

## National News Update

### Black Jobless Rate Drops in October

Employment was up sharply in October for all workers. The number of Blacks with jobs increased by 160,000 over the month and the proportion with jobs increased by more than 2 full percentage points over the year. This increase in jobs for Blacks was considerably more than the 8-tenths of a percent increase for whites.

The Black unemployment rate in October, at 12.0 percent, was a three-tenths of a percent drop from September. The October rate compared favorably to the 14.3 percent of a year ago but the rate was, nevertheless, at more than twice that of whites (5.2%).

Nearly 11.6 million Blacks were employed in October, almost 700,000 more than a year ago. Black adult women, with 5.5 million at work, showed the largest increase with 333,000 over the year. Black adult men in jobs numbered 5.4 million, an increase of 282,000 while Black teenagers increased their work participation over the year by 72,000 to an October total of 636,000.

The jobless rate for Black adult men was 9.6 percent, a sharp drop from 13.1 percent a year ago. The rate for adult women was 11 percent, a decrease of more than a point over the year.

The teenage unemployment rate in October was 34.0 percent, more than double the jobless rate for white teenagers and a sharp 4-point jump from last month, almost equalling a similar increase last year when the rate was nearly 36 percent.

The nation's overall unemployment rate, 5.9 percent, and the rate for civilian workers, 6.0 percent, were about the same as in September.

### OIC/A Names National Chairman

Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America (OIC/A) has named Edmund T. Pratt, Jr., to serve a one-year term as Chairman of its National Industrial Advisory Council (NIAC).

Mr. Pratt, chairman and chief executive officer of Pfizer Inc., succeeds Richard Ferris, former chairman of Allegis Corporation as head of the NIAC advisory group, comprised of executives from leading corporations.

Through a network of some 75 affiliates around the country, OIC currently offers employment, training and supportive services to unemployed and underemployed persons and is launching a five-year drive to increase the number of affiliates to at least 125.

OIC founder Rev. Leon Sullivan said the organization "will continue to make great strides under Ed Pratt's able guidance. We have worked closely together across the years and I have great respect for his leadership, integrity and deep commitment to social responsibility."

Between now and the turn of the century, Mr. Pratt said, demographic changes, along with proposed welfare and education reforms, pose significant challenges to society and to business.

OIC, he said, "is uniquely positioned to help assure that the nation's critical manpower needs are successfully met and that we begin to deal more effectively with the multitude of problems brought on by a sizable group of our citizens who are not adequately integrated into our society."

### RJR Nabisco Donates Millions to UNCF

To help put college educations in reach for more Black youth, RJR Nabisco has donated \$250,000 to the United Negro College Fund.

This grant was the first of four payments toward a new million-dollar pledge from RJR Nabisco, which has been the largest contributor to UNCF schools since 1983. Prior to making this pledge, the company had already donated more than \$2 million to UNCF.

RJR Nabisco presented its most recent contribution to UNCF during the Ebony Fashion Fair in Chicago on November 8, 1987. Assisting RJR Nabisco in the presentation was actor Danny Glover, who has received critical acclaim for starring roles in movies such as "Places in the Heart," "Witness," "Lethal Weapon," "The Color Purple" and HBO's "Mandela."

"This nation's Black colleges build self-esteem in countless young people," Glover said. "That is of immense importance, because an individual's ability to achieve depends in large measure on what that person thinks he or she can achieve."

He added, "Black colleges have produced many of our leaders, educators and historians. They have been a cornerstone of our culture, and our cultural traditions are what sustain us."

"From Reconstruction to Jim Crowism to the Depression, from world wars to civil rights battlefields — at all those junctures, Black colleges have been a valuable resource," Glover continued. "They have examined the issues of our time, and given us guidance for the future."

UNCF's mission of making college educations affordable for Black students is not just a benefit to the Black community, Glover noted. "The minds enriched at Black colleges do not just enhance the Black community. They make contributions that benefit the whole country, other nations — all of humanity."

Glover also encouraged greater participation in support of educational programs, noting that only 4 percent of the Black community's charitable dollars are directed toward education. "Black colleges have struggled and survived without the large endowments common at other universities," he said. "Like the Black church, Black colleges have always been there for us. Now, we need to develop a strategy to be there for our colleges, more than ever before."

Virgild E. Ecton, executive vice president of the United Negro College Fund, commented on the need for support among UNCF's 42 member colleges. "On the heels of the civil rights movement, college enrollment increased among Blacks during the 1970s. But since 1980, Black college enrollment has been declining. The causes include cutbacks in federal aid for education and rising tuition costs."

Ecton noted that UNCF is "working hard to address those problems," and added that "RJR Nabisco's generosity will go a long way toward helping."

## Hyatt Regency Upbraided for its Racially Discriminatory "Anti-Cornrows" Employment Practices

Notwithstanding Hyatt Regency Crystal City's advertisements offering sumptuous accommodations and courteous service, there is evidently "no room at the Inn" for many of its Black women employees. As a result, a law suit has been commenced against the hotel for its employment practices banning braided hairstyles.

On August 3, 1986, Ms. Cheryl R. Tatum, a food and beverage cashier at Hyatt Regency, arrived at work with her hair in thick lustrous cornrow braids. Her reasons for donning the cornrows hairstyle were threefold: one, with respect to the hair growth and maintenance of African hair, the cornrows style is the most healthy way for Black women to wear their hair; two, cornrows are an African-inspired artstyle, an expression of the heritage, culture, and racial pride of Black women; and three, the style is impeccably groomed, professional in appearance, and cost-efficient.

From roughly August 3rd to August 17th, there was no adverse reaction or comment to Ms. Tatum's hairstyle. To the contrary, guests and co-workers complimented her daily, generally commenting that her cornrows were quite exquisite. However, on or about August 17th, cashier manager Mizita Sannoh directed Ms. Tatum to pull her braids into a "bun". Without protesting, Ms. Tatum began wearing her cornrows in a bun the following day. Another two weeks proceeded without any further suggestions from Ms. Sannoh or from any other supervisory personnel.

On September 4th, personnel director Betty McDermott summoned Ms. Tatum to the personnel office. Ms. McDermott ordered her to re-style her hair, asserting that cornrows were an "extreme hairstyle." After several minutes of discussion in which Ms. Tatum disputed this baseless characterization, Ms. McDermott bluntly stated, "I can't understand why you would want to wear your hair like that anyway. What would the guests think if we allowed you all to wear your hair like that!" Ms. McDermott ended their conversation soon thereafter. Notwithstanding Ms. Tatum's exemplary employment record, Ms. McDermott determined that she could no longer work for Hyatt Regency if she continued to wear her cornrows. Left with no choice, Ms. Tatum tendered her resignation under duress.

In her law suit, Ms. Tatum seeks redress for discrimination on account of race, suffered by her in violation of federal and state laws, in her capacity as an employee of Hyatt Regency. Specifically, she alleges that she was subject to a discriminatory atmosphere on the job and that as a result she was constructively discharged. She demands an award of back pay, front pay, compensatory damages, punitive damages, and attorney's fees against the hotel.

The cornrows hairstyle is worn predominantly, if not exclusively, by Africans, African-Americans, and other people of African descent. In the Washington metropolitan area, cornrows are extremely popular among Black professional women, Black female clericals, and Black female college students. You can readily observe Black women with cornrows in various professional, business, and educational settings throughout the region.

Commenting on the import of this litigation, Taalib-Din A. Uqadah, co-owner of Cornrows & Co., Inc. (the natural hair care salon which created



Disputed hairstyle — Cheryl Tatum and the Hyatt Regency in Crystal City are going to court over the corn-rowed hairstyle Tatum claims in court briefs the hotel insisted she get rid of.

Ms. Tatum's hairstyle), explained that this scenario was becoming disturbingly familiar: "We have many clients who relate similar instances of job discrimination happening to them. It seems that although white establishments are forced, by law, to seek an integrated workforce, many employers nonetheless insist that their Black female employees appear as white or 'European' as possible. Thus, often when a sister wears cornrows, another braided artstyle, or any other chemical-free natural hairstyle, this seems to strike a racist 'nerve' in her white supervisor who cannot stand to see something inherently African in the workplace. . . . It is tragic that, in 1987, we as Americans cannot realize integration in the true sense of the word, i.e., the coming together of equals for the benefit of the united whole. It appears that for many whites, integration is, at best, only a one-way street of assimilation for blacks."

Mr. Uqadah added that, on behalf of Ms. Tatum and other similarly situated women, he is having preliminary discussions with representatives from several civil rights and women's rights organizations. In addition to the instant suit, some consideration is being given to organizing a boycott against Hyatt Regency to force it to modify its discriminatory employment practices.

### ADL Amends Policy Opposing Quotas

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has amended its long-standing policy opposing quotas and preferential treatment by recognizing that such measures may be appropriate under limited conditions.

The League approved exceptions to its policy in two resolutions — one dealing with court-ordered preferential relief, including quotas, and one dealing with the consideration of race, gender or ethnicity as a factor in private sector employment. The actions were taken at the agency's recent National Executive Committee meeting in Chicago.

In the resolution on court-ordered preferential relief, ADL emphasized that it "continues to oppose quotas, preferences and government required goals and timetables based on race, gender or ethnicity as a means of equal opportunity." ADL approved as an exception to this policy, that "court-ordered preferential relief, including quotas, may be appropriate under the following limited conditions":

- Where there has been a long history of "systematic and egregious discrimination" and
- Where the workforce is "substantially segregated" by race, gender or ethnicity and
- Where appropriate remedies such as training, education, vigorous recruitment efforts and/or fines and penalties ordered by the court have been unsuccessful and the workforce remains substantially segregated and
- Where preferential relief is limited to a defined duration after which it must be re-evaluated.

The second resolution on private sector employment says that "in situations where there has been impaired access to a workforce by minorities and/or women resulting in a workforce which is substantially segregated, a private employer's consideration of race, gender or ethnicity as one factor in choosing among equally qualified applicants shall not be deemed a preference."

The League defined "substantially segregated" to mean instances in which "there are no representatives or only token representatives of the aggrieved class," and not situations where "the aggrieved class is merely underrepresented in relation to the population, labor pool or workforce."

Marshall B. Bass, senior vice president of RJR Nabisco, presented the \$250,000 check to UNCF. "Black colleges have produced more than half the nation's Black executives; 80 percent of the country's Black lawyers and doctors; and three-quarters of all Black Ph.D.'s and military officers," said Bass. "We want to be a partner in those kinds of achievements. And we also believe that those who do not help Blacks are guilty of helping to hold them back."

RJR Nabisco, Inc., an international consumer products corporation with headquarters in Atlanta, GA., is the parent company of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and Nabisco Brands, Inc. Well-known RJR Nabisco brands include Winston, Salem, Camel and Vantage cigarettes; Oreo cookies; Ritz and Premium crackers; Del Monte fruits and vegetables; Planters nuts and snacks; Life Savers candy; Nabisco Shredded Wheat cereals; and Fleischmann's margarine.

### Transylvania University Announces \$260,000 Minority Scholarship Program

Officials at Transylvania University have announced plans for a \$260,000 minority scholarship program to begin in the Fall term of 1988.

An anonymous gift has endowed a program that will annually provide up to four partial scholarships for minority students. The individual scholarship amounts can range up to \$4000 per year, depending on the family's financial background.

According to Dr. Charles L. Shearer, Transylvania's president, the scholarships will be need-based and both high school seniors and transfer students are eligible.

The criteria for selection will include academic performance, leadership ability, promise as a citizen, and other personal traits. Final candidates will be invited to the Transylvania campus for an interview with a selection committee.

Dr. Shearer added that candidates for the minority scholarships are also eligible to apply for other need-based or merit scholarships at Transylvania.

For additional information contact the Transylvania University Admissions Office, Lexington, Kentucky, 40508, (606) 233-8242.

Transylvania University was established in 1780 and is one of the oldest colleges in the nation. The school offers 23 majors and was recently listed one of the best colleges in the South by U.S. News & World Report and named a "Best Buy in a College Education" by the education editor of The New York Times.

### National Baptist Convention of America Presents \$50,000 to Florida Memorial College

Florida Memorial College has received a gift by the National Baptist Convention of America, fulfilling a \$50,000 commitment to quality Black higher education and excellence at the College. The Rev. Dr. J.B. Adams, pastor of St. John Baptist Church, Belle Glade, FL, representing the Rev. Dr. Edward Jones, president of the National Baptist Convention of America, recently visited officials at Florida Memorial to present the gift on behalf of the Convention.

According to Dr. Willie C. Robinson, president of the College, this is the largest single gift to Florida Memorial by its special constituency, which fulfills a commitment made by Dr. Jones to the College family nearly two years ago. "Dr. Jones is without a doubt one of the most articulate, influential, and creative Black leaders in this century. This is another example of the Convention's work, which uplifts the people that it represents," said Dr. Robinson.