

The Black College III:

By Prof. McKinley Burt

The quality and sources of the responses to last week's article on Black Colleges was both impressive and reassuring ("A Dinosaur?"). Evidently, I had supposed this to be more of a super-sensitive issue than is the case. But, then again, all the votes are not in. Let me hear from you.

It appears that a local sorority person who has been involved in the College Fund/UNCF process for quite some time faxed a copy of my article to a friend who serves on the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). This is the national body that represents the black fraternities and sororities; Alpha and Kappa to Omega and Zeta, and in between.

I was faxed a tentative reply in turn. No, I was not taken to task, but was assured, "...and many of your points are well taken. This

is not an official response of the organization -- many of whose members are graduates of the 'traditional Black Colleges' -- but this issues you advance certainly deserve an organizational consideration... I read your book, Black Inventors of America, during undergraduate years, so I fully understand your commitment to securing the best technical education possible for our African American youth; a suitable 'niche' as you put it (smiles)."

Sounds good, but I do not plan on being lulled into complacency, and certainly not when considering the highly relevant feedback I am getting from the community. A fifty-year relationship with the parents, students and others of Northeast of three generations underwrites a number of meaningful dialogues I have with many on a number of subjects. With no issue producing more concern and uneasiness than the difficulty of

financing a college education in times of escalating costs combined with a deteriorating economy and job outlook. Grandparents are becoming increasingly vocal.

When William H. Gray, president of the College Fund says its about, "young people from every kind of financial and educational experience given a fair chance to develop into productive and responsible citizens through a first-class education", I hear you, do I ever! I certainly thought about your words when a recent national study stated that most parents believe special courses and career decisions can be made as early as middle school and definitely by the first two years of high school. And want that combined with occupational skills and a structured work experiences, all integral to a local educational experience and career ladder.

That is precisely why the past two weeks I have been quoting Dr. Wolf of Oregon Institute of Technology (education that is uneven geographically does not meet employer's needs) -- and CEO Bill Gates of Microsoft Corp. (students, educators, parents and employers must be connected -- an extended community).

And last Thursday night, all of this especially came home to me as I looked out over the audience at the annual "House Of Umoja" holiday party. Again I was impressed with the depth and compassion of the support that flows from the staff, parents, grandparents and friends of the at-risk youth whose guidance and future are shaped by this key community institution. Like that prerequisite for structure and continuity in the education of our youth, the social and cultural outreach of this type of institution is just as critical a mission.

Again, my congratulations, to the director, Mr. Johnny A. Gage, and an equally committed staff.

Interacting with those young people, you just know that I had to be thinking, "what happened? Twenty-five years ago this week, I was just returning from a second nation-wide lecture tour of universities, television show and community institutions -- beating the drum for a pioneering method to direct and motivate minority youth in a society that even then was becoming more technical each day. Beating the drum and touting my book and research on black technological genius, I managed to run up my credit card to \$5000 before paying it off (ten grand, today's money).

In those days, there were some presentation contracts to be had from the school district or federal agencies, providing some monies for innovative, but needed and proven

projects. I haven't had a call from a predominately "black" school in three years, though it is more obvious than ever that there is a compelling, crucial need for a structured technological motivation by experienced-based mentors with both academic and industrial sector skills -- as well as experience in program administration if possible.

A large number of the clientele of UMOJA and other youth-intervention programs is generated by a failure of the system to deliver just the type of educational structure we have been discussing. If you have any good ideas, please communicate them, one can only do so much with a Social Security check. We have to reach "all" youth and, for most, it is increasingly the case that a four-year college experience is not an option -- black, white, poor or lower middle class.

Winter Heat Help Offered

Multnomah County low income households in need of financial help to pay their winter heating bills can now apply for energy assistance. Household income must be at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. For example, a household of one would be eligible with an annual income at or below \$9,338 or for a household of four the annual income could not exceed \$18,938. The average assistance payment is \$190.

To inquire about making an appointment, call the United Way Energy Assistance Hotline at 227-5437 or call the following neighborhood community service centers: Albina Ministerial Alliance - 240-0828, Friendly House - 228-4335, Human Solutions - 248-3662, Neighborhood House - 246-1663, Portland Impact - 239-4328, St. John's YWCA - 721-6762, and Transition Projects - 222-9361.



From a much loved mother to an honored public servant, Venerable Booker stands proudly in front of a memorial erected next to American State Bank in honor of the life of the late Gladys Sims McCoy. The plaque in a small park on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Knott Street lists McCoy's record of longtime service to the community and her leadership, from being a member of the Portland School Board and an Oregon Ombudsman in the 1970s, Mother of the Year in 1980 and Multnomah County Commissioner and chairperson from 1987 to 1993.

(Photo by Michael Leighton)

The 'Dawg' Walked In

"It's a matter of using a different approach", says Jay. His organization has strategically managed to empower other minority businesses by spreading the wealth through employment and contracting services that was previously non-existent.

Hospitality Tour '95 guest were also impressed with the sincerity and commitment of the Oregon Convention and Visitor Services Network

convention and tourism advisory board, which is 75% minorities appointed by Jay, including board chair Harold Williams who delivers compassionate speeches and presentations which are rivaled by such nationally known speakers as Les Brown and others.

"Normally when we visit a city on a FAM trip, the bureaus traditionally bring out one or two of us and that's

all that we see", said Marvin Perry of the Black Board of Directors Project. "I've been to many cities, but I'm glad I finally was invited to come to Portland", said Bob Countryman of National Organization of Black Chemist & Chemical Engineers.

"The Dawg certainly walked in Portland". "Jay and his staff were the most professional and efficient that I've ever come across".

Continued from Metro

and Visitor Services Network, who was awarded an independent contract, with no restrictions, to enhance Portland's and the local CVB's marketing efforts in the minority convention arena. Bookings and leads have since increased over 300% in less than 2 years of the initial 3 year contract.

Dancers Get "Dream Call"

Continued from Metro

and that was the way it went. To enter a girl into college with all its trials was enough, but to hear two complaining girls whose hearts were still for tap dancing in New York City, when it came to college they were both singing the blues. So three weeks into their freshman year at the university, a decision is finalized. A videotape of both girl's performance is made by a former teacher and it makes winners of both. This time the answer was, "when does the next plane leave."

The airport scene was filled with mixed emotions for all their family members and friends, but for now let's just call it a sabbatical.

After training in NYC for two weeks, the elaborate costumed jazz musical revue toured Amsterdam, Munich, Germany and Zurich and Switzerland.

Home for the holidays, Karmaria and Karida expressed homesickness after three months of travel and performances, but they both said they'd like to continue with the tour when it continues in the summer.

Karida plans to enroll winter term at U of O and Karmaria's plans are uncertain at this time.

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