



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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Poverty Doesn't Have to be a State

The racial differential in the poverty rate is staggering. Last time I checked, about 12 percent people in the United States, one in eight people are poor. Depending on race and ethnicity, however, poverty is differently experienced. Fewer than one in 10 Whites are poor; more than one in four African Americans and Latinos are poor.

Differences in occupation, income, employment and education are considered the main reasons for poverty, with current and past discrimination playing a role in educational, employment and occupational attainment. We see the discrimination when we consider that African American women with a doctoral degree have median earnings of about \$1,000 a week, compared to about \$1,200 a week for Black men and White women, and \$1,600 a week for White men. White men earn 60 percent more than African American women, and a third more than Black men and White women.

It would not take much to recite the differences, by race, or education, unemployment, earnings and occupation. The recurrent question in reviewing the data is: What are we going to do? It makes no sense to just recite the data and then wring our hands as if nothing can be done. The three steps in social change are organization (especially protest), which leads to legislation (with pressure) and litigation (when legislation is not



BENNETT COLLEGE

Julianne Malveaux

implemented).

Often laws preventing discrimination have been passed but not adhered to, forcing litigation to get offenders to do the right thing. Of course, it takes more than a minute. It takes people who are committed for the long run. “The arc of the moral universe is long,

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but it bends toward justice,” Dr. Martin Luther King said in 1964.

Carter Goodson Woodson understood the long arc when he founded the Journal of Negro History and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915. The organization and the journal have changed their names to reflect the nomenclature of these times, and they are now called The Journal of African American History and the Association for the Study of Negro Life

and History. Both the organization and the journal have now existed for 100 years which is perhaps why ASALH chose “A Century of Black Lives, History and Culture” as its 2015 theme. (ASALH choose a Black History Month theme each year). This year, their focus on the long arc of African American life in our nation and asserts that “this transformation is the result of effort, not chance.”

Carter G. Woodson made many choices that led to his education and to the creativity and brilliance that motivated him to uplift Black History through Negro History Week, now Black History Month. Woodson was the son of former

about his action. If you can determine what a man thinks you do not have to worry about what he will do. If you can make a man believe that he is inferior, you don't have to compel him to seek an inferior status, he will do so without being told, and if you can make a man believe that he is justly an outcast, you don't have to order him to the back door, he will go to the back door on his own and if there is no back door, the very nature of the man will demand that you build one.”

In other words, poverty can be the reality of living, but it doesn't have to be a state of mind. Many are trapped in poverty because that may be all they know, and because protest, legislation, and litigation have not provided a passage out of poverty for Woodson. He worked as a miner to earn a living, and he transcended his status as a miner to make a life of embracing his people and our history. He wrote about the ways that our thinking could oppress us as much as living conditions can. He is a role model and example for African Americans today because, motivated by a desire to be educated, he fought his way out of poverty. There is a difference between thinking you can live like Carter G. Woodson, and thinking that you can't. See www.ASALH.org for more information.

slaves, and a family that was large and poor. He worked as a miner in West Virginia, and attended school just a few months a year. At 20, he started high school and by 28 he had earned his bachelor's degree. He was only the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard (W.E.B DuBois was the first in 1895). He was a member of the Howard University faculty and was later a dean.

He wrote, “If you can contrail a man's thinking, you don't worry

Did NBC'S Brian Williams Lie about Katrina?

“NBC Nightly News” anchor Brian Williams has finally admitted that he had incorrectly asserted that a helicopter he traveled aboard while reporting on the Iraq War in 2003 was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade, forcing an emergency landing.

“This was a bungled attempt by me to thank one special veteran and by extension our brave military men and women veterans everywhere...” he said on air.

Williams' admission came on the heels of a story published in the military publication Stars & Stripes that challenged his retelling of events.

“NBC News anchor Brian Williams has told a war story over the years since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. It grew to where he was claiming to be on a Chinook helicopter that was forced down after taking rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms fire,” the newspaper reported. “In his on-air apology Wednesday, he backed off that, but said that he ‘was instead in a following aircraft.’ Soldiers who were in two Chinook companies say he was not in, nor ever near, a helicopter that was being fired upon.”

Williams, who makes \$13 million a year, has drastically altered his story over the years, according to a timeline published by CNN.

Lt. Col. Jerry Pearman, the mission commander when one of the three Chinooks took fire, told Stars & Stripes, “I can say with 100 percent certainty that no NBC reporters were on any of the aircrafts.”



THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry

Following his public admission, Williams said that he would forgo his anchoring duties at the top-rated network news program “for the next several days.” Politico.com, describing what it called “a sign of deepening trouble,” reported on Sunday that Williams cancelled an appearance

‘Four weeks after the storm, few of the widely reported atrocities have been backed with evidence’

on “Late Night with David Letterman” that had been scheduled for Thursday.

It was on an earlier Letterman show that Williams also gave his now-discredited account.

The New York Times reported, “In 2013, Mr. Williams told David Letterman that he had actually been on the helicopter that got shot down, adding that a crew member had been injured and received a medal. ‘We figured out how to land safely,’ he said, ‘we landed very quickly and hard. We were stuck, four birds in the desert and we were north out ahead of the other Americans.’”

Of course, none of that was true.

Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the media watchdog group, said, “Now that he's cleared that up, there are some other tall tales that Williams might want to take back. Take his recounting of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (Dateline NBC, 8/22/10; Extra!, 10/10):

“You know, I've been around a lot of guns and a lot of dead bodies, and a lot of people shooting at people to make dead bodies. But you put them all together and you put it in the United States of America, and boy, it gets your attention....”

“It was clear already there weren't going to be enough

mood, Williams might as well admit that he didn't see ‘a lot of people shooting at people to make dead bodies,’ nor would people have killed him for his car if he hadn't been surrounded by feds – none of which appeared in his original reporting.”

The New Orleans Times-Picayune reported in a Pulitzer Prize-winning story, “Four weeks after the storm, few of the widely reported atrocities have been backed with evidence. The piles of bodies never materialized, and soldiers, police officers and rescue personnel on the front lines say that although anarchy reigned at times and people suffered unimaginable indignities, most of the worst crimes reported at the time never happened.”

To Williams' credit he did air a week-long series called “After the Storm: The Long Road Back” in which the network tackled racial discrimination, among other issues. He said Katrina was different from most disasters and that NBC would “keep covering it.”

However, that was not the case. FAIR observed, “... Katrina's impoverished victims faded rapidly away from NBC's coverage thereafter. By the six-month anniversary in February, NBC had joined its rivals in limiting coverage to a brief look at the struggles of putting on Mardi Gras in a depopulated city, then moving on before anyone could accuse them of peering too deeply into matters of race or class.”

Perhaps it was another “bungled attempt” by Brian Williams to portray himself as a hero.