

Back To The Ranch; If It's Still There

BY PROF MCKINLEY BURT

As many of us, black, white and other, spin out of Black History Month, we find that some have "renewed their roots, reinforced their psyche or paid their respects to minorities for another year." Others are just glad to get their classrooms and assembly halls "back to basics." Now, where is the "Portland Observer" in this scheme of things? Where should it be?

The establishment media is not going to be of much help, not with its flurry of mixed, misleading and emotional signals. "Abu Dhabi to settle some BCCI Claims," or how about "Clinton tells Black voters He's The Most Qualified." The ones I really like are the updates on President Bush's HOME IN TAX-FREE TEXAS, Suite 271 in the Houstonian Hotel. Though he only spent three nights there in 1991, the Maine People's Alliance says the scam is "not illegal, but we think it's sleazy."

Bear with me now, somewhere in this potpourri of a media mix are the substantive issues that need to be addressed by African Americans. Now several weeks ago I dealt with the derailment or modification of two key national programs designed to place this nation in a lead position in science and technology by the turn of the century: "Education 2000 and Work Force 2000." There will be much more to come on these. Anticipate some dis-

ussion on the following announcement: "Higher Education Bill Passes; Pell Grants will now have a \$42,000 maximum family income limit and individual grants will top out at \$4800." In addition schools whose students have had a serious repayment problem will be cut from the program. It occurs most immediately that there are a number of constraints other than financial upon a number of youth who would formerly be considered college bound. There is the declining economic situation of the state systems of higher education, as in Oregon where enrollment has been capped or reduced.

Additionally, when the cold waves of reality finally washed over the avid proponents of Omnibus education and work force "2000" projects, these missionaries were abruptly faced with the fact that the only technological learning structure which could deal with youth at the math and language literacy level of our kids was the COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM. Even here there is a mountain of remedial work to be done until science and math are sufficiently integrated into the lower grades (That alone will take until the turn of the century--that magic date of 2000 forecast by dreamers or charlatans for the U.S. to gain international technical leadership).

There is much that can be done to further an improved educational process, an effort that will require several

decades of concentrated effort and commitment. It is difficult to understand why we still have so many educated (and uneducated) who conform to a Holy Grail that everyone must pursue a straitlaced, unbroken educational path from Head Start to Pomp and Circumstance at about age 22 or 23. And who believe any deviation from the process constitutes a failure of either the individual or the system. A concerned American industry (Associated Oregon Industries included) has made it quite clear that they are first concentrating on obtaining a vastly improved HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE and then Community College products with Technology Certificates (2 years) or who have completed RETRAINING.

In the 1970's, coming from industry to a teaching position at Portland State University, I was able to see the handwriting on the wall quite early on. I was able to quite successfully adopt and modify the educational time line of many students, white and black, who were in consequence enabled to survive economically and emotionally--and, eventually, gain their higher degree, all within the context of REALITY. As a matter of fact I am on the Board of Directors of a Beaverton Corporation whose CEO is a former student from this period.

I will continue with this important concept next week.

ALONG THE COLOR LINE

Mike Tyson vs. The Morals Of Our Movement

BY DR. MANNING MARABLE

One of the central tenets of the struggle for freedom in African-American history was the idea that what was politically necessary also had to be morally uplifting. From Frederick Douglass to Malcolm X, the ends never justified the means. Ethical behavior toward each other was an important feature of the African-American community. The violence of Black vs. Black crime and the peddling of drugs to innocent children were denounced as socially destructive behaviors which have to be expelled from the Black community, if it is to survive.

However, during the recent rape trial of former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson, disturbing trends developed within the national African-American community. Some compared Tyson's prosecution unfavorably to the acquittal of William Kennedy Smith in last year's controversial rape trial. Others complained that the behavior and motives of Tyson's victim were "highly questionable." Why would Desiree Washington, an intelligent woman who had been crudely propositioned by Tyson earlier in the day, willingly go back to his hotel room in the middle of the night? Black Baptist ministers clustered and prayed for the Black pugilist in his hour of need.

With Tyson's conviction, some of these sentiments assumed ugly dimensions. A Black student newspaper in New York City declared that the young woman raped by Tyson "willingly went to his hotel room to win his fame and fortune, but realized that a one night

stand would not have been enough." Tyson's conviction was "a grave injustice to the whole Black community," because the "loss of another Black role model means the imprisonment and death of many of our Black youth."

At some Black radio stations, telephone calls ran at least five to one in favor of Tyson and against the woman he had raped. Many of the callers supporting Tyson were Black women. Some argued that the woman's decision to enter a man's bedroom voided any right she held to claim that she had been sexually violated. The same attitude could be observed on the streets. In Los Angeles several days ago, I witnessed Black young adults--male and female alike--wearing sweatshirts which protested the Tyson rape conviction in bold letters. In vulgar, sexist language, the shirts proclaimed: "The b---- set me up!"

Enough is enough. On this issue, we must draw a line. To stand with Mike Tyson is to stand for everything Black freedom struggle has been against.

No man has a right to rape any woman, no matter what the situation or context. When people argue that the woman shouldn't have gone to his hotel room, our response must be "So What?" People who use poor judgement deserve to be raped? There are no excuses for criminal behavior and the evidence indicates that Tyson was indeed guilty of rape.

Within the African-American community, we need to discuss the social destructiveness against the Black male within society. Our young men are bom-

barded by values and images of violence, vulgarity and self-hatred within the popular culture. In rap music, Black women are routinely described as "bitches" and "ho's." On NWA albums, there are titles such as "Findum, F--um, and Flee." Given this social conditioning and sexism, is it surprising that too many young males make the connection between violence and sexuality?

We must challenge the glamorization of male brutality, the concept that males with status, money and power of whatever race can act in ways which are destructive to women. By placing Tyson on a pedestal, by ignoring the evidence and accepting this brutality against one of our sisters, we are embracing that same violence against our daughters, mothers and ourselves. Instead of projecting a vision of humanity which enriches the spirit, we devalue and de-grade ourselves.

No doubt, Black men suffer disproportionately from the violence and discrimination of the political and criminal justice system. Racism is alive and well, limiting Black males' economic opportunities. But the pain of oppression doesn't justify violence against another person. Tyson is guilty, and for the sake of our own humanity, we must draw the line.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of Political Science and History, University of Colorado, Boulder. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 220 publications internationally and a radio version is broadcast by more than 50 stations.



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Magazines Seeks Information on Black Art Galleries

Black Spots, a seven-year-old Black culture magazine, is compiling a directory of Black-owned art galleries and seeks information.

"We're looking for historical and contemporary data about Black-owned art galleries including the first one founded, and the oldest continuously operated one," says publisher Cynthia E. Griffin.

Griffin adds that galleries included in the directory can feature the works of artists of local, regional, national or international note and must be more than a retail art outlet.

"We want galleries that mount exhibits at least two times a year in their

own space or at another location. They should also be a place where people can buy or just look" stresses Griffin, adding that the galleries must be at least 50 percent Black owned.

Gallery owners interested in being included in the directory should send the name, address, phone number, hours of operation, the number of exhibits held each year and a brief description of the works featured, says Griffin. Also include the year the gallery opened.

March 15 is the deadline to submit information to: Black Spots at 1283 S. La Brea Ave., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90019. Fax to: (213) 296-5399. For information, call (213) 938-0101.

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