

"You've Got The Right One, Baby!"



The one and only Ray Charles, second from right, accepts congratulations following his receipt of the NAFEO Leadership Award in Sight and Sound during the recent 16th National conference on Blacks in Higher Education at the Washington, D.C. Hilton Towers. With him are, from left, Sam Hall, Manager, Community Programs, Pepsi-Cola Co., Dr. Samuel L. Myers, President of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), an organization representing the nation's 117 black colleges and universities, and Dr. Frederick S. Humphries, Chairman, NAFEO and President of Florida A & M University. Accepting the award, Charles said: "My mother inspired us to learn all that we could possible learn. She said that the knowledge you have in your head cannot be taken away from you." Charles ended with a line from his award-winning Diet Pepsi commercial: "You've got the right one, baby!"

To Honor a Hero!



Lt. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., U.S.A.F. (Ret.), National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB) Lifetime Achievement Awardee, second from left, joins supporters during the awards dinner reception at the Sheraton Washington Hotel. With him are, from left, George Knox III, Vice President, Public Affairs, Philip Morris Companies Inc., who made the presentation, Clarence Smith, President, Essence Communications, Augustus F. Hawkins, recently retired U.S. representative from Los Angeles and Hon. Percy Sutton, former Chairman, Inner City Broadcasting. Davis commanded the heroic 332nd Fighter Group-the Tuskegee Airman-during World War II and later became the first Black to become a General in the U.S. Air Force. An association of 200 Black-owned radio and television stations, NABOB is also honored: Sutton, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA); retired U.S. Rep. Augustus R. Hawkins; Ms. Suzanne de Passe; Tom Draper and A.G. Gaston.

Stephanie Stokes-Oliver: A Down Sister

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lot of stamina to decide not to assimilate or crossover. Now days, you don't have to be black...you can just decide not to deal with the brothers and sisters," said Stokes-Oliver during her luncheon speech (Sat.) at the Oregon Convention Center, where she was the keynote speaker.

Stokes-Oliver, who joined Essence in 1978 as the editor of the Contemporary Living department, is responsible for the day-to-day editorial management of the magazine. Working closely with the editor-in-chief, she also sets editorial policy, procedures and makes long rang plans for the publication. In 1984, she relocated to her hometown of Seattle, WA, assumed the title of West Coast editor, and became editor of the Mothering section. She transferred back to the New York City office in 1986.

Formerly the fashion and beauty editor with Glamour magazine, Stokes-Oliver once had strong reservations about working in white media, but after consulting with longtime mentor/friend Tony Brown, the founder of the Howard University School of Communications and host/producer of Tony Browns Journal, she decided to go for it. She had her reasons.

"He told me to just go work for the best and learn all that I could from that company. See what makes them a success and then come back to a black company and make them successful", she said. "Today, we need to come back to black companies and start some new ones of our own." As a youngster, Stokes-Oliver knew that she would be an editor of a magazine. Many people who were associated with her during those days are not surprised by the great success she's had over the years.

"When I told my parents that I wanted to be a magazine editor, they told me that they didn't know any of them", she said. "Meaning that they didn't know anyone within their circle of doctors, lawyers, etc...but there were heroes for me like Ida B. Wells, Fredrick Douglass, John H. Johnson, James Russworm, and Marcus Garvey." Today, she can add her name to the list.

Essence, which targets Black women, addresses issues on family stability, money, health/health care, self-esteem, relationships, and much more, including feature stories and other information relevant to Black people. As far as relationships were concerned, Stokes-Oliver questioned whether the journalists at the conference were as serious about their relationships as they were about their jobs.

"In these recessionary and stressful times, there is no room for jive-time relationships," she said. "We need strong parents and two working parents. We sometimes have to swallow our pride and try to be nurturing or nurture our relationships for everyone's sake. We need that support system. It's not about looking for a man to fulfill your life or looking for a woman to be your mother. You have to be equal partners today."

Stokes-Oliver could not emphasize enough the importance of Black people feeling good about their accomplishments as professionals and as a race. "You should remember that you're not even suppose to be free, much less successful. Everytime you show up at work, you're thumbing your nose up (to oppression and making your ancestors frown). You've learned to read and write just like them. We have degrees just like they have degrees. We may

not be running the world, but at least we're up off our knees", she said.

Stokes-Oliver encourages Black people to look for substance instead of style. She contends that Black people miss the point, sometimes. "No one asked what type of car Ralph Bunch drove or the type of designer suit Dr. Martin Luther King wore. Get your insides in order and your direction clear," she urged.

Stephanie Oliver-Stokes has vision, her direction clear, and her insides in order as evident by the quick jaunt she made to Seattle after her participation in the conference was over. Before flying back to New York City, she went home to attend church services with her parents. "Family is very important," she said.

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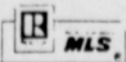
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