

## Is There A Doctor In The House? If Not, Why Not?

By Prof. MCKINLEY BURT

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhuman."

Martin Luther King Jr.

I don't know how many members of our community are aware of the fact that we have an extraordinary number of young African Americans who are either preparing for or entering the field of medicine - including such disciplines as biochemistry, pharmacology and optics, to name a few.

This is a remarkable turn around from several very discouraging situations I encountered in past years. Two dates, in particular stand out in my mind, because in both cases, rather alarming media statistics proved sufficient to energize me into an effort to being about a small change - at least on the local level. At this point the reader may anticipate there follows a model(s), and real-time working models, at that. Two older and one-in-progress.

In the spring of 1974, having just dismissed my morning urban economics class at PSU, I took time to scan each and every page of the "Los Angeles Sentinel", a weekly, African American newspaper. I was following the advice given my students. "Two excellent sources of ideas and systems not practiced in your own territory are out-of-town newspaper and the 'yellow section' of that city's phone books."

Several 'real-time' and successful student enterprises had been de-

veloped from this approach. This particular day, my eyes were drawn to an article captioned, "Program Encourages Minority Students to Seek 'Health Careers'". The article described a 'work-study' program for university students where they would be placed not only in local hospitals and clinics, but at such support institutions as social services agencies, pharmacies, laboratories, etc. Salaries and transportation provided.

The program also incorporated a number of disciplines where an early emphasis on medically-related experience would be of immense value; accounting, counseling, psychology physical therapy and the like. The program was funded by what was then "The Department of Health, Education and Welfare (H.E.W.)", but I found the fact that the entire nation-wide concept had been developed by one of America's most prominent and dedicated African American Physicians, Dr. Geraldine Woods was the moving factor.

You know me. Within an hour, I was on the phone talking to this marvelous woman. Evidently she was impressed by commitment, certainly not by my medical knowledge. Within three weeks Washington had approved a grant for Portland and Twelve, minority students were soon enrolled. The 'host' organization was not PSU as I had intended but this proved to be an excellent learning scene.

My second venture into the medi-

cal field also was spurred by a discouraging media headline; this one in our own Portland, Observer for June 3, 1987: "Study finds Severe Shortage of Black Health professionals." This time I was better prepared for an excursion into the medical field, having been, first, a patient at the Providence Medical Center and then, a volunteer for several years.

things went much better this time for I had an opportunity to study and evaluate the entire system before becoming involved; every department, every discipline and every support unit. And I had taken the opportunity to interview all the personnel from the chief administrator and surgeons to nurses, orderlies, and maintenance workers. I detail this process to the youths with whom I work so that they may get a better idea of the necessary hard work and discipline required to bring any project to a successful conclusion.

The end result was that, as detailed on page 1 of the August 26, 1987 edition of the Portland Observer, the Providence administration accepted a work-study proposal of mine exactly as submitted. This time the design was for high school students, for I had come to realize that effective intervention was going to have to come about long before the university experience. My first 'interns' were from Benson High School. Cont'd next week.

# Health & Science



The outer walls and roof are now up on a medical office Kaiser Permanente is building in the 3600 block of North Interstate Avenue in north Portland. Observing the construction work are Hoffman Construction's Kelly Rowland, field superintendent, and Ken Pasley, project superintendent. Kaiser Permanente expects sometime this fall to open the two-story medical building, which has three stories of underground parking. Remodeling work on a 20-year-old medical office next door is slated for completion early next year. Photo by Carole Archer.

## "Overweight Children Need to 'Get Out Of The House'"

Overweight children need to "get out of the house" and exercise.

"In most cases, obesity is not solely defined by the amount of calories you consume or food you eat," said Becky Gorham, a registered dietitian and research nutritionist at the USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "But instead by inactivity."

Computers and video games mean more children stay inside when they could be outside burning off calories.

"When children sit in front of a computer or TV screen they tend to eat more which might cause them to gain

weight," said Gorham. Here are some exercise tips for parents to remember:

- \* Encourage kids to walk to and from school if it is safe.
- \* Basketball, volleyball, swimming, and biking are all good forms of exercise.
- \* Keep exercise equipment in the house, not in the garage.
- \* Encourage kids to play during recess.
- \* Look for churches or other organizations that offer activities for children.

Parents should stress exercise and not diets, which are not healthy for growing chil-

dren.

The best programs for overweight children are those that incorporate lifetime habits of healthy eating and consistent exercise.

Parents can help by modeling these behaviors and exercising and eating right themselves.

Encourage healthier snacks from the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid for when children get home from school, keep the junk food out of the house or at least limit it to occasional treats.

"Teaching children the importance of good nutrition and exercise early on will help them choose the right path to a healthy lifestyle when they become adults," said Gorham.

### Third Annual Black Achievers Recognition Banquet

Judith E. Nichols, Ph.D., CFRE in her book *Growing From Good To Great* has defined the generation born in 1977-1996 as the Millennium Generation where we have seized this term. Judith states the following: "Minorities will exert more influence over the national agenda as the population of African-American, Hispanics, and Asian Americans increases from seventeen percent

in 1990 to thirty-three percent by 2000. In 1990, 1 out of 6 workers belonged to an ethnic minority. By 2000, they will be 1 in 3."

The Black Achievers Program recognizes the necessity to train and mentor our youth for the workforce and business world that lies ahead.

The time is NOW for us as adults to prepare our children, following the program motto:

"Each One Must Reach One and Teach One."

This event is to recognize African-Americans who have achieved in their careers and are giving back to their community. Furthermore, we will honor and award two teens The Youth Achiever Award of the year. Please join us for a fun and exciting evening as we celebrate our... Third Annual Black Achievers Recognition Banquet.

## Third Annual BLACK ACHIEVERS RECOGNITION BANQUET

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1998

5:30PM - SOCIAL 6:45PM - DINNER

Guest Speaker:  
Daniel O. Bernstine



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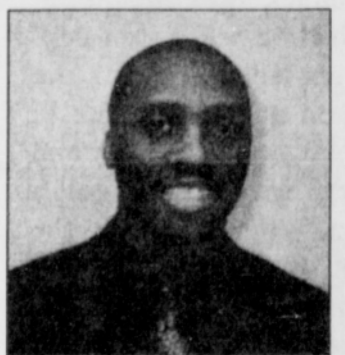
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