



# EDITORIAL / OPINION



## Civil Rights Journal

## Perspectives

Soon and very soon, Anglo or white Americans numerically will become a minority group in the United States of America. This prediction is based on current domestic patterns and rates of birth and immigration. Time magazine in a cover story entitled "America's Changing Colors" stated, "In the 21st Century--and that's not far off--racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. will outnumber whites for the first time. The browning of America will alter everything in society, from politics and education to industry, values and culture."

While it is not clear how the structures and values of American society will be changed in the future as the result of the United States becoming a non white majority nation, it is clear that change will occur. A change in the percentage or the proportion of the racial and ethnic population of this nation does not automatically mean an increase in the degree of political and economic empowerment of racial and ethnic communities in the nation.

For Time magazine to do such an extensive cover story on this subject, it

indicates the increasing concern and in some corners, increasing anxiety about these dramatic demographic changes in every section of the country. There are those who are fearful and there are those who are hopeful. Our point is to emphasize the opportunities that these inevitable changes will provide. This nation will have a greater opportunity to become more multi-racial and multi-cultural. This should be seen as a blessing rather than a curse.

Another opportunity is that the movement and struggle for racial justice for all people should have a higher national priority. Thus, at a time now when overt racism and racial violence is still increasing across the nation, there must be a greater attention given now to challenging all forms of racism and racial discrimination. If not, then this society is in for the most difficult period in its history.

Today, already one out of every four persons in the U.S. defines himself or herself as being non white. Soon more than half of all persons in the nation will be non white. For example, by the year

2020, the non white population of the U.S. will have doubled to more than 115 million persons.

We would issue a caution, however, concerning the possibility of deliberate efforts of the power forces of this society orchestrating racial and ethnic conflicts in order to insure that those in power stay in power in the future. Will the United States be faced with a situation similar to what is now happening in the Soviet Union in regard to inter-ethnic conflict? Will the U.S. institute or legislate apartheid-like measures to insure white minority economic control? Or will this nation provide leadership before the global community in its redistribution of power and wealth to serve the ends of justice and human dignity? We all should be involved in answering these questions.

In the final analyses the "browning of America" is more than a question of numbers and percentages. It is rather an ultimate question of justice, fairness, freedom and morality. We see the "browning of America" as a blessing in a colorful disguise.

### Education IV: What Are We Testing For?

by Professor McKinley Burt

Never end a sentence with a preposition (as above) even if it seems to really make the point (never split an infinitive as I just did). In either case someone may conclude that you are not "intelligent." And never fail to identify a three-legged stool as the odd-ball concept in a set of otherwise conventional artifacts; the fact that some of the chairs in your ghetto home are short one leg is no excuse if you SAT is being graded. Never score low on this or any other "I.Q." test, for that fact may haunt you through life. These three types of cognitive non sequiturs have loomed high in the baggage of the assessment fraternity that monitors the scholastic behavior of American youth.

There is one thing for sure, one thing only. Any test tests your ability to perform well on that particular test. A consideration of whether that fact is important or not is where the fun begins. As we examine these concepts, please read as a companion piece my "Immigration" article on the front page of this newspaper (preferably do that first). There, I use the respective test performances of Blacks and of several generations of white immigrants to refute the "spurious" nature of U.S. Army conclusions based upon statistics from the testing of recruits in 1980: "A genetic disability was responsible for the shockingly low scores of Blacks and Hispanics when compared to those of whites."

In the operative sense it doesn't matter what the heck it is that a SAT measures--the point is that in the real world it is a fact that most (not all) students who score high do very well in their

college careers, and further, where they have been tracked, earn much more over their working years. Under pressure from minority and women's organizations (NAACP, Urban League, The Center for Women Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.) many major colleges and Universities have at least stated that they are no longer looking at SAT scores as a sole criteria for admission, but now evaluate on the basis of a mix. "These days we place more emphasis on straight forward achievement tests which measure what a pupil has learned in such core courses as history, physics, or foreign languages. We find these test (SAT) very reliable in predicting future performance. We also evaluate a student's participation in extra-curricular activities whether a club related to a subject matter, or something that indicates above average success at socialization."

We cannot know to what extent college administrators are doing this--and we note that the "socialization processes" may mitigate against many Black students (and whites) who must work. The February/March edition of Dollars and Sense magazine has an excellent article describing a computer program that trains Black students to perform better on SAT tests. The article begins with the usual depreciation of the validity of such test--an approach almost universal in relevant literature originating with Blacks. I agree the "inherent fallibility" of the tests (loaded against minorities, and they may or may not measure "intelligence" in any particu-



lar case). However, I already have pointed out a fact of the real world: A low score on a SAT or any other test purported to measure intelligence/reasoning may haunt one throughout life--from college (if you get in), to the economics of your career earnings and retirement. The College Board, the research arm of the Educational Testing Service kept track of test scores by seven ethnic groups. In 1988 the group scoring highest on the combined Math and Verbal SAT was white males, followed in order by Asian males, white females, Latin American males, Native American males, Mexican males, Native American females, Latin American females, Puerto Rican males, Mexican females, Black males, Puerto Rican females and Black females.

That is what they're telling the world. Read my front page article again and then think about it. Think long and hard--then see if you can come up with a better answer. Is this genocide or isn't it?

Continued next week.



### To Be Equal

by John E. Jacob

#### Putting Black Youth On the College Track

Finally, some long overdue good news about African American college attendance rates.

The U.S. Department of Education says that Black enrollment in independent colleges and universities rose seven percent between 1986 and 1988. that follows a 5 1/2 percent drop between 1982 and 1986.

Whether the rise represents a new, upward trend in African American college enrollment, or just a blip on the longer-term downward trend line remains to be seen.

And it remains to be seen whether institutions reporting higher African American enrollments will ensure that those young people do well in college and graduate. Too often institutions work harder to recruit entering freshmen than to making sure they graduate.

But I'm optimistic for a number of reasons, especially the fact that the rise in enrollments has been most striking in the historically black colleges and universities--institutions known for combining quality education with a nurturing environment that helps students reach their full potential.

If I'm right, then we can finally reverse the decline in African American college attendance that's occurred despite the big jump in the numbers of Blacks graduating from high school.

Heavy federal budget cuts in student

aid and work-study programs helped account for that troubling decline. Those cuts, and the federal policy shift from aid to loans, have not been reversed, but the numbers are getting better.

Why? My guess is that the African American community's concerns about education and the tremendous efforts made by individuals and community-based groups are beginning to pay off.

The word has reached our young people that they can't get very far without staying in school to get the skills they'll need in a very competitive job market.

Community institutions are providing after-school study centers, counseling that raises aspirations, and other assistance to help young people stay on the right track.

While the highly-vaunted school reform movement has largely bypassed inner city schools, such community involvement has begun to payoff in positive changes.

Some programs implemented as part of the National Urban League's Education Initiative, for example, have reduced dropout rates, while others have helped local colleges to guarantee freshman places for local high school graduates.

Another example of grass-roots involvement is the growth of mentoring. Last month, The Commonwealth

Fund released the results of a nationwide survey of high school students and their mentors that indicated the great impact the practice has had.

Students said that their mentor's advice was important to them in making career choices, in staying off drugs, and in improving their grades.

Their mentors inspired them to try harder, to raise their goals, and to develop the self-confidence they need for success.

That survey tells us what we already know from experience--that one-on-one mentoring bringing students together with adults is a valuable way to help keep young people on the right track.

The spread of mentoring in inner city schools and the increasing involvement of African American adults and professionals is probably an important factor in the reported boost in college attendance.

Individual involvement--whether through mentoring or other means--will be crucial to raising our kids' aspirations.

So will a change in federal education policies that improve the schools and provide young people with the assistance they need to get post-secondary training, whether in college or in technical schools.

#### USDA Identified 560

#### Jobs For Students of 1890 Institutions

Washington--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has identified 560 positions to be filled by students of the 17 historically Black 1890 institutions in its second annual USDA/1980 summer intern program.

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Jack C. Parnell said the program provides minority students with an excellent chance to sample the many careers opportunities at USDA. "These summer jobs can help make minority students aware of the many rewarding and fulfilling careers available with USDA," Parnell said. "We hope they will then decide to pursue careers in agriculture when they graduate."

The summer jobs are with 22 USDA agencies at locations throughout the country. Parnell said a wide variety of jobs are available, including laboratory aides, bio-technicians, fire crewmembers, computer assistants, and civil engineers.

Last year, 330 minority students were employed in the USDA/1890 summer intern program. Comments from students in the 1989 program indicated the summer employment with USDA provided them with valuable training and experience, and successfully communicated USDA's interest in recruiting minority students for permanent employment.

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

#### North/Northeast Business Boosters to Host Candidates Forum

Candidates for the Portland City Council and the Multnomah County Commission have been invited to attend a 12:00 p.m. luncheon meeting Tuesday, May 8, sponsored by the North/Northeast Business Boosters at the Best Western Aladdin Inn at the Coliseum, 10 N. Weidner St. The public is invited to attend and take part in the meeting. Luncheon cost is \$10.00. For more information or reservations please call the Booster office, 284-3093. This is one of several events provided by the Boosters to increase awareness of significant issues in the Northeast community.

#### Volunteers Aid United Way Funding Requests

Three members of the Black community are working with others in the community to determine United Way funding requests from member agencies for the 1990-1991 fiscal year.

Included in this group are: Raymond Barber Jr., health/aid to handicapped track committee;

Albert Gaines, multi-service/emergency track committee; Denise S. Walker, family/mental health/children's service track committee

These volunteers have been meeting for the last few months to hear reports on approximately 400 programs under consideration for United Way funding. These programs focus on such items as child care, hunger, high-risk pregnancy and delinquency, and provide services for youth, families and the elderly.

#### "Reach for Success" Visitation Day Set April 21

Nearly 300 people across Ore-

gon are expected to participate in the fourth annual "Reach for Success" visitation day for middle school students of color and their parents. Saturday, April 21, at the University of Oregon.

The free program is designed to encourage Native American, African American, Chicano/Latino and Asian/Pacific American students to consider higher education as an option, according to Dianna Kale, intergroup relations coordinator in the UO Office of Multicultural Affairs.

For more information on this "hands-on" introduction to university life, call Dianna Kale, 314 Oregon Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403 or call 246-3479 or toll free (in Oregon) 1-800-BE-A-DUCK.

#### Portland Starts "RoundUp" of Kindergarten Students

Portland School District has begun "rounding up" next September's kindergarten students.

The annual Kindergarten Roundup involves 61 elementary schools in early registrations of an estimated 4,200 students for half-day and all-day programs.

Designed to aid enrollment projections and planning for the coming year, the two-week roundup runs through April 27.

Parents actually may enroll kindergartners at any time from next Monday through the start of school on Sept. 4.

Kindergarten students must be five years old on or before Sept. 1 and have proper immunizations.

#### Tri-Met Will Offer Free Rides

All rides on Tri-Met will be free on Friday, April 20. Tri-Met has declared the free-fare Friday "Clean Air Day" to kick-off Oregon's Earth Day celebration and to thank loyal transit passen-

gers for the role they play in keeping the air clean.

"Tri-Met's success in more than doubling its ridership over the last 20 years sets an example for the rest of the country that a clean environment and a healthy economy can go hand in hand," Congressman Les AuCoin said. AuCoin suggested the fare-free Friday.

#### Portland's Summer School Registration Started!

Students began registering for "Summer" summer-school programs offering enrichment, academic and remedial courses.

Elementary programs, for those now enrolled in kindergarten through grade eight: June 25-July 20 at eight sites.

Secondary programs, for those now enrolled in grades 9-12: June 25 to Aug. 3 at four sites.

Students residing in the Portland School District pay \$70 per elementary, \$90 for secondary tuition. Non residents pay \$120 for elementary, \$140 for secondary tuition. Tuition is free per certain economic and academic guidelines. Information is available at neighborhood schools.

#### Mental Health Center to Hold Annual Board Meeting

The Center for Community Mental Health will be holding their Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors on April 24 at Bethel A.M.E. Church (5828 NE 8th) at 6:45 pm.

The evening's highlights include a speech by Gladys McCoy, Chair of the Board of commissioners and an award presentation to Jeanne Hartzog for outstanding contributions in mental health and the community. The public is welcome.

Call The Portland Observer at 288-0033 or come by to drop off a short release on your upcoming event in the N/NE Community.

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