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THANK YOU FOR READING
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Health Care, Education And Science Programs: Getting Around The System

BY PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

I wish to thank my readers for their informed response to this series on African American contributes to medicine and the health sciences. In case you didn't know, it really makes a writer's day when those calls and letters indicate that this newspaper has made a valuable contribution of its own—to parents and operators of programs dedicated to the motivation and education of our youth.

Where to start? First, we will comment on that community interest-before furnishing some more relevant history. While I appreciate the citations of a number of my own pioneering efforts in using novel means to secure more medical education opportunities for black youth, I am still unhappy because my African American "friends" and those knowledgeable in the field never called or offered support for several highly publicized programs. Those efforts could certainly have used more resources and could have reached an even broader constituency. Fortunately, many whites picked up the slack; people of no more means than ourselves who helped with paper work, transportation.

I mention this because at the present time I have identified several vacant "evolutionary niches" in the development of educational resources for African Americans in the fields of medicine and health care. At the same time I am hearing from grassroots people in the community who complain that they have both energies and commitment, but are shut out of the process. I say to them "tell me about it; I, too call those whom you refer to as community wheeler dealers or Talking Heads on the cable channels". How well they have learned "Old massas" jargon, e.g. "B.S."

As busy as I am in the development of my own new programs in the medical, science and math fields (funding guaranteed), I, nevertheless, gathered a group of these "real People"

together recently and explained to them the innovative and "independent" techniques I used to launch my two largest successful medical education programs. "At Portland State University I became aware of the resources available because I consistently read out-of-town newspapers, looking for new ideas. I secured a \$100,000 grant simply by calling up Los Angeles (\$3.60) and gaining the support of two female African American doctors who were operating a federally funded medical education program. They were delighted that others were interested."

At this point it was absolutely necessary to get across to my group that I have never answered a "RFP" or a "Request For Proposal." That is, the usual way a grant is gotten is that a federal agency related to health, education, transportation, etc. determines that there is a specific public need in their field and resident experts within that agency (usually Washington, D.C.) will design a program tailored to achieve the objective. These programs and the amount of funding available are listed in the "Federal Register" along with information on where to obtain a "Request For Proposal." A person or organization wishing to obtain such a grant is automatically in competition with all others in the country who must complete this voluminous document in order to qualify (the same procedure for private foundation).

I pointed out to my little group (relevant to their own situation) that the reason I never sent in a "RFP" was that the experts in the agencies always specify academic and experience criteria that match their own e.g. Physician, nurse, engineer, mathematician, career scientists, advanced degrees and so forth. In other words, these people believe that only their peer group has competency in the given field. Never mind that their "peer group" has never been mentally alert enough to even recognize that the

problem existed.

I break it down to them: "So what I do folks, is innovate (Black Inventors). I read the urban script, identify the problem, design a remedial structure, sell and involve key people with the required academics and 'real time' expertise; then launch a mini-program with my own meager resources, ten dollars for incorporation, and some loaned-executive people from any organization that is going to benefit from my initiatives. This anization that is going to benefit from my initiatives. This has worked like a charm, going back to The Dalles, Oregon Communications/Mathematics Project in 1966 (National Science Foundation), and continuing on through my Medical Education Project at the Providence Medical Center and other hospital in 1986.

Then I told my group, "The next step is to let the right people know what you are doing--this is real, come and see for yourself. Congressman, Government Agency, Industry, Foundation, whoever. Believe me, they will come, local or national, and I am contacting those kinds of people. Now about my new 'year 2000 initiatives in Health, Education and Science. The only problem I have is that several national companies and one of the foundations think my kind of program should be based in Los Angeles or Chicago because more youth can be reached there."

I didn't get a chance to get back to our black health pioneers this week, but I did want to cite a point made by several of our readers. "Mr. Burt, did you note that most of these African American Scientists whose accomplishments excelled throughout the world attended American High Schools before the 1920's or 1930's--those dilapidated, run down, poorly-lit, leaky ghetto buildings with poor laboratory equipment and outdated books?" I suggested that it "must have been the teaching that made a difference. Aha!

This Way For Black Empowerment

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

The Time For Independent Politics Is Now!

Last week, while our nation's capital geared up for the inauguration of Bill Clinton, the cause of independent politics took a significant step forward. Along with Emmet Ash, III, an African American leader of the Perot movement in California, I held a press conference in Washington to announce our intention of joining forces to form a national third party.

President Clinton takes office in the midst of a volatile international situation—the U.S. military is right now actively engaged in Iraq, Somalia and the high seas beyond Haiti. He takes office in the midst of a staggering economic crisis: several days ago the Labor Department announced that it has been using seriously flawed methods for measuring unemployment levels and that the unemployment rate is higher than reported. He takes office amidst a swirl of government corruption, ranging from the Savings and Loan and BCCI scandals to sexual harassment of women on the job to Congressional check bouncing shenanigans. Bill Clinton takes office as our educational system faces crisis-level underfunding, and clashes over curriculum are tearing communities apart.

The media have alternated between lavish accounts of the American people's "honeymoon" with the new administration and criticism of its broken promises. In my opinion, this is not the time to criticize the new president. Like millions of Americans across the country, I am interested to see what the new president and his team can do. We have to be rooting for Clinton to bring some relief to our people, who are suffering. But although we must be hopeful, it is hardly the time to count on him. While many of us feel every good-and

rightly so—about getting rid of the Bush/Reagan regime and its negative and reactionary policies, we cannot forget for one moment that these policies are typically introduced, funded and executed with bipartisan support. The deficit is a product of bipartisan mismanagement of the economy. Poverty and racism have spread cancerously under successive Democratic and Republican administrations. Anyone who says we should hold off on building a third party in order to give Bill Clinton a chance misses the point of how this country is actually governed. They also miss the point of what the voters said they wanted in 1992.

Twenty million people voted independently on November 3. There is a manifest desire on the part of the American people for a fundamental restructuring of the political process.

Some people active in politics are acutely aware that this is not the time to sit back and wait to see what happens. One of those insightful activists is Ross Perot.

Recently he was quoted in the *New York Times*: "Clinton was strong as horseradish on government reform during the campaign.

When their delegation came down there to see me that day, when I was deciding whether to get back in the race, they were going to get rid of lobbyists, they were going to get rid of big money. But there's been a drift since. They talk about their new ethics rules, but what they've left out is that they've left all those lobbyists in place who gave them big money."

Perot said that at first he intended to "Back off and give this Clinton group a little time." But he decided instead that this was in fact the moment to "create a counter-pressure" to

the new administration.

When he held a press conference to launch his membership drive into United We Stand, America—which will be a grassroots lobbying organization—Perot said he would consider it a personal failure if he had to run for a second time in 1996. I agree. If he has to run in 1996 as he ran in 1992, it will represent a failure—but not on his part; it will mean that the leaders of the independent political movement can't get our act together. Because while a rerun of '92 would mean that our movement has stalled, it would be quite another matter if Mr. Perot or another independent candidate ran with the backing of a national, grassroots, independent electoral people's machine with organization and ballot lines in every state and with the active participation of millions of Americans.

While Perot himself may be declining the opportunity to consolidate his followers into a third party, there is no question that significant numbers of those who voted independently this past November—not to mention the 45% of the eligible electorate who still did not go to the polls—want a third party. Those who voted for Ross Perot or for me or for Dr. John Hagelin of the Natural Law Party or for Andre Marrou of the Libertarian Party did not, in my view, cast those votes in favor of leaving the two party arrangement intact. Those 20 million votes established that there exists, in the United States of America today, a viable and untapped market for a major new political party.

We have millions of Americans who are ready to buy in on such a party. All we have to do is bring it to the political marketplace!

Safeway Could Do It Better

BY JAMES L. POSEY

For years groups and individuals have been trying to get Safeway and other food chains in the "Hood" to do the right thing. The Black United Front over the last several years has led the fight, building on the earlier work of more fervent versions of the Urban League and NAACP. No matter how you look at it, some progress has been made. But the truth is, it's always been a struggle to get them to stick with a commitment to hire, train and promote African-Americans above token levels. So while their overall hiring record of African-Americans throughout the Portland metropolitan area may be OK, the numbers at the MLK & Ainsworth store is shameful.

It's a shame not only because of the small numbers, but because this store started with so much hoopla and promise. Now it appears to be backsliding rapidly. Most remember how Safeway did a great job of promoting the newly-remodeled store against the backdrop of the closure of the Walnut Park Fred Meyer store. Everybody knows that the Fred Meyer's closure struck a nearly fatal blow to an already depressed business environment on MLK Blvd. So it looked then like Safeway was coming to the rescue.

Well it seems like the rescue was short lived, and it's back to business as usual. After the renovations, Safeway hired a female African-American store manager and showcased what ap-

peared to be many Black employees. But now the store apparently employs only a handful of African-Americans, and none appear to be in money-making, skill positions. There are no Black managers, no Black butchers, and only one Black baker, who appears to be a trainee. To add insult to injury, there are only a few Black security guards on staff.

But according to the King Neighborhood Association, the store has made several improvements in their overall management. In fact, the association recently presented the store with an award keeping the store clean and improving customer relations. But it seems the award was based more on the fact that, in contrast to Fred Meyer's, Safeway has not abandon the community. Maybe we should all be gratified by this fact, but as I see it, Safeway's efforts are motivated more by profit than community loyalty.

To be fair, Safeway is probably more responsive to African-American community needs than most large companies. But they still could do much better and could set an example for other companies. For example, I have never seen an African-American pharmacist at any of the Safeway or Fred Meyer's stores. It's a sad irony to know that in the midst of all the illegal drug dealing, Safeway and Fred Meyer's can push legal drugs in the absence of any Black participation. Everybody knows there is profit in drug dealing. Instead of these compa-

nies giving token donations to Black non-profits, they should institute a program to recruit and develop African-American pharmacists.

The point I'm trying to make in all of this, is that if Safeway and other companies would make a more substantial investment in Black education and economic development, they would end up investing less in the installation of security sensors at their entrances. Come to think of it, I have not seen security sensors at any other Safeway in Portland, or anywhere else for that matter. I just happen to believe that if Blacks had decent jobs paying livable wages, they would be less likely to steal. With the Black unemployment rate at about 25%, it should not surprise anybody that Black folks will eat regardless of whether they have jobs.

What is most disturbing about all this is the fact that this battle is fought over and over again. Safeway and other companies never seem to get the message. And, some Black folks seem to be satisfied with token change. It's nearly impossible to make genuine progress if we continue to fight the same battles.

I apologize if Safeway is doing more than I am able to observe. But from my point of view, Safeway could do more to live up to its slogan, "No one can do it better."

James Posey is a local, small business owner with a background in social work and community activism.

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

African Worlds When Haiti Was Queen

It is difficult for either black or white Americans to grasp the depth and impact of the African presence in Europe at the time Haiti was free and "Queen of the Caribbean". It created a legacy so strong and compelling, that 150 years later a sojourning African American novelist, James Baldwin was able to say, "over there, I felt free; like a man I could breathe and think, touch my soul."

This was relative of course, but that statement about a vastly improved condition for people of color provides a meaningful opportunity to recreate our European stage of the early, nineteenth century. We cannot escape the all-pervading influence of that "general-who-would-

be-Emperor," Napoleon Bonaparte. Like an ambitious and successful white coach of an all-black NBA team, he scoured the world for the ebony-hued masters of the disciplines which could propel him to an ultimate glory; Haiti was just one source.

Not only did he import the best of Haiti to France, but Napoleon went back to an Africa 4000 years earlier when, during a war with England in Egypt, he lined his troops up before the great African Pyramid and told them, "Forty centuries of greatness look down upon you." He promptly proved his point by bringing back to France every African cultural and intellectual property he laid his greedy hands on (It was a deliberate and methodological plunder such as the

world had never seen). His "military" expedition included several shiploads of scientists, mathematicians, artists, astronomers and scholars. And those cultural and intellectual riches they brought back changed the world.

Napoleon may have lost the war, but the booty brought back was more than enough to get the famed "Louvre Museum" off to a flying start. There was the fabulous "Empire style" of furniture and dress that Europe went wild about—and later Americans who were quick to imitate the "Continental" modes. And there were the African modes of mathematics and surveying which so influenced the discipline (and still does); the so-called "Fibonacci Se-

ries" crucial to genetics, nuclear physics and much else. This series may be derived from structural relationships in the Pyramid, but this visiting Italian is given the credit. (Closely related is the universal constant "Phi", useful in the study of the refraction of light, and laser technology).

Another European who recognized the significance of the intellectual wealth of Africa was the map maker "Mercator" whose famous rendition of the earth changed that discipline forever. Again, as in the case of the "Fibonacci Series Phi", a high school student can be shown how to derive the function from the geometry of the Great Pyramid (I've done it). There is a very excellent book available that details (with illustra-

tions) all of these things I have described and much, much more. The famous "Newton" and his dependence upon the design and geometry of the Pyramid to verify his "Theory of Universal Gravitation". Tompkins, Peter, "Secrets of the Great Pyramid", N.Y., Harper & Row, 1971 (book shows Mercator/Fibonacci graffiti on Pyramid).

African architectural concepts were also brought back—these too were to change the world. That great Paris landmark, "The Arch de Triump", is an exact replica of the main gate of an ancient Egyptian city that the Greek oral poet, Homer, so eloquently described, "Mighty Many-Gated Thebes, one of the seven wonders of the world". The same with

that famed "Eifel Tower", a striking imitation of the African "obelisks", seen not only in Egypt, but throughout the northern half of Africa. In the United States the best examples of modern appreciation of this classic African design are "The Washington Monument" and the "New York Obelisk" in Central Park.

The latter monument is an original, brought from Africa in 1881 at the height of popularity of these "Cleopatra's Needles."

For some fascinating reading about the world's fascination with these structures, see the book by Tompkins I cited. Also see Habachi, Labib "The Obelisks of Egypt: Sky-scrappers of the Past", N.Y., Charles Scribner & Sons, 1977.