

# Affirmative Action An Endangered Species?

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

If so, we are yet to hear those cries of sympathetic concern or calls for immediate implementation of "life-support" as was the case with the nation's old forests, Stream Salmon and Spotted Owls.

Perhaps it is early on yet, but we have not seen in either high places or in groundswells of public opinion an enthusiastic defense of a valuable socio-economic tool that has at least made 'some' inroads into the country's racist and sexist hiring practices.

What we do have early on is a flurry of media interrogations of government, state and industry officials that has produced a 'Guinness Book of Records' number of "off-the-

record" and "don't quote me" interviews. From the President and White House to State Houses and Human Resource Managers, we have people whose commitments are wavering, bending and bowing in the winds of the right Wing attack on Affirmative Action like reeds in a shallow sea-cavillation in style.

And as we identify the most shrill and active congressional opponents of Equal Opportunity laws, the Right Wing and Conservative Republicans who told the American public that "Term Limits" was about the most important of the Ten Commandments of their contract with America, we note that "Term Limits" is the 'only' element of the contract they have reneged on. And what happened is that many now-frightened little hypo-

crites (including some Democrats) got the feedback from home that they were going to be called on the carpet for their treachery. In the age-old manner of politicians who wish to remain feeding at the public trough, they embraced the hottest card in America's political deck, "RACE".

"Willie Horton" won a presidential election for George Bush didn't he, they reasoned; why not jump on this Affirmative Action thing to divert the voters from a close inspection of the 'smoke and mirrors' of our attacks on social programs. "The media is giving all possible coverage (impetus) to manipulation of white resentment to this 'reverse discrimination'", they further reason (much overstated by willing accomplices). "And look at the big crack in

the wall in the NAACP, now is a good time for rolling back this 'racial diversity' thing!"

The more perceptive among us have long anticipated a counter attack on a system that was designed to end the centuries-old patterns of racial dominance and 'offered' relief and hope to tens of millions of America's citizens who had long since given up hope of having an equal opportunity in the land of their birth (not that his goal has been achieved yet).

If anyone should hold "resentment," it should be the African American who for over a century has watched the newest European Immigrant enjoy a superior opportunity, in the job mart, in the finance and banking structures or in leasing, hous-

ing and contracting -- all of which the establishment unequivocally states to be an absolute prerequisite for the enjoyment of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Again, the "more perceptive among us" began to appraise the dangers of a 'counter-insurgency' long before publication of "the Bell Curve". For many years I have used this column to warn that "vigilance is the price of liberty", and sure enough, they are now at the barricades in full cry for liberal scalps.

As far back as 1974 I was emphasizing such dangers in an "Affirmative Action Class" I taught for some years at Portland State University (the first such university-accredited class in the Northwest).

In my class was not only the conventional student body but federal, state, county and city officials/ personnel managers, but the same profile of human resource people from private industry--and a number of foreign students, especially women, who wanted to take the details of this American phenomenon to their homelands with the idea of implementation. Now, twenty years later, Hugh B. Price, President of the National Urban League puts the crisis in these terms. "The black beneficiaries of Affirmative Action are being positioned as the wedge issue of the 1996 election campaign."

Next week we will get into the nitty gritty details of this uniquely American monument to "Equal Opportunity."

## This Is One Time When Black Contractors Should Agree With A White Conservative

BY JAMES POSEY

**F**ew African-Americans are aware that in the next few months the Supreme Court will decide a court challenge that could possibly do away with all federally-mandated, disadvantage business set-aside programs on federally-funded projects.

The case, known as "Adaran vs. Pena," involves Adaran Construction, a white-owned Colorado firm, losing a bid to a competitor because of a minority preference program. Upset because the company's low bid was denied in favor of the other company, which got points for using a minority subcontractor, Adaran filed suit against the Federal Highway Administration.

This case has broad implications for African-Americans far beyond the seemingly narrow focus of

disputing contractors. For example, it is likely to be the quintessential test case for new attacks against all races based preferential programs. In fact, it could be the biggest nail in the coffin, adding to other efforts to kill all affirmative action as a matter of public policy.

I suppose there is a more tactful way of saying it, but this is all about Black people being continually kicked in the butt. Some will say that I always try to make it a Black thing. But this time, it ain't just this angry Black antagonist with a knack for blaming white folks. This same message also comes from none other than arch conservative and nationally-known columnist James Kilpatrick. In a recent article in the Oregonian, he tells the story about how these set-aside programs were originally designed and implemented to address a specific condition of discrimination against Blacks in the heyday of the Civil Rights move-

ment. And, during this period, discrimination and racism against African-Americans was well established and extensively documented.

But even before this case surfaced, it's clear that everybody and their brothers are benefiting from the current programs except African-Americans. For example, during the 93/94 construction season, African-Americans did not receive one major contract from the multi-million dollars spent on federal aid projects in Oregon. Moreover, the pattern is essentially the same nationally, regardless of the prominence of Blacks in urban population centers.

Conversely, as a result of legislative change in 1986 involving a combining of mandated goals, white females have become the main beneficiaries of disadvantaged programs. But even before the advent of white female dominance, Blacks as an ethnic group were not benefiting in relation to their acknowledged econom-

ic deprivation and historical discrimination. Consequently, the case that Kilpatrick convincingly makes, and with which we must agree, is that these federally-mandated programs have been compromised.

Kilpatrick knows that from the beginning these programs were designed to fail. Affirmative action represented meager, half-hearted attempts at fairness by white liberals. On the one hand, while conservative whites were initially tolerant, they worked tenaciously behind the scenes to sabotage the programs.

Therefore, as far as African-Americans contractors are concerned, the notion of affirmative action has proven in many cases to be more harmful than helpful. But contrary to the opinion of the white conservatives, they are harmful for very different reasons. Nevertheless, there's no question that these programs must be corrected and re-directed, based on legitimate need, or scraped altogether.



Mark Mathabane who lived in South Africa under Apartheid will speak Monday at Benson High School.

## A Racial Division

The YWCA presents author Mark Mathabane who will speak on "Healing the Racial Divide," Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Benson High School Auditorium.

In the best selling book Kaffir Boy, Mathabane tells the horrifying true story of his childhood in South African under Apart-

heid. His other books include Love in Black and White and African Women. Mathabane will answer questions and sign books after his lecture.

Contributions will help support the YWCA's "Racial Equity Week." Tickets are \$10 at Fastixx, at the YWCA and at the door.

## Some Boo-Boos, A Kiss Can't Fix

Polio, Measles, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough. If your kids aren't immunized for these childhood diseases by age two, you're making a big mistake. Talk to your doctor or Health Department. Or call 1-800-SAFENET.

Oregon Preschool Immunization Consortium including Medicaid is sponsoring Immunization Day '95, Saturday, April 22.

Free Immunization will be available at all of the following locations: Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. Northeast Health Center 5329 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. 9 a.m. - noon

North Portland Nurse Practitioner Clinic, 5311 N. Vancouver, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

St. Johns Community Center and McDonalds, 8427 N. Central, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Mid County Health Center, 12710 S.E. Division St., 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

East Portland Family Care Clinic, 17214 S.E. Division, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Oregon Nurses Association Immunization Clinic, Pilgrim Lutheran Church, 4244 S.E. 91st, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. Southeast Health Center, 3653 S.E. 34th Ave., 9 a.m. - noon

Eastmoreland Hospital, 2900 S.E. Steele St., 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Portland Indian Health Clinic,

2901 E. Burnside, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Hillsdale Community Church, 6948 S.W. Capitol Highway, 10 a.m.

Oregon Health Sciences University, Old Library, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Yes On 26-26 For Our Community**

The metro area's parks, trails, streams and open spaces are an indispensable part of our quality of life. But over 500,000 new residents are coming in the next 20 years. Unless we protect some natural areas now, we will most certainly lose them forever.

That's why Measure 26-26 is so important to us: It is designed with neighborhoods in mind, protecting and improving sites right here. It will help insure that our neighborhood can keep a quality of life that is only a memory in other cities.

Measure 26-26 will: Preserve and improve neighborhood open space for walking, hiking, biking, jogging and other recreation. Help protect water quality and improve access to rivers, streams and creeks. Protect vital salmon, trout, steelhead and wildlife habitat. Pass on a legacy to our children and grandchildren.

Get Involved - Volunteer! Please call the campaign at 227-4878 or drop by campaign headquarters at Room 426 Montgomery Park, 2701 N.W. Vaughn. We'll let you know how you can join your neighbors to protect open space, parks and streams!

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