say, 'They should do it,' Blevins said.

"You really don't have a united front in this community," she continued. "(City officials) don't have to worry about keeping up, because you haven't been keeping up."

Racism is another thing holding the community back, Wesley Hester observed. Community residents told him, "Black citizens feel they are discriminated against because they are Black," he said. He suggested a community-wide forum with the mayor and city officials at a Black church to confront racism. "Holding the meeting in the Black community will express the importance the Black community really plays in Portland," Hester said.

Echoing the sentiments of other team members, Stanley Lowe said, "The median strip should go. It's a barrier."

"The median strip is an attractive nuisance," said Randolph Hester. "Right now, it's screwing the business

and it's keeping people from crossing the street."

For economic development of the area, the UVW project manager should be knowledgeable about the loan policies of all financial institutions in the city, and he needs to be able to pull together business owners and financial backers with creative loan packages, according to Lowe.

He also recommended that the UVW project work closely with the three major businesses in the area — Emanuel Hospital, Wonder Bread Bakery and the Red Cross — to see if spin-off businesses can be generated to provide services in the community that now come from outside the community.

Randolph Hester suggested that the community needs to discover what it's image is and then use that image. Realizing that "the image of this area has a lot to do with the Black history of Portland," Hester urged the project to exploit the area's positive character.

The UVW area is "an urban village in the best sense of the word," Hester said. "It probably is, for my money, the best place to live in Portland," he said, drawing applause.

Blevins cautioned, "We can tell you what works and how to make a difference, but you are the ones who have to do it."

NCBS Conference

By Jerry Garner

The 5th Annual conference for the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS) ended Saturday at the Hilton Hotel. The conference's Motto was: Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility. During the three-day event, speaker after speaker promoted academic excellence and social responsibility for African-Americans.

Some of the topics discussed during the conference was development of the African-American library, using African culture, Black studies courses in universities and community colleges, Black entrepreneurship and international trade, academic excellence, sports and crime in the African-American community, Black theology and the African world view, and corporate America's role in African-American community development.

Distinguished Black scholars who

spoke at the conference included Dr. John Hendrik Clarke, historian, scholar and writer; Dr. Wayne Williams, Director Afro-American Studies, University of Washington; and Dr. James Turner, Director, African Studies Research Center, Cornell University.

Keynote speakers at the conference included Dr. Delores Aldridge, President, National Council for Black Studies; Dr. Matthew W. Prophet, superintendent, Portland Public Schools; and Dr. Thaddeus Spratt, Professor, School of Business, University of Washington.

Besides promoting and enriching the field of Black studies as a vehicle to further the development of people of African descent, NCBS' attempted to integrate scholarship and social responsibility from a Black perspective. In hope of affecting public policy so it contributes to the liberation of Black people in the United States and abroad.

Joe Basey, 9, is 1986 Easter Seal Child

Joseph (Joe) Basey, 9, of Oregon City, is Oregon's 1986 Easter Seal Child.

Ron Kutella, Portland, chairman of the Board of the Easter Seal Society of Oregon, says Joe will represent physically disabled Oregon children and adults served by Easter Seals. The Society's 1986 "Back a Fighter" campaign begins February 15.

"Joe fights both cerebral palsy and severe hemiplegia with an upbeat attitude and a lot of determination," Kutella says. "He's a real winner."

The second-grader, of bi-racial parentage, was reared in foster homes until his adoption at age 3. He has little use of his left arm or leg. He wears shoe splints, uses a cane for balance, a wheelchair for distance, and a three-wheeled motor-scooter — a gift from Rotary's Wheels of Power — whenever he can.

"I was trying to get help for Joe when I learned about Easter Seals," says his mother, Jan Basey. She didn't at first know the extent of his handicaps. "We were told when we adopted him that he was 'environmentally and developmentally delayed.' He was still crawling at 3 and had an 8-word vocabulary."

He's catching up fast. He swims regularly in the therapeutic/reaction pool in Portland's Easter Seal Center. He uses a wheelchair from the Society equipment services program. Summers, he goes to wheelchair-accessible Camp Easter Seal. He's had surgery and therapy at Shriners. He attends Portland's Holladay Center for therapy and computer classes and Youngsen Elementary for academic studies.

Kutella emphasized that Easter Seal Society rehabilitation services are available to adults as well as children with physical disabilities. Persons in need of help can call Society offices in Portland, Bend, Eugene or Medford. He said programs are funded primarily by voluntary gifts or bequests.



JO BASEY, 9, of Oregon City, 1986 Oregon Easter Seal Child, waves Easter Seals which will be distributed statewide as part of the "Back a Fighter" campaign to raise funds to help Oregon children and adults with physical disabilities.