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NABCJ Gives Support to Blacks in Justice System



Vera Poole

Photo by Richard J. Brown

by Jerry Garner

Back in 1974 a conference on "Blacks in the Criminal Justice System" was held at the University of Alabama. Participants of that conference decided to create a permanent Black-oriented national organization that would focus its efforts on the entire range of the criminal justice system in achieving equal justice for Blacks. Thus was the beginning of the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCL).

Since its creation in 1974, NABCL has been endorsed by over 100 nation-

al organizations and has participated in a variety of conferences, including a special White House meeting on "Minorities in Criminal Justice and the Role of the White House."

"Our goals are to act upon the needs of Blacks and other minorities; their concerns and contributions as related to the administration of equal justice in the United States," said Vera Poole. Poole is president of the Oregon chapter of the NABCJ, a position she has held since the creation of the Oregon chapter in 1979.

Poole has been in corrections since 1970, is presently a correctional lieutenant, day shift commander, at the Justice Center. She has a B.A. degree in sociology and a masters in criminal justice from the University of Portland. Besides serving as president of the Oregon NABCJ, Poole has been a member of the national board since 1979.

Poole said the main objectives of the NABCJ are to increase Black representation and participation as policy makers within the administration of justice nationally, regionally and locally; to recruit Blacks and minorities in all areas and levels of the criminal justice system to further enhance their priorities; and to serve as a vehicle for input into legislation and social policy formulations in all areas of the criminal justice system.

She said it's a perception here in Oregon that Blacks are basically clients in the criminal justice system, and not practitioners. "When people come to the Justice Center jail, they're shocked when they see me. They'll ask me how long I have worked here, or say that they didn't know there was a woman lieutenant. They're so amazed."

Poole said, as president of the Oregon chapter of NABCJ, her top priority is to expand its membership. "We are trying to recruit more Blacks and other minorities into our organization; practitioners within the system or anyone who is interested in improving the system for Blacks and other minorities. As criminal justice professionals, we can perhaps make the criminal justice system more preferable for these groups who come into the system."

She said a lot of people belong to professional organizations but don't get actively involved in them. "A lot of us belong to professional organizations. However, in many instances, we just pay our dues. There should be a commitment to function in that organization and make sure that it grows, not only financially, but professionally."

Poole said other priorities of the NABCJ are to sensitize the general public to the plight of Blacks in the criminal justice system in order to promote community involvement in the resolution of these problems and to assist the media in presenting a fair and factual account of the problems and accomplishments of Blacks within the criminal justice system.

NABCJ is a unique organization because it encourages ex-offenders to join and contribute their perspectives to the organization. Poole said NABCJ, in an effort to recruit more members, will hold a recruitment social hour November 21st from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at The Esquire Club. Those who are interested in supporting or joining the NABCJ are encouraged to attend the reception.

NSBA Issues Report On 'AIDS And Public Schools'

Publication of a 55-page report on "AIDS and the Public Schools" was announced today by Nellie C. Weil, president of the National School Board Association, at a news conference in Montgomery, Alabama.

The report contains a comprehensive review of medical facts about AIDS, the legal and classroom implications for the schools, and an overview of policies on AIDS that can be considered by school districts in developing local policy regarding students, teachers, and the community.

The information is based on a national conference of experts on AIDS, sponsored by NSBA in early 1986. The conference and subsequent report were designed to provide local school districts with the best available information on the issues, Weil said.

In the report, health and education officials suggest six key steps that school boards and administrators should follow in dealing with the AIDS issue:

- Work closely with local and state health officials knowledgeable about communicable diseases.
- Adopt appropriate policies in dealing with persons with AIDS.
- Conduct public awareness programs aimed at informing school staff, parents and others in the community about facts regarding AIDS.
- Conduct education programs for students to explain the facts and how to avoid the disease.
- Respect the privacy rights to those infected by AIDS by revealing their identities to as few persons as possible.
- Take a leadership role in controlling community reaction to persons with AIDS in the schools.

The report points out that AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is transmitted by: (1) intimate sexual contact with a person carrying the virus, (2) intravenous injection of drugs with a hypodermic needle used by an infected person, (3) transfusion of blood contaminated with the AIDS virus, or (4) by an infected mother to her fetus or newborn child.

"In the five years that researchers have been studying data related to AIDS," the report says, "they have found no cases in which the virus has been transmitted by casual contact," such as in a school setting. "The fact that the AIDS virus is difficult to transmit is what keeps AIDS from being a greater health risk than it already is," the report adds. But it cautions that "currently, there is neither a cure for AIDS nor a vaccine against the virus."

In the absence of a vaccine or cure, the report indicates that education about AIDS and ways to prevent its transmission and spread are "society's strongest weapons." Schools, the report says, can play a key role in this effort by "educating staff, students and parents about what the disease is and what it is not."

The report notes that "many education and health departments have recommended that most children infected with the virus be allowed to

attend school." It adds that "medical evidence can offer no sound reason to remove most infected children from the school setting." And it quotes medical experts as urging that each infected child be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The report says that of nearly 22,000 cases of AIDS in the U.S. as of June, 1986, "only 400 - or less than two percent - involved children 19 years of age or younger."

School boards were urged to "develop a policy that delineates the district's response to persons with AIDS in the schools and to develop that policy in the open by working with public health officials and with members of the community." This should be done preferably before a district is faced with a student or employee who has AIDS.

A lack of information to understand AIDS "greatly increases public anxiety both about the disease and how it is spread, and about the competence of the public officials involved," the report said.

Just as important, the report said, is "development of a curriculum to teach students the facts about the disease and ways to prevent its transmission." It suggested that this information can be provided in courses such as sex education, general science, psychology, current issues, and in classes or workshops on drug abuse prevention.

NSBA's February conference highlighted presentations by seven nationally recognized experts on AIDS, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, director, Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health, Washington, D.C., and Dr. Harold Jaffee, chief, Epidemiology Section, AIDS Activity Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia.

Copies of the report are available for \$15 each, plus shipping and handling, from: Research and Information Services Dept., NSBA, 1680 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

C-TRAN Wins Honorable Mention

A series of corporate advertisements explaining the advantages of public transportation to major employers in Clark County recently won C-TRAN an Honorable Mention Award in the 1986 American Public Transit Association's Ad Wheel competition.

Creative Services International, a Vancouver-based advertising and public relations firm, worked with C-TRAN to produce the newspaper

and magazine ads that were run in local Clark County media.

C-TRAN, with the assistance of Creative Services International, has been a winner in previous APTA competitions. Transporting an average of 7,500 riders a day on its twenty-three routes, C-TRAN currently operates a fleet of forty-three buses. In addition to fixed-route service, C-VAN provides paratransit transportation for the elderly and the disabled.



Dr. Dorothy Alexander

Photo by Richard J. Brown

Dr. Alexander Named Chair of Commission

by Jerry Garner

Dr. Dorothy Alexander has been voted Chair of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs. Alexander, who is a Research Associate with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory here in Portland, was voted by Commission members to serve a 3-year term as chair.

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs' mission is to implement and establish economic, social, legal and political equality for Blacks in Oregon.

Alexander has been a member of the Commission since 1983. She has a B.A. degree in biology from Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Miss.; a masters in library science from the University of Washington; a masters in guidance counseling from Portland State University; and a Ph.D. in Education Research from Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Dr. Alexander is active in a variety of community and professional organizations. She is a member of the Black United Front, NAACP, Black United Fund (Board Chair), Friends of Multnomah County Library, and the Black College Committee. She is an active member of the Mallory Avenue Christian Church and sits on the board of directors. She also teaches junior high school church class at Mallory Avenue Christian Church.

Dr. Alexander said she was honored to be named as Board Chair by her fellow members on the Commission. "It's great when your peers select oneself for a leadership position."

Sexual Harassment Suit Filed Against Businessman

By Jerry Garner

Sandra Lynn Herman, a staff member on the voter-approved Police Internal Investigation Auditing Committee, has filed a sexual harassment complaint against Portland businessman and committee member, Alvin Manus.

The suit was filed last week in Federal District Court. Portland Mayor Bud Clark, the City, and Commissioner Dick Bogle are also defendants in the law suit. Herman is seeking \$500,000 punitive damages and \$150,000 general damages.

Herman claims in her suit that Manus has sexually harassed her since May 1985. As a result of the harassment, she has suffered mental anguish, emotional distress, humiliation and disgrace.

Clark and Bogle were named as defendants in the federal suit because Herman alleged they failed to take action against Manus after she made his alleged behavior known to them.

The Observer contacted Manus at his business, River Place Florist - The Flower King, for his reaction to the suit. He had no comment. The mayor's office referred questions regarding the suit to the City Attorney's office. Mike Moline from the City Attorney's office said he could not discuss the suit, other than to say that the City intends to defend the case.

Moline was asked whether the City Attorney's office would represent Clark, Bogle, and Manus in the suit. He replied, "That decision will be made by the Bureau of Risk Management." Manus was appointed to the audit committee in 1985 by former Portland Police Chief Penny E. Harrington.