# COURAGEOUS AFRICAN AMERICANS

by Ron Weber

## Wizard of Tuskegee

### Former slave leads vocational school

Born in 1856, Booker T. Washington would become a house child servant to his master James Burroughs. Burroughs would never imagine that this little boy would become the most famous "Negro spokesman" of the times. At the age of seven, little Booker would be fed by the 1865 Union Army victory in America's famous Civil War. In 1872, Washington would meet a New England general who taught him hard work, serious purpose, and personal morality. As a school principal, former general Samuel Armstrong took Washington into his Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. Here his new student learned the value of an education. An eager and excellent student, Washington was later asked by Armstrong to head up a new school for African Americans in Tuskegee, Alabama. Choosing a black man over a white man to be principal of the school was unheard in the 1800s. Armstrong however knew he had made the right choice.

Washington's goal for the school was one that still causes controversy even today. Instead of attempting to breed highly intellectual educators, he felt black students in those days would have better chances of finding jobs in the vocational work setting. Praised by whites and most blacks, the school was a resounding success. Black intellectuals, of which there were few in those days, protested, saying that limiting the black worker to physical labor was demeaning. However, Washington knew just how far a white dominated society in the late 19th century would allow blacks to go in the workplace. He felt raising them up to the middle working class first was the best way.

Booker T. Washington

Under Booker T. Washington's command, the Tuskegee Institute began turning out highly skilled and trained students ready to tackle the vocational work force. The school prepared many young African Americans to enter a hard and competitive market where they would have to apply along side of whites for the same positions. Although they were often times beat out by a white person, the Tuskegee training gradually allowed them to begin entering the middle class work force. The Ford Motor company became well known for not only hiring black workers, but also for paying them equal wages with whites. While few African Americans got the top jobs in companies, most were pleased with the opportunities that Washington and his school gave to them. This generation and those to follow would then insist on even better educational opportunities for their children. Booker's plan appeared to work well, as the African-American workforce steadily grew in size. By 1920 higher numbers of black workers and their families began to start realizing the American Dream. It was not uncommon to see African-American families buying cars, homes, and other luxuries that were once for whites only.

Following an 1895 speech in Atlanta, Georgia, Washington became so famous that Harvard granted him an honorary master's degree. Using his newfound fame, he collected money for his school and enhanced its vocational training program. While a few black intellectuals of that era, such as W.E.B. Du Bois blasted Washington for his perceived beliefs of limitations on black workers, most felt that his idea of gradually raising the standard of living for the average African American was the best plan for the times.

Although Washington led the Tuskegee Institute into a great success story, by the time of his death, just short of his 70th birthday, times were beginning to change. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had begun and African Americans were now setting their goals higher than before. Washington's famous "Cast down your bucket where you are," idea now needed to make room for more progressive thinking. Booker T. Washington lived out his life in prominence and wealth. Andrew Carnegie, the great "man of steel," fully supported Washington's path and became his most generous benefactor. He called Washington "One of the most wonderful men who has ever lived."

## Ask Deanna!

**Real People, Real Advice**
*An advice column known for its fearless approach to reality based subjects!*

**Dear Deanna:**
I have a friend who messed around with one of my boyfriends family members. This was years ago and included pregnancy but she lost the baby. They stopped dating, recently got back together and broke up again. Now she wants to date the first cousin of her ex-boyfriend. Personally, I think this is wrong. --Concerned; Denver, CO

**Dear Concerned:**
Your friend is nasty and has an agenda if she plans to go through the family. When it comes to relationships friends and family is off limits no matter how much time has passed. Although love is blind, this kind of dipping can cause problems in the man's family as a result of teasing and the sloppy seconds jokes. Tell your friend to prevent future drama by finding another man and remember blood is thicker than water.

**Dear Deanna!**
I'm a family man with a problem. I treat my wife like a beautiful queen. I take care of her, the kids, and my financial duties. I come home every night, I offer to help her with chores and I understand when she's not intimate. Now she's telling me I'm boring and she needs excitement in her life. Her remedy is to go clubbing with her miserable girlfriends and I'm fed up. --Paul; Hickory, NC

**Dear Paul:**
Misery loves company and your wife is foolish to trail behind her cronies. Her girlfriends don't have much going on if they're searching for something in the club. Sit your wife down and share your feelings while at the same time, ask her how why she's bored and how you can spark things up. Direct verbal communication is the key. If she makes a suggestion on what she wants to do, you must accommodate her even it means seeing a female movie, swinging from the ceiling fan or dancing like a Luther Campbell video.

**Dear Deanna!**
I have a crush on a man at church but I'm afraid to approach him. He's a God fearing man that I respect and hold in high regard. I'm a Christian now but I have an old reputation that people hold against me. I would be devastated if he rejected me because of my past. --Louise; Phoenix, AZ

**Dear Louise:**
Pray for courage, guidance and confidence and then make your move. Your sins have been washed away and your slate is clean. Your church Romeo is a man of God and will see you as a womanly vessel of the kingdom. Turn a deaf ear to those who hold your past against you. If he rejects you, then applaud his faith, keep it moving and know that God has something else in store for you.

*Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or write: Deanna M, P.O. Box 88847, Los Angeles, CA 90009. Website: www.askdeanna.com*

## Portland Police Excessive Force Case Settled

### $145K paid after police shock and pepper spray blind, elderly woman

(AP) — The city of Portland has agreed to pay $145,000 to an elderly blind woman in north Portland after police pepper-sprayed and shocked her with a stun gun.

The altercation began as an attempt to remove shrubs and appliances from 71-year-old Eunice Crowder's yard, and ended with police citing her for harassment and disobeying an order. This week, the city agreed to settle her excessive force lawsuit out of federal court, a month after a Multnomah County Circuit Court judge dismissed the violations against her.

"This case goes to show that police misconduct and excessive force can happen to anybody outside the mainstream," said Ernest Warren Jr., Crowder's lawyer.

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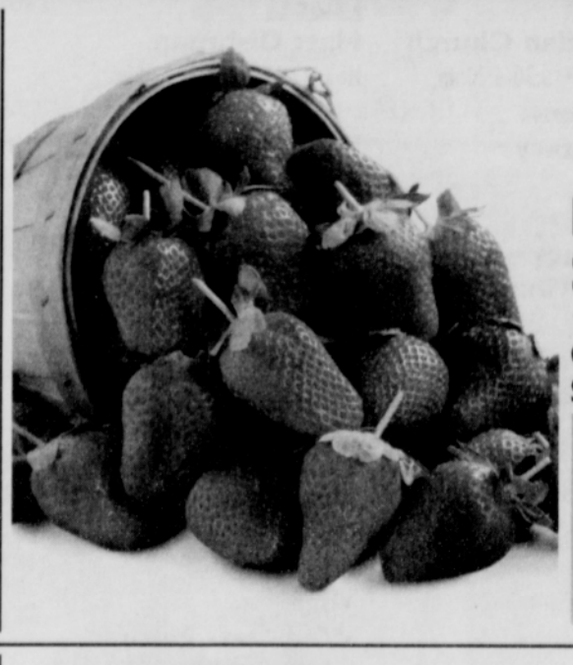

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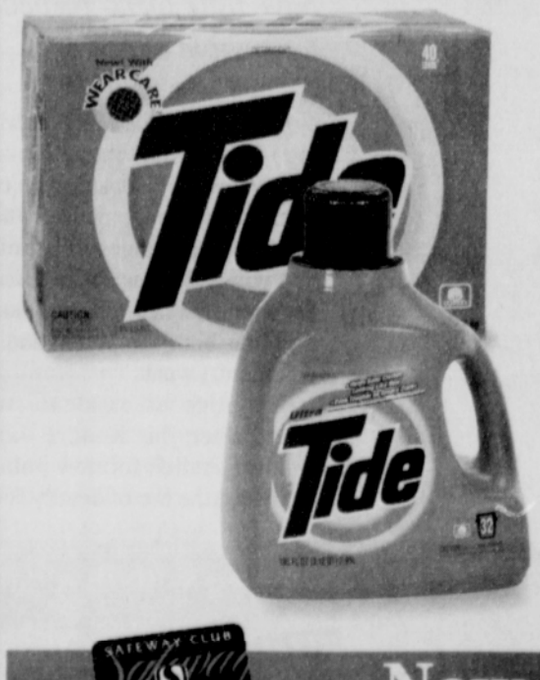


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