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DESTINATION: THE AMERICAN DREAM

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Thank you Jon for that warm introduction. I cannot begin to tell you how much my colleagues and I appreciate the remarkable leadership and support that you, Chuck Collins, the Senior Vice Chair, and all of the members of our board give to the National Urban League movement.

My friends, our trustees don't just talk the talk. They really walk the walk.

Last year we launched an historic endowment drive to help ensure that the National Urban League has the resources to survive and serve in the 21st century. To date, our trustees have made personal commitments exceeding \$1 million.

I'm especially thrilled that the single largest pledge has come from an African-American trustee.

That isn't just walking. That's strutting. It shows the kind of volunteer spirit and visionary leadership that makes our movement so great.

Let me ask all of our trustees to stand. Let me also ask every Urban League affiliate trustee to rise as well. Please give these stewards of our movement a rousing round of applause.

I'm delighted that the Price family is here in force again this year. My beloved wife Marilyn, who is my rock steady source of support.

Our daughters Lauren, Janeen and Traer and her husband Steve, have become regulars as well.

Then there's my mother, Charlotte Price, who gets a big kick out of conference. And, of course, my brother and sister-in-law, Kline and Bebe, who enjoy every minute of it.

And please welcome two first-time Urban Leaguers, their daughter and son-in-law, Kathryn Price and Joe Bronson.

Please give the Price family affiliate of the National Urban League a hearty welcome.

Two giants of the civil rights struggled passed away recently. James Farmer was a true visionary. He pioneered the tactic of peaceful sit-ins in the early 1940s. He founded CORE later that decade and he launched the Freedom Rides in the 1960s.

Federal Judge Frank Johnson, Jr., ordered that Montgomery's public facilities be desegregated and authorized the Selma March in 1965. As a compassionate white man from Alabama, Judge Johnson was the very antithesis of Bull Connor.

Please join me in a silent moment of remembrance for these courageous Americans.

Houston is the ideal site for the last National Urban League conference of the 20th century. For starters, Houston is Mayor Lee Brown's town. He is one of America's most distinguished public servants.

Houston is a beacon of inclusion and hope. Business leaders like Phil Carroll, former CEO of Shell and a trustee of the League, civic leaders like former Mayor Bob Lanier and community leaders like our own Sylvia Brooks, head of the Urban League here, banded together to beat back an assault on affirmative action.

Houston is the home of Shell Oil, a stalwart friend of our movement. Shell shares our deep commitment to preparing young people for the future. We're profoundly grateful to Steve Miller, the new CEO of Shell, for chairing this year's annual conference.

Please join me in saluting Sylvia Brooks, one of our movement's most dynamic CEOs, her board chair Willie Brown, all of the dedicated trustees and guild members, and the world class staff of the Houston Urban League, and all of our great friends in Houston.

This year, Houston is the launching pad for our newest Urban League affiliate -- Wilmington, Delaware. Their lift-off is being fueled by \$1 million in local funding.

There's another reason why Houston feels like home. It's the birthplace of so many marvelous Urban League institutions. Start with my predecessor, the legendary

John Jacob, who loves our movement to this day. Under Jakes's leadership, our wonderful NULITES youth program was launched here exactly a decade ago.

Two years ago, Shell hosted our first summit of religious, civic, sorority and fraternity leaders. That summit spawned the historic Campaign for African-American Achievement, which is already paying huge dividends for our young people.

And this year, Houston is giving birth to another exciting new initiative. We've decided to corral the awesome talent and boundless energy of those remarkable young leaders of today and tomorrow who've moved into high finance, public relations, telecommunications, and community service.

At this conference, we have officially chartered a brand new national organization. It's known as the National Urban League Young Professionals. Already there are 18 chapters boasting 1,200 members.

Let me ask our NULITERS and young professionals to rise. Please join me in applauding our children who are our destiny.

Houston has really put out the welcome mat for the Urban League movement. We want to return the favor. It's going to be pretty hot outside this week. Here in the air-conditioned convention center, we have an exhibit hall full of wonderful displays and a job fair. We invite Houstonians to come chill with the Urban League.

We gather here on the eve of a new century, indeed a new millennium. It's a fitting time to reflect on whence we've come and where we're headed as a people.

A century ago, black folk who migrated from southern farms to cities often lived in squalor. Our men were denied decent jobs and steered into menial labor.

Teenage girls were lured to the big city with bogus promises of work, only to be forced into prostitution, destitution and servitude.

So the National Urban League was founded in 1910 to lead the struggle for social and economic opportunity for urban blacks.

A century ago, Jim Crow confined our families -- and our dreams -- to urban ghettos and rural backwaters that were wracked with poverty and bereft of hope.

Segregation blocked every escape route. We were barred from the voting booth and restaurants. Marauding white thugs lynched our young men and burned crosses in our yards.

That's why, in 1909, the NAACP was formed to spearhead the fight for equal rights.

In the 19th century, we shed the shackles of slavery. This century, we whipped Jim Crow in many realms of American life. We won the right to vote, the right to eat and shop wherever we want, the right to live anywhere we can afford. So the last two centuries laid down the foundation of basic freedom.

It's clear from all the statistics that we're making steady progress. Unemployment and poverty recently hit record lows. Out-of-wedlock births have dipped to the lowest level in four decades.

Household income and homeownership rates have reached all-time highs. The earnings of many low-wage workers are rising again, while the black middle class has more than doubled in the last generation.

The racism that locked millions of our young men out of the job market for years is dissolving slowly. Employers are laying out the welcome mat because they need eager workers and our young men are eager to work.

Businesses that abandoned inner cities a generation ago are scrambling to open up shop and capture a share of these rediscovered urban markets.

You may remember that movie called "Cotton Comes to Harlem." Well, the sequel today would be titled "Home Depot Comes to Harlem."

So the cup is filling. But don't be fooled. It ain't full yet. And for the least among us, it still leaks -- from the bottom.

As President Clinton spotlighted on his recent tour, there are regions of America where all that folks know of the economic boom is what they see on the evening news.

One out of six Americans lack health insurance.

Welfare reform is touted as a resounding success. But thousands of former recipients are being denied food stamps by heartless bureaucrats who defy the law.

The black unemployment rate remains about twice that of whites. For young adults, the gap is even wider -- nearly 17 percent for blacks versus 6 1/2 percent for whites.

The digital divide still divides us. The gap in computer ownership among working class white and black families has actually grown over the last five years.

Everyone says we should depend less on government largesse and start our own businesses like everybody else. That sounds fine.

But the truth is that even to this day, according to a study just published by the Federal Reserve Board, black entrepreneurs seeking small business loans are rejected twice as much as whites with the same credit rating.

Police brutality haunts people of color. You know and I know -- and deep in their hearts, the police know -- that there's no way Amadou Diallo, Anthony Baez, or Tyisha Miller would be dead today if they were white. No way.

AIDS is ravaging over people. Yet as U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher reminds us so insistently, public awareness and prevention efforts among African Americans lag far behind other groups at risk.

Whites wouldn't tolerate these gaps in life circumstances for a second. Nor should we.

There won't be One America until the gulf that divides minorities from mainstream America disappears once and for all.

The primary task facing our nation in the century ahead is to transform America's "have-nots" into "haves".

The year 2000 election will be a referendum on whether America is serious about making the American dream truly accessible to all Americans.

Politicians and pundits say big government has gone out of style. They say big government programs don't work. They tell us that big ideas are passe because we cannot afford them any longer. That's all a bunch of baloney.

When America decides to win a race or fix a problem, we muster the will and marshal the wherewithal, come hell or high water. Throughout the nation's history, we've used taxpayers' money to prop up bankrupt industries. We've helped fallen communities and war-ravaged continents get back on their feet.

Remember the multi-billion dollar savings and loan bailout. Taxpayers footed that bill.

Remember the Marshall Plan for Europe following World War II. The clear signal coming from the Balkan Summit in Sarajevo recently is that we'll do the same for Yugoslavia if Milosevic is ousted.

We've created government programs to catapult our fellow Americans of modest means right into the middle class -- and in one generation at that. That's what homesteading did out West. Land-grant colleges and the GI bill. FHA guarantees with low downpayments for first-time homebuyers.

When it comes to the "haves" of America, there's no government program too big for Washington. I'd certainly call the nearly \$1 trillion tax cut that the House and Senate passed just a few days ago a big idea. So big, in fact, that I lost track trying to count how many millions of dollars make a trillion.

Given the surpluses piling up in Washington, state capitals and city halls, government can't cry broke anymore. It clearly has the resources these days.

It's our job to make certain our politicians muster the will. That's why we must register and vote in the year 2000 election as though our future depends on it. Make no mistake, it does.

President Clinton and this Congress have a little over a year left to go in office. They deserve everlasting credit for accumulating the surplus.

But it's morally wrong for them to divvy up most of the surplus loot on their way out the door.

Why? Because how that's done will set the domestic agenda well into the next century. The debate over how to do it should be the defining issue of next year's presidential election because America will live with the consequences for decades to come.

What I'm about to propose is more than a Marshall Plan. It is a moral imperative.

The National Urban League is proposing *Ten Opportunity Commandments for the 21st Century*. Yes, this is a big idea. But I'm not about to apologize for laying out an ambitious agenda.

I'm not talking about dead-end expenditures that don't pay off. These investments are proven winners. They'll pay handsome dividends to society for generations to come.

Back in the 1800s, homesteading gave the least among us a big lift by giving them 40 acres and a mule.

Our *Ten Opportunity Commandments* are the 21st century equivalent of homesteading. They're basically what one economist calls "40 Acres and a Sheepskin."

Here then are the National Urban League's *Ten Opportunity Commandments*:

1. Offer quality pre-school education to every child whose parents cannot afford it.
2. Provide affordable health care for the 41 million Americans who are uninsured.

3. Ensure that every public school serving poor children equips them for self-reliance.
4. Vastly increase support for proven programs that get the estimated 15 million high school dropouts back on track.
5. Guarantee universal access to affordable higher education.
6. Maintain national economic policies that promote high employment and economic growth in communities that have missed out on the good times.
7. Eliminate the digital divide by making the acquisition of computers and use of the Internet affordable for everyone.
8. Assure full participation of minorities in higher education, employment and contracting. There must be no retreat to tokenism.
9. Eradicate the homeownership gap along ethnic lines by providing 100 percent mortgage guarantees for credit-worthy, working class minority families.
10. Equalize access to capital by totally eliminating discriminatory business loan practices, so that minority entrepreneurs can join the chorus in proclaiming that the business of America is business.

Now, it would take the rest of the evening to cover each of these *Opportunity Commandments* in detail. So I'll address many, but not all of the *Commandments* tonight.

Let's start with the *Third Opportunity Commandment*, which calls for high performing public schools.

Equality begins with education. We all know that "Achievement Matters." One main reason is that, like it or not, ready or not, states and school districts are holding students to higher academic standards and stricter account. They're even willing to take the political heat for holding pupils back in grade.

In New York City, for instance, nearly a third of the school system's one million students will repeat next year if they can't pass the minimum proficiency exams. The same tough love is taking hold from Jacksonville, Florida, to Houston and L. A.

The academic achievement gap even extends to middle class suburbs, like Shaker Heights, where our children lag noticeably behind their white classmates.

What's especially puzzling – and disturbing – is the fact that this pattern holds true even for black students whose parents are well educated.

If those aren't reasons enough to make certain our children achieve, the competition to get into college is stiffer today than ever before. And it'll even get tougher still in the future.

High school valedictorians are being rejected by colleges that they had considered shoe-ins.

Applications to San Diego State University soared by 28 percent this year alone. So it raised the minimum grade point average for applicants from 2.5 to 3.2.

The days of skating through high school into college are over.

I'm proud to report that the Urban League movement is doing its part to spread the gospel that "Achievement Matters". In partnership with the Congress of National Black Churches and two dozen sororities, fraternities and civic groups, we've launched the Campaign for African-American Achievement.

Together we've designated September as Achievement Month. Last September 19th, some 40,000 youngsters and parents participated in our events nationwide to celebrate children who are doing the right thing.

A year ago, the CNBC and the League launched the Thurgood Marshall Achievers Society, our national honor society for youngsters who excel in school. This is the brainchild of our trustee, Dr. Israel Tribble. I tend to think of it as our national achievement gang, complete with its own rituals and regalia.

Already we've inducted about 5,000 academic stars and challenged them to spread the gospel to their siblings and buddies that achievement is cool.

In Columbia SC, the Urban League joined forces with State Farm Insurance Company to stage an SAT awareness rally. Can you imagine a more boring subject? If you had asked me, I'd have said teenagers would avoid this event like the plague.

J. T. McLawhorn, our CEO in Columbia, originally hoped to attract a couple hundred kids to the rally. Guess what? Seven hundred showed up. They had to move the event to the chapel at Benedict College.

Young brothers were there in jeans and dreadlocks, the sisters in their designer clothes. Why? Because they know achievement is cool and because they're determined to get into college.

What's more, the rally was the lead story on the evening news on three networks. Viewers statewide -- youngsters and adults alike -- saw a chapel overflowing with our kids who are serious as a heartbeat about bettering themselves through education.

Last winter, Bill Gray, head of the United Negro College Fund, approached us with a brilliant idea.

He said the League and U.N.C.F. should join forces with the Congress of National Black Churches to take our achievement message even deeper into the black community through our churches.

Three weeks ago, we videotaped the all-star gospel gala that will air on Black Entertainment Television in primetime from 7 to 11 p.m. on September 26. We're calling it *Achievement Sunday*.

You all know I'm not one to exaggerate. Take it from me. This is a soul-stirring, foot-stompin' show. We have two goals in mind for the gala. The first is to raise scholarship money for college-bound students. The second is to spread the gospel that "Achievement Matters."

Legendary gospel artists like Shirley Caesar, Fred Hammond, Dottie Peoples and the Williams Brothers pitched our message on air.

The program is spiced with inspiring profiles of NULITERS who dream of going to college.

So our message that "Achievement Matters" is spreading like wildfire. But we have lots more work ahead.

That's why every black organization must step up to the plate. We must assume collective responsibility for the fate of our children because our collective future is at stake.

For starters, every church, every pastor, every chapter of the Eastern Star and the Links, Phi Beta Sigma and Delta Sigma Theta, the Beauticians, Barbers, and the Boule -- must make certain that the children in their own flock are squarely on the achievement page. That they learn to read on time and stay on course academically.

Get your children to read newspapers to polish their reading skills and stretch their vocabulary. Encourage your members to keep an eagle eye on how their youngsters are doing in school. Use your own publications to spread the gospel that "Achievement Matters" among your own members. Get your church or sorority to sponsor after-school tutorial programs and SAT prep courses in partnership with other groups.

History teaches us that no ethnic group can thrive if it half-steps on education.

We must preach the gospel of achievement until it reaches every African-American household, every organization, every pulpit and place of worship, every publication and broadcast program we control.

We must preach until the gospel of achievement permeates the consciousness of every black child -- and every educator who has charge of our children.

Our children equal our destiny.

This spring the Education Trust, a highly respected research and advocacy organization, released a revealing survey of several hundred high performing schools around the country that serve minority and low income children. Many of them even outshine suburban schools on state tests.

These schools have several attributes in common:

- They devote lots more time than the typical school to reading and math instruction, even if that means lengthening the school day;
- These highly successful schools monitor their students closely and intervene quickly if they falter. They don't dawdle during the school year and then impose massive doses of summer school after the students fall way behind;
- They get parents involved, not just with staging bake sales but with helping their children to do better in school and meet the standards; and
- They place the onus for improvement mainly on the educators, where it belongs.

My friends, this is sheer common sense. It doesn't depend on exotic experiments or heroic educators. Mere mortals can make this happen.

What's required is the collective determination of parents, educators and politicians that the days of underestimating and under-educating our youngsters are over.

The big push to end social promotion is a day late and a dollar short. The truth is that school systems have been holding youngsters back for years.

There's no way to educate urban children on the cheap. Study after study shows that the youngsters who are held back seldom catch up and end up dropping out more often.

States and school districts must invest in quality pre-school and K-12 education up front, instead of imposing flashy quick fixes that often do more harm than good.

When the clock strikes midnight this New Year's eve, leave all those excuses in the litter baskets along with the noisemakers.

It's a new millennium for humankind.

And if urban public schools hope to survive in the 21st century, it'd better be a new day for our children.

It's a different story out of school. Labor Secretary Alexis Herman estimates that 15 million young people have dropped out of school and are headed nowhere fast. Some hold menial jobs that pay barely enough to get by. Others are hanging out on the streets, idle and alienated. All too many have gone over the edge and gotten ensnared in the criminal justice system.

I know it's fashionable in today's conservative climate to feel no compassion for these young people. To dismiss them as n'er-do-wells who deserve their fate.

That's hard-hearted. And, to be blunt, it's just plain dumb given all those help-wanted signs posted by employers. These young people represent a vast reservoir of underutilized talent for our economy, if only society will invest in tapping it.

We Urban Leaguers know how to re-engage these young people and unleash their potential. The Urban League of Portland, Oregon runs a street academy which does just that.

Across the country, the National Guard operates its hugely successful Youth ChalleNGe Corps, which has equipped dropouts to pass the GED and go on to jobs and college.

That's the point of our *Fourth Opportunity Commandment*, which calls for a major investment in successful programs like these that rescue dropouts from oblivion.

There's another enormous pool of people who are contributing far less to society than they could and costing taxpayers far more than they should.

I speak of the millions of non-violent offenders who've provided the convenient excuse for the prison construction binge over the last decade.

If America keeps locking up people at this clip, before long we'll monopolize the global license plate production market.

In some states, first-time drug offenders languish behind bars for fifteen years or more. Many are wives or girlfriends who've been snookered or intimidated by their man into carrying a miniscule amount of drugs.

Let me tell you about Kemba Smith. She was a student at Hampton University when she fell under the sway of a charming boyfriend who was bad news. Unbeknownst to her in the beginning, he was a big time drug dealer.

Kemba was hit with a federal conspiracy charge even though she never dealt drugs and clearly was coerced and physically abused by her boyfriend.

Would you believe that this first-time offender with no prior criminal record was sentenced to 24 years in prison, with no possibility of parole?

Patty Hearst, the wealthy newspaper heiress who was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army and later helped stick up a bank armed with a machine gun, spent just a couple of years in jail.

What possible public purpose is served by locking up a non-violent, first-time offender like Kemba for much of her adult life and removing her from the labor market during her most productive years? What possible public purpose is served by incarcerating her at staggering public expense? For Kemba, it'll probably cost taxpayers \$2.5 million or more.

What possible public purpose is served by forcing young mothers like Kemba to turn over their children to sisters and grandmothers who have burdens of their own. Or to the publicly financed foster care system. Taxpayers then catch it in their wallets twice.

To finance all this all-out war on crime, states have siphoned money from higher education to pay for prisons.

When you adjust for inflation, state support for the City University of New York has dropped by 40 percent since 1980, while support from the City of New York itself has plunged by 90 percent.

Yet this year, New York Governor George Pataki actually tried cutting tuition assistance for low-income college students by \$134 million. Thankfully, the State Legislature wouldn't let him get away with it.

The politicians who are robbing higher education of support are the real criminals.

Cuts in appropriations mean increases in tuition. This squeezes out the very students we should be steering to college -- instead of prison. I don't care what culinary school you attended, that isn't a recipe for global competitiveness.

That's why our *Fifth Opportunity Commandment* calls for universal access to affordable higher education.

Buried in all the good news about plunging unemployment rates was a tidbit that caught my eye.

Do you realize that for all the ballyhooed improvements in policing, the fact of the matter is that crime has dropped most dramatically in cities that have enjoyed the steepest declines in unemployment?

They say crime pays. But the moral of these statistics is that economic opportunity pays even better.

That's all the more reason for the National Urban League's *Sixth Opportunity Commandment*.

Washington should stay the course with economic policies that promote economic growth in impoverished inner cities and rural communities.

Alan Greenspan, the head of the Federal Reserve Board, is worried these days that inflation will resurface.

Chairman Greenspan -- If you must cool down the economy, find a way that doesn't dash the hopes of our young people, who've just tapped into the American dream.

Let me repeat the National Urban League's *Ten Opportunity Commandments*, to make certain they become etched in our minds:

1. Offer quality pre-school education for all low-income children;
2. Provide affordable health care for the millions of Americans who lack it;
3. Ensure that public schools equip poor and minority children for self-reliance;
4. Expand programs that get school dropouts back on track;
5. Guarantee universal access to affordable higher education;
6. Maintain national economic policies that promote economic growth in poor communities;
7. Eliminate the digital divide;
8. Assure full participation in the opportunity structure;
9. Eradicate the homeownership gap; and
10. Equalize access to capital.

Closing the opportunity gap isn't Washington's responsibility alone.

Governors and mayors love reminding us that they are principally responsible for services like public education. I challenge them to step up to the plate as well.

The job of the next president of the United States is to galvanize leadership at every level of government to close the opportunity gap once and for all.

This campaign season, we should judge the candidates for president -- and for every other elective office -- by how genuine they are about closing the opportunity gap.

Don't be enticed by slogans or seduced by lip service. Focus on substance. The bottom line is this: Are they serious?

To help you judge whether they are, the National Urban League will launch a brand new scorecard this fall called *Opportunity Watch*.

Many of our affiliates, like Chicago and Seattle, already keep a watchful eye on public policies affecting their constituents. Now we're going national with this technique.

Opportunity Watch will monitor the policy pronouncements, position papers, press conferences and debates involving the major presidential candidates.

We will rate how committed they are to our *Ten Opportunity Commandments*. Instead of the stars they use for movies, we'll use our equal opportunity logo to rate the candidates.

If they're really serious and actually endorse our plan or come up with a better idea, they'll get five equality signs. If they mention our *Commandments* on the campaign trail, perhaps they'll earn a two.

But if they're silent or shuckin' and jivin', they get a big zero, with no equality sign inside it.

We'll report the results in *Opportunity Watch*. We plan to distribute it periodically to our affiliates and the news media.

To our colleagues in the civil rights community. To our partners in the Achievement Campaign, with the request that they share the ratings with their 25 million members.

We'll also publish the scorecard on our website and use it for my *To Be Equal* column and weekly radio commentary.

In other words, we're serious that we want every candidate to take our *Ten Opportunity Commandments* seriously.

Opportunity Watch won't shut down after next year's election. In fact, the stakes will rise for whoever wins. We'll rate the new president and Congress based on their bottom line performance, not their pronouncements.

To make this nation work, America must lower the gangplank and help everyone on board.

The dumbest and most dangerous thing this country can do is to hoist the gangplank and try sailing off into the 21st century without all hands on deck.

The National Urban League's opportunity agenda lays the groundwork for putting equality into practice.

But even as we move forward, we must forever be on guard against racism and, its more benign form, tokenism. Both still bedevil us.

Sometimes it's in our face, like police brutality or the violence of white supremacists.

Other times, it's camouflaged, as in the emerging debate over so-called "cascading" in higher education.

Many offenders deserve their fate because they are one-person crime waves who have wreaked havoc on society and, on our own people.

But the criminal justice system is wreaking its own form of havoc on our community. I'm talking about inexcusable brutality and the rampant racial profiling, stopping and frisking of folk who've done little or nothing wrong.

I know that police work is dangerous and that the vast majority of cops are good people who do a great job.

I realize that some young people lose their cool when they're stopped by an officer. The police deserve our gratitude and our support.

Still, when the police declared war on crime a decade or so ago, they all-too-often declared war on innocent people as well as known perpetrators.

Some police departments have gone way overboard with racial profiling and, like those New Jersey State troopers, they've been caught red-handed.

One black police officer reports being stopped in a Philadelphia suburb by a white officer who said his inspection sticker was placed "abnormally" high on the car's windshield.

Police practices like these make an utter mockery of the constitutional protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. They shred the civil liberties of ordinary citizens whose only suspicious trait is the pigmentation of their skin. Whose only offense is living in the inner city or driving where they supposedly don't belong.

The National Urban League has led the way in urging President Clinton to acknowledge the problem and get his administration in gear to address it.

Last February I sent Mr. Clinton an open letter telling him that his vision of One America will never materialize without resolving this issue.

On February 25th, the League convened an historic press conference to make the case.

The array of leaders from all walks of life was so impressive that the White House had to respond. They were all there -- Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Raul Yzaguirre of the National Council of La Raza, Kweisi Mfume, Johnny Cochran, Abe Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League, Karen Narasaki of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, Rep. James Clyburn, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Fred Rotondaro of the National Italian-American Foundation.

Many of these leaders will be with us for the plenary session Wednesday morning.

I'm also pleased that Police Commissioner John Timoney of Philadelphia will be with us as well. He's helping to bring law enforcement leaders to the table to find constructive solutions.

The Clinton administration heard us loud and clear. In June, Attorney General Janet Reno embraced one of our major recommendations and convened a summit of police chiefs and union leaders, civil rights groups, community leaders and young people.

That meeting definitely moved the ball downfield.

The challenge from here on out is for the President and the Attorney General to match their encouraging rhetoric with concrete action. I call upon them to:

1. Launch federal investigations immediately whenever there's a highly questionable police killing or brutal assault. Just like the National Transportation Safety Board whenever there's a plane crash, the Feds should swoop right in before there's time for the police to erect that "Blue Wall" of silence and alibis;

2. Publish an annual report on the incidence of police brutality and abuse nationwide, spotlighting those local departments by name where the problems are egregious and festering;
3. Require that local police departments that receive federal aid teach their officers how to dissuade and disarm wherever possible -- before they resort to deadly force;
4. Withhold federal subsidies from police departments that fail to remedy chronic patterns of brutality and abuse; and
5. Place local and state police departments that procrastinate or stonewall in federal receivership until the problems are fixed.

We Urban Leaguers share the noble dream of a colorblind society.

But it'll never happen so long as the criminal justice system is riddled with racism.

In higher education, we'd better keep an eagle eye on an ominous trend. It's called "cascading." Basically, it's nothing but a kinder, gentler form of tokenism.

We all know that affirmative action is now illegal in California and Texas.

Plenty of bright Latino and Black high school graduates, who once would have gone to prestigious institutions like the University of California at Berkeley, no longer are getting in.

So they are "cascading" down to less selective campuses.

Many of us bitterly recall being under-estimated or misled by supposedly well-meaning teachers and guidance counselors who, it turns out, were snakes who had anything but our best interests at heart.

As a high school junior back in the late 1950s, I was chosen to participate in a summer program for students who were strong in math and science.

During the summer, the Defense Department subcontractor we worked for saw fit to subject us to a battery of academic assessments.

I'll never, ever forget what they told me about my potential. I was informed that I "probably" would get to go to college, but that I "should not count on" getting into graduate or professional school.

I was confused and hurt. My self-confidence was badly shaken.

Fortunately my mother and my late father told me that they didn't know what the hell they were talking about and that I should ignore what they said.

But I always remembered that downbeat appraisal, especially when I obtained my law degree from Yale in 1966 -- and when I returned 30 years later to receive its prestigious alumni award.

It's outrageous for the apologists of cascading to suggest that our ablest young people should stop shooting for the top and gratefully settle for less than the best.

W.E.B. DuBois would roll over in his grave if we ever acquiesced. No way!

Have you heard any critics of affirmative action urging white students to lower their sights?

Have you read any supposedly scholarly articles arguing that they'd be better off? Why is cascading good only for us?

The competition to get into prestigious colleges is hotter than ever. I see no sign whatsoever that white parents are foregoing any advantage they can gain -- or, yes, purchase -- for their youngsters. Just look at the small fortune they're spending on SAT tutorials, which is a booming industry.

Our destination is the American Dream, and nothing short of it. DuBois said we should push our best and brightest into the toughest institutions possible. Why? Because that's where they'll acquire the wisdom and the skills to swim in the swiftest currents of the American mainstream.

Tokenism and exclusion are ugly mementos of a fading century with barely four months left on the clock. DuBois would have none of it in 1900. Nor must we on the eve of the new millennium. With each passing decade, America will be more diverse, not less.

That is why in the spirit of our *Eighth Opportunity Commandment*, the National Urban League has no intention of leaving inclusion to chance.

Under the banner of *Opportunity Watch*, we will compile an annual scorecard on specific colleges and universities, and on higher education overall.

We'll do year-by-year tabulations and comparisons of how many minorities apply, how many are accepted and ultimately attend two-year and four-year institutions, as well as graduate and professional schools.

We'll also keep track of admissions patterns for low-income and working class students. There will be no retreat to tokenism in the 21st Century.

Earlier this year, America was deeply shaken when two teenaged loners named Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold slaughtered a dozen high school classmates and a teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.

The massacre triggered an instant search for solutions, ranging from stricter gun control to Internet censorship. But it also exposed some harsh truths about American life that young people wrestle with daily, but that most adults would just as soon forget.

Suburban high schools mimic mainstream America. They are intensely competitive and hierarchical. Students become obsessed with their status.

Ostracism is rampant. There are cliques of youngsters who hang together and lord it over outsiders. "Winners" love rubbing salt in the wounds of "losers."

Ostracism, racism, anti-Semitism and tribalism are all points along a continuum of intolerance. In their most benign form, these "isms" produce embarrassment and isolation. Taken to extremes, they poison, maim, kill and destroy – families, communities, cultures, peoples, even nations.

They all entail defining one's own self worth by demeaning the worth of others based on factors like race, religion, income, gender, geography, GPA, SAT scores or sexual orientation.

None of these superficial attributes measure the true value of an individual, much less the contributions they'll make over a lifetime.

To the young people within earshot of my voice, I say: You must define the kind of society you want for yourselves, your loved ones and, above all, your children.

I implore you to recognize the evil of intolerance. Search below the surface of your fellow citizens and discover the shared humanity and common aspirations that transcend the boundaries that divide us and unite the family of man.

Littleton has taught America's young people the traumatic lesson that intolerance, vulnerability and mortality do not discriminate.

The ideal of One America will elude us so long as Americans are isolated from one another inside segregated public schools and houses of worship, gated communities and narrow-cast popular culture.

That's why America's young people must reach across the chasms of ignorance and intolerance, of race and religion, of poverty and plenty, of presumed superiority and subjugation.

You are America's best hope for forging a society based on mutual humanity, mutual respect and mutual aspirations.

If we're to become One America, your generation, not mine, will make that call. It will occur on your watch because you want it that way. I have every confidence that you will.

The odyssey of black people from subjugation to liberation the world over is the most inspiring freedom ride in the history of humankind.

A century ago, Ethiopia and Liberia were the only free nations in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, every African nation is free. Nary a colonial master is left on the continent.

A century ago, Jim Crow seized the bullwhip from slave owners to keep our people subservient and trapped in segregation.

Today, the hills are alive with the sound of glass ceilings shattering. Not from the ring of Mary Poppins' voice. I'm talking about the sledgehammers wielded by Franklin Raines at Fannie Mae, Ruth Simmons at Smith College, Ken Chenault at American Express, Anne Fudge at Maxwell House, Lloyd Ward at Maytag, and Mark Whitaker at *Newsweek*.

We've come a great distance since slave ships arrived on these shores. Two centuries ago, our ancestors struggled mightily to shed the shackles and the shame. They even crawled underground to escape the scourge of slavery.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, it took our people another century and a half to traverse a forest fraught with darkness and danger.

En route, we sang "We Shall Overcome" to steel body and soul against disappointment, delay and the deadly assaults of Jim Crow and the KKK. And we did overcome.

When the going got tough, we pressed forward by singing "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Us Around." And we didn't.

When our energy flagged, we revived ourselves by singing "I Don't Feel Noways Tired."

Today, on the eve of the new century, we finally can see the clearing on the far side of the forest.

Now we begin our ascent toward the light. Our destination is the American Dream, and nothing less.

To the loyal members and dear friends of our great movement, as I declare this final National Urban League conference of the 20th century open for business, please

rise and join together in singing the tune that captures the spirit of our journey in the 21st century:

"Ain't No Stopping Us Now."

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

***EDUCATION—
CAMPAIGN FOR AFRICAN-
AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT***

PRESS CLIPS

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Young blacks need to hear right story

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Value of education and potential for success must be stressed

"Oh, God, we're gonna get creamed!"

Frank, this kid on my daughter's soccer team, would offer that pessimistic prognostication before every one of their mid-'80s matches. It was no less annoying for its unerring accuracy. The team went winless, usually losing in a shutout. They really did get creamed.

Part of the reason was that many of the players weren't particularly athletic. Another was that they weren't (may those underappreciated parent volunteers forgive me) particularly well coached.

But surely some small part of the team's failure had to do with Frank's contagious certainty that victory belonged to the other team. You're not likely to succeed if you are convinced beyond all doubting that you won't.

I wonder if this youngster's pessimism offers any insight into the disturbing academic underperformance of black students. Last Sunday's *New York Times* had another of those depressing pieces on the subject. Even at the upper socioeconomic levels, in professional homes with two college-educated parents, black students, in one analysis, scored nearly 200 points lower on the SAT than their white counterparts.

Can the assumption that academic success belongs to other teams —



William Raspberry

whites or Asians — lead, first, to performance-damping fear and, later, to half-hearted effort? Can it lead at last to that phenomenon we keep hearing about: of black students actually resisting academic achievement on the ground that it is "white"?

Hugh Price, president of the *National Urban League*, believes it can, and that's why he and his colleagues in a score of national black organizations have come together in a Campaign for African American Achievement.

The leaders of these organizations — ranging from fraternities and sororities to civil rights groups to the Con-

gress of National Black Churches — have been celebrating black achievement, honoring scholars the way we routinely honor athletes and entertainers.

In a series of ceremonies around the nation, usually in churches, the group has been inducting thousands of bright young blacks into the Thurgood Marshall National Achievers Society. The aim, Price said over a recent breakfast here, is to counter both the academic self-doubt and the negative peer pressure that says doing well in school is somehow not "black."

"We hope to change the culture that devalues educational achievement, that says African Americans won't be allowed to succeed economically, so there's no need for them to succeed academically," he said.

That culture badly needs changing — both because it is so inimical to the best interests of black people and because it's no longer true. America is, to an almost unprecedented degree, a worker-hungry economy. But unlike earlier labor-tight periods, this one requires workers with decent academic credentials. A strong back and a willingness to work no longer are enough to make a decent living.

Astonishingly, at a time when more African Americans than ever hold jobs of prestige and power, the notion persists among young blacks that racism

remains an insuperable barrier — not just in the workplace but even in the schools. All of us have stories to tell of unfair supervisors, insensitive counselors and bigoted teachers, and the stories are mostly true.

But so are the equally compelling stories of black achievement.

The culture change Price hopes to achieve will depend on which stories become our guide — those that say we needn't try or those that prove we can succeed if we put forth the effort.

What our young people need to understand is that education is not a zero-sum game in which they either outperform someone else or else join the ranks of losers. It is a matter of acquiring the knowledge, the skills and the attitudes that can make them valued (and well-compensated) employees. But it does take effort.

As 18-year-old Fitzroy Dennison told *The New York Times*:

"My teachers are not telling me I have to (work hard academically). My parents don't tell me I have to do it."

Well, Fitzroy, I'm telling you, you have to do it. We have to do it. Or else, in this increasingly technical economy, we really are "gonna get creamed."

William Raspberry is a columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group at writersgrp@washpost.com.

Children & Families

Urban League Effort Targets Young Achievers

By Caroline Hendrie
Jacksonville, Fla.

Grandparent Snapshot: The 2000 census will include several questions about people who are caring for their grandchildren, but a recently released report from the U.S. Census Bureau already includes information about the growing number of households in which grandchildren and grandparents live together.

Almost 5.5 million children—or 7.7 percent of all children in the United States—were living with at least one of their grandparents in 1997, according to the report. Most of those homes—75 percent—were maintained by a grandparent, meaning they were owned or leased in that person's name.

The report also indicates that among all families in which a grandparent lives with grandchildren, certain types—such as those in which the grandchildren live only with a grandmother—are more likely to live in poverty.

There are other differences as well. In homes maintained by grandparents, a majority of both the grandfathers and grandmothers are employed. But in homes maintained by parents in which grandparents also live, only a third of the grandfathers and a quarter of the grandmothers are employed.

In homes where grandparents are the heads of household, about 27 percent of the grandchildren are poor, and a third of the grandchildren are without health insurance. In homes maintained by parents, 17 percent of the grandchildren are poor, and 19 percent have no health insurance.

Data for the report, "Coresident Grandparents and Grandchildren," come from the 1997 Current Population Survey.

At Work in Chicago: The Chicago school system not only serves students from the Alba Homes neighborhood, a housing project on the city's South Side; it also employs their parents through a new welfare-to-work project run by the district's human resources department. Twenty former welfare recipients, whose children attend school in the city, are working for the district in entry-level, part-time jobs that provide full benefits.

Most are making \$7.96 an hour working as lunchroom attendants, preparing meals and cleaning kitchens.

The program is part of a plan by Mayor Richard M. Daley to rebuild the Alba Homes neighborhood. Other goals include building 2,900 new housing units and improving park facilities and transportation service. Plans call for an additional 500 residents to receive job training and chances for interviews with the school district and other city agencies.

When applying to college in the late 1950s, Hugh B. Price was determined to aim for the top. So he ignored a guidance counselor who advised him to shoot low, and wound up winning admission to such top-ranked schools as Harvard University and Amherst College, his eventual alma mater.

What Mr. Price knew then, and what he knows now, is that African-Americans can achieve far greater academic success than many people assume. It is a message he is taking to the nation, as he spearheads the Campaign for African American Achievement in his role as the president of the National Urban League.

His passionate belief in that message was clear here last month as Mr. Price inducted a batch of new recruits into the Thurgood Marshall Achievers' Society, a centerpiece of the campaign. Conceived as a national honor society for black students from grades 3 through 11, the fledgling group has inducted more



Hugh B. Price, the president of the National Urban League, welcomes students into the Thurgood Marshall Achievers' Society.

than 5,000 youngsters since the spring of 1998.

In a church filled with beaming parents and earnest-looking youngsters, Mr. Price urged them to spread the gospel to family, friends, and classmates that "achievement matters."

"Let us send a signal out to the world that the days of undereducating our young people, the days of underestimating our young people, are over," he said.

Determined To Succeed

High expectations have long

held the key to Mr. Price's own success.

Born in 1941 to a physician father and a mother who was active in the desegregation movement, he grew up surrounded by black professionals and academics in a neighborhood adjoining Howard University in Washington. This setting instilled in him not only faith in the importance of education, but also a belief that he could fare well in the educational arena.

That faith served him well as he joined the first small contingent of black Washingtonians who entered previously all-white schools in the fall of 1954, months after the U.S. Supreme Court had declared the capital city's segregated school system unconstitutional.

It also helped him shake off the discouraging words he heard after attending a special program geared to promising mathematical and science students before his senior year in high school. After taking a battery of tests, he recalled, "I was told that I could probably go to college, but

Network of 14 Districts To Focus on Achievement Gap

By Caroline Hendrie

In search of solutions to a pervasive national problem, a new network of relatively well-off school districts is taking aim at the academic performance gap between racial and ethnic groups.

The 14 districts, mostly in suburbs and small cities, have banded together to find answers to lagging performance by blacks and Hispanics. Though many of the communities have sizable numbers of such minority students from middle-class families, the students typically post lower grades and test scores than white or Asian-American youngsters from comparable backgrounds.

"Each of us is ready to acknowledge that we haven't been able to address the issue by ourselves," said Allan Alson, the superintendent of the Evanston Township High School system, the suburban Chicago district that co-hosted a three-day conference launching the network late last month. "Maybe by helping each other, we can find some answers."

The Minority Student Achievement Network will aim to create programs that attack underachievement among non-Asian minorities and research projects that identify causes of the performance gap.

Other objectives will be to share information, provide staff development, and serve as a national clearinghouse on strategies to improve achievement by blacks and Hispanics. Several of the member districts serve large or well-known universities, including Amherst, Mass.; Ann Arbor, Mich.; Berkeley, Calif.; Chapel Hill, N.C.; and Madison, Wis.

During the network's inaugural conference June 27-29 at Northwestern University in Evanston, a retired Yale University professor told participants that they were uniquely positioned to address unequal achievement among racial and ethnic groups.

"If those in relatively stable and affluent communities serving kids where all the

odds are not against them can't crack the problem, there are many who will say it can't be done because the kids are not capable," said Edmund W. Gordon, a professor emeritus of psychology and a former chairman of African-American studies at Yale, who delivered the keynote address.

A Growing National Concern

The network's debut comes at a time when closing the achievement gap has emerged as a priority in states and districts across the country. San Francisco, Seattle, Tucson, Ariz., and the states of Texas and North Carolina are among those that have launched high-profile efforts to eliminate such disparities.

Those efforts have been fueled by national statistics suggesting that blacks and Hispanics have been giving up ground academically during the past decade. In a recent publication highlighting the problem, the Washington-based Education Trust reported that in both reading and mathematics, test scores among African-American and Hispanic 17-year-olds were on a par with those of typical white 13-year-olds.

"Many African-American and Latino students are trapped at levels of achievement that leave them terribly unprepared either for the next level of education or the world of work," said the trust's 1998 state and national data book.

Explanations for the problem vary. In addition to the socioeconomic differences among racial and ethnic groups, experts say that teacher expectations, peer culture, student motivation, parental involvement, and other factors all have an effect. Similarly, few analysts say that a single strategy for solving the problem will suffice.

Districts in the network typically have growing proportions of nonwhite enrollment, as well as significant levels of student poverty despite their communities' relative affluence. In Mr. Alson's district, 42 percent of students are black, a total of

Working Together

The following districts are taking part in the newly formed Minority Student Achievement Network:

- Amherst-Pelham School District, Mass.
- Ann Arbor Public Schools, Mich.
- Annington Public Schools, Va.
- Berkeley Unified School District, Calif.
- Cambridge Public Schools, Mass.
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, N.C.
- Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District, Ohio
- Evanston/Skokie School District 65, Ill.
- Evanston Township High School District 202, Ill.
- Madison Metropolitan School District, Wis.
- Oak Park Elementary School District 97, Ill.
- Oak Park-River Forest High School District 200, Ill.
- Shaker Heights City School District, Ohio
- White Plains Public Schools, N.Y.

54 percent are nonwhite, and about 30 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

"For a variety of reasons, it can be embarrassing for us school people to reveal the disparities that exist," said Mr. Alson, who was instrumental in creating the network. "A network offers the opportunity to openly discuss the results we're seeing, and the strategies we're employing to try to make a difference."

Mr. Price gave the lie to that prediction in 1966, when he earned his law degree from Yale University. He then moved on to a varied and distinguished career in law, government, journalism, philanthropy, and civil rights.

Making such stories commonplace, by fostering a grassroots movement for black academic success, is the overarching objective of the achievement crusade.

For one thing, he noted, the robust economy is opening new doors for blacks, but employers are demanding higher skill levels than in the past. Competition in college admissions, meanwhile, is growing keener for all students, and affirmative action programs are under attack.

Public schools are adopting tougher academic standards at a time when the achievement gap between black and Hispanic students on the one hand and white and Asian-American youngsters on the other has begun to widen again after nearly two decades of progress.

One of the campaign's primary goals is to spur black parents and community members to demand more from their schools, and to press harder for changes that will translate into better student performance.

An Achievement 'Gang'

Equally important is a drive to heighten expectations and support for students themselves. That's where the achievers' society comes in.

By serving as an "achievement gang," the society is designed to counteract the low esteem in which academically oriented blacks, especially boys, are often held by their peers.

"The whole point of the campaign is to fix into the eye of that storm, negative peer pressure," Mr. Price explained. "This has been a largely missing component of the education reform agenda."

To qualify for entry, students must achieve at least a B average. Modeled on a smaller-scale effort pioneered in Florida, the society has chapters at only 100 schools.

Each new member receives a custom-designed jacket garnished with the society's logo—a conscious echo of the gang-related garb and insignia that are fixtures in many inner-city neighborhoods. A highlight of the induction ceremony is the moment when the adults who are sponsoring the new members help them into their shiny black jackets.

The jackets were generally a hit with the 31 Jacksonville youngsters honored here in the June 26

Her father, Victor Hayes, was more interested in the less tangible benefits the society can offer his daughter, a straight-A student entering 6th grade. "Sometimes you can be the leader of your class and think you don't have to try too hard," he said. "She saw some competition out there today."

For the New York City-based Urban League, the achievement

"We're out in a zone that we haven't been in before, but we think the stakes warrant it," Mr. Price said.

But the achievement crusade is familiar territory for Mr. Price, who came to the league in 1994. In his previous job as a vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, he was responsible for arranging large grants to support urban school reform.

The School Development Program, the reform model developed by James P. Comer of Yale University, and the Texas Interfaith

Maria Ucelli, the associate rector of the Rockefeller Foundation's equal-opportunity division, who worked under Mr. Prioleau, called him "a wonderful, visionary person" with a knack for "identifying powerful people and powerful ideas and putting them together."

She said the achievement campaign "is completely consistent with what he has been about supporting the developmental needs of African-American kids but then challenging them to the same standards as we want for all kids."



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CITY NEWS

NEWARK, NJ
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Budweiser Jammin' for Education" raises scholar dollars

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Singer Shanice (top) and R&B group Silk perform at the "Budweiser Jammin' for Education," a benefit concert for Urban Scholarship Program.

ST. LOUIS, MO — Anheuser-Busch Companies Inc., in partnership with certain local affiliate chapters of the Urban League, 100 Black Men, the NAACP and other community organizations, will present the first "Celebration of Black Music Television Special" to benefit the Urban Scholarship Program.

The program was established to help urban students receive a college education.

The television spectacular is a component of the company's "Budweiser Jammin' for Education" initiative and features top entertainers in the respective genres of black music — R&B, jazz, blues, gospel and rap/hip hop. Celebrity hosts of the evening are Colin Powell, Vivica A. Fox, Gerold Levert and Sheemar Moore.

Performers and special guests for the concert include: Diahann Carroll, Chaka Khan, Kenny G., Sinbad, Silk, Herbie Hancock, Shanice, 702, Kenny Lattimore, Patti Austin, The Gap Band, Sporty Thievs, Jonathan Slocumb, James Ingram, Shirley Caesar, Yolanda Adams, and Keb' Mo'.

Produced by Byron Glöre of The Glöre Group, and taped recently in Los Angeles at

the Luckmon Fine Arts Complex, the TV special salutes and celebrates Black music's impact on American pop culture.

This star-filled gathering brought together the entertainment world and leading minority community organizations for one united purpose — to make it possible for deserving local African-American students to receive a college education.

As a fundraising vehicle for Budweiser Jammin' for Education, the Celebration of Black Music Television Program will raise money to assist local African-American college stu-

dents in cities across the country. The program was created to address the problem of limited scholarships are available to them.

"The Urban Scholarship Program is designed to provide more scholarships to more students to address this situation and send students in our communities to the colleges of their choice," said Wayman F. Smith III, vice president of Corporate Affairs for Anheuser-Busch Companies.

"For one united purpose — to make it possible for deserving local African American student to receive a college education."

"What makes this program so special is that the money raised in the community helps students in the community," says Tommy Dortch, president of 100 Black Men of America.

"The direct benefit is realized where it counts — in the community where the funds were raised."

"There are thousands of talented young people who are looking for the opportunity to better themselves by attending college," said John W. Mac, President of the Los Angeles Urban League.

"The 'Budweiser Jammin' for Education' campaign and Urban Scholarship Program will help African-American and other minority youth achieve the most important tool for success — education. Naturally, we're very excited about that."

Since 1979, the company has helped raise more than \$1 million for educational efforts across the country.



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Education accountability: First the school systems, then the students

FRONT PAGE

WASHINGTON Poor children and children of color will suffer greatly from the tough new academic standards politicians and educators are establishing for America's schools, a panel of education experts, economists and civil rights officials said in Washington recently.

They warned that, unless substantial improvements are made to improve the quality of schooling for poor and minority students, there will likely be a significant decline in the high school graduation and college attendance rates of students of color, and a worsening of the educational, occupational and income inequality that currently exists between affluent and poor Americans, and

whites and African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans.

Generally speaking, those standards require students to pass uniform standardized tests at particular grade levels - usually the fourth, eighth and 12th grades - for promotion to the next level or graduation from high school.

According to a recent report, 46 states either have or are preparing to implement these new standards.

But Hugh B. Price, president of the National Urban League, which convened the panel, said that only 13 states require and fund such in-

See Education, page 16



Members of the National Urban League Education Accountability Forum pose for a photo. From left, Professor Robert M. Hauser, Dr. Vlnetta Jones, Jane Smith, Dr. Gerry House, Hugh Price, Dr. Velma L. Cobb, Lynn Olson, Nat LaCour and Professor William M. Rodgers III.

Education

continued from front

Intervention programs to help low-performing students reach the state standards, while six other states require that such students be helped, but provide no resources to enable that to occur.

That gap, Price continued, is one of the ways urban and rural minority children are caught in an unconscionable trap between lofty standards and lousy schools.

"We don't fear holding our children to high academic standards," he said. "In fact, we demand it. But they must have a fair shot at succeeding."

The Clinton administration recently joined the fray with its proposed Education Accountability Act that would mandate an end to the practice of social promotions - promoting some students, even if they haven't met all the official requirements for moving on to the next grade - by school districts that receive federal aid.

Lynn Olsen, senior editor of *Education Week*, said that the educational accountability movement pushing these new measures is the latest national effort "to find the right levers to pull to increase educational results across the country."

"But," Olsen added, referring to the likely negative impact of such provisions, "what sounds good in theory is enormously complicated in

That complexity is evident in the issue of social promotion.

Robert M. Hauser, director of the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin, said numerous studies have confirmed that simply keeping students back a grade, without giving them substantial help, actually decreases the chances they will do well in school and increases the likelihood they will drop out.

"These new rules put barriers in place that will hurt poor and black and Hispanic students," said Velma L. Cobb, the Urban League's director of education and youth development policy. She noted that 95 percent of school-aged black children, for example, attend public schools. "Equalizing educational opportunity is a critical test the accountability movement must pass."

Dr. Gerry House, the Memphis (Tenn.) school system's superintendent, told those assembled that there was no mystery to doing that.

She said involving parents and other adults in the community, as well as teachers and school officers in the effort, was as crucial as providing the proper educational resources for high-achieving students and those who need help.

"If you are going to expect students to learn more and perform better," she said, "you have to make sure the resources are available and the teachers are ready to help them do that."

Michelle Singletary

WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON, DC
WEDNESDAY 834,641
APR 7 1999

A Scholarship That Makes Sense

By MICHELLE SINGLETARY
Washington Post Staff Writer

Shanita Brown has it all together. Girlfriend is ready for the world, and the world better watch out for her. With her tea-colored skin and almond-shaped eyes, she's a most beautiful and poised young lady.

In fact, during my interview with Shanita, I couldn't believe she was just 16. But she is 16, and she's graduating a year early from Potomac Senior High School in Oxon Hill.

Shanita is an example of what can happen when business, community, educators and families come together to ensure children most at risk make it in this world.

We can debate till the cows come home about teachers pay, test scores or busing, but Shanita and the people in her life have found a solution.

From the time she was in first grade, Shanita has been helped by the Greater Washington Urban League, which teamed up with Merrill Lynch & Co. in 1988 to help 25 Washington area children finish high school. In all, the National Urban League and Merrill Lynch selected 250 first-graders from some of the poorest neighborhoods in 10 cities to participate in their "ScholarshipBuilder" program.

Every one of the children was promised a full scholarship to college. Shanita is finishing high school a year ahead of her fellow scholarship winners and is off to the nursing program at Hampton University.

As I listened to her describe how it felt to have the scholarship and the years of guidance she got from the Urban League, her parents and her teachers, I had to choke back a few tears, I was so proud of her.

"I remember dressing up and taking a lot of pictures one day, but I didn't really understand what it was all about," Shanita said recently, while sitting in the Urban League's Washington office. "Now, I really feel blessed to have been in this program. I've been able to travel. I had the chance to meet a lot of different people. Without this scholarship, I don't think I would have been this well-rounded."

And, that is exactly what separates this program from so many other efforts to help urban, low-income children succeed in school.

The ScholarshipBuilder program took a holistic and long-term approach when it was set up to help those first-graders 11 years ago. Merrill Lynch put up the money, but the company recognized that it would take more than just cash.

"There has to be a collaborative effort," said Eddy Bayardelle, director of philanthropic programs for Merrill Lynch. "You cannot do it by yourself. Merrill Lynch couldn't do it by itself even with the money we are offering."

For its part, the Urban League became responsible for monitoring the students' progress. Over the years, the organization has helped the children with their academic studies, including offering tutoring when it was needed.

But that hasn't been all.

The children also received internships and trips to cultural events. "If you want kids to excel, you have to provide them with the right kind of exposure," said Bayardelle, a former school superintendent.

If parents needed job training or housing assistance, they got it. Counseling also was made available to the families. When one local boy lost his mother, the Urban League staff stepped in to help him cope with the loss.

"It's important at times like that to stabilize the youngster," said Audrey Epperson, the director of education for the Greater Washington Urban League who has been with the program since the beginning. "Student lives are impacted by a variety of things, and you have to try to make sure whatever negative things come along are balanced with positive things."

Whenever possible, the organizers also included the siblings of



BY JOHN MCCONNELL—THE WASHINGTON POST

Shanita Brown, one of 250 students from some of the poorest neighborhoods in 10 cities chosen to participate in a scholarship program sponsored by Merrill Lynch and the Urban League, goes a sketch of her prom gown with dressmaker Anthony Bullock.

of her children was participating in the program, a mother realized her oldest child wasn't reading well. "That's the beauty of our program," Epperson said.

So far, 96 percent of the original 250 students are still in school, and 80 percent are on track to graduate from high school by 2000.

Since the program's inception, Merrill Lynch has contributed to a special investment account for its scholarship students. The company estimates that the value of the account could increase to as much as \$16 million by the time the students enroll in college or other training programs. There's even a stipend for the graduates that become employed full time or join the military. Merrill Lynch employees have raised \$1.2 million for program activities such as tutoring for the SAT, college tours and leadership training for the students.

"Every opportunity that has come our way we have taken advantage of it," said Andrea Brown, Shanita's mother. "As a family, we couldn't have afforded to take Shanita to all the places they did."

It doesn't take an expert to figure out that it takes more than million-dollar pledges to help students like Shanita achieve. There really isn't a price tag for the kind of education Shanita has received, and she knows it.

"It would have been more of a business deal if the company had just said, 'Here's the check,'" said Shanita, who wants to become a pediatric nurse. "It wouldn't have been the same. This scholarship program had more of a personal touch because they had dealt with us since we were 5. It was a lot better program because of that."

Boy, that girl is smart.

Talkin' Money appears every other Wednesday in the Prince George's Extra. If you have comments or column ideas, send me a letter or e-mail. You can write to me in c/o Talkin' Money, 14402 Old Mill Rd., Suite 201, Upper Marlboro, Md. My e-mail



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PRO & CON

The effects of Proposition 209

By Bonnie Erbe and Josette Shiner

QUESTION: *New figures show that the number of minorities admitted to California's university system has nearly returned to the same level as before Proposition 209 was passed and racial preferences were banned. What have affirmative-action supporters, and critics, learned from California?*

JOSETTE SHINER: Hysteria reigned when Proposition 209 passed in California in 1996, banning the consideration of race, ethnicity or sexual orientation in employment, public education, contracting and promotion. Elite opinion was that if blacks, Latinos and Native Americans were not given easier admission criteria than whites they would be purged from our institutions of higher learning. Those who supported Prop 209 were called closed-minded and intolerant; then California Gov. Pete Wilson was branded a racist.

But the 1998-1999 admissions figures for California's eight-campus university system released this spring give lie to this fear. Elite opinion was wrong. The universities have not been resegregated; in fact, many of them are now more racially and ethnically diverse than ever. California voters were right not only on principle but in practice.

The original motivation behind many affirmative-action programs was well-placed: that the racial makeup of American schools and businesses should mirror the racial makeup in society. But American courts — including the Supreme Court — and American voters have rejected racial preferences as a tool to achieve such goals.

California universities got the numbers of minority admissions back up by reaching out to help prepare and attract qualified students. They have broadened admissions criteria for all students beyond just grades and SATs. Today the academic credentials of minorities accepted at California's top schools, such as Berkeley, more closely match those of their white peers than in the past.

Ward Connerly, the leader of the campaign for Prop. 209, predicts minority students will get more respect under the new system. "Many of the students were not getting a preference in the first place," he said recently. "UC was unfairly stigmatizing them by using race, and, in fact, once you stop using race and you look at the students on the basis of their individual merits you will find they get in even without the preference."

The California experience shows us that there are other more meaningful and less divisive ways to open the doors of opportunity to all Americans.

BONNIE ERBE: We are supposed to believe that there always were plenty of qualified minority students hiding out in California high schools? That all it took was the demolition of affirmative action admissions policies and a little bit of encouragement in the form of recruitment to get them to apply to the University of California?

Now, if you buy that pile of dung, I have a manure factory down the road for sale.

Truth be told, conservatives' defeat of affirmative action has created a web of lies to attempt to accomplish the same thing that was being done before

Proposition 209 became law. According to Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, "All of that (intense recruitment of minority students) is fine, but it is living a lie. If Proposition 209 requires that you live a lie, then that's what you do."

What he means is that the university, still, thankfully "hell-bent on assembling diverse campuses," now goes in to heavily minority school districts and does whatever needs to be done (e.g., tutors students) to make sure a representative percentage of them are admitted to the university system. It also enacted the 4 percent rule, which says the top 4 percent of each public high school class is automatically admitted, a move that automatically includes a major representation of inner city minority students. So minorities are still benefiting from preferential treatment, but in high school instead of in the college admissions process.

And there's another hidden loss that the latest admissions figures do not display unless one digs beneath the surface: fewer African-American and Hispanic students are going on to attend the U.C. system's most elite institutions and more of them are going to the less selective campuses. Minority admissions are up, he says, at the less prestigious U.C. campuses and down at U.C.-Berkeley. That, he says, is a loss to them, a loss to the state and a loss to the nation. And I could not agree more.

Bonnie Erbe is host of the PBS program "To the Contrary." Josette Shiner is president of Empower America.

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Mark Bohwan/The Gazette



Shana Latrice Hill, right, a seventh-grader at Panorama Middle School, and Shante Jackson, a Gorman Middle School sixth-grader, leave The Broadmoor after being inducted Wednesday into the Thurgood Marshall Achievers Society.

Local minority students lauded for achievements

Positive community involvement honored

By **Ovetta Sampson**/The Gazette

Story editor Victor Greto

Headline by Sarah Marquardt

9595

Honor societies, academic accolades and awards are only as good as the people who give them.

For many years, people of color in American society were ignored or passed over for the most prestigious prizes, including Pulitzer Prizes and Academy Awards. It was not because their craft, art or accomplishments weren't good enough.

They simply weren't considered. Now, awards are attainable to

all. Still, some organizations cling to the notion that maybe all the good work achieved by people of color isn't recognized enough.

That's why the National Urban League began its campaign to recognize sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students for their academic achievements and community service.

This year, The Pikes Peak Urban League has followed in its footsteps by creating the Thurgood Marshall Achievers Society.

The society, which held its first See **AWARDS/NEWS3**

Awards/Recipients say society inspires, encourages students

From NEWS1

awards ceremony last week, gave plaques and certificates to students of color who have a grade-point average of 3.0 or above and who have significantly contributed to their community. Seventeen students were honored. Each was nominated by someone in the community.

"A lot of minority students get a bad rap for not being positive in the community," said Michelle Gregory of the local Urban League. "We felt this was an opportunity to give them a pat on the back and to allow the community to know that there are a lot of positive students in the community."

Two examples of students of color doing great things are Stephanie and Jackie Newsom.

The 14-year-old twin sisters

are accomplished speakers, students and community volunteers. Stephanie and Jackie attend Timberview Middle School in Academy School District 20. They both volunteer at Silver Key Senior Services. Stephanie spent the summer working at the Children's Museum and taught children how to read.

Jackie is set to become a candy stripper at Penrose Community Hospital this year.

Both said the award is important because it acknowledges the good things teens of color do and gives other youths something to aspire to.

"It really could encourage kids to keep doing better in school and stay with working in the community," Stephanie said.

The following is a list of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders

inducted into the Thurgood Marshall Achievers Society:

Jamila Young

Athena Abeyta

Thomas Green

Marvis Cotton

Krystal Wilson

Marisa Beasley

Shana Latrice Hill

Shante Jackson

Keshia Hollins

Stephanie Newsom

Jackie Newsom

Shawndell Thompson

Monika Williamson

Diamone Gathers

Artione Morgan

Tania Vijarro

Jarvis Hill

Ovetta Sampson may be reached at 636-0374 or ovetta@gazette.com

**NORTH COUNTY TIMES
(VISTA EDITION)**

OCEANSIDE, CA
TUESDAY 40,318
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**Experts urge aid
for poorer schools**

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WASHINGTON — Minority children, who often attend poor or struggling schools, could suffer under new efforts to make schools more accountable for their students' performance, some civil rights leaders say.

President Clinton's education proposals, which include tying a child's promotion or graduation to rigorous testing, should include plans to fix city schools and provide better teachers there, said Hugh B. Price, National Urban League president.

The civil rights organization has called for an academic bill of rights that would require school districts to prove they are giving minority children an equal education before adopting such test-based promotion plans.

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Tough New Education Standards Will Take Their Toll On The Poor

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FRONT PAGE

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Poor children and children of color will suffer greatly from the tough new academic standards politicians and educators are establishing for America's schools, a panel of education experts, economists and civil rights officials said in Washington last week.

They warned that, unless substantial efforts are made to improve the quality of schooling for poor and minority students, there will likely be a significant decline in the high school graduation and college attendance rates of students of color, and a worsening of the educational, occupational, and income inequality that currently exists between affluent and poor Americans, and whites and African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans and Native Americans.

Generally speaking, those standards require students to pass uniform standardized tests at particular grade levels—usually, the fourth, eighth and 12th grades—for promotion to the next level or graduation from high school.

According to a recent report, 46 states either have or are preparing to implement these new standards.

But, Hugh B. Price, president of the National Urban League, which

convened the panel, said that only 13 states require and fund such intervention programs to help low-performing students reach the state standards, while six other states require that such students be helped but provide no resources to enable that to occur.

That gap, Price continued, is one of the ways urban and rural minority children are caught in a trap between lofty standards and lousy schools.

"We don't fear holding our children to high academic standards," Mr. Price said. "In fact, we demand it. But they must have a fair shot at succeeding."

The Clinton administration recently joined the fray with its proposed Education Accountability Act that would mandate an end to the practice of social promotions—promoting some students, even if they haven't met all the official requirements for moving on to the next grade—by school districts that receive federal aid.

Lynn Olsen, senior editor of Education Week, said that the educational accountability movement pushing these new measures is the latest national effort "to find the right levers to pull to increase edu-

(See POOR STUDENTS, P. 2)

POOR STUDENTS

Continued from page 1

cational results across the country."

"But," Olsen added, referring to the likely negative impact of such provisions, "what sounds good in theory is enormously complicated in fact." That complexity is evident in the issue of social promotion.

Robert M. Hauser, director of the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin, said numerous studies have confirmed that simply keeping students back a grade without giving them substantial help actually decreases the chances they will do well in school and increases the likelihood they will drop out.

"These new rules put barriers in place that will hurt poor and black and Hispanic students," said Velma L. Cobb, the Urban League's director of education and youth development policy.

She noted that 95 percent of school-aged black children, for example, attend public schools. "Equalizing educational opportunity is a critical test the accountability movement must pass."

Dr. Gerry House, the Memphis school system's superintendent, told those assembled that there was no mystery to doing that.

She said involving parents and other adults in the community as well as teachers and school officers in the effort was as crucial as providing the proper educational resources for high-achieving students and those who need help.

"If you are going to expect students to learn more and perform better," she said, "You have to make sure the resources are available and the teachers are ready to help them do that."



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GenBored

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*That teens are bored
is nothing new.
But in today's
"enlightened society"
— and dangerous
times — you would
think we would
be doing more
about it.*

Story by Andrea Simakis

Photos by JOHN KUNTZ



Above right, Derek Pfirman, Jessie Bray and Jason Markovitz hang out in a Lakewood playground. Shannon Ray of Fairview Park, above, says of her favorite haunt, Common Grounds Coffee Bar on Lorain Avenue, "My friends and I probably spend more time here than at home."

Jessica Peck is rooted to a chair, sucking on a candy pacifier. She parked on one seat or another in "that damn coffee-house," as a few of the parents refer to Common Grounds Coffee Bar on Lorain Ave., all through high school. Now a Lakewood grad, she still comes to the spot and meets up with a battalion of friends. They play cards, chain-smoke and talk about nothing and everything ("I hate phony people so much"; "Boys as friends rule, boys as boys suck.") A teen grabs for the cell phone Jessica keeps on a table in front of her, near her pack of cigarettes. "Get your own!" she snaps, pulling the Nokia to safety. "My bill was 45 bucks because of you guys. Now I'm asking for a dollar to use the phone." Despite the occasional irritant, Jessica says, "I can't live outside this habitat." With her little-girl hair clips, lime-green, glow-in-the-dark-nails and corrosive one-liners, Jessica is a poster child for the jaded sons and daughters of the Baby Boomers. "We're Generation Bored-Off-Our-Butts," she says.

Boredom is a teenage rite of passage, as expected as acne and insecurity. Bobby-soxers and greasers in the Fifties had too much

DETROIT FREE PRESS

DETROIT, MI
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Will Morrison, now, above and back with his first-grade class at Goodale Elementary. He's on the far left, second row from top.

Promise made, promise kept

He'll graduate a year early, they'll pay for college

Will Morrison's graduation ceremony at Woods Tower High School on May 17 will be a special event for him and his family. The Detroit Urban League and the Lynch & Co. Foundation are sponsoring the ceremony.

Will is one of 24 first-grade students at Goodale Elementary in Detroit who were selected in 1988 for a program called Scholarship Builders. A total of 250 students were chosen for the program, which provides educational support and pays for all or college expenses. The program is sponsored by the Lynch & Co. Foundation and the Detroit Urban League.

"If you want to make a difference in the world, you start early," says John Burrelle, director of the Global Philanthropic Program at the Detroit Urban League. The program keeps close contact with most of the youngsters from Goodale, and most of them are on track to graduate high school in 2000.

Will is more than on track. He's a graduate a year early. (He was skipped ahead out of sixth

grade and attended grades 6-7 at Goodale Elementary and Holy Innocents School in Warren Woods Tower. He continues to attend meetings and group outings.

His years in the program, not even for his family, are a blur. When William Morrison died in 1990, Will was needed to help care for his mother, Darlene Morrison, who was 40 years old at the time.

Will is now 10, while Darlene Morrison is 50. He is a member of the National Urban League and the National Youth Summit at the National Conference in August in Houston. He has a 3.0 grade point average and has been in all sports and basketball. He is a member of the Detroit Urban League and the Western Michigan University and is a member of the school's basketball team.

Will's mother says his mom, William Morrison, was a really important that he couldn't afford it on my own. Will of his scholarship. "It's a pretty good thing I won't have to worry about it."

By Dana Jackson, Your Turn staffer



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CSU grads urged to unite nation

9595
By CORWIN A. THOMAS

PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League, told the 1999 graduating class of Cleveland State University to "define what kind of society they want" because they stand to "inherit the Earth."

"The 21st century belongs to your generation," said Price, head of the nation's premier social service and civil rights organization.

Price, a graduate of Yale Law School, was the morning commencement speaker yesterday at CSU for the graduates in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Fenn College of Engineering and First College. In an afternoon ceremony, Timothy F. Hagan, former Cuyahoga County commissioner and Cleveland State alumnus, was the speaker. CSU conferred degrees to 3,200 graduates

Reflecting on the Littleton,

Colo., school shooting, Price also said today's schools are a mirror image of American life, and that students have become too obsessed with status instead of self-worth.

"Our children see society obsessed with status... it should be on self-worth," Price said. "When will the time come when we will be judged on content of character and not the color of our skin?" he said, quoting the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

Price also urged the graduates to ask questions about Littleton; to "search below the surface... to unite man."

"Your generation, not mine, will make that call," Price said. "If we are to become one America, it will occur on your watch."

Price became vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1988 and joined the National Urban League in 1994 as its seventh president. Price yesterday also

received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree.

Hagan, who received an honorary doctor of laws degree, spoke to the graduates in the College of Education, the James J. Nance College of Business Administration and the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs.

Hagan became the 100th person to serve as a Cuyahoga County commissioner when he was elected in 1982. He was elected three times, serving a total of 16 years. In January, Hagan joined CSU as an executive-in-residence in the college of urban affairs, of which he is a 1975 alumnus.

Three other honorary degrees were awarded.

A. Grace Lee Mims, who is involved in the music and art community in Cleveland, received an honorary doctor of music degree. For the last 23 years, she has hosted "The Black Arts" on

WCLV-FM, a program she originated. She holds a master's degree in library science from Case Western Reserve University and formerly was head librarian at Glenville High School.

Cleveland businessman Samuel H. Miller received an honorary doctorate in business administration. Miller is co-chairman of Forest City Enterprises, a multibillion-dollar real estate development company that developed Tower City Center.

Linda Darling-Hammond received an honorary doctorate in humane letters. Darling-Hammond, an educator at Stanford University, also is the executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, which produced the 1996 report, "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future." The report has been acclaimed as a blueprint for transforming educational policy.

On Campus

June 7, 1999 Vol. 23, No. 10

Commencement '99 celebrates student achievements

At their commencement ceremonies, Cleveland State's 1999 graduates were urged to use their education for the betterment of society and the nation.

Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League, told the morning graduates that "the 21st century belongs to your generation, not mine. Sooner than you think, you'll take charge. You must define the kind of society you want for your family and your children." Tim Hagan, former Cuyahoga County commissioner and a 1975 graduate of the Levin College of Urban Affairs, told the afternoon graduates that "you have the power within you to change how we see each other. Education isn't a piece of paper. It's understanding our obligations to others and to making life meaningful."

The Class of '99 — comprised of some 3,200 men and women — received degrees and diplomas at two commencement ceremonies at the Convocation Center on Sunday, May 9. The morning ceremony was for graduates in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Fenn College of Engineering and First College. The afternoon ceremony was for graduates in the College of Education, the James J. Nance College of Business Administration and the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs. At both ceremonies, individual graduates were recognized by name as they crossed the stage and received their diplomas. Ph.D. and doctoral graduates were hooded



Outstanding graduate Cheryl McKenna receives the President's Award from Claire Van Ummersen.
See story on page 4.

leader Samuel Miller and educator Linda Darling-Hammond.

The Cleveland-Marshall College of Law graduated 230 students in a separate ceremony at the Convocation Center on Saturday, May 22. The ceremony included participation by more than 50 alumni judges and featured a commencement address by 1980 alumna Maureen O'Connor, the lieutenant governor of Ohio. O'Connor, the recipient of a 1997 Distinguished Alumni Award from the University, discussed the

Columbine High School shootings in Colorado. Price said the incident "exposed some harsh truths about American life." He compared the anguish suffered by Columbine's suburban white students to the pain endured by minority youngsters because of their status.

"We have miles to go before we reach the promised land of One America," he said. "Black and Latino youngsters who are taught to play by the rules learn that in many realms of American life, there are still two sets

"Ostracism, racism and anti-Semitism are not unrelated phenomena. There are all points along a continuum of intolerance. Race, religion, gender, geography, income, GPA, SAT scores or sexual orientation do not define the true value of an individual, much less the contributions he or she will make over a lifetime."

He urged the graduates to "recognize the evil of intolerance. Search below the surface of your fellow citizens and discover the shared humanity and

erance, race and religion, poverty and plenty to forge a society based on mutual humanity, mutual respect and mutual aspirations."

Alumnus Hagan used his time at the podium to reflect on "where we've been as a nation and where we might go under your leadership."

Sharing stories of his ancestors, he urged the graduates be mindful of the "work, effort and struggles of those who came before us and who often were excluded because of their race, religion or economic status. We are all beneficiaries of their great effort to make life better for themselves, their families and the nation."

He reminded the graduates that "none of us choose our parents, the pigmentation of our skin, the economic situation we are born into, or our gender."

"But how blessed we are to have people who have nourished us and given us self-worth. None of us get to this day alone but sometimes we forget to say thanks."

Members of the Class of '99 have an obligation to help others, Hagan added. "Measure yourself by your journey with others and by what you do to make a more just, decent and compassionate society."

President Claire Van Ummersen described commencement as "one of the most joyous days of the year on campus" and a day that the graduates will never forget.

"Today we celebrate your accomplishments, we recognize and take pride in your successes and we look to your future," she said. "You have



Speaker Hugh Price, president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. He is shown with Bill Patient, chairman of the CSU board of trustees, and President Claire Van Ummersen.

Commencement

From page 1

in the classroom, on the playing field, and in service to the community. We salute you."

Provost Harold Allen encouraged the graduates to "allow yourselves some time to relax and consider where you've been and where you're going.

"Your lives are about to change profoundly. You have been taught, coached, mentored, encouraged, tested

and loved. You are ready to put into practice the skills you have honed," he said.

"You are joining the ranks of the educationally elite. Go out and claim what is rightfully yours. Move constantly forward with your lives and careers but never forget to give back."

Greetings from the University's board of trustees were delivered by Chairman

Bill Patient in the morning and Vice Chairman David Hill in the afternoon.

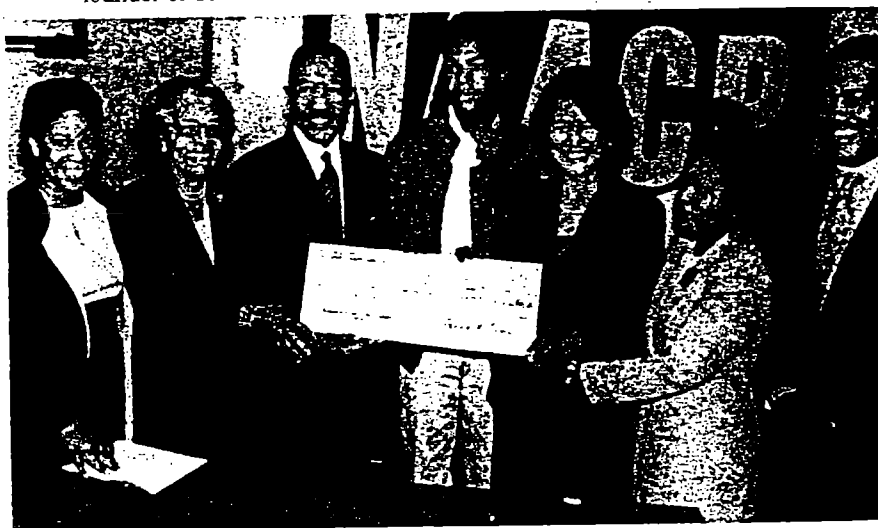
"Today we celebrate your success and your future. I know you will make us proud," said Patient.

"Success is within you," added Hill. "You are the determining factor in your own fate. Let no one block your way." □



▲ **THREE DECADES STRONG:** Ingrid Saunders Jones (2nd, l), vice president, corporate external affairs, The Coca-Cola Company, extends greetings to (l-r) Rudolph J. Frank, chairman, Black Executive Exchange Program (BEEP) conference, Ann Fudge, executive vice president, Kraft Foods, and Dennis Dowdell, chairman, BEEP advisory committee, during the 30th Anniversary Banquet of the National Urban League's BEEP, sponsored by the Coca-Cola Company, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta. Fudge was the keynote speaker at the affair.

▼ **\$1 MILLION ENDOWMENT:** The Reginald F. Lewis Family & Foundation recently gave the NAACP \$1 million for an endowment to establish youth business camps in eight cities during a ceremony in Baltimore, MD. From (l-r) are Jeanne Hitchcock, NAACP chief of staff; Carolyn Fugett, Lewis' mother; Kweisi Mfume, NAACP president/CEO; Marcus Fugett, Lewis' nephew; Loida Lewis, Lewis' widow; Beverly A. Cooper, Lewis' aunt; and Anthony S. Fugett, Lewis' brother and vice president of the Reginald F. Lewis Foundation. Reginald Lewis was the founder of TLC Beatrice International Holdings Inc.



Ricardo Gray/NAACP

JUL To Host National Thurgood Marshall Achievers Society Induction

National Urban League and Congress of National Black Churches bring Campaign for African American Achievement to Jacksonville



Richard Danford
JUL President

Jacksonville - The National Urban League and the Congress of National Black Churches will present its second Thurgood Marshall Achievement Society Induction Ceremony. Nationally renowned radio personality Tom

Joyner will serve as keynote speaker for the induction ceremony. The event will be hosted by the Jacksonville Urban League (JUL) Saturday, June 26, 1999, 2 p.m. at Second Missionary Baptist Church located at 954 Kings Road.

"It is an honor for us to host this event," said Richard Danford, president of the Jacksonville Urban League. "A ceremony such as this is no stranger to our organization. For the past 14 years, the JUL has been inducting youth into this society formerly known as the McKnight Achievers."

The ceremony will induct 30 students into the Thurgood Marshall Achievers Society, one of the African American

community's most prestigious honor societies. These inductees join more than 4,000 African American youths and students of color who previously received the honor and embraced the principle that "Achievement Matters," since the program launched in 1997.

The Thurgood Marshall Achievers Society is a part of the National Urban League's Campaign for African American Achievement. Established in 1997, the Campaign for African American Achievement is an aggressive collaboration with the Congress of National Black Churches (more than 65,000 African American churches nationwide), Urban League affiliates, African

American fraternities and sororities and other professional groups. The Campaign is designed to promote to African American youth and children of color, as well as their parents, the principle that Achievement Matters. It is also the African American community's mechanism for holding schools accountable for the quality of education they deliver.

The Jacksonville Urban League was founded in 1947 and consistently serves the Jacksonville community in many areas including social services, advocacy and economic development. The JUL is an affiliate of the National Urban League and a United Way Certified Agency.

8 Charter Schools, 4 With Profit Goal, Are Picked by State

By ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS

A state board selected the first eight charter schools for New York State yesterday, setting the stage for a new and hotly disputed system of taxpayer-financed schools operating outside the regular public school system. Four of them will be run by profit-making corporations, and one will be in a school building owned by a church.

The newly created charter schools, like those in other states, will receive public money but be freed from the constraints of local school district rules and union contracts.

But the most radical change for the state and for New York City is the inclusion of profit-making schools in the first round of selections. The teachers' union, a powerful lobbying force in Albany, has fought hard against creating schools outside of the public system and particularly opposes profit-making companies' running charter schools. So do most school superintendents in the state, including Chancellor Rudy Crew in New York City.

The schools — five in New York City, one in Long Island and two upstate — will have state, Federal and local financing, about \$6,000 a pupil, with more for special education students, state officials said. Some public-school officials have complained that the charter schools will drain money and the best stu-

Continued on Page B4

Continued From Page A1

dents from the existing public schools. Advocates say they will encourage competition and innovation.

The schools chosen yesterday represent a mix of ethnic and regional interests, from a Dominican-oriented school in Washington Heights to a Chinese-oriented school in Flushing, Queens, and a school sponsored by the Urban League in Albany. Three schools will open in the fall, and the other five in the fall of 2000. Among the first three, two are profit-making, one in New York City and one in Albany. The third, also in New York City, will be nonprofit.

The profit-making school in New York City brings together civil rights advocates, community and church leaders and wealthy Wall Street executives, who say they are looking for alternatives to failing public schools in poor neighborhoods. It will be called the Sisulu Children's Academy, after Walter Sisulu, the South African opponent of apartheid, friend of Nelson Mandela and fellow leader of the African National Congress.

Union officials attacked the initial selections yesterday, saying that they had been made in secret and appeared to advance the interests of private companies in taking over education. But Gov. George E. Pataki, who pushed hard for the charter school legislation, hailed the first round of schools yesterday as "the single greatest improvement in education in state history."

The charters, or operating agreements, will be for five years and monitored by the State University of New York and the State Board of Regents. Schools must meet the academic standards in their charters, or the charters can be withdrawn. The standards vary from school to school, but charter students are required to take all state tests given in other public schools.

No details were given yesterday on how the students would be chosen, but in a typical charter system, students apply to a particular school and, if there are more applicants than places, are chosen by lottery.

The eight schools approved yesterday, out of 15 applicants, all begin in kindergarten and have various grades. Most plan to grow gradually to middle and high-school grades.

Mr. Pataki's staff was briefed on the charter school applications, said Scott W. Steffey, a vice chancellor at SUNY, which has the legal authority to issue charters for 50 new schools. But Mr. Steffey said the Governor and his staff had played no role in selecting the schools.

The schools were approved unanimously yesterday by the SUNY trustees, meeting in midtown Manhattan.

The Sisulu Academy, the profit-making school in New York City, will be run by Victory Schools Inc., a management company set up by Steven B. Klinsky, a general partner in Forstmann, Little & Company, the leveraged buyout firm. Another partner, Theodore J. Forstmann, made news two months ago when he raised \$170 million for scholarships to send poor children to private schools.

Sisulu will be in a school building owned by the Canaan Baptist Church of Christ in Harlem, at 115th Street between St. Nicholas and Lenox Avenues, but officials said that in keeping with the charter law, no religion would be taught, and the church would be only a landlord. Rent, Mr. Klinsky said, will be about \$16,000 a month, which he called market rate.

The Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, senior pastor of the church and a former aide to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., lobbied heavily for the charter school legislation in Albany.

Mr. Klinsky said he came to the building through Marshall Mitchell, a former chief of staff to the Rev. Floyd Flake, the former Congress-

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The New York Times

6/16/99

man and pastor of the Allen A.M.E. Church in Queens. Mr. Flake also supported the charter legislation, and said yesterday that he planned to apply for the next round.

Mr. Klinsky said yesterday: "One of the toughest things in the charter school movement is going to be to find real estate. It's a beautiful new building, and Harlem is so symbolically important a place to start."

He said he expected to earn a profit by managing the school more efficiently than other public schools. He and other applicants said they expected to get \$6,000 per pupil in state, Federal and local spending, about \$2,000 less than New York City spends on its students. The typical profit margin for a charter school in other states is 7 to 15 percent, according to Mr. Steffey.

All but one of the charter schools are starting with fewer than 250 students, which under the law will make them exempt from teachers' union contracts, even if they grow in later years, Mr. Steffey said.

The New Covenant Charter School in the Arbor Hill neighborhood of Albany, which is also to open this fall, will start with 550 students, under a provision that allows 10 schools to

Public money, but no district rules or union contracts.

exceed 250 students and still be exempt from the contract. It will be managed by Advantage Schools, a profit-making company, in conjunction with the Urban League of Northeastern New York.

The third school to open this fall is the John A. Reisenbach Charter School, a nonprofit school to be run by the Learning Project Inc., which already runs a small public school, the Learning Project, in the East Village. It will also be in Harlem, at Lenox Avenue and 126th Street.

The Reisenbach School has received consulting help from the Center for Educational Innovation, an education research group in Manhattan that was involved in helping to draft the charter-school legislation.

Although the center and Dr. Walker both lobbied for charter schools, the SUNY trustees said yesterday that their lobbying had nothing to do with the choice of schools so far.

Robert A. Carillo, an official with the state teachers union, accused the trustees of violating a state law that calls for school districts to be notified before a local charter is issued. Mr. Steffey said he had waited until yesterday to notify school districts because of deadline pressures to approve schools for fall.

While the Regents have review power over the choices, it does not have veto power. The Regents are also allowed to approve 50 charter schools, but no one has applied to them yet, a spokesman said.

The five schools approved yesterday for the fall of 2000 are these:

¶Amber Charter School, a nonprofit in partnership with the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans in Washington Heights.

¶The Flushing International Charter School, a profit-making school to be run by SABIS Educational Systems Inc., in Flushing Queens.

¶The Syracuse Charter School, a nonprofit to be run by Margaret I. Brooks in Syracuse.

¶The Victory Children's Academy in Roosevelt, Long Island, which also will be run by Mr. Klinsky's management company.

¶The Harbor Science and Arts Charter School, a nonprofit to be run by Boys' Harbor in East Harlem.

Summer Robinson

6-6-99

Students shape up at charter school

At Camp Curtis Guild, some Springfield students have learned the meaning of discipline, self-esteem, and motivation.

By MARY ELLEN O'SHEA

Staff writer

READING - At an Army base 100 miles from their classrooms, students at the New Leadership Charter School measure their skills with sweat, stamina, and spirit.

Last week was the third and final time this school year that the seventh-graders spent three days and nights at Camp Curtis Guild, wrapping up the academic year with camp-outs, marching drills and exercises aimed at honing their leadership qualities.

The school, which will grow from its first-year enrollment of 65 seventh-graders to 130 in Grades 6

through 8 in the summer, offers an unusual blend of academics and military training.

In the 10 months since it opened, New Leadership has proven that it can reap results. Students gained an average three years in mathematics and two years in reading on standardized tests.

Students like Edgardo Figueroa say it is not magic, but rather discipline, individual attention, and persistence that make the school work.

"This school has made me more disciplined and prepared, in all ways," said the 12-year-old, one of 58 students who went on the trip to Camp Curtis Guild.

"Kids do better here," he said last week. "We're motivated because we see what can get us far in life. We help each other out."

New Leadership is one of three charter schools operating in the city, and the only one classified as a Horace Mann, meaning that it is run privately but with support from the local school board and teachers' union.

Launched as a partnership be-

INSIDE

School may relocate to West Springfield,
Page A13

tween the Springfield Urban League and the state National Guard, the school features a longer school year (220 days instead of the required 180), six days of classes most weeks, and a focus on character development.

School runs from 8 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. on weekdays, and from 8 to noon on Saturdays. The calendar started last Aug. 9 and ran through June 4 this year.

Director Joanne P. Wingood said that while the first year came with unexpected struggles and challenges, she is pleased to look back on the progress.

"You can see incredible growth in the children," she said. "Their sense of self, their ability to see what they're doing, and their ability-

Please see Camp, Page A12

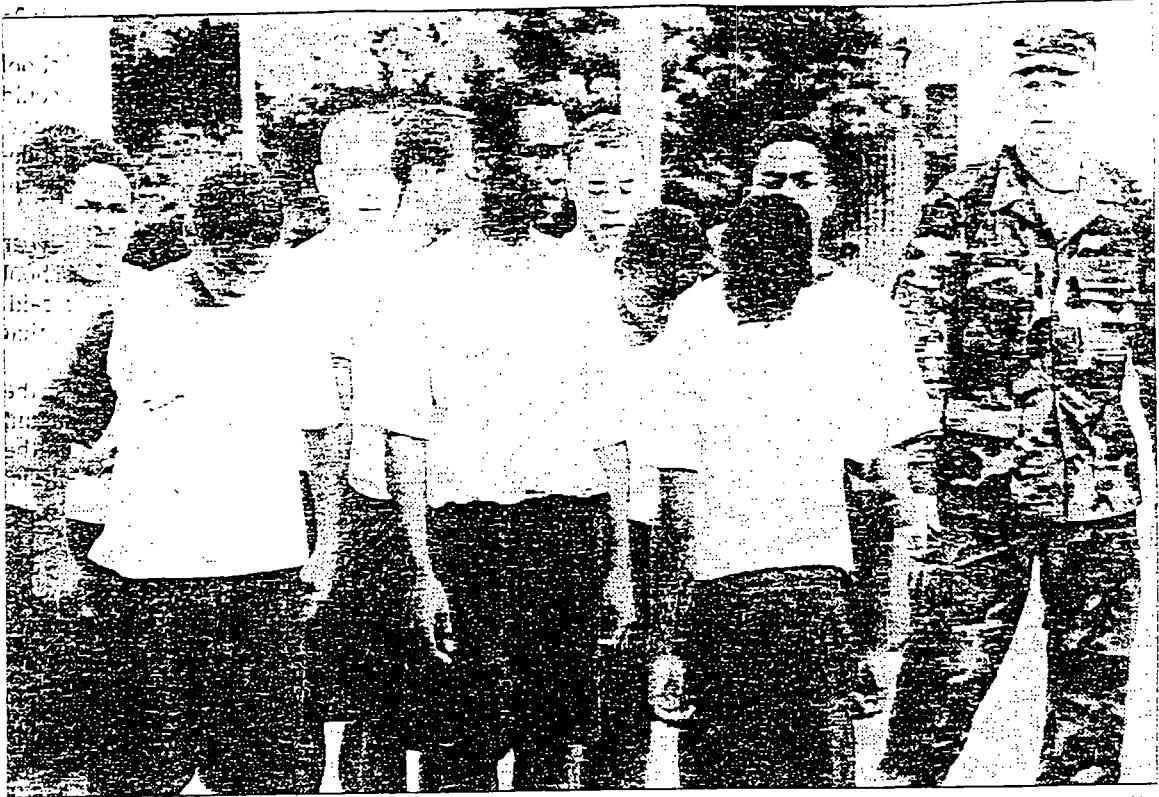


Photo by PATRICIA McDONNELL

Massachusetts National Guard Cpl. Patrick Matthews a, karate instructor in private life, works with New Leadership Charter School students at Camp Curtis Guild last week.

Camp: Students shape up at New Leadership School

Continued from Page A11

to identify their goals and meet them is very clear."

A look at the results of standardized test scores proves her point.

When the academic year began for students last August, the average student scored at the level of an early fifth-grader on the Key Mathematics Test. By April, the average mathematics score was mid-eighth grade on the comparable Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

In the language arts, students performed as early sixth-graders on the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test last summer. This spring, their average was that of an early eighth-grader on the test.

Students themselves say the difference in their classroom skills is obvious.

"I do a lot better in school, now. My reading is a lot better, too," said Ernest Hugney, a former G.O. student at the Kiley Middle School, who now earns top grades at New Leadership.

"The kids have a lot of input in what they do because they act as leaders. We're trying to show them some type of integrity as a group."

Massachusetts National Guard Cpl. Patrick Matthews

Like many of his classmates, Ernest resisted going to New Leadership. But his mother signed him up after attending informational sessions last spring.

At the outset, the school faced unexpected difficulties.

For one, a third of the children had special needs, a fact that did not surface until almost a month after school began. Racial and gender balance are off-kilter, with 61 percent of the students black, compared with 31 percent in the city schools, and 63 percent of the students male.

Wingood and Assistant Director Stephen Armstrong said the school worked vigorously on disciplinary issues. Disruptive students

are removed from classrooms as soon as problems arise, enabling the others to learn without interruptions.

School begins with a 20-minute community meeting and ends with a brief meditation on learning successfully. From 2 to 2:30 every afternoon, students gather in squads of 10 with a staffer to discuss such issues as integrity and attitude.

Uniforms are mandatory.

At camp, the school's focus is on character, and leadership rings clear.

Students are divided into three platoons, each group sharing barracks and daily schedules that allow them less than a half-hour of

Charter school may rent space in W. Side

By TED FLANAGAN

Staff writer

WEST SPRINGFIELD - A Springfield charter school looking to relocate for a year may end up renting space in the largely vacant William Cowing School in West Springfield.

The school was closed at the end of the 1997-1998 school year, and has since housed an alternative education program for middle school students.

School Committee Chairman Chester Zymroz confirmed Friday that town and city officials are hammering out the details of a one-year agreement that would see the 168 students of the New Leadership Charter School take residence next fall at Cowing.

A West Springfield School Committee vote on the plan could take place as early as Wednesday, but Zymroz said the financial details aren't yet ready for public release.

"We're talking about a one-year rental, but the alternative school will remain there," Zymroz said. "It's a win-win situation that works for both parties."

If the town ever hopes to use the one-time elementary school again - perhaps as an alternative in the growing all-day kindergarten dispute - repairs are going to be needed.

Officials earlier this year pegged needed improvements to Cowing for an anticipated magnet school (which itself has been delayed) in the neighborhood of \$1 million.

Meanwhile, Springfield officials are scrambling to find homes for the students of several city schools undergoing renovations.

The New Leadership School, a school stressing discipline and leadership run by a partnership between the local Urban League chapter and the National Guard, is currently housed in the former Van Sickle Junior High School on Caraw Street.

The school is set to close this summer for a two-year, \$45.3 million renovation.

"It works for both," Zymroz said. "They get the opportunity to renovate, and we get the chance to make some maintenance repairs with the rental money."

^AED: Revamp Promotion, Retention Rules (Cont. from p. 1)

After four years, ED would require states and districts to retain students who fail to meet academic thresholds in specific grades, such as fourth, eighth and 12th—but only as a last resort.

Initially, Clinton's promotions plan took flak from the Urban League and other civil rights groups, who worried that districts that end social promotion will skim on resources to help students that have fallen behind meet grade advancement standards. Clinton tried to address their concerns by more strongly emphasizing the need for early intervention and extra assistance.

Nonetheless, the education community is still ambivalent on a federal mandate to end social promotion, said Jack Jennings, director of the Center on Education Policy, who nonetheless says Clinton is staking out the right position on how best to end the practice. "The research is very clear that holding students back doesn't make them learn better and results in more dropouts and discipline problems," he said.

Standards Are Key

The first step for districts that want to improve promotion policies is to set clear objectives for students to meet in each grade, the guide said. Identification of students falling behind is the guide's second of 12 specific recommendations (see chart, right).

Early intervention is the most cost-efficient way to end social promotions, Jennings said. "The big cost of retention that nobody talks about is that you're paying one year extra for that kid."

While providing more help and individual attention to a child encountering difficulty might seem like common sense, Jennings said the system doesn't always have mechanisms to address the problem. "We've structured things in the United States where there are things teachers don't have time for, and the result is kids fall behind," said Jennings, who as a member of a Maryland task force recommended that children be identified for extra help in third, fifth and seventh grade.

"Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion" is available by calling (877)4ED-PUBS or at online at www.ed.gov. □

A 12-Step Plan To End Social Promotions

The Education Department calls for schools to take the following approaches to ending social promotion and traditional grade retention:

- Set clear objectives for students to meet performance standards at key grades.
- Identify student needs early in order to apply appropriate instructional strategies.
- Emphasize early childhood literacy.
- Focus on providing high-quality curriculum and instruction;
- Provide professional development that deepens teachers' content knowledge and improves instructional strategies to engage all children in learning;
- Set out explicit expectations for all stakeholders, including families and communities, in efforts to help social promotion;
- Provide summer school for students who are not meeting high academic standards;
- Extend learning time through before- and after-school programs, tutoring, homework centers, and year-round schooling;
- Reduce class sizes in the primary grades.
- Keep students and teachers together for more than one year and use other effective student grouping practices;
- Develop transitional and dropout prevention programs for middle and high school students; and
- Hold schools accountable by publicly reporting school performance, rewarding school improvement, and intervening in the policies of low-performing schools.

WHAT WORKS IN TEACHING
& LEARNING

ALEXANDRIA, VA
BI-WEEKLY
JUL 14 1999



**ED: Districts Must Revamp
Promotion, Retention Rules**

9595 p.3
Staking out middle ground, the Education Department last week released a long-awaited guide on social promotion that urges schools to provide struggling students with extra help.

Recognizing that retaining students leads to more dropouts and discipline problems and that promoting them unprepared can have the same detrimental effects, ED officials outlined a strategy for local officials to prevent and remedy academic failure without holding students back.

"Truly embracing the idea that all children can learn—and making sure that all children do—requires that we all take responsibility for ending social promotion and help all students meet high expectations for learning," said Education Secretary Richard Riley.

In his Jan. 19 State of the Union address, President Clinton called for local districts to end social promotion by testing students before they move on to the next grade and providing more funds for summer and after-school programs.

For this year's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Clinton has proposed requiring states over four years to phase out social promotion and traditional retention practices while providing resources and support so all students can meet high standards.

Carrots Rather Than Sticks

Specifically, the administration wants states and local districts during the initial phase-in period to identify struggling students and then provide extra services, such as specialized reading instruction, smaller classes and after-school and summer instruction, to help them get up to speed.

(more on p. 3)

BOCA RATON NEWS

BOCA RATON, FL
FRIDAY 23, 1995
JUL 2 1999



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46 students attend Urban League tour

■ Students returned Sunday from the third annual Heritage Tour.

The 46 students were selected by N.U.L.I.T.E.S., the National Urban League Incentive to Excel and Succeed.

The selection was based on academic excellence and behavioral standards.

Boca Raton and Delray had 15 students attend the tour.

Accompanying the students were ten adults including Rev. Henry Fuse, Michael Odum, the Youth Development Director, and Latitia Dawkins, the N.U.L.I.T.E.S. Supervisor.

The week-long tour directed the children in the footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The students were also exposed to the historical black college campuses and other attractions in the cities of Atlanta, Selma, Mobile, Birmingham, Jackson and Tallahassee.

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SAT results show race, gender gaps still exist in schools

Tuesday, August 31, 1999

By Eleanor Chute, Post-Gazette Education Writer

College entrance exam results for the Class of 1999 show that students who took tough high school courses typically did better on the Scholastic Assessment Test.

But Hugh B. Price, president of the National Urban League, said there is unequal access to high-powered courses along racial and economic lines. Price, who also is a board member of the Educational Testing Service, which devises the test questions, believes that may contribute to the persistent gap in SAT scores between black and white students.

The national SAT scores for the Class of 1999 are to be released today. They show that a gap still exists between black students and white students. For example, the average verbal score was 434 for blacks and 527 for whites. The average math score was 422 for blacks and 528 for whites.

PG Online chart: SAT results are in

The test results also show that students who take calculus on average have higher SAT scores than students overall nationwide.

Higher average scores also were recorded by students who took advance placement exams or more honors courses than students overall.

Nationwide, average SAT verbal scores for the class of 1999 held steady at 505 for a fourth year, while average math scores fell 1 point to 511, the first decline in nine years. The top possible score on each test is 800.

In Pennsylvania, verbal scores increased 1 point to 498 and held steady at 495 in math.

The test, which formally is called the SAT I: Reasoning Test, was taken by a record number of 1.2 million students in the nation.

Only five states nationwide had higher participation rates than Pennsylvania's 70 percent.

"In general, the more people you have taking the test, generally it's going to pull down the scores because a wider variety of students are taking it

SAT results show race, gender gaps still exist in schools

Page 2 of 3

and it's more broad-based. In some states, the SAT is taken only by students who are applying to more selective institutions," said Diane Briars, assistant director for mathematics for Pittsburgh Public Schools and chair of the academic council for the College Board.

Among students who took both the SAT and AP exams nationally, their average scores were noticeably higher, 586 on verbal and 594 on math.

The College Board, in a news release stated, "Non-Asian minorities continued to score relatively low, reflecting variables like fewer academic courses, lower grades and class rank and lower levels of parental education and income."

"I was struck by the finding that rigorous courses can raise SAT scores," said the Urban League's Price.

"I think that takes us to the question of what kind of access do African-American and Latino kids in urban and rural settings have to rigorous academic courses?"

Price noted legal action has been taken in some California high schools involving a lack of advanced placement courses and the College Board's Equity 2000 project, which offers algebra to ninth grade in urban areas.

"The research suggests vastly more of the children can handle it if we will structure our educational system to make sure they succeed," said Price.

The College Board also noted that 33 percent of those who took the SAT in the class of 1999 were minority students, up from 25 percent 10 years ago.

Price called that trend "very encouraging."

Michael Nettles, education professor at the University of Michigan and director of research at the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute of the United Negro College Fund, noted a "sizable" increase in the number of minority students taking the test.

"More of the minority people are aspiring and trying to go to college," said Nettles.

Nettles and colleagues plan to study several years of score results to find out what factors are most important in achieving higher SAT scores.

The main focus of the study will be to learn why some black students achieve higher scores.

Bob Schaeffer, public education director of FairTest, a critic of the SAT, noted that the gender gap persists in the SAT. The national average math score was 495 for females and 532 for males, and average verbal scores were 502 for females and 509 for males.

SAT results show race, gender gaps still exist in schools

Page 3 of 3

Schaeffer said he believes that test bias plays a role. He said the gender gap was significantly reduced in the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test taken by the Class of 1999. The reduction was the result of changes in the PSAT, including adding a writing section.

"SAT bias will illegally cheat thousands of young women out of college admissions and scholarship aid they have earned by superior classroom performance," he said.

The College Board's news release said this about the performance of females: "Although women reported higher class rank and grades and more honors courses than men in all subjects except math, they also tended to come from families with less education and income and were more likely to be the first in their families to go to college — traits associated with lower test scores."

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SOUTH SIDE JOURNAL

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SUNDAY 38,500
JUL 25 1999



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Urban League seeks to give all a chance

By Nancy L. Ide
Staff writer

A simple equation — "our children equal our destiny" — is the basis of the Urban League's Youth Development Fund program.

The program awards grants to qualifying youth service organizations, enabling the groups to expand their services to help even more youths.

The Urban League, through this program, awarded \$2,000 grants to 13 agencies in February. Recipients include: Cameron Youth Chamber Orchestra Inc., Lift for Life Inc., Special Olympics Missouri-East Area, Project Respond and East St. Louis Community Camp.

The YDF concept of "putting an adult

in the life of any low-income African American youth who needs it," was introduced by Hugh B. Price, president of the National Urban League, in 1994. The idea gained the support of the St. Louis-based Monsanto Fund, which donated a \$1 million, four-year grant to cover administrative costs.

Because of the Monsanto Fund grant, all donations to the program can be distributed directly to youth agencies in the community. In addition to contributions, YDF relies on special events to raise funds.

This year, the Urban League will host a Caribbean Fete from 6:30 to 11 p.m. July 30 at the Urban League Headquarters, 3701 Grandel Square.

The festive outdoor affair will feature

the band Reggae At Will and Jamaican hors d'oeuvres. Tickets for Caribbean Fete are \$30. For more information or to order tickets, call 615-3667.

Founded in 1918, the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis is a social service organization that strives to fulfill its mission of "equalizing life chances for all people."

The Urban League serves African Americans and other minority groups in St. Louis and St. Louis County in Missouri, and St. Clair County in Illinois.

Programs are offered in the areas of employment, community outreach, education, housing, health awareness and cultural enrichment.



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'Urban League chief urges parents to push education

By Jeannine F. Hunter

News-Sentinel staff writer 9595

CLINTON - Make school officials more accountable toward children's academic success.

Parents become demanding and informed consumers who expect the best from their children and fault the adults if poor academic performance persists, Hugh B. Price, National Urban League president and chief executive officer, said Thursday.

"We have to be sure our children have access to courses that challenge them," Price said before a tent filled with educators, religious leaders and child advocates. "... Parents have to demand schools are structured to serve the students, not the adults."

Price spoke at the Samuel D. Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry, sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund.

The conference, which ended Friday, was held at the former Alex Haley Farm in Clinton. Child advocates and religious leaders met to discuss ways to help children.

Founded in 1910, the National Urban League is a nonprofit, community-based organization headquartered in New York City. The social service and civil rights organization has 115 affiliates in 34 states and the District of Columbia. It serves about 2 million people by operating programs in education, job training and placement, housing, business development and crime prevention.

Its mission is to assist African-Americans in the achievement of social and economic equality. The 31-year-old Knoxville Area Urban League on East Fifth Avenue encompasses a three-county area -

Anderson, Blount and Knox.

Price affirmed the importance of partnering with churches, civic, social and professional organizations to start scholarships, after-school programs and enrichment activities such as the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools, a summer and after-school programs in which children's social, educational and cultural growth are emphasized.

"We have to keep aware of what courses our children are taking and why," Price said. "We have to keep an eye on our young boys who tend to fall off an academic cliff in about the second or third grades."

This was met with rousing applause.

For more information about the National Urban League, contact the group at 212-558-5300 or via the Internet at www.info@nul.org.

Jeannine F. Hunter may be reached at 423-521-1844 or hunter@knews.com.

CAHOKIA-DUPO JOURNAL

CAHOKIA, IL
WEDNESDAY 13,700
JUL 21 1999



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Urban League

seeks opportunity

FRONT PAGE

All young people deserve a chance

By Nancy L. Ide
Staff writer 9595

A simple equation — "our children equal our destiny" — is the basis of the Urban League's Youth Development Fund program.

REGIONAL

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OBSERVER

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ULHC Offers Free After School Program

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The Urban League of Hudson County (ULHC) is accepting applications for its Gateway Achievement Program (GAP). This free after school program provides fun, hands on training in computers, math, and science in addition to help with homework and field trips.

The ULHC is a not for profit community service organization that administers a variety of programs to provide counseling, career training, job placement, educational opportunity, senior services, economic development, and empowerment in urban communities.

The ULHC is an affiliate of the National Urban League and United Way of Hudson County.

The GAP meets Monday - Friday, from 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. and selected Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. for field trips. The program is free to Hudson County residents ages 12 - 17. The program cycle begins on Sept. 20. Applications are being taken on a first come basis. GAP is made possible with funding from the United Way of Hudson County. For more information, call (201) 451-8888 ext. 35.

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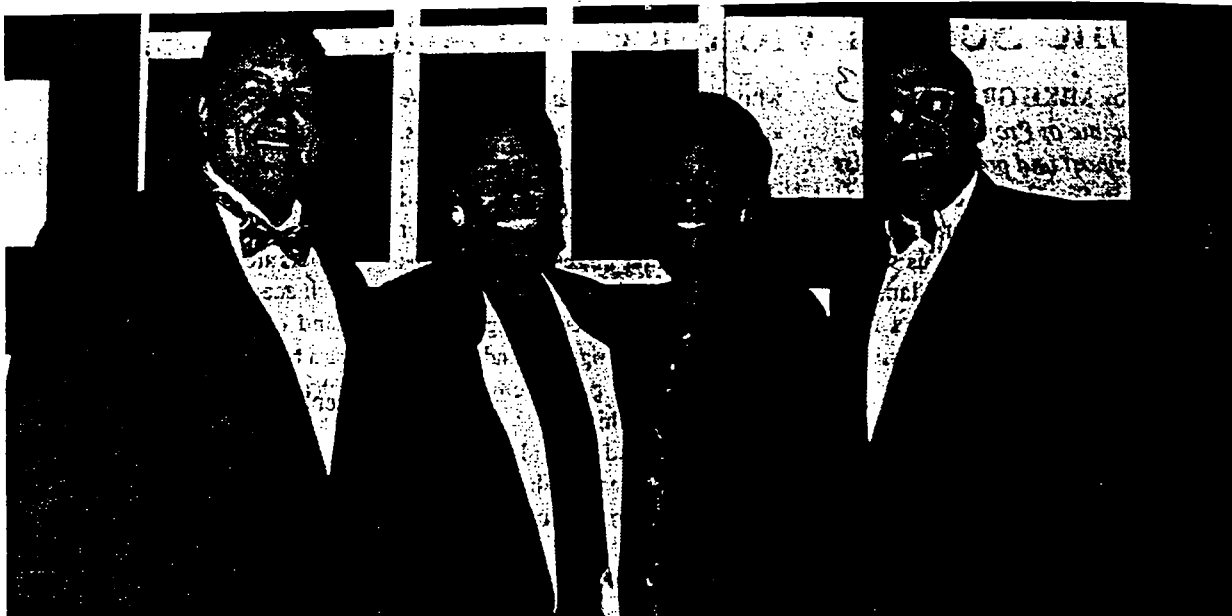
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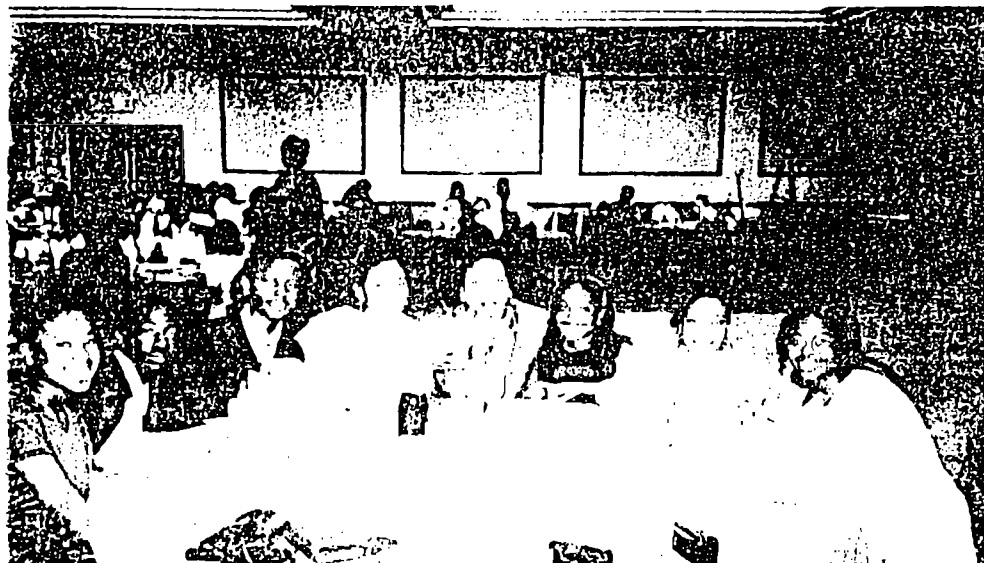
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9595
ANNIVERSARY BANQUET—The Coca-Cola Company served as sponsor of the 30th Anniversary Banquet of the National Urban League's Black Executive Exchange Program (BEEP) held in Atlanta at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Ingrid Saunders Jones, second left, vice president, corporate external affairs, The Coca-Cola

Company extends greetings to, left-right, Randolph J. Frank, chairman, BEEP Conference, Ann Fudge, executive vice president, Kraft Foods and keynote speaker at the Banquet and Dennis Dowdell, BEEP Advisory Council. The Coca-Cola Company is a long-time supporter of BEEP and the National Urban League.

JUL Thurgood Marshall Achievers participate in statewide competition



The Thurgood Marshall Achiever Society (TMAS) of the Jacksonville Urban League Center of Excellence Black History and Cultural Brain Bowl Team are pictured above (left) at the Awards Banquet. Members of the Jacksonville team were sponsored by the TMAS Parent Association. The team received medallions, T-shirts, journals, gift certificates and certificates for their participation.

On Saturday, more than 800 people from Pensacola to Miami participated in the "Young People of Florida Summit." Jacksonville was represented by fifty (50) students and parents of the TMAS. Workshops were presented by

of the team shown (left to right) are: Tanisha Scott, Johnathan McNair, Cornell Robinson, Audrey Mobley, Coach Joan Clark, Ashley Barker, Fera Blackman and LaQuista. Entire group in right photo.

Mrs. Linda Mobley received the "Parent of the Year" award from the Jacksonville Urban League Center of Excellence. Alysha Brown received the community service award for being a *Student Principal at Salvia B. Mathis Elementary School*. Shanika Ladson received an award for submitted art work, and Jocelyn Davenport performed a gymnastic routine during the talent extravaganza.

The Thurgood Marshall Achiever Society is a national honor society for minorities. The TMAS is one component of the Jacksonville Urban League Center of Excellence Program. Ms. Nicole Brown is the Center of Excellence now in its fourteenth (14) year provides many activities for the students who meet monthly, perform community service projects, and who's grades permit attending Center of Excellence participation. Minority students in grades 4-12 are nominated by their school parents, teacher or church and must be honor roll students.

Dr. Richard Danford is the Jacksonville Urban League president. For information on the Center of Excellence, please contact the Jacksonville Urban League (located Union & Davis).

JUL Brain Bowl Team competes in Tampa



The Thurgood Marshall Achiever Society (TMAS) of the Jacksonville Urban League (JUL) Center of Excellence traveled to Tampa, FL March 18-21 to compete in the 14th Annual Statewide Black History and Cultural Brain Bowl Competition. Team members pictured above are (front, left to right) LaQuista Trotter, Tera Blackman, and Ashley Barker. Back: Cornell Robinson, Johnathan McNair, Coach Joan Clark and Audrey Mobley.

Cont. on Page 3.



Alyssa Brown (pictured at left) received the representing Jacksonville received the State Community Service Award for her service as principal at Sallye B. Mathis Elementary; and Mrs. Linda Mobley (pictured at right) received the "Parent Volunteer of the Year" award.

The Thurgood Marshall Black History and Cultural Brain Bowl Competition, which is sponsored by the Florida Education. Teams throughout the state of Florida competed for four year college scholarships. The Jacksonville Urban League Center of Excellence traveled to Tampa, Florida March 18-21 to compete in the 14th Annual Statewide

Candidates Forum

The Jacksonville Urban League, First Coast Black Communicators Alliance and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority will host a Candidates Forum at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 6, 1999 at the Urban League Community Development Center, 903 West Union Street (at Davis).

With term limits forcing 12 of 19 City Council members out of office and two others opting not to run, voters have an unprecedented opportunity to overhaul Jacksonville politics. Four seats are available on the Northside with 21 persons vying for them. The Supervisor of Elections office is in a contentious race. This forum will help voters obtain information they need to select the city's leaders for the new millennium.

For more information, please call Charles Griggs at 366-5462.

Success

Continued from Page 1C

Fish Hatchery Road.

Price, who has headed the national League for the last five years, said his message to parents and students is simple: Demand more of your schools.

"Parents have to start by becoming quite insistent," Price said.

That can mean finding out what their children are being taught and how that compares with a district's academic standards, how qualified the teachers are and whether their kids are being exposed to enough college preparatory courses, Price said.

Price's visit comes amid renewed efforts by the Madison School District and several community groups to attack the achievement gap.

Last fall, the Madison School Board adopted the recommendations of an independent "equity audit committee" urging that all children read at grade level by third grade, pass high school algebra and geometry and have an attendance rate of 94 percent or better.

At the same time, the board is considering a Schools of Hope proposal to improve learning by lowering elementary class sizes in schools with large numbers of poor students. Schools of Hope began as a community journalism project by the State Journal and WISC-TV (Ch. 3) and has grown into a communitywide effort to improve schools.

Madison league honors black publisher Anana

The Madison Urban League, which is dedicating its annual awards dinner to the late newspaper publisher Betty Franklin-Hammonds, is honoring another black publisher with its 1999 Whitney M. Young Jr. award.



Anana

Milele Chikasa Anana will receive the award named after the former National Urban League president who served during the turbulent 1960s, for her work on the colorful and upbeat Umoja magazine.

"It's a real honor to have my name associated with Whitney Young and with Betty Franklin-Hammonds," Anana said.

Anana, 65, took over the two-page newsletter in 1992, eventually expanding it to a full-length magazine. The magazine, whose name means unity in Swahili, profiles local African-American families and notes student achievement.

The covers also provide a forum for local black artists.

Anana was Madison's affirmative action officer for five years and served as interim executive director of the Madison Equal Opportunities Commission. She also was the first African American to serve on a Wisconsin school board, elected to the Madison School Board in 1974.

— Phil Brinkman

Urban League leader urges black parents, students to close success gap

By Phil Brinkman
Wisconsin State Journal

In a message that should resonate with his Madison audience, National Urban League President Hugh Price is urging African-American parents and children to take a more aggressive role in closing the average achievement gap between white and black students.

Price, the keynote speaker at tonight's Madison Urban League equity dinner, said he plans to "spread the gospel that achievement matters."

"We are challenging children to overcome the perception among some of their peers that achievement isn't cool," Price said.

Price's message reinforces one championed by the late Betty Franklin-Hammonds, former Madison Urban League president and publisher of The Madison Times, who died April 28.

This year's dinner is dedicated to the memory of Franklin-Hammonds, in whose name the League has established a scholarship fund. She also is being honored in a tribute today at Wright Middle School, 1717

Several ways to honor Franklin-Hammonds

Friends and colleagues are offering several ways to honor the memory of the late Betty Franklin-Hammonds, publisher of The Madison Times. A community celebration of "the life and Madison times" of Franklin-Hammonds will be held from 3:15 to 5:15 p.m. today at Wright Middle School, 1717 Fish Hatchery Road. Tonight, the Urban League of Greater Madison will dedicate its annual "Equity Dinner" to her memory. Hors d'oeuvres are at 5:30 with dinner at 7:30. Tickets are \$60 per person. Finally, the Urban League and the Madison Community Foundation have established a scholarship fund in her name. Checks may be made out to the Urban League of Greater Madison — BFH Scholarship Fund. Checks should be sent to the Urban League at 151 E. Gorham St., Madison, Wis., 53703.

Please see **SUCCESS**, Page 2C

Voucher issue splits civil rights groups

WASHINGTON — An important crack has opened up in black America's once-impenetrable wall of resistance to school vouchers.

The eyebrow-raising split occurred in Miami between two of our oldest civil rights organizations. In a move that pokes gaping holes in the argument that publicly-funded school



CLARENCE PAGE

vouchers are a racist plot, the Urban League of Greater Miami has hired a law firm to fight for a voucher plan passed by the Florida legislature that awaits Gov. Jeb Bush's signature.

That puts the chapter on the opposite side of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights group, which has vowed to sue to block the Bush voucher plan.

It also puts it on the opposite side of its national organization and its president, Hugh

Americans that blacks are now more likely to support them than whites are.

In a survey taken last year by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a black-oriented Washington think tank, 48.1 per cent of blacks favored the use of state money for private school tuition vouchers, while 39.8 per cent opposed it. Whites, in contrast, opposed vouchers by a margin of 50.2 per cent to 41.3 per cent.

A closer look at black responses reveals a glaring gap along income lines. Poorer and less-educated blacks were more likely to support vouchers than their more affluent, well-educated counterparts.

Blacks with college degrees opposed vouchers by a 45.3 per cent to 38.6 per cent margin, while blacks with "some college" or other post-secondary vocational education favored vouchers by 58.7 to 41.3. Those with high school diplomas or less favored vouchers by 52.1 per cent to 35.4 per cent.

David Bositis, the Joint Center's research director, attributes the class gap to indications that better-educated blacks, like better-educated whites, tend to be more politically moderate and more satisfied with the job their public schools are doing.

"Moderate people have the most misgivings about vouchers, which they see as a radical solution," he says. "People who are happy with their schools see vouchers as a challenge to the status quo, that could hurt their schools."

As a college-educated black parent whose son attends a fine, racially-integrated, suburban public school, I have an additional theory.

I think low-income people are most concerned, for good reason, with helping their own children get the best education possible, while many of the rest of us are more concerned with helping all children get the best education possible.

I care not only about the few lucky kids who can escape bad schools with vouchers, but also about the kids who are left behind after their former classmates are spirited away, along with badly needed taxpayers' dollars.

*Blacks are now
more likely to
support vouchers
than whites are*

Price, who oppose vouchers.

T. Willard Fair, the Miami chapter's president, won't knuckle under to talk that his chapter has betrayed the race. "We are not bound by color the way we used to be bound," Mr. Fair says.

Actually, if it were up to grassroots, rank-and-file African-Americans, Mr. Fair would find more friends than foes. Surveys show that the more we African-Americans learn about vouchers, the better we seem to like them.

Some of us, anyway.

The racial angle is important in the voucher debate.

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Monday, April 12, 1999

Digital Nation

Reaching Out to Bring Low-Income Blacks Across the 'Digital Divide'

By GARY CHAPMAN

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The most important factor in American politics and society, at the end of this century, is still race--especially the relationship between white and black Americans.

This centuries-old tension has nearly always had a technological dimension, as black Americans have commonly found their economic prospects altered, usually for the worse, by technological developments. Slaves were freed just as new agricultural technologies devalued human labor. African Americans who migrated to cities for factory employment weren't there very long before automation decimated those jobs.

Now African Americans are confronting the digital revolution, and the picture they again see is a decidedly mixed blessing.

There are, of course, many black American leaders helping shape the future of high tech. They include William Kennard, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (and a Los Angeles native), and Larry Irving, assistant secretary of commerce and director of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

There is a new group of black entrepreneurs making money online, such as E. David Ellington, president and CEO of NetNoir Inc., an online service for African Americans on the Web (<http://www.netnoir.com>) and on America Online (www.aol.com), and Robert L. Johnson, the wealthy founder and head of Black Entertainment Television, who has launched MS-BET on the Internet (<http://www.betnetworks.com>).

Middle-class blacks in the U.S. are the fastest-growing segment of first-time buyers of home computers, especially now that there are PCs selling for \$600, studies have found. A study reported a year ago by Vanderbilt University (www.vanderbilt.edu) professors Donna Hoffman and Thomas Novak estimated that there were then about 5 million blacks in the U.S. using the Internet, and the figure has undoubtedly grown since then. More black people have reported wanting to get on the Internet than have white people.

However, there are also stubborn disparities in technological access and participation in the high-tech economy. As the Rev. Jesse Jackson pointed out last month, high-tech companies are

overwhelmingly, even embarrassingly, white. Jackson's Rainbow Coalition has purchased stock in 51 Silicon Valley companies in order to press shareholder resolutions for greater diversity on corporate boards. Out of 384 board directors of those companies, only five, or 1.3%, are African American.

For low-income African Americans, the boom in the "new economy" threatens to pass them by. Poor schools with predominantly minority students have twice as many students per computer, on average, as middle-class white schools. White families are roughly twice as likely to own a home computer as black families, according to Hoffman and Novak.

This well-known problem has been characterized as the "digital divide," the subject of a recent workshop at the annual convention of the National Forum of Black Public Administrators in Austin, Texas. Herman Lessard, president and CEO of the Greater Austin Urban League and a workshop speaker, called equalizing access to technology and training "the new frontier of civil rights."

One tool for providing training and access to low-income African Americans is the community technology center model, or CTC, a physical place that provides computer access for people who can't afford one. Black leaders throughout the U.S. are beginning to regard CTCs as an essential part of the African American community, especially in inner cities and poverty zones. And there are several CTCs in Los Angeles that are leading the way.

Blue Line Televillage, a project of Compton and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority, is one model that has an international reputation. It is a center with computers, Internet connections, videoconferencing facilities and training classes for its roughly 2,000 members, mostly African American, who pay \$10 a year for adults and \$5 annually for students and seniors.

Blue Line Televillage is situated next to a public transit hub in Compton as an experiment in creating a "telework" center, according to Walter Siembab of Siembab Associates, a Los Angeles consulting firm that helped get the project started. Siembab advocates the proliferation of what he calls "personal network access facilities" no more than half a mile away from anyone's home, primarily as a way to reduce traffic and air pollution, promote telecommuting and reconfigure urban areas into more convivial spaces.

Another L.A. program, Break Away Technologies, was founded and is run by local African American community activist and entrepreneur Joseph Lobe. Break Away has a "200 by 2000" project that is aimed at establishing 200 community technology centers in central Los Angeles--in schools, churches and nonprofit organizations--by 2000. Sony Entertainment in Culver City has given computers to the program, and Microsoft has donated software. The group expects to mark its 100th center, which will be at the Magic Johnson Foundation in Los Angeles, with a ceremony on April 29 at USC.

The Urban League, one of the nation's oldest civil rights organizations, has been sponsoring technology centers for low-income minorities for a long time--its first center was opened in Los Angeles in 1968, said B. Keith Fulton, director of technology programs and policy for the National Urban League.

in New York.

Fulton said that welfare reform and the national effort to put people back to work require new approaches, and that CTCs are the most promising development. "Welfare was a deficit model," he said, "and technology training and access is an asset model."

"We need 'safety.net' now."

Because of this interest in CTCs in low-income communities, the Clinton administration's next fiscal year budget, now under review in Congress, contains a \$65-million line item for community technology centers, spending that will be part of the Clinton education program. This initiative is being led by Rep. Maxine Waters of Los Angeles.

The Commerce Department's Irving said, "This is a strategy for all at-risk communities. Community technology centers are just as valuable in Carthage, Tenn., rural Kentucky or on an Indian reservation as they are in South-Central Los Angeles."

User experience seems to bear this out. CTC-Net (<http://www.ctcnet.org>), an umbrella organization of more than 250 affiliated CTCs in the U.S. and headquartered near Boston, did a survey last year of 817 CTC users at 44 community sites. Their survey revealed that two-thirds of the users identified themselves as "nonwhite"; 37% as African American. About 65% of the survey respondents reported taking classes at their CTC to improve their job skills, and, of 446 job seekers, 43% had either found a job or were a lot closer to getting one.

Many companies are doing their part. IBM is experimenting with putting computers and network connections in public housing projects in Oakland. Microsoft is donating software, and the Gates Foundation is increasing a multibillion-dollar program of grants and donations. Dell Computer is about to launch a special program of discounts for students at historically black colleges and universities.

But most CTCs are still too dependent on one-year government appropriations and foundation grants, which are unreliable and too easily cut off.

Lessard says that black America has a window of two to three years to get on the high-tech train--after that, he believes, patterns of inequality may become a permanent part of the Information Age. And low-income Americans cannot get on this train without widespread public support for CTCs and similar programs.

The alternative is a "digital nation" that falls far short of its promise and potential.

* * *

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EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: FIRST THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS, THEN THE STUDENTS

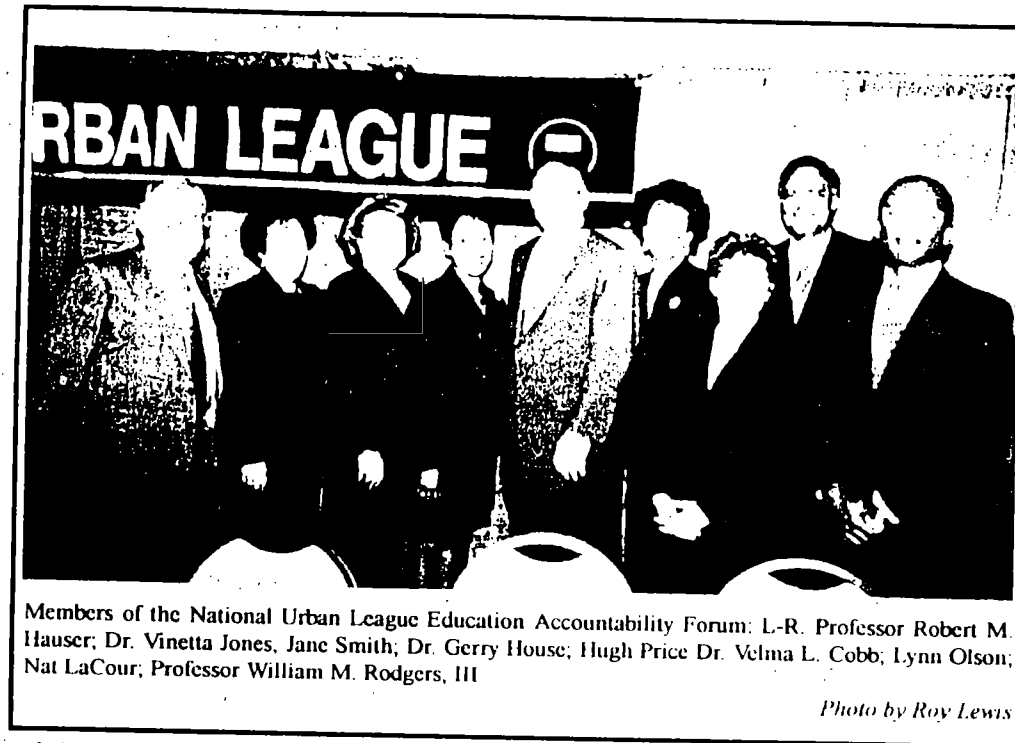
Washington, DC, March 19, 1999-Poor children and children of color will suffer greatly from the tough new academic standards politicians and educators are establishing for America's schools, a panel of education experts, economists and civil rights officials said in Washington last week.

They warned that, unless substantial improvements are made to improve the quality of schooling for poor and minority students, there will likely be a significant decline in the high school graduation and college attendance rates of students of color, and a worsening of the educational, occupational, and income inequality that currently exists between affluent and poor Americans, and whites and African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans.

Generally speaking, those standards require students to pass uniform standardized tests at particular grade levels—usually, the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades for promotion to the next level or graduation from high school.

According to a recent report, 46 states either have or are preparing to implement these new standards.

But, Hugh B. Price, president of the National Urban League, which convened the panel, said that only 13 states require and fund such intervention programs



Members of the National Urban League Education Accountability Forum: L-R. Professor Robert M. Hauser; Dr. Vinetta Jones, Jane Smith; Dr. Gerry House; Hugh Price Dr. Velma L. Cobb; Lynn Olson; Nat LaCour; Professor William M. Rodgers, III

Photo by Roy Lewis

to help low-performing students reach the state standards, while 6 other states require that such students be helped but provide no resources to enable that to occur.

That gap, Mr. Price continued, is one of the ways urban and rural minority children are caught in an unconscionable trap between lofty standards and lousy schools.

"We don't fear holding our children to high academic standards," Mr. Price said, "in fact, we

demand it. But they must have a fair shot at succeeding.

The Clinton Administration recently joined the fray with its proposed Education Accountability Act that would mandate an end to the practice of social promotions — promoting some students, even if they haven't met all the official requirements for moving on to the next grade — by school districts that receive federal aid.

Lynn Olsen, senior editor of

Education Week, said that the educational accountability movement pushing these new measures is the latest national effort "to find the right levers to pull to increase educational results across the country.

"But," Olsen added, referring to the likely negative impact of such provisions, "What sounds good in theory is enormously complicated in fact."

That complexity is evident in

the issue of social promotion.

Robert M. Hauser, director of the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin, said numerous studies have confirmed that simply keeping students back a grade without giving them substantial help actually decreases the chances they will do well in school and increases the likelihood they will drop out.

"These new rules put barriers in place that will hurt poor and Black and Hispanic students," said Velma L. Cobb, the Urban League's director of education and youth development policy. She noted that ninety-five percent of school-aged Black children, for example, attend public schools. "Equalizing educational opportunity is a critical test the accountability movement must pass.

Dr. Gerry House, the Memphis school system's superintendent, told those assembled that there was no mystery to doing that.

She said involving parents and other adults in the community as well as teachers and school officers in the effort was as crucial as providing the proper educational resources for high-achieving students and those who need help.

"If you are going to expect students to learn more and perform better," she said, "You have to make sure the resources are available and the teachers are ready to help them do that."

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Venice schools get grant for tutorials

By Cheryl Cadue 95-95

Belleville News-Democrat

VENICE — The Venice School District will receive a \$698,000 federal grant to expand an after-school tutorial program for students who need extra help with their school work.

National Urban League President Hugh Price announced the grant during a speech before the Madison County Urban League on Wednesday at Lewis & Clark Community College in Godfrey.

"Children who participate in after-school activities with caring adults do better in school," said Price, who praised the Venice after-school tutorial program. "If they're not in a constructive program, they're getting into stuff, and we've got to make sure that they are getting into the right stuff."

The program, modeled after a Madison County Urban League program used in the Alton school district, will be funded for the next three years with the grant.

Venice Elementary School tutor Ann Rosenburg, who is greeted with hugs when she walks into the third-grade classroom, said the best part of her job is watching her students holding spelling bees for fun.

"They take the initiative," said Rosenburg of the students enrolled in a new education initiative for the district. "They are working toward something."

Sandra Hudson, social service administrator for the Madison County Urban League, said the program is aimed at keeping children out of trouble between the hours of 3 and 6

p.m. when they are typically without adult supervision and when they get into the most trouble.

"This (grant) provides an opportunity to replicate a successful program," she said of the Alton program.

Rose Anderson-Rice, director of education for the Madison County Urban League, said the program was ideally suited for the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center grant because the program was designed specifically to fit the district's education needs.

The Venice School District students' test scores rank among the lowest in the state.

So far, the program accommodates 130 elementary and middle school students. High school students will have their own program beginning this fall.

Students in need of extra tutoring are referred to the program by their teacher and must be granted parental permission to enroll in the after-school program, which is held Monday through Thursday from 3 to 5:30 p.m.

Besides finishing up homework with one-on-one attention, students play learning games, such as spelling and math contests, and eventually will go on field trips during the summer months.

Students will receive after-school tutoring for nine weeks in the spring and fall semesters and for six weeks in the summer.

The program this semester ends April 29 because most of the tutors are students enrolled at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, which lets out in May.

Rescuing Kids From Bad Schools

A recent poll on "Teacher Quality: A Report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers" revealed that only 20 percent of the 4049 full-time public school teachers surveyed across the nation felt—according to *The New York Times* (January 29)—that they were confident "in working with students with disabilities or from diverse backgrounds."

"Less than half reported feeling very well prepared for the challenges facing public schools."

There are some superior public school teachers and even some principals with demanding expectations of both teachers and students. I have reported on a number of them here and when I was writing on education for the pre-Tina Brown *New Yorker*. Also, see Karen Hunter's column on P.S. 76 in Harlem (*Daily News*, January 29). And Clyde Habbeman's on P.S. 165 on the West Side (*Times*, January 29).

But public school educators who believe that every child can learn are not the norm in the nation or in this city.

As Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, points out, "The typical inner-city student who earns an A knows only about as much and tests only about as well as a suburban youngster who gets a C in the same course."

And what is the future for all those inner-city students who don't earn an A and never discover how much they are capable of learning?

So what is to be done? Clearly, there have to be alternatives to dead-end public schools. Some of the new charter schools created by public funding work well. Others don't, at least not yet.

There are individuals and private groups that provide scholarships to private schools for low-income families desperate to get their kids out of failing public schools. Since the funds involved do not come from public tax money, there are no constitutional barriers to that approach. But only a relatively small number of children can benefit from the amount of money raised that way. And currently, more than 200,000 New York City children are trapped in educational dead zones.

A plan for a large-scale, privately funded voucher experiment that could have ramifications around the country appeared in the March 10 *Daily News*. The authors are Reverend Johnny Ray Youngblood and Ray Domanico. Both are with the Metro Industrial Areas Foundation, which was founded by one of my heroes, the late Saul Alinsky, arguably the most effective American community organizer in this century. Until recently, Domanico headed the Public Education Association.

They propose that entirely private funds be used "to enable every child in three districts (one each in east Brooklyn, upper Manhattan,



Do these children have to go to a religious school to be truly educated?

school of his or her choice. Make it approximately \$100 million for a three-year experiment involving more than 12,000 students."

While this experiment in school choice is going on, the remaining kids in the three districts would be allowed to go to any public school in their district. Some are better than others. No new money is required for that.

Also, a private independent organization would draw up a complete list of the positives and negatives of the public and private schools in the three districts so parents can choose a school for their children intelligently.

After three years, the performances of three large groups of students would be compared: those who took their vouchers to a private school, those who exercised choice among the no-longer-overcrowded public schools (in those districts), and those in neighboring nonvoucher districts with similar student populations.

One of the most effective raisers of private funds in this city is Rudy Giuliani—when he's running or planning to run for office. Some cynics speculate that his current push for private school vouchers financed by public tax money is a way for him to get national Republican support for an eventual run for the presidency. This form of vouchers is devoutly desired by many Republican leaders—and includes public money going to religious schools.

But if Giuliani is really serious about school choice, he is capable of leading a formidable drive for private money for the Domanico-Youngblood plan.

hard to raise. As the originators of this idea note, "Walter Annenberg alone donated \$50 million to New York public schools several years ago, most of it wasted by educational reformers, and he also gave \$500 million nationally."

"A major investment bank could fund this effort or a major foundation. Or a pool formed by rich individuals, of whom there are many in this city."

After three years, "The public schools in the three choice districts must either improve their performances or lose students to schools that do." The private schools that acquire new students must prove they can do a better job than public schools of educating large numbers of boys and girls.

"And schools in the adjacent nonchoice districts must improve their performances so that the public school system proves it has both the ability to serve poor families well and the will to revitalize the dead zones."

Caution: no subsequent reforms arising from this test program should be allowed to include public money for religious schools.

If this experiment happens, and it can, "New York would be the site of a unique national test of ways to break the cycle of education failure in our cities. The results would silence either the knee-jerk defenders of ailing public schools or the knee-jerk promoters of simple market solutions to complex public and social problems."

If Giuliani won't abandon his publicly funded voucher program, which will lose in the courts, who will join with Domanico and Youngblood to liberate more than 200,000 New York City children from schools that