

EDITORIAL

Dr Tucker Calls For Black Woman Appointment To U.S. Supreme Court

BY CHESTER A. HIGGINS, SR.

Wouldn't it be nice if President Clinton appointed a Black woman to the U. S. Supreme Court?

Dr. C. Delores Tucker thinks so. She and the organization she chairs, the National Political Congress of Black Women, Inc., are strongly urging the President to listen to them this time and name a black woman to the seat that Justice Harry A. Blackmun is giving up after nearly a quarter of a century occupancy.

Lord knows there are plenty of black women around who are more than qualified to sit on this lofty bench. There is the tough, street-smart and scholarly Eleanor Holmes Norton, Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives for the District of Columbia; Elaine Jones, another toughie and as street smart as they come, who heads the NAACP Legal Defense Fund; Mary Berry, the canny, outspo-

ken, longtime U.S. Civil Rights Commission member--to name a few at the top of the NPCBW list.

Then there are Amalya Kearse, Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, New York, who has been favorably mentioned by the Clinton administration as a possible appointee; and a baker's dozen of outstanding U.S. District Judges, including Mary Johnson Lowe, Consuelo D. Marshall, Anna Diggs Taylor, Anna E. Thompson, and Ann Clair Williams.

Dr. Tucker declared this is the second time she and her organization have asked the President to fulfill his promise of bringing diversity and representation to all areas of public service by appointing a black woman to the high court bench. Last year they petitioned him to appoint an African American when Justice Byron R. (Whizzer) White resigned.

But their pleas fell on deaf ears as

Clinton appointed a white woman, Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg to fill that seat. This time Dr. Tucker and her organization are playing a little hard ball politics. They are reminding President Clinton that African American women voted overwhelmingly for him in the last election, giving him 86 per cent of their vote, the highest percentage of any group. And this message carries with it the spoken but strongly implied threat: Don't monkey with us this time, or we'll see you at the polls next year when you are up for re-election.

There has never been a black woman appointed to U.S. Supreme Court. Dr. Tucker says "As guardian of our constitutional rights, the U.S. Supreme Court must reflect the views, background, race and gender of all Americans. African American women must not be excluded. The Time Is Now!"

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

No one alive today experienced slavery. We only know what it was like through the stories passed down from generation to generation and from the books and speeches written by abolitionists and writers of the day. We know that it was illegal to educate slaves--even illegal to teach them to read the Bible.

In spite of such laws in the South, there were colleges founded in the North to educate blacks, including Cheyney and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Wilberforce University in Ohio. These were among the first Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's), which grew to include a number of institutions serving the black community in the South, since most Southern colleges and universities did not admit black students.

Today the more than 100 HBCU's are under attack on several fronts. Some of them are facing loss of state funds or are actually being phased out in an effort to integrate state higher education institutions. Some of them are facing charges that their students are anti-white or anti-a. All of them are being challenged to prove their value in the present day world.

For example, recently the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sponsored a national march on Jackson to support equal funding of all state-supported HBCU's. HBCU's generally receive a disproportionately lower funding than their white counterparts. The State of Mississippi is proposing that Jackson State be downsized, Alcorn State be merged and Mississippi Valley be closed.

At the same time, the United

Negro College Fund (UNCF), which raises funds for 41 black colleges, has been receiving letters accusing students at black colleges of being racists because of the recent publicity surrounding the speech of a Nation of Islam speaker at Howard University. The irony is that Howard is not a member of the UNCF, that all press reports have indicated that only a small number of students actually attended the speech and that the majority of students at Howard do not agree with that speaker. In addition, only 3 of 55 Nation of Islam speakers have appeared at black colleges; the others have been at white educational institutions. Nevertheless, the UNCF is fearful that its fund-raising efforts will be dampened by these false accusations.

The Historically Black Colleges and Universities do have an unique and critical mandate and role to play in the multi-racial society in which we live. These institutions have become havens for able students who were deprived and rejected elsewhere. Often they are able to provide the remedial education, self-esteem building and mentoring that determine the success of their students. Indeed, it is no accident that 70% of African American elected officials, 80% of African American lawyers and 85% of all African American professionals are graduates of HBCU's. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, and the writer, Zora Neale are just three of the more well-known graduates of HBCU's.

While virtually all Historically Black Colleges do have non-black students (including foreign students), their principal mission is the education of African Americans. Most of

these institutions also have non-black faculty and staff members as well--about one-third of most black college faculty members are black, according to the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education.

As the African American community continues to face a crisis threatening its very survival, it would seem that Historically Black Colleges have a special role to play in the revitalization of our communities. With over a hundred years of history of designing curricula and programs focusing on developing self-esteem, raising basic skills needed for academic success and establishing role modeling and mentoring relationships, HBCU's have a proven track record of working with African American youth.

At a time when there are said to be more African American men in prison than in college, HBCU's can play a pivotal role in the lives of our youth. Just as new elementary and secondary programs are focusing on serving young African American males, HBCU's are in an unique place to provide higher education for African American men.

But they need the support of all of us to survive and to find new ways of serving our communities. Several years ago Bill and Camille Cosby donated \$20 million to Spelman, one of the better-known HBCU's. Most of us can't do that, but we can give what we can to the UNCF or directly to the college of our choice. And we can work to make sure that HBCU's receive equal funding from federal or state governments so critical to their survival.

We need the Historically Black Colleges and Universities and they need us.

National Urban League Receives \$600,000 In Renewed Support From Exxon Corporation

The National Urban League announced today that the Exxon Corporation has provided \$600,000 in renewed support for the Parental Involvement Program. The new five-year grant brings Exxon's total support of this Urban League Initiative to a total of \$1,225,000. The program was initiated in 1987 with funding from Exxon with the goal of improving the educational prospects of at-risk youth in inner city schools.

John E. Jacob, President and Chief Executive officer of the National Urban League, state: "Exxon's initial support of the Parental Involvement Program enabled over

350,000 students and parents to become involved in this education program at 64 local Urban Leagues throughout the country. This program is critical to the academic success of students who have difficulty in school and need extra support. It demonstrates our philosophy that all students can learn and that parents are an integral part of that progress."

The new Exxon grant will enable the Urban League to extend the current program from 64 to all 113 affiliates sites. The program will place an increased emphasis on strengthening parental involvement in math and science, college guidance and coun-

seling, financial aid assistance and academic enhancement.

The Urban League will also use the funding to develop a Parent Information and Training film, support local parent forums and training workshops and distribute the League's parent manual, What Students Needs to Know.

Founded in 1910, the National Urban League is a non-profit social service and civil rights organization headquartered in New York City, with 113 local affiliates in 34 states and the District of Columbia.

p e r s p e c t i v e s

SEEDS OF CHANGE, CONCLUSION: MARY, MARY, HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

That old English nursery rhyme about at little Mary's garden hardly prepares us for the disasters that may beset our food supply today. After all, a century ago, no one envisioned a horticultural nightmare where corporate-promoted pesticides, chemical fertilizers and now, patent-controlled food plants govern our daily bread.

As for how our own little personal gardens grow, certainly, African Americans do not grow nearly as much backyard foodstuffs as they once did, even in urban areas; and of course, nothing like we produced before leaving the South (this fact obtains for other ethnics as well). Consequently, it will mostly be only those

who "read the literature" who will be aware of the new dietary dangers: Ethnic groups in other countries however are very aware--and belligerent.

At issue last year was a series of new patenting laws coming from that highly publicized "General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)" to take effect in developing countries. This was the same issues which caused George Bush to refuse to sign the Biodiversity Treaty at the Rio environmental summit.

Fearing U.S. Attempts to covertly gain control of their food supply through patents, a group of farmers in India stormed an administrative headquarters of "Corgill Seed and Grain, Inc." This largest privately held corporation in American had its new multi-million dollar seed processing center burned to the ground. I saw a

CNN special on this strange devious operation which has almost as much influence on the world food supply as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The gardens are in danger.

The television tour of many richly furnished rooms of British-styled mansions connected through luxuriant, formal gardens, occasionally permitted a glimpse of sallow-faced old men, the youngest of which must have been seventy. These controllers sat on comfortable and well upholstered period furniture, monitoring their billions on flickering TV screens as they controlled the world's grain and other commodity markets.



By Professor McKinley Burt

A commentator on another program remarked that the whole operation looked like nothing so much as some of the campus-type buildings the CIA had taken over along the highway to Dulles Airport (?). Cargill, of course is a big player in Oregon and Washington agriculture.

Several readers wondered, if the new government in South Africa would be in a position to intervene in situations like that in India. It was suggested that there might be a difference in attitude between the indigenous population of India and the culturally-aloo East Indians of South Africa, who for the most part are merchants and professionals - a situation found in a number

of African countries below the equator. Some may remember that it was in Uganda a number of years ago that the Africans uprooted almost 10,000 East Indians and deported them because they had gradually taken over and controlled most retail and wholesale distribution of food, goods and services.

The readers may be certain that I shall inquire about the situation in South Africa - I now have several correspondents there (by FAX). Like them, the Uganda exploitation has always reminded me of the long-term situation in the U.S. where the banks have always protected the financial interests of their non-black depositors in the intercity by not making loans to African American businessmen who could be

competitive. The same of course with the establishment real estate brokers and mortgage houses; never let them ever have a really competitive location. Even if you have to tear up the city with urban renewal.

I know that a friend of mine is going to comment so I'll beat him to it. The situation above sort of parallels that which kept blacks out of Broadway plays for so long. In the book, "Negro Caravan," dancer/anthropologist Dorothy Dunham quotes famed theatrical producer Charles Frohmer as mandating "Never give a nigger a line." Some African American actors and playwrights voiced their own line when Frohmer went down with the steamer Lusitania in 1915, "Not soon enough!"

Letter To The Editor

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Do you know what happens when a young person grows up without positive role models, a high school education, a stable home life or em-

ployment opportunities? The majority of these youth wind up totally unprepared to face all of the challenges that life holds for them,

which leads them to find other ways to survive. Far too often, these young people join gangs as a means of survival. One thing leads to another and they find themselves trapped in a world of despair and hopelessness, perpetuating a vicious cycle of vio-

lent, deviant and criminal behavior. While the "American Dream" eludes them.

Experience has taught us that these youth are not only volatile, but they are also capable of destroying entire communities when intervention services are not provided. However, when intervention services are provided many of these same youth can become productive contributors to our society.

After four years of serving this clientele, I have created a new organization that will resolve many of the challenges facing the youth of today. I will be introducing the new organization to the community by hosting a series of breakfasts which will be held on Saturday mornings from 10:00am to 11:30am at Fellowship Church of God located at 5131 N. E. 23rd and Summer in Portland.

You play a vital role in the success of this organization. Won't you join us in making the "American Dream" a reality for all of our youth?

Sincerely, Timothy C. Holt, President

Vantage Point

Beyond Euphoria: The Difficult Road Ahead For Nelson Mandela

BY RON DANIELS
BARRING UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES, NELSON MANDELA WILL BE INAUGURATED AS THE FIRST BLACK PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA THUS CAPPING A HEROIC STRUGGLE BY THE INDIGENOUS AFRICAN MASSES FOR SELF DETERMINATION IN THEIR OWN HOMELAND.

The eyes of the world will be riveted on South Africa as that which was virtually unthinkable just a few short years ago becomes a reality. Once the euphoria of the moment has passed, however, Nelson Mandela will face the crucial task of governing. He confronts the formidable task of meeting the expectations of the African masses that their lives will be better now that the shackles of apartheid have been shattered. The road ahead in this regard may be extremely difficult. The thinking of African theoreticians of revolution may be instructive in this regard.

Frantz Fanon reminded us that the goal of African liberation movements should not only be achieve national liberation but to achieve national reconstruction. National reconstruction addresses the crucial question of controlling the economic structures so that the material resources of the nation can be harnessed to meet the needs of the great masses of the

people. Without control over the nation's vital resources and control over the principal instruments and means of production national liberation simply becomes what is often termed "flag independence." Kwame Nkrumah warned that without the total liberation of the economy from foreign hands independence will only result in neo-colonialism.

Under apartheid the vast resources of South Africa and the major means of production were firmly in the hands of the White minority. If the inauguration of Nelson Mandela is to be meaningful in terms of national reconstruction then Black majority rule must translate into control over the economy. Otherwise social and political apartheid may be over, but economic apartheid will remain in tact. It was Amilcar Cabral who cautioned that the people do not struggle for ideas but for a change in their material condition. Herein lies the difficulty for Mandela and the ANC.

At the height of the liberation struggle the ANC promised that major industries and sectors of the economy would be nationalized in order to ensure that the masses would benefit from national liberation. Failing to win a decisive victory on the battlefield and with the West eager to relax sanctions, the ANC backed away from its more radical call for national reconstruction in order to pave the way for victory at the ballot box. The

rhetoric of nationalization and radical economic reform was abandoned in a major concession to the White minority owners who control key sectors of the South African economy. The White power elite in South Africa is comfortable that everything will change but nothing will change. Nelson Mandela is perceived as sufficiently safe for business as usual to continue uninterrupted. Conceding Black majority rule under these conditions is hardly a sacrifice for those who control the commanding heights of the economy in South Africa.

It is, however, a major problem for those who suffered, bled and died in the belief that Black majority rule would bring an end to their suffering. In the short term this gap between what Mandela and the ANC are expected to deliver and what they will in fact be able to deliver could fuel widespread disillusionment, frustration and discontent. Once the symbolism of Mandela's victory wears off the masses of Africans will still be faced with massive unemployment, poor housing, inferior education, poor health care and grinding poverty. Beyond the euphoria of the moment, Nelson Mandela will confront the awesome challenge of delivering on the promise of national reconstruction. With the White minority firmly entrenched and in control of the economy, the road ahead will not be easy.

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