

EDITORIAL / OPINION



Perspectives

Education, Part I: Should We Pay Teachers For Performance?

by Professor McKinley Burt

Well, I would think so. Every year I (and many others) pay a premium price for tickets to see the 'best' to be presented that season in performing arts. Because we pay for the best we expect the best, and we get the best—and that, friends, is more than an adage. This common thread runs throughout all our culture, from the common marketplace to the most preferred relations in professional services. I have yet for anyone to present me with any valid reason why the same time-tested (and obvious) relationship would not prevail in an educational mode.

Since this is a three-part series I will have time later to detail the hard logic and experience I would use in support of my 'you-get-what-you-pay-for' thesis. In the interim let me cite some personal experience with an 'educational excellence' from yesterday. I would advise those who clamor for a return to the classroom of cadness of that type of super-competent, super-committed pedant of old that they had better pay attention to the 'bottom line', economics!

Even the minorities with those priceless skills, expertise and empathies we so desperately need in today's classrooms can do much better in other fields. Science, industry or communication systems will pay them what they are worth. The 'giants' I cite here taught at a time when the establishment offered them little or no such opportunities. They are presented as examples of the many such we could (and should) have in our schools today—if only we were willing to pay for them. Clearly, there should not only be the basic remuneration of salaries but 'bonuses' for a demonstrated excellence "above and beyond"—the same as in many other occupations. Other institutions accomplish this type evaluation and mensuration—why can't schools?

Our stage is the segregated school system of St. Louis, Missouri some fifty years ago. Let me take you down this nostalgic road to the Charles E. Sumner High School where my memory can provide a kind of time-lapse photography. I've checked with a few old friends to be sure that I have things fairly accurate.

There was this magnificent and erudite history teacher, P.E. Davenport, whose name well-fitted his six-foot, 350 lb. bulk ("P" was for 'Patroclus', but you had better not call him that. These were the early days of ethnic pride and no 'Negro' appreciated being named after a Greek or Roman). He was in turn either intimidating and threatening, or a gentle giant—the former demeanor was necessary to maintain law and order among tenth-grade teenagers, and the calmer profile encouraged one to pursue some of the fascinating lines of inquiry opened up by this gifted teacher. One particular 'indelible' day turned around a 10 a.m. class in European history.

As was his style when he thought his 'message of the day' was of sufficient import to warrant theatrics (which was often), Mr. Davenport had staged the room with various props from the drama department—10th and 11th century England. Too big for any available replica of armor to encompass his huge bulk, he did, however, sport a home-made helmet and a great wooden sword befitting an invading Norman Knight. If you have not realized it, the Battle of Hastings (1066) was about to be fought—and in such a way that you would never forget it; not in life!

All the previous week the class material had been preparing young minds for this climactic moment. A hundred and fifty years earlier, Alfred the Great, the only Anglo-Saxon king to be called "Great," had unified England, encouraged the building of churches and monasteries and the education of clergymen. He founded schools, brought teachers into his realm from abroad, translated Latin books into Anglo-Saxon and compiled the laws of his predecessors (The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles). How could we pubescent teenagers be aware that we were being indelibly imprinted for a lifetime with the most valid of criteria for evaluating men and their deeds—leaders and dynasties? That decades later we would be able to recognize and acclaim the accomplishments of African Kingdoms and institutions that thousands of years earlier had reached the same or greater heights? The pyramids, the temple schools, the scribes, letters, mathematics, astronomy, laws, and

the arts—all that the Greeks proceeded to copy!

As in the case of many of the African empires, King Alfred of England was succeeded by weaker men, decaying institutions and finally the inevitable occurred—invasion from France! That was what the class was about this day. Davenport went into his act; he whirled, he twirled, he danced and he pranced, striking many a vicious blow upon the Anglo-Saxons. The personalities had merged—he had 'become' William The Conqueror, "Die you Saxon mongrels. Quick men, burn the villages, sack the towns, sieze the women" (giggles from the girls). "Go man" we would cry, and thoroughly inspired this fateful day, "Patroclus" leaped upon his desk, which promptly collapsed under the 350 lb. mass of frenzied flesh. To his credit he never lost a beat; reaching down, he retrieved a Ketchup-stained arrow from the eye of a slain King Harold of England (Nothing but rave reviews in the gym class that followed).

There were many other teachers at Sumner High School equally deserving of such accolades. But we should remember what I said earlier—that these teachers of excellence taught at a time when the establishment offered them no opportunity to perform in the fields for which they were so superbly equipped. People of this caliber are still around, of course, but not nearly enough in the schools. I reiterate, it is a matter of economics. Mr. Davenport had advanced degrees in European History and in Jurisprudence. I am reminded of that famous and oft-repeated quote from the "Wall Street Journal" many years ago. A white corporate executive on a transcontinental trip remarked that there were more college degrees among the Black dining car waiters than to be found at his New York office.

Later in the year Mr. Davenport in further examination of the 'Norman conquest saga revealed that it led to the development of some basic tenets of English law and civil procedures; including the establishment of Royal Courts by sending our horseback riding judges on a circuit to hold court in isolated towns (our western movies—and that nefarious rogue 'Robin Hood' who was always freed from jail by his merry men before the King's representative came by for the next 'assize'. A little later came the 'Magna Carta' and the concept of 'Eminent Domain (of the King)—the right of a ruler or political body to sieze the real property of a citizen, ostensibly for the public good (with some remuneration of course). African-Americans have suffered significant economic losses in inner-cities when this leverage has been applied in pursuit of 'Urban Renewal' projects ('Urban Removal'). I and two of my classmates can say that because of this type of thorough and dedicated teaching, we were able to pass the entrance examinations to first class law schools with flying colors—though we didn't finish high school!

(Continued Next Week . . .)

Jewish Federation Votes to Retain Name of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

At its Board meeting last night the Jewish Federation of Portland urged the city to retain the name Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

The Jewish community feels it is vital for all Americans to take inspiration from Dr. King's example and to strive for a society in which true equality of opportunity exists for all.

A letter of support and the resolution has been sent to Richard Brown, the Chairman of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Campaign.

Attached is a copy of the resolution adopted March 14, 1990, by the Jewish Federation of Portland Board of Directors.

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a great exponent of the American ideals of freedom and equality for all people; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King was cruelly cut down at the height of his powers; and

WHEREAS, it is vital for all Americans to take inspiration from Dr. King's example and to strive for a society in which true equality of opportunity exists for all; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish community and the African-American community share a long tradition of working together in the cause of civil rights in this country; and

WHEREAS, the naming of a major street in Portland in memory of Dr. King demonstrates this community's determination that the ideals for which he lived and died not be forgotten;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Portland strongly favors retaining the name Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

SPORTS/EVENTS

The Locker Room

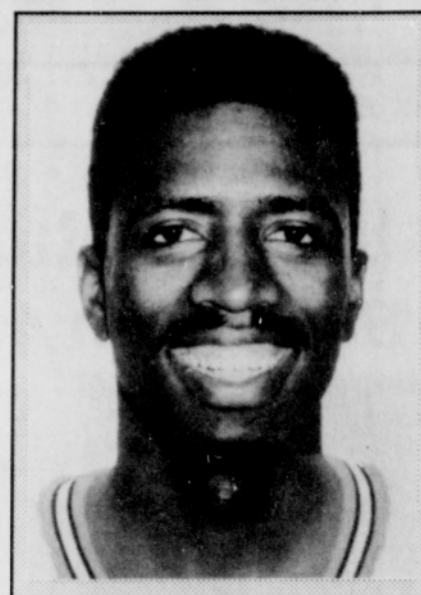
by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.



Kenny Smith: Loving Life In Atlanta

Some player in the NBA dread the ill-fated telephone call that could lead to instant unemployment or a trade. Some trades are blessings and others are nightmares. Take Kenny Smith for example, he is thrilled to be playing for the Atlanta Hawks. After five years with the Sacramento Kings, where he never played in the playoffs, he can now put an end to making early summer plans. Barcly, The Hawks are clinging to the eighth and final spot in the Eastern Conference race. Smith is very excited.

"I think anytime you get traded, you have some remorse—leaving behind your teammates, friends and a great community that you're accustomed to," he said. "But as a career opportunities go, this is a great one. And this team's attitude is a lot looser



Kenny Smith

run a basketball team," he said. "I feel more comfortable now compared to when I first arrived here. All I want to do is help the team win some games and make the playoffs."

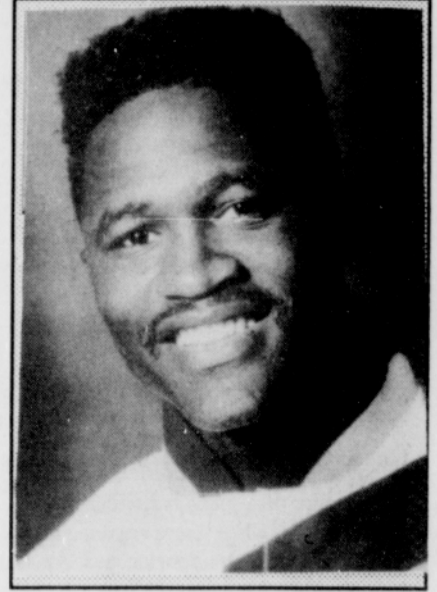
Head Coach of the Atlanta Hawks, Mike Fratello, believes strongly in Smith's abilities and sees him as a fine addition to the organization. "Kenny has always been a class act, whether it was college or in the pros," said Fratello. "He's a good floor leader and very intelligent. He has blended in real well with our system."

Depending on the game conditions, Smith has been playing up to 25 minutes per contest. His point total has dropped from 15.0 to 7.3, but the Hawks did not acquire him to shoot the ball. They want him to get it inside to Moses Malone, Dominique Wilkins, and Kevin Willis. This trio alone can average 70 shots per game. Smith is currently averaging 6.4 assist per game, almost the same total he averaged as a starter for the Kings.

"This team has been together a long time," he said. Backing up Spud Webb has been good too. He and I knew each other from college. He's been a great influence on me. He's really helped me with the various offensive sets and schemes. My job is to pass the ball and create easy opportunities for my teammates."

When questioned about who really won the Slam Dunk contest in Miami, Smith smiled and said, "No comment." The winner, Dominique Wilkins is now a teammate. Smith knows how to keep his teammates happy.

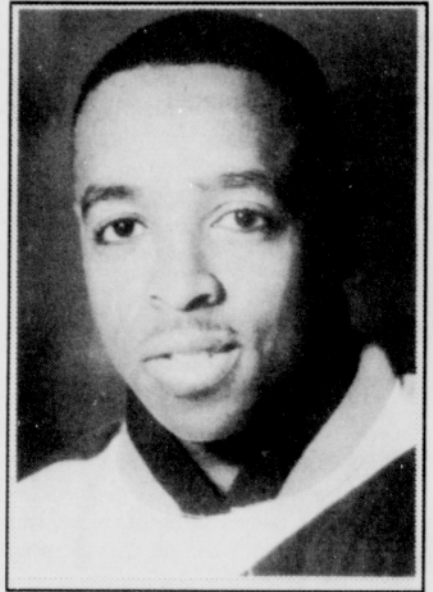
Short Shakes: The Final Four in Denver is all set and ready to tip off this weekend. UNLV vs. Georgia Tech in the first contest and Arkansas vs. Duke immediately afterwards. How are you hoop junkies doing in your office NCAA Basketball pool? Well, I picked UNLV to win on one of my two sheets. I took a beating like most people, but the second sheet gave me a new lease on life. One took into consideration upsets and the other coaching . . . Loyola Marymount University recent performance in the NCAA Tournament should remind all people to keep chasing your dream, regardless of the outcome. There are great lessons to be learned in defeat . . . Aside from the Detroit Pistons, the Phoenix Suns have been the hottest team in the NBA since the start of 1990. The acquisition of Kurt



Dominique Wilkins

"Superman" Rambis from Charlotte changed their soft image and made the Suns stronger in the rebounding/defense department . . . Atlanta, with Moses Malone and Dominique Wilkins are in town to take on the Blazers tonight. Get a ticket if you can . . . What do Kenny Carr, Adrain Branch, Sidney Lowe, Adrain Dantley, CBS's James Brown, and Danny Ferry, to name a few, have in common? All are from the Washington, D.C. area and played basketball at Dematha High School . . .

Believe It or Not: Tyrone Bogues, Charlotte; David Wingate, San Antonio; Reggie Lewis, Boston; and Reggie Williams, San Antonio, all played on the same high school team. Each were also first round NBA picks coached by former U. of Maryland Coach Bob Wade at Dunbar High in Baltimore, Md.



Anthony Webb

than I expected. You've got guys here who are able to turn on the intensity in an instant, which I like."

Smith was traded by Kings three days after he finished second to Dominique Wilkins in the Gatorade Slam Dunk Championship at the NBA All-Star game in Miami. In exchange for Antoine Carr and Setric Toney, Smith and Michael Williams were sent packing. The Hawks, plagued by early injuries to their back court, needed Smith to add some offensive punch off the bench and quality point guard. Smith admits, that the adjustment on the court was a lot tougher than off the court. A former All-American at the University of North Carolina, he is at home in the south and closer to his immediate family.

"It's real tough for a point guard to come in during the middle of the season and

Big Time Boxing Returns to the Northwest

Thad Spencer, a former no. 1 heavyweight contender for the world and last man to sign to fight Muhammad Ali before Ali lost his title, and who began his professional career right here in the Northwest, is back to promote boxing.

Since 1983, Thad Spencer has applied for a promoter's license in Oregon, but has been turned down. He is licensed and does promote boxing events in California. He has promoted George Foreman and the highly sought-after Olympian, Roy Jones, Jr., of Pensacola, Florida. Thad, however, is finally getting his long-awaited chance to promote fights in his home town. Following a meeting held on March 17 with Bruce Anderson, head of the Oregon Athletic Commission, Thad will go before the Commission on Monday, March 26, at 10:00 a.m., along with Cardell Blockson (a former boxer and now a businessman and owner of Neicey's Restaurant and Lounge)

Blazer Clash With San Antonio Added To Cable Schedule

The Portland Trail Blazers have announced that their Sunday, April 8, home game against the San Antonio Spurs has been added to the Blazer Cable broadcast schedule, replacing the March 29 contest with the Atlanta Hawks.

"The San Antonio game has been added to the Blazer Cable schedule due to overwhelming demand to see David Robinson and the Spurs, and because of the impact the game will have on the Western Conference playoffs," said J.R. Hellman, coordinating producer/cable operations manager for the Trail Blazers.

The Trail Blazers, 43-18, currently own the fourth-best record in the NBA and the third-best mark in the Western Conference. San Antonio, 39-20, trails Portland by three games in the race for playoff position. The Blazers have defeated the Spurs in two meetings already this season. After winning in San Antonio, 108-104, on Nov. 8, Portland turned the Spurs away, 109-103, Jan. 26 at Memorial Coliseum. That matchup was the third most popular Blazer pay-per-view broadcast this season.

Following that announcement, Thad Spencer plans to stage a double Title Northwest Heavyweight Championship main event featuring former Jr. Olympic Champion and current Light Heavyweight Contender, Marcellus Allen. This will be Marcellus' first fight, and Thad says he is here to "Guide Marcellus back into the the Light

title picture." Also on that card will be "One of the best up and coming heavyweights I've seen in a long time," namely Terry 'The Terminator' Davis, out of Vallejo, Calif. with a pro record of 21-0-02 and a convincing knockout power punch. "This is what Portland has not seen for a long time - pro boxing at its best."

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Letters to the Editor

Issue of Re-Naming Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

To the Editor:
Here we are once again working on the issue of re-naming Martin Luther King Blvd. Many are still working on using the new name consistently and this prospective change back does not help.

I am in favor of keeping the name Martin Luther King Blvd., and so is the Sabin Community Association, which reaffirmed its decision of 23 January 1989 by a unanimous vote on 12 January 1990.

It is time to introduce some historical fact into a dispute in which each new development obscures preceding developments. An unfortunate complication is presented by the media, which either distorts or misrepresents facts, or allows distortion or misrepresentation of the facts to stand when reporting the views of the disputants.

An example of this occurred soon after City Council voted to name the former Union Ave. after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was stated that no local neighborhoods were in favor of the name change. This was not true, as attention to the above dates reveals. And this is a crucial issue in the current dispute, which uses the pretext that due process was not followed. In fact, due process was followed. The Martin Luther King Street Naming Committee approached City Council and were told, appropriately, to go to the local Neighborhood Associations. Sabin Community, for one, can affirm that the Committee did just that. Having secured favorable input from the local neighbors, the Committee returned to City Council, which decided the issue in favor of the name change. Clearly, the charge that City Council pulled a fast one behind the backs of local residents and ignored due process is false.

Also at issue is the selection of Union Ave. Many now say that its prostitution and drug activity, its ravaged business properties, make the former Union Ave. unworthy to bear Dr. King's name. These same people will say, "Front ave would have been more suitable." Where were these people when the Committee began its work? Front Ave. was considered, and dropped because there was no support, and no possibility that local businesses would agree to the name change. This exposes another pretext, that of, "just not this street." The list of streets not to use

appears to include every street in Portland.

Oh yes, Union Ave. is "historic." Expert opinion has it that Front Ave. is even more "historic." Up to now, "due process," "lousy choice," and "historic" protests can be did posed of readily. Some of the underlying motives in the dispute are not so easy to detect or to oppose, inasmuch as it is difficult to oppose a covert agenda. This dispute is pregnant with hidden agendas.

The greatest share of the street in question lies within the North and Northeast quarter, an area which has been ghetto-ized by Portland residents, government and financial institutional throughout living memory.

This area still lags behind the rest of the metropolitan area in economic opportunity and police services, to name just two gaps. I don't believe that the fact that the bulk of Portland's African-American population resides in this quarter, while the area is the poorest and most lacking in services is any coincidence. Well, Portland, why can't you continue to shower us with your benign neglect and at least allow us to name our own streets?

Further, given the location of the street, the entire West side is not affected and has no right to a vote, while only about 25% of Southeast precincts would be affected, and therefore entitled to a vote.

We think many people who are involved in the change-back effort are not racist, although the leaders are. Most people are unaware of the facts about the name change and the process, and the racist leaders are cynically using their ignorance to manipulate them.

Another of the covert agendas we see at work is that of punishing the mayor and the city council for other actions of theirs which offended many residents. If you fall into this camp, consider; do you really want to get at Clark and co. by trampling on the rights of North/Northeast residents to name our streets and facilities after those whom we honor?

Finally, to the Husses: we are calling your bet and raising. We think Martin Luther King Convention Center has a nice ring to it, don't you?

The Sabin Community Association
Terri Hanley, Secretary