

PERSPECTIVES

By McKinley Burt

**BLACK GENIUS-
WHITE COVER PART
III**

Last weeks' article under this same title certainly provoked a lot of discussion in the community, and at several schools in the district. As strangers on the bus and in the market (recognizing me from the accompanying picture) approached to comment. I was made aware of the great positive impact that **knowledge of self** can have, and I thought how much this type of input is needed for our children and youth to help counter the insidious forces that drive them to gangs in search of **self-image** and **role models**. Please listen up, you parents, teachers and counselors.

Let us examine some of the sources of the worlds wisdom as handed down to us through proverbs, folk tales and morality plays-always with **white covers**, either deliberate or assumed. From J.A. Rogers (Worlds' Great Men of Color) we have the following: "The influence of **Esop-Esop's Fables** on Western thought and morality is profound. Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Aristophanes, Solon, Cicero, Julius Caesar...Shakespeare and other great thinkers found inspiration in his words of wisdom. "Socrates spent his last days putting his fables into verse." They didn't tell us that in school, did they?

This great African thinker lived in the sixth century B.C., and according to the monk, Planudes the Great, was a "native of Asia Minor and a **Negro**...Flat-nosed, with lips thick and pendulous and a black skin from which he contracted his name (Esop being the same with Ethiop)." Sometimes, Esop is confused with another great African Sage, **Lokman** who lived 1100 B.C. Mohammed The Prophet quoted him as an authority and named the 31st chapter of the Koran after him. Among his best known fables is the following: "a rabbit, meeting a lion one day said reproachfully, I have always a great number of children while you have but one or two now and then. The lioness replied, It is true but, **my one child is a lion**."

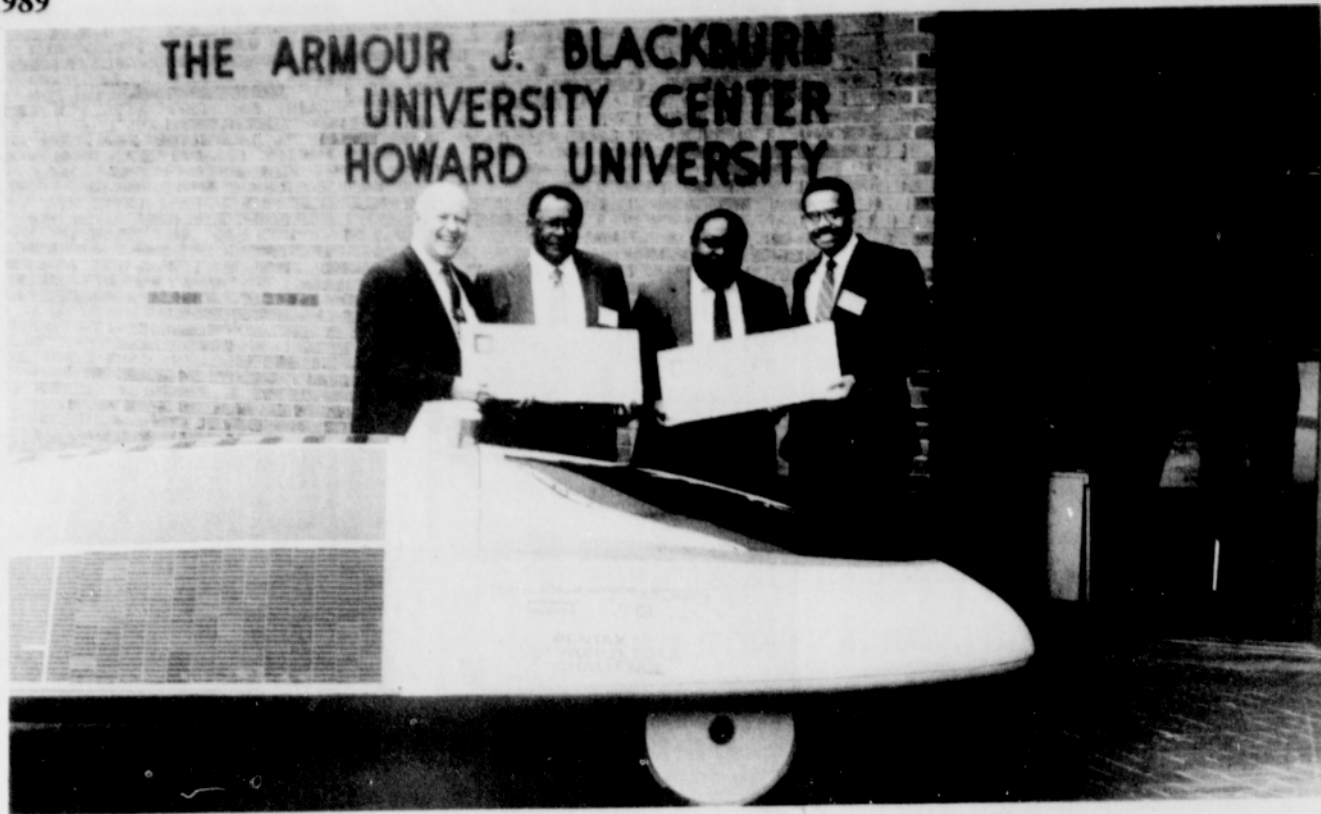
In todays' world the cover story continues. How many of our youth (or you) know the true background of Famed 88 year old **Jester Hairston**, the Black internationally known composer, conductor, choral arranger and lecturer on African-American music who (back then) graduated cumlaude from Tufts University.

This is the man who, when **Hall Johnson** became ill, took over his choir and in one month trained them to do the **Russian music** for the fabled movie, **Lost Horizon**. The Russian composer **Dimitri Tiomkin** won an **Academy Award** for the score, but Jester Hairston was never mentioned. Timomkin remained his **white cover** for the next twenty years, while the unsung Black genius worked as the Russians' conductor and arranger.

Why, then, we may ask, does **NBC** have Mr. Hairston playing the role of a no-too-bright church board member (Rolly Forbes) in the situation comedy, **AMEN?**, when the fabulous story of his life and cultural contributions provide a wealth of material for significant dramas that could portray the **real cultural contributions** of great African - Americans in music and the theatre.

The situation of Jester Hairston brings to mind the story of **Thomas Edison**, the busiest **white cover** in history. A fictionalized version appeared on Educational Channel 10 several weeks ago. Not told here was the well documented (Patents) truth of the development of the **filament** that made the **electric light bulb** possible, that Lewis Howard Latimer, the Black inventor (1848 to 1928) was the genius who made it possible. Last year **The General Electric Foundation** contributed \$25,000 toward preserving his home.

This is the same Latimer who was hired by Alexander **Graham Bell** to make enough sense out of his ideas for a **telephone** to execute the drawings for a patent. When Bell, in turn, was hired by Thomas Edison, the smart businessman, he persuaded Edison to bring Latimer aboard as the only Black member of the **Edison Pioneers**. He is well covered by Edison and it is little known that he also patented the light switch and socket, and wrote the first textbook on **The Edison Electric System**. Granville Woods, the Black inventor of **The Westinghouse Air Brake**, escaped the cover by suing Edison twice, and winning judgement in the Ohio district.



GM Presents Major Grants To Howard University

Two General Motors executives, Alfred S. Warren Jr., vice president of the industrial relations staff (pictured far left), and Roderick D. Gillum vice president and general counsel of the GM subsidiary Saturn Corp. (far right), came to Howard University recently to present checks for the first installments of major grants to the university totaling \$350,000. Receiving the checks for Howard were Dr. Roger D. Estep vice president for development and university relations (left center), and Daniel O. Bernstine, interim dean of the law school (right center). GM brought the solarpowered Sunrayer car to the ceremonies for exhibition. (Photo by Marvin Jones)

"DATELINE FREEDOM: CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE PRESS" TO BE REBROADCAST ON PUBLIC TELEVISION

WASHINGTON, D.C. Apr.13, 1989-- The critically acclaimed documentary "Dateline Freedom: Civil Rights and the Press," hosted by Washington Post writer Juan Williams, will be rebroadcast Wednesday, May 3 at 10:30 P.M. ET on PBS (Check local listings.)

Through archival footage and interviews with many of the reporters who brought this struggle to the public's attention, the half-hour program which premiered in January tells the behind-the-scenes story of how the press covered the civil rights movement. These journalists, who were mostly white, male and southern, share their recollections at a ringside seat in one of the most important movements in recent history.

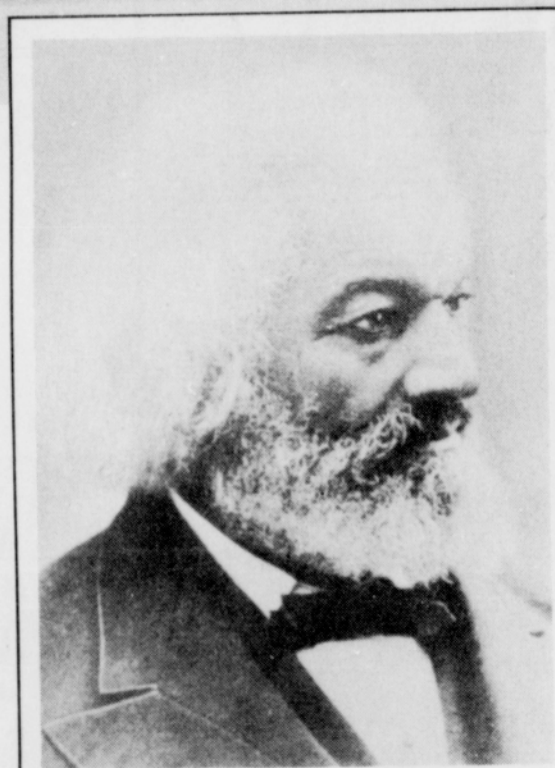
Among those interviewed in "Dateline Freedom" are: John Chancellor, Charles Quinn and Richard Valeriani NBC; Herb Kaplow of NBC, later of ABC; Robert Schakne of CBS; Newsweek's Karl Flemming; Jack Nelson of The Los Angeles Times; and Haynes Johnson of The Washington Star and later The Washington Post, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the 1965 Montgomery to Selma march

Most of the reporters interviewed thought their work made a positive contribution. According to Schakne, "Television nationalized the story." John Chancellor said of his coverage of Little Rock, "Journalism can amplify social change... and so I think we worked as an amplifier." And, Juan Williams notes, "Television seized on the civil rights movement, with its drama and its violence, and stayed with it."

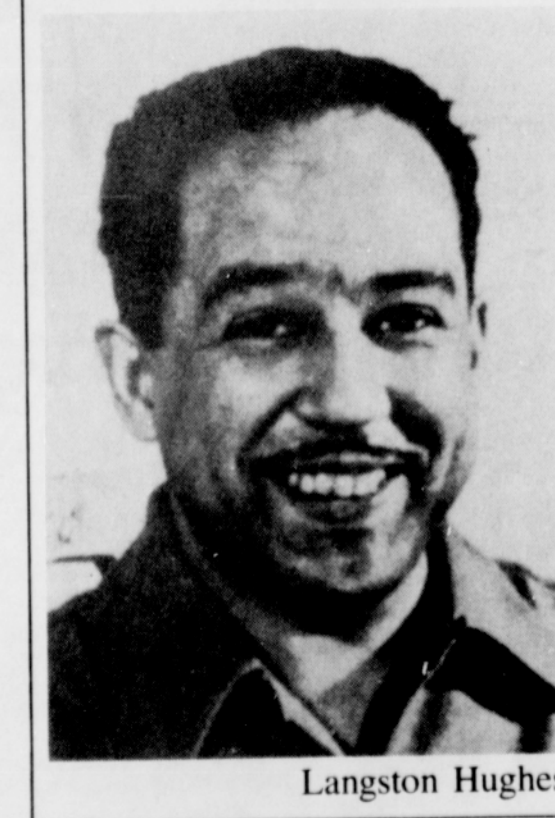
"Dateline Freedom: Civil Rights and the Press" is a production of WETA, Washington, D.C., in association with the University of Mississippi. Funding for the program is provided by the Gannett Foundation and the Times Mirror Corporation. Additional funding has been supplied by public television stations. Producer for the program is Sue Ducat. Executive producer is Ricki Green.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

CONGRESS shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the Freedom of Speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.



Frederick Douglass



Langston Hughes

Saluting The Black Press

Guardians Of Our Birthright

When the U.S. Constitution was first written, our founding fathers believed that freedom of the press was so important that it was written and guaranteed in the very first article in the Bill of Rights.

From the founding in 1847 of The North Star newspaper by Frederick Douglass to the writings of James Baldwin, newspaper reporters, authors, poets and playwrights have protected, recorded and taught black history to each successive generation.

Freedom cannot function without the free expression and communication of ideas. We salute the men and women of the Black Press and their noble profession. Perhaps Langston Hughes said it best...

"There's a dream in this land with its back against the wall. To save the dream for one, it must be saved for all."

Langston Hughes



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