

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Dickerson Will Be Missed, But Not Forgotten

Since Blacks entered Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619 as indentured servants, there have been many Black leaders who have dedicated their life to the struggle for racial equality. Mr. Earl B. Dickerson was such an individual.

Some may ask, who was Earl B. Dickerson. In order to know who he was, one must have lived in Chicago for a period of time, be a follower of the civil rights movement, or a student of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Dickerson, who died in Chicago earlier this year at the age of 95, was an attorney, businessman, politician, and civil rights activist. Not only was he the driving force behind the evolution of African-American history in Chicago, his work in the area of civil rights has benefitted Blacks and other ethnic minorities. In 1939, Dickerson successfully argued a case before the United States Supreme Court which struck down racially restrictive real estate covenants. The practice was used by real estate firms to keep communities throughout the nation segregated. The case, *Hansberry vs. Lee*, was just one example of Mr. Dickerson's contribution to the betterment of the Black race.

Dickerson was born in Canton, Mississippi, in 1891; he moved to Chicago in 1906. After earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois in 1914, he later became the first African-American to receive a law degree from

the prestigious University of Chicago. He was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 1920.

In 1921, Dickerson was one of the founders of the Supreme Life Insurance Company. He became chief counsel of Supreme Life in 1921, a position he held for 31 years. Later he was named president and board chairman. Today Supreme Life Insurance Company is one of the nation's largest and successful Black-owned insurance companies.

Forever a warrior in the civil rights army for racial equality, in 1939, Dickerson helped organize the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. That same year he represented the father of the late playwright Lorraine Hansberry.

He also served as president of the National Urban League, NAACP, the National and Cook County Bar Associations, and the Chicago Urban League.

Not only will Mr. Dickerson be missed for his leadership, knowledge, and commitment to the Black movement, he will be missed for his courage and integrity. Unlike some Black leaders who have used organizations that promote the causes of African-Americans for their own personal and financial gains, Mr. Dickerson's dedication to the advancement of the Black race was beyond question.

Mr. Dickerson will be missed by those of us who are committed to the concept of racial equality for all. His inspiration will be with us for years to come.



Healthwatch

by Steven Bailey, N.D.

While many of our state legislators are busy running for re-election, others are still hard at work in Salem. Members of interim committees are presently finalizing their research into a variety of areas and setting priorities for the 1987 legislative session. Tuesday, October 14th, the Joint Interim Committee on Health Care met with its three citizen task forces (elderly care, rural health and indigent health care) to hear their recommendations for the upcoming session. In November the Joint Committee will use these recommendations to set its upcoming priorities.

The first of the task forces to present their work was the committee on elderly health care. Chairperson Ruth Shepherd presented the findings verbally as well as presenting an in-depth written report. Her oral report touched on the high points of the committee's 19 recommendations. One of the greatest concerns in elderly health care is the fact that most people who enter nursing homes quickly become dependent on Medicaid and/or other support dollars.

"Only 200,000 Americans are fully covered for long-term care, yet 85% of our elderly believe that they are covered for this by Medicaid" was one dramatic statement made by Ms. Shepherd. For the majority of our elderly, there is inadequate long-term coverage and their personal worth is only sufficient to cover the first 6 months of nursing home care. At the end of 6 months most nursing home clients are totally dependent on federal and state monies. The task force feels that there is a major need for the state to help prevent the financial ruin that now greets most nursing home entrants.

Another major concern of the committee was the quality of care that is found in nursing homes. Their statistics cite that 25% of nursing home residents have bed sores by the end of 6 months. Better care and better training for the staffs is a clear need in our future.

As 20% of the elderly will enter a nursing home at least once, these are issues that warrant broad public support.

Another concern of the committee was the current status of Alzheimer's disease. This disease which affects a significant portion of nursing home residents falls through the insurance netting and is not covered as a medical concern in most policies. A new state definition of this disease is needed to correct this major fault of our health insurance coverage. Work is on-going to redefine this condition so that health plans will cover victims of this condition.

The final part of the elderly health care task force's presentation involved ideas to help ease the financial burden of health care to the elderly. Representative Bob Smith presented a few important concepts to aid in this area. First, there were suggestions to provide tax breaks for those who care for themselves in an in-house environment. Mr. Smith and others felt that there should be an incentive for those who keep themselves out of state subsidized programs. Finally, Mr. Smith recommended that Oregon look into equity conversion as a means for seniors to help cover their own expenses. This type of program allows the home owner to use some of their home equity for other concerns such as health care. He cited Maine, Arkansas, Pennsylvania and Connecticut as states that already have effective equity conversion programs. These programs allow seniors to take a more self-sufficient role in their later life and also helps to lessen the state's support role in long term care programs.

There is a more complete coverage of these issues in the written report of this task force, which should be available through Bruce Bishop, Committee Administrator, Oregon State Senate.

Next week I will cover the report of the Task force on care for the medically indigent.



Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of sociology and political science at Purdue University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

"Black Republican Renaissance?"

In the two years since Ronald Reagan's reelection, it is clear that the vast majority of white Democratic leaders have learned nothing of the significance of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow campaign for the presidency. The bulk of the Democratic hierarchy now concurs with many of the central tenets of Reaganism: major reductions in social welfare programs, massive increases in military expenditures, an aggressively anti-Communist foreign policy, and so forth. Jackson has received virtually no concessions from the Democrats, and party regulars have scapegoated him and other black leaders for their own abysmal showing in 1984.

The Democratic Party's rejection of the Rainbow Coalition and its accommodation with Reaganism forced some black leaders to rethink their entire approach to politics. For a quarter of a century, "black politics" exclusively meant Democratic politics. But what precisely had blacks gained from their faithful allegiance? Although the number of black Democrats in Congress had risen from five in 1964 to 20 in 1984, black legislators as a group had very little power. Since the founding in 1971, the Congressional Black Congress was virtually ignored on most public policy issues by white Democratic leaders. The only black politician elected to the Senate during this period, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, was a liberal Republican. Few black Democrats were elected to statewide positions, and those who sought higher public office were frequently discouraged by their party's hierarchy. By the 1980s, black votes amounted to 20 percent of the national Democratic bloc in presidential elections—yet blacks were still treated as "second class" citizens in their own party.

Jackson's inability to solidify the Rainbow at local levels, combined with the stampede to the right by most white Democratic leaders, has directly contributed to a renaissance of black Republicanism in some quarters. This conservative current is still small, but is beginning to expand significantly. This year alone, blacks ran as Republican congressional candidates in Arkansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Georgia, Illinois, and other states. In Maryland, attorney George Haley, brother of "Roots" author Alex Haley, was an unsuccessful candidate in the Republican Senatorial primary. In Atlantic City, New Jersey, black Republican mayor James Usry was reelected in a nonpartisan race. The black electorate will frequently vote for moderate Republicans, black or white, if they are perceived as friendly to blacks' traditional political interests, and if they are running against Democrats who have little or no credibility among minorities.

The best example of this came in New Jersey last year when 60 percent of the black vote was cast for Republican Governor Thomas Kean. This summer,

Kean received a standing ovation while speaking before the National Urban League convention in San Francisco. His pragmatic message to blacks was to break from their fifty year allegiance with the Democrats: "You have one party that the black community has given 85 to 90 percent of their votes to, and how much black leadership do you see in that party? I can tell you what's going on in my state, I don't see any black county chairmen, I don't see black state chairmen for that 90 percent. I don't see as many black legislators or mayors outside the black community. I don't see any gains." Although Kean's analysis begs many questions and obscures the distinction between the respective social class bases and programmatic orientations of the two major parties, his general point is indeed correct. Blacks as a social group have not received political benefits from the Democratic leadership commensurate with their high levels of electoral support since 1940. Ambitious black politicians now recognize that they can go only so far in the Democratic party's hierarchy, and no further.

This political reality was behind Michigan politician William Lucas's well-publicized decision to switch from the Democratic to Republican Party in May 1985. Lucas's background—a former New York City police officer, FBI agent, and sheriff—appeals to the law-and-order constituency. His fiscal conservatism and anti-abortion stance received praises from rightwing populists and mainstream Republicans even when he was serving as Wayne County (Detroit) Executive. But as a black politician, Lucas was astute enough never to isolate himself from Detroit's black middle class. In winning the state's GOP gubernatorial primary, Lucas convinced thousands of black Democrats to cross over to vote for him. If he defeats conservative Democratic incumbent Gov. James J. Blanchard, Lucas will become the North's first black governor—and a strong candidate as the Republican's vice presidential nomination in 1988.

The solution to the black community's problems cannot be resolved by leaping from the political frying pan into the fire. Despite the existence of a very few, isolated exceptions, the ranks of the Republican party contain no friends of affirmative action, expanded jobs and health care programs. Politicians like Lucas are seeking to advance their own narrow, personal interests at the expense of the larger material interests of the national black community. The real challenge is our inability to devise an alternative political strategy, which can move us beyond the impasse of the Reaganized, two party system. As Congressman Ronald V. Dellums has observed: "Maybe we've arrived at a point where this system does not serve us well. I don't see anything sacrosanct about the two-party system."

Letters to the Editor

Ramblin' Rod Show Host Rod Anders Made Racist Remark

On 8-13-86, I was watching the Ramblin' Rod show with my son. Rod Anders was talking about the Native American show at the Multnomah County Fair when he told a little boy that there was something that had always bothered him about Indians. "...they are always trying to learn...because whenever you try to talk to an Indian, all they can say is, 'how'."

As a caucasian trying to raise my son without prejudice, I was incensed at such a blatantly racist remark. If Mr. Anders had not yet figured out what an impact he has had on our youth for the past twenty-odd years he has been on the air, then I felt it was high time this was pointed out to him.

I wrote Martin Brantley, General Manager of KPTV, requesting that immediate action be taken regarding this matter. To date, I have not heard from him. Therefore, my initial concern has been compounded by the

apparent lack of concern and responsibility shown by the management of KPTV.

I am asking all parents to consider this issue and boycott the Ramblin' Rod show in their homes until such time as this issue is resolved in the way assurance that this will never happen again, as well as a public apology from both Rod Anders and the management of KPTV Channel 12.

The Civil Rights Act is barely 20 years old and still a fragile thing. It will be the children of the children who watch the 8-13 show that have a hope of seeing true equality come to fruition in our country—provided that their minds are not polluted by a public figure they know and love.

Victoria Holman
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Freedom Now!

Susan Mnumzana, African National Congress, and State Representative Margaret Carter will speak about the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, October 30, at Mount Olivet Baptist Church, 116 NE Schuyler, Portland, Oregon.

This event is sponsored by Portland Democratic Socialists of America, American Friends Service Committee Southern Africa Project, Portlanders Organized for Southern African Freedom, Oregon Rainbow Coalition, and Red Rose School.

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