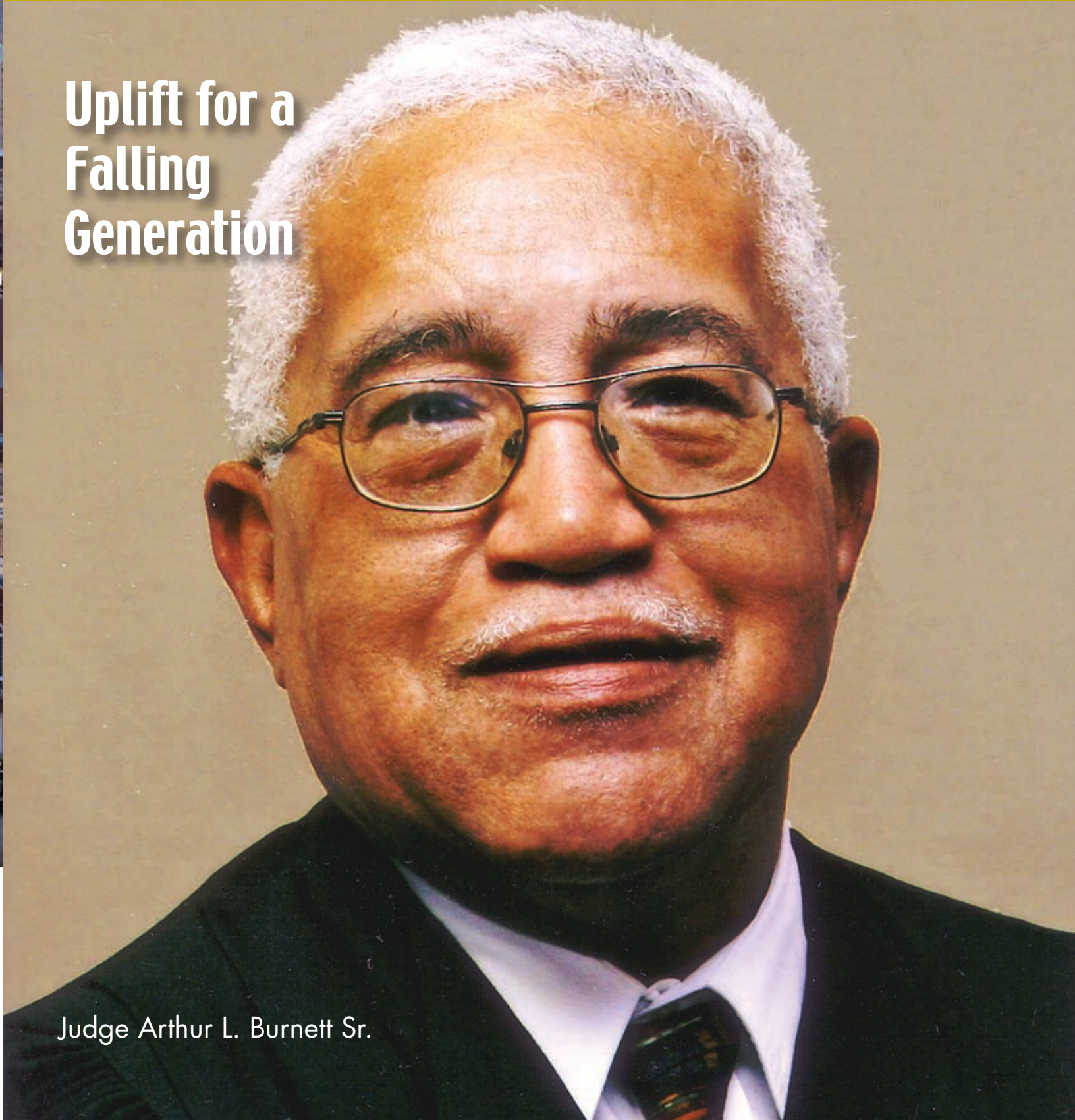




# The Oracle

FALL/WINTER 2008

**Uplift for a  
Falling  
Generation**



Judge Arthur L. Burnett Sr.





This photo is from the National Criminal Justice Advocacy Competition 2002, and features the final round evaluators and competition staff. (L. to R.) Standing: (From left to right) Rachelle Niedzwiecki, Albert Krieger, Lori Levine, Director Ron Smith and Eric Pruitt. Seated: Irene Krieger, Judge Arthur Burnett, Judge Blance Manning, Vanessa Cici and Charles Aron.

## THE ORACLE

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Following an illustrious career as a Superior Court Magistrate, Brother Burnett has since 2004 served as the National Executive Director of the National African American Drug Policy Coalition. The National African American Drug Policy Coalition (NAADPC) is a coalition of pre-eminent African American professional organizations, united with a common cause to redefine the nation's drug policies and laws

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It could be argued successfully that any one of our fraternity's four cardinal principles is more important than the others. But I argue that currently, uplift is of the most vital importance. The national deficit is nearly \$9 trillion and growing by more than \$ 1.6 billion a day. More than 26 million people have died of AIDS since 1981, and 40 million more worldwide are infected. There is a need for more uplift. More than 2,500 American young men and women have died in combat in Iraq, along with more than 40,000 Iraqi civilians. There is a need for more uplift.

More young black men are in prison than in college. Too many children are born to teen-aged parents, and there are too many children whose parents are ill-equipped and disinterested in parenting. Our public schools have lost their vision to spur our children on to creative and critical thinking. More uplift is needed.

Scholarship has given us the data for problem identification. Obviously, communities are struggling and persevering. Manhood is being displayed, but the one principle that is sorely missing in many social, civic and fraternal circles is uplift.

Now, the possession of uplift presumes the control of manhood, the attainment of scholarship, and the gift of perseverance. Uplift follows the other virtues of preparation for service, while it exemplifies the demonstration of service.

Uplift brings the members of this beloved organization together; men of similar high ideals of scholarship and manhood, in order to stimulate the attainment of ideas and ambitions of its members. Uplift helps us occupy a progressive, helpful and constructive place in the political life of the community and nation. Uplift helps us foster the humanity, freedom and dignity of the individual. Uplift helps us aid downtrodden humanity in its efforts to achieve higher economic and intellectual status. Uplift is the magnet that galvanizes our support and commitment.

So in this issue of the ORACLE, you will be excited as we share the writings and musings of brothers with an emphasis on Uplift. May the Lord prosper our efforts.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter T. Richardson'.

The Reverend Brother Walter T. Richardson, Ph.D.  
Managing Editor



## A POEM

**Brother Stafford Thompson Jr., M.A.**

is vice president and corporate actuary for North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company. He is responsible for pricing insurance, product development, budget and strategy, risk management, underwriting and new business processing for his company. Bro. Thompson is a member of Beta Phi Chapter, Durham, NC and Tau Iota Chapter, Hartford, CT.

## *Fraternities*

*by Brother Stafford Thompson*

Have you ever wondered about the value of black fraternities?  
 And why Greek letters are used as the names of these?  
 Well this issue has been debated and naysayers have shrieked,  
     Never in my life have I heard of a black Greek.  
 They claim Greek life promotes division among brethren,  
 It puts brother against brother and friend against friend.  
 And that the process to become Greek is not humane.  
     To subject yourself to it, you must be insane.  
 And after all you've been through and all that you've done.  
 Of all your many brothers, you're only accepted by some.  
     Lastly they proclaim with some audacity,  
     You're not even visible in the community.  
 Unfortunately these arguments have little foundation in fact.  
 They are maligned with rhetoric, but substance they lack.  
 For blacks who've joined Greeks don't identify with Greece.  
 Nor have they renounced their African customs and beliefs.  
     They are not trying to assimilate with any other kind,  
     But the choice of Greek letters has a meaningful design.  
 In a time when African culture was near synonymous with sin,  
     Young blacks discovered how to practice in the open.  
     So under the guise of this Greek letter creation,  
 They organized themselves to keep us off the plantation.  
     As for the claims of division, learn your history.  
     Division existed in Africa between Zulu and Ashanti.  
     But it was this division that helped each tribe to excel  
 To the point where Dutch and English imperialism was repelled.  
 Its only when division is malignant that trouble will arise,  
 And it's happening in our communities, you better recognize.  
     Blacks are killing blacks in the name of gangs,  
     That is what ought to be labeled insane.  
     And I tell you the truth it may be in this nation,  
     That Greek life is our only hope for salvation.  
 For Greeks have mastered division without being divisive,  
     And that's the fastest way to end this genocidal crisis.  
 About the process to become Greek, I have only to say,  
 It's one attempt at a rites of passage that Blacks have thrown away.  
     Acceptance by all members can never take place,  
     Until we as a people learn to accept our whole race.  
     But I'll tell you as I meet brothers from coast to coast,  
 When it comes to acceptance Black Greeks are better than most.  
     Lastly the argument on community visibility,  
     Besides being ignorant is really a bit silly.  
     Would you have us each time we impacted someone,  
     Place an article in the paper or have the newscasters come.  
     No your probably want us to put a billboard in the square,  
     Saying Greeks did something new were you aware.  
     So before you go labeling Greeks as anti-African,  
     You ought go and do some more research my friend.  
     What you will discover is that fraternities may be,  
     Our purest link to our African history.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...



Dear Brother Richardson:

Congratulations! I have read the ORACLE from front to back and I am delighted with your mission to make our publication one of studied excellence. I have always maintained that our major house organ should be a testimony to our literary excellence and be a publication of pride and dignity that always represents the finest thinking in Omega. May God continue to bless your leadership and your stated mission regarding the ORACLE.

Best to you always.  
 Brother James S. Avery  
 28th Grand Basileus

Brother Richardson-

I'm a strong believer that a more balanced portrayal of the breadth and depth of the diversity of the membership of Omega is absolutely necessary to inspire our young people and our younger brothers to attain academic excellence. Many are unduly influenced by our present "celebrity" culture, in which athletes and entertainers are the only

role models for many African American and minority youth. Previous generations understood well that education is the greatest means of upward mobility for a people.

I had a talk with a former Indian coworker who told me about how American youth are focused on frivolous pursuits, and not their education. The reason that Indian and Asian students do so well is that there is a culture of academic excellence in their societies in which this path is nurtured, supported and rewarded. They understand what previous generations of African Americans understood. Just as we, African Americans, tend to valorize sports and athletic achievement, they do the same for academic achievement. They will reap the benefits of the ever changing technological society while our young black males will often be stigmatized for "acting white" if they pursue academic excellence in school. This anti-intellectualism is even present in the Fraternity. Brother Grand is right in refocusing the Oracle as it was originally. Thank you for your efforts in bringing this to fruition.

Brother Scott Watson  
 Xi Lambda Lambda Chapter  
 Rockland County, NY

Brother Richardson,

I am disappointed in the changes to the Oracle. It seems once again attempts are being made to redefine Omega into a professional fraternity rather than a social fraternity rooted in undergraduate chapters. The Oracle now resembles the Boule publication. I'm not impressed and I don't see how this will help better the fraternity or address the current problems within our organization.

Brother James McCown  
 Life Member #1937

*Editor's Note: The mission of the ORACLE is the publication of compelling and thought provoking articles which will stimulate and encourage dialogue for positive change. The CLARION CALL will focus more on our social interactions.*

Brother Richardson,

Let me take this opportunity to commend the editorial board for transforming The Oracle into a publication that – as Grand Basileus Warren Lee stated – “place[s] emphasis on the eloquent thinkers of Omega.” Given that The Oracle has been transformed into a publication of serious scholarly research, there is a concomitant need to ensure that the editorial process is commensurate with the high standards of academic rigor. After reviewing several of the submissions in the summer 2007 edition of The Oracle, I must be frank in expressing my profound disappointment in finding evidence that the editorial process failed to suppress egregious transgressions of writing standards of the English language.

When future editions of The Oracle are published, I sincerely hope that the editorial board takes measures to ensure that the types of errors I discovered in the current edition are minimized. Since The Oracle is being positioned as a publication of serious and thought-provoking content, we need to ensure that its articles and submissions adhere to the high standards of academic rigor and grammatical accuracy.

Fraternally,  
Brother Kendall D. Franklin  
Rho Gamma Gamma Chapter  
Life Member # 4269

Ref: Endangered Species

Reverend Brother Richardson:

To set the record straight, despite information to the contrary, Mr. Johnson C. Smith, was not a Black Man. In the Johnson C. Smith Bulletin, which was issued during the 2007 commencement exercises of the University bearing his name, an entire page was devoted to his life history and generosity to the school. In the same article, Mr. Johnson's photograph is featured.

Bro. Charles W. Hargrave  
JCSU, Class of 1949  
Rho Chapter, 1946

.....

**Letters Guide:** send your brief and timely letters to the editor to [wtrichardson@bellsouth.net](mailto:wtrichardson@bellsouth.net). Include your name, organization, fraternal connection, and a day-time telephone number with all correspondence

“We keep going back,  
stronger, not weaker,  
because we will not  
allow rejection to beat  
us down. It will only  
strengthen our resolve.  
To be successful there  
is no other way.”

– Earl G. Graves

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

***Brother Troy A. Crayton, M.A.***

is currently a Graduate Assistant at the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, where he is pursuing a Ph.D. A member of Zeta Phi Graduate Chapter, he serves as the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee.

***Brother Edmund W. Gordon, Ed.D.***

is the Richard March Hoe Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and the John M. Musser Professor of Psychology Emeritus at Yale University. Dr. Gordon became a member Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc through Alpha Chapter in 1941

***Brother Joseph Marshall, Jr., Ph.D.***

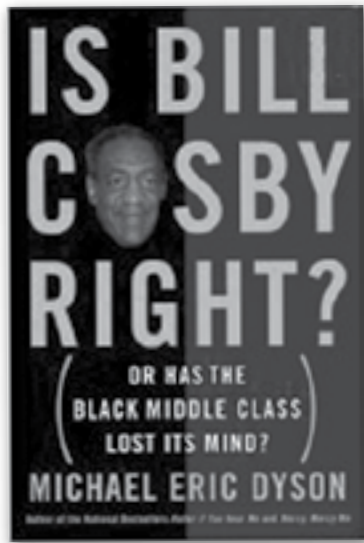
is founder and president of the Street Soldiers National Consortium, an organization dedicated to fighting violence nationwide. He is also co-founder and Executive Director of the Omega Boys Club- Street Soldiers, a youth development and violence prevention organization headquartered in San Francisco, CA that emphasizes academic achievement and non-involvement with drugs.

***Brother Byron D'Andra Orey, Ph.D.***

is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska. He is the Vice Basileus for Delta Gamma Gamma graduate chapter in Lincoln, Nebraska



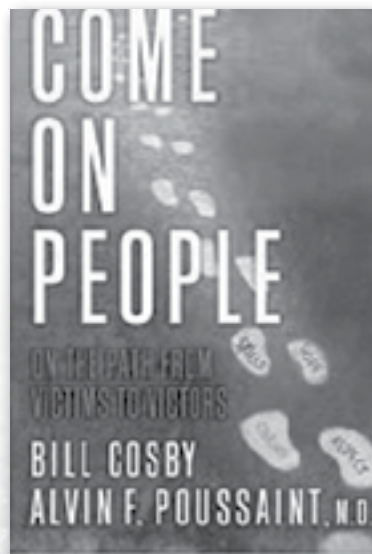
## BOOK REVIEWS



## Is Bill Cosby Right or has the Black Middle Class Lost its Mind?

*Michael Eric Dyson, Ph.D.**Basic Civitas Books, 288p*

## Come On People: On the Path from Victims to Victors

*Bill Cosby, Ph.D., and Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D.**Thomas Nelson, 288p*

On Monday night, May 17, 2004, one of our country's most beloved and revered social icons delivered an unforgettable address. The occasion was the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, and Brother Bill Cosby was the main speaker. In his remarks, Cosby took aim at blacks who don't take responsibility for their economic status, blame police for incarcerations and teach their kids poor speaking habits. That speech, which took place in Washington D.C., sponsored by the N.A.A.C.P., set off a great national debate.

The two books that I recommend that everyone reads result from that national debate. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson wrote a book in 2005 which reflected on the speech by Cosby, and describes Cosby's remarks as a "vicious attack on the most vulnerable among us" and words that only "reinforce suspicions about black humanity." He also takes the opportunity in "Is Bill Cosby Right" to explore a host of hot-button issues in black culture, from illegitimacy to faux African names, citing data and making his own case for black culture as adapted to a dominant white society that systematically puts up barriers to opportunity.

Though Dyson disagrees with Cosby's tactics, he agrees that the issues raised needed to be mentioned. Dyson's book concludes..."The conversation that Cosby has started endures because the people who must engage him, and the issues he has raised, are likewise enduring. We must learn from each other, listen to each other, correct each other and struggle with each other if the destiny of our people is to be secure. And we must fight for the best that is within our reach, even if that means disagreeing with icons and resisting the myopia of mighty men. What Cosby started is left to us to finish."

Another book was published October, 2007 which is a response to Dyson. Though it is interesting that the authors intentionally detour the philosophical differences set up by Dyson in his work, Brother William Henry (Bill) Cosby, Ed.D. and Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D. present a powerful message for families and communities. They lay out their visions for strengthening Black

.....

**Editor's Note:** These books were selected from my personal bookshelf, and the views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. I invite your comments on this section.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



# The Issue of HIV/AIDS: Where is the Black Church?

By Brother Byron D'Andra Orey, Ph.D.

*"If HIV/AIDS were the leading cause of death of white women between the ages of 25 and 34, there would be an outraged outcry in this country."*

-- Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

The above statement was expressed by Presidential hopeful, Hillary Rodham Clinton, during a Democratic presidential debate at Howard University, sponsored by radio and television personality Tavis Smiley. Journalist Bob Herbert, of the New York Time, echoes Clinton's sentiments by stating, "It's discouraging that some of the biggest issues confronting blacks—the spread of AIDS, chronic joblessness, and racial discrimination, for example—are not considered mainstream issues." Although the rest of Herbert's article points to the white power structure (e.g., the Supreme Court) as being particularly problematic in failing to address these issues, I ask the question in this article, "where is the black community, and in particular, where is the black church?"

Historically, dating back to slavery and continuing through the Jim Crow era of segregation, the black church has served as a source of refuge and support for the black community. Indeed, Christian organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, led by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., were at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement. Consistent with the role of the black church during the Civil Rights movement, previous research has found religion to be a major political resource. This is particularly the case in the black community, given that blacks are more religious when compared to other racial groups in the United States (U.S.). According to political scientist Allison Calhoun-Brown, the role of the church in the black community can best be summarized as follows:

in church, one could find politics, arts, music, education, economic development, social services, civic associations, leadership opportunities, and business enterprises. One could also find a rich spiritual tradition of survival and liberation. Whether their leaders repudiated the "curse of Ham," embraced the revolutionary religious vision of Nat Turner, or preached the more reserved doctrine that "Jesus will fix it after a while," black churches have always accepted securing and guaranteeing the freedom of black people as one of their central missions.

Calhoun-Brown's main thesis is that the black church ultimately helped to organize the Civil Rights movement. Pulling from various theories of mobilization, she argues that discontent is essentially constant during a mass movement. In other words, a precondition to mobilization is that the number of malcontents must be large enough to create a movement. In addition to organizing, the black church was highly effective in educating those black citizens who were unfamiliar with the issues related to the movement.

In addition to the church's role during the Civil Rights era, it also has been instrumental in addressing issues pertaining to poverty in the black community. To be sure, the black church has provided food banks, health care and even shelter for the homeless. Despite such efforts however, the black church has, arguably, ignored the issue of HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus-acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) and its impact on the black community. One potential reason for the church's silence on this issue rests primarily with the fact that, since the virus's origin, HIV/AIDS has been closely associated with culturally and historically taboo behaviors, such as homosexuality, prostitution and intravenous drug use. The following quote from an anonymous black minister summarizes the dilemma faced by the black church in addressing this issue:

You have to understand... It goes against the general tenets of Christianity. How can you expect ministers to accept or acknowledge the behavior that causes AIDS? All we can do is take care of those who are sick—that is our Christian duty... For many of our poorly educated clergy, homosexuals and drug users are immoral, and that is the end of the story.

Given the influence of the black church on the attitudes of its congregants, the black community has adopted socially conservative attitudes on the issue of AIDS. In doing so, they have neglected to take political ownership of this issue. It has been well documented that a majority of blacks oppose homosexuality primarily due to their religious beliefs. Elsewhere, I argue that such infatuation with the issue of homosexuality or intravenous drug usage, serves as a distraction from the larger issue of AIDS in the black community. For example, research reveals that those at-risk populations that are most likely to possess high incidences of AIDS are

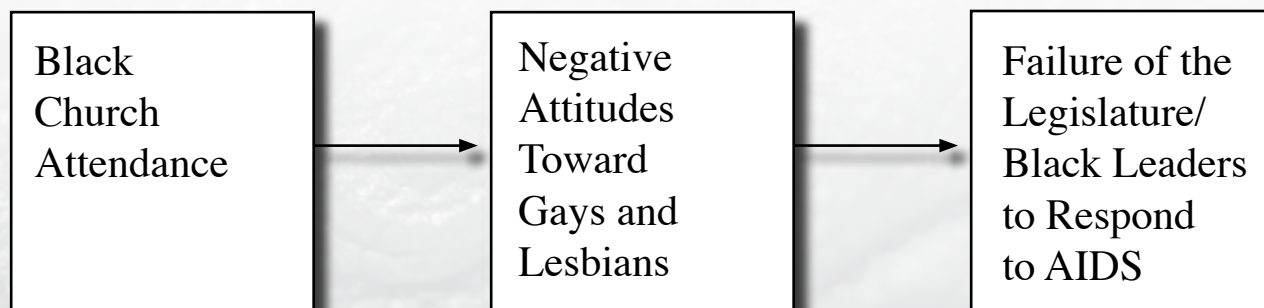
typically in low-income areas. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, HIV and AIDS have hit African Americans the hardest. The reasons are not directly related to race or ethnicity, but rather to some of the barriers faced by many African Americans. These barriers can include poverty (being poor), sexually transmitted diseases, and stigma (negative attitudes, beliefs, and actions directed at people living with HIV/AIDS or directed at people who do things that might put them at risk for HIV).

The acknowledgment of structural explanations by the CDC runs counter to the “other-worldly” ideology of traditional black theology. The other-worldly orientation, typically possessed by traditional black churches, preaches that social justice and comfort may not be received here on earth, but will be obtained in the afterlife. In the afterlife, believers can take comfort in knowing that the trials of this world are only temporary and will be eliminated in the hereafter. Moreover, this orientation rejects the structural explanations for suffering and deprivation, rather it places blame on individual failings and shortcomings. The other-worldly theological orientation, then, would blame HIV/AIDS victims for their condition, as a function of their promiscuous and risky behavior (e.g., homosexual activity, prostitution and intravenous drug-use), as opposed to blaming their poor living-conditions, which might encourage such behavior.

In *Boundaries of Blackness*, Cathy Cohen expands (not dismisses) the traditional model of white oppression as the

reason for the social, political and economic inequalities that exist in the black community, by acknowledging the behavior of black elites (i.e., leaders), in their policing of other group members. Based on the argument advanced by Cohen, black HIV/AIDS victims have been marginalized by indigenous black leaders, who have been reticent in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This type of behavior is referred to by Cohen as secondary marginalization. Secondary marginalization occurs when black leaders police less powerful members of the black community. Cohen suggests that black leaders have failed to address such problems as HIV/AIDS, because these issues are cross-cutting and only affect a small portion of the black community. She distinguishes between cross-cutting and consensus issues, stating that consensus issues impact an overwhelming majority of blacks.

In this article I argue that both individual and institutional explanations exist and must be discussed in tandem if we are to grasp a better understanding of the politics of HIV/AIDS in the black community. Based on the individual-level perspective, the rationale is that the parishioners receive messages from their ministers and these messages help to shape their political behavior/attitudes. From the institutional side, the argument goes, by subscribing to a socially conservative ideology, specifically on the issue of homosexuality, the black community has failed to pressure elected officials, and other black leaders, to adequately address the HIV/AIDS dilemma that currently exists within the black community. The overall model is illustrated as follows:



### HIV/AIDS as a Cross-Cutting Issue

In recent years, the AIDS virus has had a disproportionate impact on the African-American community. Since AIDS was first identified in 1981, roughly 38 percent of those dying from the disease have been African Americans. In addition, among the more than 1 million individuals who live with the virus, approximately half of them are black

([www.Avert.org](http://www.Avert.org)). These numbers are alarming given that African Americans represent just 12.3 percent of the United States (U.S.) population. To be sure, HIV has spread rapidly across the U.S. In doing so, it has affected some states more than others. In 2004, the Kaiser Foundation reported that approximately 72 percent of all AIDS cases had been reported in just ten states, and most of these cases were found in urban areas (Kaiser Foundation). In addi-



tion, AIDS has also been found to be a serious problem in the South. The large presence of AIDS in the South correlates highly with the large population of blacks who live in this region, many of whom are poor. Ironically, however, is the fact that this region also represents the largest number of black churches.

## Racial Identification in the Black Community

Cohen argues that the AIDS issue has not gained much attention in the black community because it serves as a cross-cutting issue. Hence, despite the strong racial identity possessed by many blacks, HIV/AIDS is not seen to be a consensus issue for which a large segment of blacks would benefit. In other words, HIV/AIDS is not perceived to be an issue for which blacks should take ownership. Rather, HIV/AIDS is viewed to be an issue that would possibly exacerbate the image of African Americans because of the negative connotations associated with the disease, and even if addressed, would only benefit a small group of undeserving blacks. In other words, because HIV/AIDS is perceived to be contracted as a result of risky-behavior, such as drug usage or sexual activities, blacks believe that they should not take ownership of the issue, given the already high level of negative baggage associated with the black community. Indeed, all sorts of sexual stereotypes exist pertaining to the hypersexual behavior of blacks, both men and women.

## Examining the Black Community's Response to HIV/AIDS

The data employed in this analysis are derived from a variety of sources. The first part of the study makes use of the Balm of Gilead's national survey of churches. This organization contacted numerous black churches across the U.S., asking them to indicate whether they provide HIV/AIDS ministries or educational resources pertaining to the virus. In addition, data are also culled from the 1999-2007 legislative sessions in two southern states, Georgia and Mississippi, to test whether state legislators are less likely to introduce bills related to HIV/AIDS. Using data from each of these states, I conducted content analysis for every bill introduced by the legislature to determine if the bill contained content related to AIDS or HIV.

## The Black Churches Response to the AIDS Crisis

Based on an assessment of the Balm of Gilead's data, the following states provided the largest frequencies for churches who either engage in HIV/AIDS education or report having

HIV/AIDS ministries: California (18); Illinois, (15); New York (12); Maryland (10); Georgia, Texas, Virginia and Ohio (9); and North Carolina and New Jersey (8). Save for the state of California, the top five states also include states which possess the highest percentage of AIDS cases in the U.S. Hence, based on this assessment, it appears that areas with high incidences of AIDS are more likely to provide AIDS ministries, and or, outreach programs to combat this disease.

## The States Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis

One of the expectations in this article was that legislators have been less likely to introduce bills related to AIDS, when compared to other bills. Based on Table 1, this expectation was confirmed. The findings here provide very strong support for the aforementioned hypothesis. In Mississippi there were only 15 bills out of 43,648 that were introduced between 1999 and 2007. Similarly, in Georgia, only three bills out of 8,494 were introduced during the same period.

## Conclusion

The AIDS virus has served as one of the deadliest diseases to plague the black community. However, because of the negative baggage associated with the disease, African Americans have failed to take ownership of this issue. This has led to a failure by the black community to pressure/lobby elected officials to assist in ameliorating this epidemic. In this article, I have proposed a model which posits a relationship between the black church, black attitudes toward gays and lesbians, and legislative behavior. The expectations were that blacks who attend church regularly would possess socially conservative views on issues pertaining to gays and lesbians. This in turn, would lead to a dearth of bills with HIV/AIDS related content. The attitudinal model has been tested and confirmed elsewhere, and was beyond the scope of the current analysis.

To test the black community's response to the AIDS issue, I examined whether black churches have adopted any HIV/AIDS awareness programs or ministries. The findings reveal a pattern in the states with the highest incidence of AIDS and the states with the highest reported ministries and outreach programs dedicated to fight AIDS. Thus, while it was argued forcefully throughout the paper that the church has failed to address the AIDS issue, the results here do find some support of programs that exist in states with high cases of AIDS, with one important caveat, however. These data should be interpreted with caution, due to the potential of selection-bias. Said differently, those churches that do

not provide HIV/AIDS intervention programs or ministries may simply decide against responding to the survey. In the event that this is the case, the sample will be biased, consisting mainly of churches that provide interventions/ministries. This notwithstanding, the Balm of Gilead's data are amongst a very limited set of data currently available.

In addition, this article sought to examine the impact of elected officials and their response to the HIV/AIDS issue. I chose two southern states with high percentages of AIDS cases among blacks and conducted content analysis on state-legislative bills to assess whether legislators were responding to the crisis. The results reveal that elected officials have turned a blind eye to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. After examining over 50,000 bills, only 18 included key words associated with HIV/AIDS. To add insult to injury, among the 18 bills making reference to HIV/AIDS, five of

those bills were punitive in nature.

In closing, the current research has offered a parsimonious model to examine the black community's response to the AIDS epidemic. Clearly, the problem associated with AIDS is much more complex than what has been discussed here. However, the purpose of this article was to hopefully increase the dialogue concerning this very perplexed issue. For blacks, the church has served as a long-time advocate and lobbyist, so to speak, between the black community and political institutions. However, because HIV/AIDS is a cross-cutting issue and does not affect the black community at large, the church and its congregants have failed to take ownership of this issue. Organizations such as the Balm of Gilead, however, are assisting in creating the contagion necessary to change this pattern.

TABLE 1. BILLS SPONSORED ADDRESSING HIV/AIDS

State	Number of Bills Addressing HIV/AIDS	Total Number of Bills Introduced
Mississippi	15	43,648
Georgia	3	8,494
Total	18	52,142

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3. Wald 1987.
4. Harris 1994.
5. Calhoun-Brown, 169.
6. Cohen 1999, 6-7.
7. Cohen 1999; Fullilove and Fullilove III, 1999; and McDaniel 2004.
8. See Orey 2007.
9. Ellison and Sherkat 1990.





## The Passion of the Honorable Arthur Louis Burnett, Sr.

*National Executive Director,  
National African American Drug Policy Coalition*

The Honorable Arthur Louis Burnett, Sr. has always had a passion for excellence and scholarship. Born in Spotsylvania County, Virginia March 15, 1935 he graduated as the valedictorian of his high school class. He then attended Howard University where he graduated summa cum laude and New York University Law School for his J.D. According to Judge Burnett, "New York University Law School was not his first choice". He preferred to study law in his home state, but the state of Virginia would not admit him to attend the University of Virginia Law School in Charlottesville, Virginia and there were no Black law schools. With potential litigation pending, the Commonwealth of Virginia agreed to pay for his education to attend New York University School of Law.

Judge Burnett began his career as a prosecutor in the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice in June 1958. While there he earned the Attorney General's Sustained Superior Performance Award. He left in April 1965 to become an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, a position he held for almost four years. He went on to become the first Legal Advisor, a position now described as General Counsel, for the Metropolitan Police Department. On June 26, 1969, Judge Burnett was appointed as one of the first two United States Magistrates for the District of Columbia and the first African American to serve as a Magistrate Judge in the United States. In 1975, he became Assistant General Counsel at the United States Civil Service Commission where he helped to develop the Reorganization Plans and the legislation creating the Office of Personnel Management, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and the Federal Labor Relations Authority. He was one of the principal attorneys advising the Civil Service Commission members and President Jimmy Carter on government reorganization, civil service reforms and proposed legislation, and all federal government personnel issues. He returned to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia as a Magistrate Judge in January 1980.

President Ronald Reagan appointed him to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in November 1987 where he served until his retirement in October 1998. He took Senior Judge status the same year. Since retirement, Judge Burnett has been teaching as an adjunct law professor at two law schools and working with several civic, community and professional organizations to address the crisis of drug use and abuse in minority communities. Since August 1, 2004 he has been on sabbatical leave from the Superior Court serving as the National Executive Director, National African American Drug Policy Coalition

He was one of the principal attorneys advising the Civil Service Commission members and President Jimmy Carter...

During all of this illustrious legal career, Judge Burnett has been passionate about reaching out and giving back. As a United States Magistrate Judge and as a Superior Court Judge it is estimated that he has mentored over 2,000 law student judicial interns. In addition, his speeches to minority high school, college and law school audiences are too numerous to attempt to quantify. His efforts to bring diversity to the legal profession is exemplary.

Judge Burnett served as Chair of the ABA Judicial Division's National Conference of Special Court Judges 1974 - 1975. He is a former president of the National Council of United States Magistrate Judges; the District of Columbia chapter of the Federal Bar Association; and the Prettyman-Leventhal American Inn of Court. He is the recipient of the ABA National Conference of Special Court Judges' Frank-

lin N. Flascher Judicial Award as the Outstanding Special Court Judge in 1985; the Federal Bar Association's President's Award; the National Bar Association's President's Award; in 2004 the National Bar Association's Judicial Council Raymond Pace Alexander Award for Lifetime Contributions to Judicial Advocacy; also in 2004 the National Bar Association's highest award, the C. Francis Stradford

Award; the National Conference of State Trial Judges Award as one of its Outstanding Judges in 1999, and the Ollie May Cooper Award of the Washington Bar Association.

The following is the Executive Summary of the National African American Drug Policy Coalition (NAADPC) written by Brother Burnett.

## Five Year Business Plan

### *Executive Summary*

The National African American Drug Policy Coalition (NAADPC) is a coalition of pre-eminent African American professional organizations, united with a common cause to redefine the nation's drug policies and laws, through the promotion of policies and programs that provide a more effective and humane approach to address the chronic societal problem of drug abuse. Working with initial financial support from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, NAADPC, a proposed Section 501©3 organization aims to reduce and prevent illegal drug usage and related crimes in the African American community through an initial five-year plan. The Coalition will seek to embrace the public health nature of drug abuse and emphasize therapeutic sentencing over criminal sanctions. Through this approach, the member organizations individually and collectively would seek to shift public resources into education, prevention, treatment and research programs.

The Coalition now comprises 23 organizations. The Coalition's charter members are the: National Bar Association, Association of Black Psychologists, National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc., Howard University School of Law, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc., National Dental Association, National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Association of Black Sociologists, and National Black Nurses Association, Inc. Following the first meeting of the Coalition in October 2004, six (6) new member organizations joined: National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice, National Black Alcoholism & Addictions Council; Black Administrators in Child Welfare, Inc., Association of Black Health-System Pharmacists; and National Medical Association. The most recent members are the: National Black Police Association, Thurgood Marshall Action Coalition, National Organization of African Americans in Housing, National Alliance of Black School Educators, the National Institute for Law and Equity, National Black Prosecutors Association, Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc., and National Conference of Black Political Scientists.

The NAADPC has planned several approaches to implement its mission. These include a National Summit on Drug Policy and the implementation and evaluation of pilot projects in seven (7) pre-selected population centers which include: Chicago, Illinois; Huntsville, Alabama; Flint, Michigan; Seattle, Washington; Baltimore, Maryland; the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, DC. The NAADPC anticipates that the measurable outcomes of these multidimensional interventions will include lower recidivism rates, reduced public costs for incarceration, crime and violence, a reduction in child abuse cases, and increases in drug court and drug treatment compliance.



## ORGANIZATION GOALS

The Coalition will work to achieve six (6) goals:

- **Goal I:** *To create an organizational structure for ongoing operation and coordination of the Coalition.*
- **Goal II:** *To build a revenue base to sustain and generate support for the Coalition.*
- **Goal III:** *To enhance pretrial diversion and therapeutic sentencing in selected communities.*
- **Goal IV:** *To advance knowledge regarding substance abuse policies and programs and its impact on African Americans through research and evaluation.*
- **Goal V:** *To provide knowledge and information services regarding substance abuse policies and programs and their impact on African Americans*
- **Goal VI:** *To refocus drug laws and policies towards a public health approach.*

## ORGANIZATION GOALS DEFINED

### **Goal I: To create an organizational structure for ongoing operation and coordination of the Coalition.**

It is the goal of the Coalition to incorporate itself as an independent, not-for-profit organization with space, staff, policies and procedures consistent with the mission and philosophy of NAADPC. This will permit about one full year to establish the office, incorporate as a non-profit and establish the first seven (7) pilot sites. In the subsequent four (4) years the Coalition will expand its pilot projects and evaluate the impact of the Coalition's activities at the pilot locations, and disseminate findings.

### **Goal II: To build a revenue base to sustain and generate support for the Coalition.**

It is the goal of the Coalition leadership to identify funding from private and public sources to support and sustain the home office for five (5) years and beyond.

### **Goal III: To enhance pretrial diversion and therapeutic sentencing services and programs in selected communities.**

It is the goal of the Coalition to enhance existing, and implement, new pretrial diversion and therapeutic sentencing services and programs using a multidisciplinary approach through the talents and expertise of Coalition members and supporting organizations and volunteers. It will be implemented in seven (7) pilot cities in year one and during years two (2) through five (5), there will be an expansion of up to 40 sites. The primary functions of the local coalitions will be to 1) develop wider public support for the services; 2) increase the influence of individual community institutions regarding substance abuse policies; 3) minimize duplication of services; 4) develop more financial and human resources; 5) Increase participation in substance abuse policies and programs from diverse sectors and constituencies; 6) Improve capacity to plan and evaluate and 7) strengthen local organizations and institutions to respond better to the needs and aspirations of their constituents.

### **Goal IV: To advance knowledge regarding substance abuse policies and programs and its impact on African Americans through research and evaluation.**

It is the goal of the Coalition to be producers of information by identifying best practice models through research and evaluation of both NAADPC programs and general programs.

**Goal V: To create a National clearinghouse of new and relevant information regarding African Americans and substance abuse for the public.**

It is the goal of the Coalition to be disseminators of information by providing the public and key stakeholders with evidence-based information on African Americans and substance abuse using a variety of mediums.

**Goal VI: To serve as a catalyst for refocusing of drug laws and policies towards a public health approach.**

It is the goal of the Coalition to educate and inform the legislatures and policy-makers regarding the impact of specific drug laws and policies on the African American community and make recommendations for more effective laws and policy.

## Q & A with Judge Arthur Burnett Sr.

***Q - Tell the Oracle how you came to be the leader of the drug policy coalition.***

**A -** As a young United States Magistrate Judge in the 1970s in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia I handled a number of probation review hearings on referral from the United States District Court where there had been technical violations, i.e. failure to maintain clean urines on drug testing, failure to maintain employment, failure to keep appointments with the probation officer, failure to maintain an address and advise the probation officer of change of address, and it is my responsibility to hold hearings to get the probationer the services needed and bring him or her into compliance, by ordering the probation officer and social service agencies to do what was necessary, including even mental health counseling and general health referrals. I learned then that many of these individuals were bright and had much talent and if they could be cured from their drug addiction, they could become outstanding contributors to society. Further, I then began to learn that drug abuse and addiction is a medical problem and presents a public health issue, and that the crimes of possession of illegal drugs or selling drugs as a minor dealer to get one's own supply was the product of a craving or compulsion to use drugs, and that relapses occurred when persons suffered frustrations or disappointments,

and like the insanity defense for criminal conduct, we ought not hold these individuals criminally responsible for their conduct and behavior, but treat them, but in a meaningful and comprehensive manner to restore them to functioning human beings in our community.

When I became a Superior Court judge in November 1987 and was assigned to criminal calendars the first three years I began to ponder how I could get people I placed on probation successfully through probation, and I became very discouraged and frustrated with the prospects of revoking probation for every 3 out of 4 persons with drug histories convicted before me. So I devised a procedure that when I pronounced judgment and placed a person on probation, I would give two-stage probation, i.e. place the person on probation for five (5) years but at the time of sentencing include a provision that probation shall be reduced to 30 months or two (2) years, if the probationer remained drug free, got employment, maintained a fixed address and did not get rearrested for future criminal activity. By giving them affirmative incentives right at the beginning of their sentences, I found that I was having far fewer probation violation proceedings. I also for the high risk probationer established a procedure of scheduling a probation review or compliance hearing at the time of the sentencing, so that the probationer would know that I was monitoring his



or her performance in the community. The combination of these two innovations led to a substantial reduction in probation violations and a significant increase of my probationers completing probation successfully. As a result of these innovations, I was asked to be the closing speaker at a major conference at Howard University and wrote a paper which later became an article published in the Howard Law Journal on how to solve the problem of excessive incarceration of African-American men in prison. (See Burnett, Arthur, Prison Effect on the African-American Community, Howard Law Journal, No. 34, p528-36, 1991). This article then became the basis for an initiative by Reverend Jesse Jackson when he was Shadow Senator for the District of Columbia in 1994 called "Reclaiming Our Youth" and we applied some of the concepts to Pretrial Release before adjudication of crimes, with establishing meaningful third-party custody supervision of persons accused of crime, and we convinced prosecutors on occasions to drop the criminal charge, thus avoiding a criminal conviction, and if it did not avoid a criminal conviction, it placed the defendant in a favorable position to get a probation sentence rather than being incarcerated. These endeavors led to Marian Wright Edelman, President and CEO of the Children's Defense Fund, persuading me to retire in 1998 after eleven (11) years on the Superior Court Bench to become Judge-in-Residence to the Children's Defense Fund while continuing to serve also as a Senior Judge of the Superior Court, and to advise on innovations and programs which would help solve the problems of African American youth tempted reference by criminal conduct.

Because of this extensive background, Clyde E. Bailey, Sr. when he became President-Elect of the National Bar Association in 2003 asked me to serve as his key chief judicial adviser and Senior Co-Chair over two separate task forces, one dealing with Racial Disparities in Drug Policy and the other dealing with Healthcare Disparities. As we explored the work of these two (2) Task Forces we concluded that there was considerable overlap, especially when we learned that associated with substance abuse in some 60%-70% of the cases there were emotional disorders, i.e. depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder and thus a high level of co-occurring conditions, and that many physical conditions or disorders stemmed from the use of illegal drugs and poor health care. Thus, the work of these two (2) Task Forces was merged into the concept of creating a National Coalition of all the African American professional organizations whose members dealt with the law enforcement, legal and justice aspects of drug abuse and addiction and related mental conditions and of all the health care organizations whose members dealt with the medical and public health issues of these same individuals.

The initial meeting of several such organizations occurred on April 1, 2004 at the House Rayburn Office Building as the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation was one of the catalyst and organizing entities along with the National Bar Association. Howard University and its School of Law was also one of its initial members and agreed to provide the administrative offices and support for the creation of this national coalition. The other initial members included the Association of Black Psychologists, the National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc., the National Dental Association, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the Association of Black Sociologists, and the National Black Nurses Association, Inc. At that point we applied to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for a start up grant and in May 2004 their staff asked who would be the Project Director. I was contacted and asked to take a sabbatical from the Bench for a period of five (5) years to establish this organization. I initially agreed to two (2) years and commenced my sabbatical on August 1, 2004. In November 2006 the Commission that oversees the activities of Senior Judges of the Court granted me an indefinite extension of my sabbatical to continue serving as the National Executive Director of the National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc., which is based at Howard University School of Law.

We initially established as a goal, recruiting the other African-American professional organizations whose members worked with people afflicted with substance abuse problems, and when we reached fifteen members, we would proceed to incorporate as a non-profit corporation and seek tax-exempt status. By December 2004 we had attained our goal - the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice, the National Black Alcoholism & Addictions Council, Inc., the Black Administrators in Child Welfare, Inc., the Association of Black Health-System Pharmacists, and the National Medical Association had become members of the Coalition. But we had eight (8) additional organizations whose leaders had indicated an interest. By July 2005 we had been joined by the National Black Police Association, the National Alliance of Black School Educators, the National Institute for Law and Equity, the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, the Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc., the National Black Prosecutors Association, the National Organization of African Americans in Housing, and the Thurgood Marshall Action Coalition. The National Institute for Law and Equity is an organization of former African-American United States Attorneys appointed by the President of the United States who returned to private practice. The Thurgood Marshall Action Coalition is an organization of Black professionals working with drug courts throughout America. This brought the

total member organizations in the Coalition to twenty-three (23) representing almost 255,000 African-American professional individuals. We then proceeded with formal incorporation as a not-for-profit District of Columbia corporation with the date of incorporation being January 12, 2006 and then applied for IRS Section 501©(3) tax exempted status, which was granted August 30, 2006 retroactive back to the date of incorporation.

In 2007 we have had two (2) additional organizations join the Coalition. They are the National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Consortium on Substance Abuse with a membership of 82 historic black colleges and universities and the National Association of Health Services Executives. We estimate that the total number of individuals now associated with the Coalition representing African-American professionals, university and college professors, college and graduate students for these twenty-five (25) entities exceed 400,000 persons. Kurt L. Schmoke, Dean of the School of Law and former Mayor of Baltimore, Maryland serves as the President of the Corporation. I serve as the Vice President of Administration and the National Executive Director, and Jean Bailey, Ph.D., the Director of the Center for Drug Abuse Research at Howard University, serves as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Corporation. We are the three officers and the legal directors of the corporation. We have established an Advisory Board of Directors, with a representative from each of the member organizations, to serve in an advisory capacity to the officers and from which our committee leadership members are drawn. In the capacity as National Executive Director I serve as the catalyst and public spokesperson for this organization to promote its goals and objectives nationally and within the member organizations throughout the United States.

***Q - Is there an intersection of your work with the Coalition and the mission of our Fraternity?***

A - Absolutely. Our Coalition as part of its drug education and prevention program with African-American youth stresses that not being truant, not dropping out of school, working hard and achieving academic excellence are far better options in life than becoming involved in illegal drug abuse and drug trafficking and that through educational achievement one can become a doctor, lawyer, college professor, teacher, scientist, engineer or anything he or she may have the aptitude and talent to become. Thus, the Coalition promotes Scholarship, one of the cardinal principals of Omega. The Coalition also promotes Uplift, another cardinal principal of Omega, in that we stress that any child regardless of the poverty circumstances into which he or she is born through educational achievement can become an outstanding professional or skilled craftsman or tech-

nology expert in any field of endeavor he or she wishes to pursue. The Coalition will provide mentors throughout the Nation through its local affiliates to any child who really wants to be educated and lift himself or herself out of poverty and improve the quality of life for all of the residents of this Nation. Men of Omega could be vital role models for these youngsters and could be their counselors and tutors to bring many of them into our ranks rather than have them end up in prison or as the victims of violence and death at a young age. The Coalition has as a mission reducing drastically the number of African-Americans in the pipeline to prison over the next ten (10) years and increase significantly the number of African-Americans who can rise up into the middle class and beyond in the professions, crafts and trades, business and technology.

***Q - What are your proudest moments as a member of our beloved brotherhood?***

A - My proudest moment as a member of Omega was to see my son, Darryl Lawford Burnett, who attended an Historic Black University become a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity while in Graduate School in Public Health at Tulane University. My second proudest moment was to receive my 50-Year Pen as a Member of Omega in August 2004, having been inducted into Alpha Chapter at Howard University in April 1954. Finally, as an Omega man to promote scholarship in my own family, I am proud that each of five (5) children received two (2) degrees. One daughter is a lawyer and C.P.A.; a son is a medical doctor – urologist and prostate cancer surgeon and the principal inventor of Viagra; a second son who has become a Public Health Administrator and an expert in substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS among other issues impacting Community Health Centers throughout the United States as a Deputy Administrator, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services; another daughter who has become an economist and marketing expert for Ford Motor Company nationally; and a third daughter who has become a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.





# Training in Thinking: A Conceptual Response to the Crisis in Education

By Brother Troy Crayton, M.A.

## Part 1 of a 2 Part Series

Our public schools are in crisis. The environment for 'training in thinking,' toward scholastic excellence, seems to be lost to the majority of students. This is a characteristic of a broken education system. The goal of this article is to offer some preliminary hypotheses toward a solution to this crisis in education. John Dewey's pragmatic instrumentalism, specifically the criteria discussed in Dewey's *School Conditions and the Training of Thought* (1907) will provide the conceptual basis for this discussion. Pragmatic instrumentalism addresses the role of thought in determining consequences.

Dewey offers suggestions in the following quote that will provide a framework for this article:

***"Training in thinking, Dewey writes, requires the development of curiosity, of habits of exploring and testing. Teachers must attend both to students' individual mental habits and to the effects of conditions at school. They should be aware that they teach by example as well as by precept, that their own habits of thought and speech will influence students; and they should be wary of focusing too much on getting students to 'recite their lessons correctly.'"*** (Dewey [1907], cited by Haack, 2006, p.331)

The current role of the teacher seems to require merely a recitation of lessons, in hopes of the student imitating what he or she hears, correctly. So, where is curiosity bred? And from what is a habit of exploring and testing evolved? First, the teacher must be a disciplined student, in order to create a habit of self-awareness of teaching both by example and precept. Moreover, teachers must know that their own habits of thought and speech directly influence students. Next, in order for the teacher to develop or retain a role of teaching by example and precept, he or she must learn the individual habits of his or her students. Further, the teacher must attend to the effects of the conditions of the school environment. Thus, there is a cycle of activity that seems to encompass the process of effective learning, involving ongoing self-awareness, student awareness, and environment awareness.

The classroom environment and the learning process between students and teachers either breed or eliminate curiosities. It is these curiosities that must be discovered es-

entially in the learning process. From these curiosities are born doubts, another characteristic of learning processes. In other words, as current beliefs are challenged; the foundation upon which they have been established, slowly become less sturdy. However, the lack of sturdiness ignites a natural desire to resolve.

Why? Why does the case seem to be that doubts cause thought activity? Why, in turn, do doubts seem to begin a process leading toward an evolution of thought? Why, moreover, is it "belief" that seems to be the appeasing state of the process in the evolution of thought? Curiosity breeds doubt which evolves through a natural desire to resolve into a cessation of doubt; and, this cessation of doubt is equivalent to belief (Pierce, 1992). Beliefs, in-turn, is the preceding stage to developing habits-- habits of study, habits of behavior, or habits of learning, for example. Habits are merely evolved beliefs from which actions are prompted. The process of doubt to acting upon habit is critical to an effective learning process. These actions in turn, contribute to the environment, the learning process, and serves as an evolved experience from which the cycle begins again. As may be discerned, curiosity is essential in the development of thought activity leading to more effective learning.

Now, a critical role of the teacher is to engage the student in the development of the will to engage in the expression of curiosity. Each student, should be introduced to some object or construct that arouses a level of curiosity. Naturally, to some degree the individual will have an inclination to resolve the given curiosity produced by the presence of the unknown object. The issue becomes whether or not the student perseveres through the resolution of the curiosity, thus an issue of will.

The teacher's primary charge should be to constitute an interaction that incites will, and "[develops the] curiosity, suggestion, and habits of exploring and testing..." (Dewey, (1907), cited by Haack, 2006, p.332) This conception is prophetic in that it is a statement borrowed from an article written by Dewey, circa 1910 and it applies to our educational challenges today.

In recent discussions by me with a diverse representation of students, they were asked what the perfect high school would be for them. The perfect school was presented as a place where they would enjoy attending daily. They were then asked, "given this conception, what would it take for their school to be this 'place'?" Interestingly, the perspective of the students seems to reverberate that which is conveyed by Dewey, that curiosity inspires learning.

Upon discussing various concerns with the current educational climate in the School, the U.S. Congress isolated five areas that effectively summarize their discussions (REF). The five areas are: 1) Equal opportunity for voices to be heard in the development of the school environment, and, equal respect exhibited among students and teachers, 2) Open mindedness among students and teachers, 3) Lack of challenges presented by work, and, make work fun/interesting (interesting seemed to mean 'relevant' within the discussion), 4) Students should have faith in response from administration and the ability to interact without recourse, 5) Discipline policies.

The students who were queried, provided these areas as issues of concern regarding their school environment. Their responses are interesting both thematically as well as individually. Thematically, the environment is addressed as a concern, as one would expect. Individually, the concerns seem to be a matter of the students' curiosities being addressed inadequately. I ask the reader to recollect the interpretation of thought training as represented within page 1 of this essay. It seems plausible that if teachers interact as students with students then each element of the thought training cycle should be addressed. First the teacher should be a student of individual traits and habits and lastly the teacher should be a student of the conditions, or environment.

The environment plays an important role in modifying the directions of how individual powers habitually express themselves. 'Powers' is used here to convey the dynamic process of developing curiosity and persevering toward resolving the given curiosity, and the need to test the habits produced in order to provide sound basis for future actions. (Foucault, 1983) Said another way the environment may be understood as being made up by three components. Those three components are: the mental attitudes and habits of persons with whom the child is in contact; the subjects studied; and current educational aims and ideals.

Dewey's statement seems to include both the adoption of aspects of scientific inquiry by each student, as well as the adoption of qualitative elements. These qualitative elements would need to be administered by the teacher, while

engaging the student to activate individual curiosity, or interest, as the genesis of a process of coming to understand, believe, and form habits toward a self-sustaining growth and acquisition of knowledge.

Now, scientific inquiry is important in sustaining a level of belief given an 'irritation of doubt.' However, the realization of said irritation is what must be presented first to initiate the possibility of an interest in elevating it. It is this initiation that the teacher must accomplish. It is this initiation that has been overlooked by the analytic traditions in a seeming assumption that each student's doubt is irritated by simply presenting an object. Dewey says no; there must be interaction among the teacher, as a kind of facilitator, and the student-- an interaction and not a dictation of information from one to the other with no consensus in understanding, among the teacher/facilitator and student. The genesis of such a method stems from the most basic way of transferring information, that most basic way being the conveyance of understanding by the written word. Therefore, a comprehensive program of reading and comprehension seems to be called for as a basic and critical step in the implementation of an effective educational process.

The increased quantitative requirements imposed by our educational system, and the testing of students on material which teachers are unable to cover have contributed to the frustration of both teachers and students. This frustration characteristically represents a failure to fully understand and commit to the natural evolution of an educational process due to reigns put upon administration for immediate results. A belief in numbers and statistics rather than patience and trust in the allowance of qualitative evidence to reveal itself seems to remain the rule of the day. So although hints of Dewey's philosophy may at times be present, I submit that most of our public schools were initiated under the influence of the old analytic system, where quantitative results are important, and thus, very little or no qualitative methodology has been implemented toward engaging each student's 'black box' and its natural mechanisms for learning.

This is a major flaw in our educational system today, and stimulates the crisis we now face. Across the US, we are losing students' interests (particularly African-Americans) before they reach third grade. Many of our graduates will be awarded certificates of completion and not high school diplomas, which make futures uncertain at best. Is Dewey's philosophy a viable solution to this crisis? The sequel article will offer further hypotheses and practical solutions to the crisis of our Educational system.



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“There can be no democracy without economic equality. Thomas Jefferson said that when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. There can be no brotherhood of man without a brotherhood of dollars. I have another theory. It is based on economic and racial brotherhood. I presume to call this the Merry-Go-Round of History. On the merry-go-round all the seats are on the same level. Nobody goes up; therefore, nobody has to come down. That is democracy, as I see it. In a brotherhood, all the members are equal.”

– Melvin Tolson, ... Oct. 19, 1940

# Intellective Competence

*By Brother Edmund W. Gordon, Ed.D*

The ability to use knowledge to engage and solve problems, not just acquire knowledge, is increasingly the currency of advanced societies. The goal should be to develop such abilities in a broader range of young people.

The concern with what it means for students to be proficient is not unrelated to my long-time concern with the development of what I have called intellective competence. In our book *Affirmative Development: Cultivating Academic Ability*, Beatrice Bridglall and I make the case for the "affirmative development of academic ability," in which we argue that intellective competence, increasingly, is the universal currency of technologically advanced societies (Gordon & Bridglall 2006). What are the characteristics of this universal currency?

While my list of characteristics begins with an emphasis on rigorous academic experiences and achievement, I do not stop there. The mastery of academic learning is, for me, only instrumental to the development of intellective competence. In my vision of teaching, learning, and assessment, academic-outcome standards are central, but the explication of what we want learners to know about specific disciplines and to be able to do academically must be considered as instrumental to what we want learners to become. I have argued that it is important for learners to become compassionate human beings, capable of rational adaptation of and to the world around us and capable of using mental processes, information, and available resources to solve problems. There is no question about the importance of what students learn and are taught. Most of us would agree that teaching and learning independent of content (subject matter) is problematic. However, just as teaching and learning without subject matter is vacuous, teaching and learning should not be so constrained by content that the purpose of engagement with these pedagogical endeavors is precluded.

I am more and more persuaded that the purpose of learning – and the teaching by which it is enabled – is to acquire knowledge and technique in the service of the development of adaptive human intellect. I see these as being at the core of intellective competence. The old "scholastic aptitudes" may not have been so far from the mark. In the effort to achieve some distance from the actual material covered in the nation's diverse curricula, the scholastic aptitudes or abilities were conceived of as more generic capacities to handle academic work. But, more important, scholastic ability has come to reflect the meta-manifestations of intel-

lective abilities that result from particular kinds of education and socialization. It may be more appropriate that instead of scholastic aptitudes, we think of developed expressions of a wide range of human learning achievements, some of which are related to what happens in schools – and all of which are related to sense making and problem solving.

These developed abilities are not so much reflected in the specific discipline-based knowledge a student may have, but in the student's ability and disposition to adaptively and efficiently use knowledge, technique, and values through mental processes to engage and solve both common and novel problems. James Greeno (2006) suggests that what I call intellective competence is really "intellective character."

## Understanding Intellective Competence

What is intellective competence? I have come to use the term to refer to a characteristic way of adapting, appreciating, knowing, and understanding the phenomena of human experience. I also use the construct to reference the quality with which these mental processes are applied in one's engagement with common, novel, and specialized problems. Intellective competence reflects one's habits of mind, but it also reflects the quality or goodness of the products of mental functioning.

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**These developed abilities are reflected in the student's ability and disposition to use knowledge, technique, and values through mental processes to engage and solve both common and novel problems.**

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Like social competence, which I feel is one manifestation of intellective competence, it reflects "goodness of fit," or the effectiveness of the application of one's affective, cognitive, and situative processes to solving the problems of living. Twenty years ago I might have used the term "intelligence" or "intelligent behavior" to capture this characteristic or quality of one's mental capabilities or performance. In 2006, I am concerned with more. I am trying to capture aspects of human capability, developed ability, and disposition to use and appreciate the use of human adaptive processes in the service of intentional behavior. I am not surprised that James Greeno (2006) calls it



a manifestation of character. No matter what we call it, I argue that intellectual competence can be created through the deliberate development of academic ability. The task to which I am committed in my next career is the “affirmative development of academic ability” in a broader range of human beings.

## Deliberatively Developing Academic Ability

Within the education establishment, we know a great deal about the deliberate development of academic ability. I propose that the education community use that knowledge to embark upon a deliberate effort to develop academic abilities in a broad range of students who have a history of being resource deprived and who, as a consequence, are underrepresented in the pool of academically high-achieving students. The deliberative or affirmative development of academic ability should include more equitable access to such educational interventions as:

- Early, continuous, and progressively more rigorous exposure to joyful pre-academic and academic teaching and learning transactions. This exposure should begin with high levels of communicative, literacy, numeracy, and self-regulatory development.
- Rich opportunities to learn through pedagogical practices traditionally thought to be of excellent quality. We do not need to wait for new inventions: Benjamin Bloom’s Mastery Learning, Robert Slavin’s Success for All, James Comer’s School Development Program, Bob Moses’s Algebra Project, Vinetta Jones’s Equity 2000, the College Board’s Pacesetter, and Lauren Resnick’s “Effort-based thinking curriculum” all attempt to do some of this.
- Diagnostic, customized, and targeted assessment; instructional and remedial interventions.
- Academic acceleration and content enhancement.
- The use of relational data systems to inform educational policy and practice decisions.
- Explicit socialization of intellect to multiple cultural contexts.
- Exposure to high-performance learning communities.
- Explication of tacit knowledge, metacognition, and meta-componential strategies.
- Capitalization of the distributed knowledge, technique, and understanding that reside among learners.
- Special attention to the differential requirements of learning in different academic domains.

- Encouragement of learner behaviors such as deployment of effort, task engagement, time on task, and resource utilization.
- Special attention to the roles of attitude, disposition, confidence, and efficacy.
- Access to a wide range of supplementary educational experiences.
- The politicalization of academic learning in the lives of communities of culturally subordinated people.

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It is possible that the attention we give to improving the quality of teaching and to broadening access to good teachers, while being necessary to the achievement of academic proficiency, may not be sufficient. Increased attention may need to be given to learning.

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## Developing Personal Agency

Important as these educational interventions are, the matter of personal agency may be even more so. It is possible that the attention we give to improving the quality of teaching and to broadening access to good teachers, while being necessary to the achievement of academic proficiency, may not be sufficient. Increased attention may need to be given to the learning domain of the “teaching and learning” dyad. Good teaching is necessary, but it may take appropriate student learning behaviors to achieve proficiency. In my thinking about learning behavior on the part of the student, I tend to privilege:

- Time on tasks related to what has to be learned.
- Deliberate deployment of energy and effort to those tasks.
- Seeking and utilizing necessary human and material resources.
- Personal efficacy – the belief that the learning goals and related tasks are worth the effort.

These are the learner behaviors and attitudes that result in what Albert Bandura (1982) calls “agentive behavior” – purposeful action on behalf of the self and others. In the final analysis, academic proficiency requires the necessary conditions for learning and sufficient effort on the part of both teachers and learners.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

# Life In An A.C. World

*By Brother Joseph Marshall, Ph.D.*

As I continue my life long career work with young people, there are times when I come to some major conclusions. This latest one may startle many, but to me this conclusion has huge implications for the future of black people, in particular, and society, in general. (Yes, we are part of the larger societal tapestry, whether we or others like it or not). I've been at this community work a long time now (almost forty years) and have seen a lot of things—from Jackie Robinson's integration of major league baseball to Barry Bonds chase of Henry Aaron. I've seen the movement from James Brown to Earth, Wind and Fire to Tupac to Nas. I've witnessed South Central Los Angeles go up in flames twice and watched a hurricane destroy New Orleans. Yeah, I'm definitely an O.G. I'm certainly a Community Elder.

Yes, we are part of the larger societal tapestry whether we or others like it or not.

So from that perspective I'm going to say what I think is the most significant thing I've seen in my many years of looking at and working in the community. It will surprise some of you that it's not the Civil Rights Movement or Martin Luther King, Jr. or Malcolm X or the Black Panthers. It's not Hank Aaron or Barry Bonds or Muhammad Ali; not Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Prince or "Pac" or any other major sports or entertainment figure. It's not the Crips or the Bloods or the Vicelords or the Gangster Disciples. It's not jazz, R&B, or hip hop. Nope, it's none of these things. The most significant thing I have seen in my years of community work—bar none—is the presence of crack cocaine.

Yes, crack, that heinous drug that seeped into the community circa the late 1970s. I'm not sure anybody knows really when, but I definitely know this for sure—nothing, and I mean nothing, has come along that has been quite so devastating.

In my book, *Street Soldier: One Man's Struggle to Save a Generation, One Life at a Time*, I wrote about my realization of the devastating effect of crack:

"(Today's homie) inhabits a different world than I did. He faces serious unemployment issues that discourage the legal work ethic it takes to compete in mainstream American society. He has to deal with weapons of war that have been literally dumped on the streets of America—AK-47s, Uzis, nine millimeters, glocks, MAC 10s. But most of all, he has to deal with crack cocaine, the worst thing to hit black America since slavery. Hell, crack is worse than slavery. Crack cocaine pulls young men into the illegal work ethic—some as young as nine or ten—and most of them never manage to get out of it, ending up dead or in jail. But there is something even more pernicious, even more insidious, about crack. Crack has been able to do something even slavery couldn't do: It has stopped the African-American woman from mothering her child. Imagine that—a force stronger than motherhood! The effects of crack are nothing short of unbelievable."

The effect of crack is so significant that it has even influenced the way I now view history. In the past, like many of us, I recognized many significant dates and milestones in the history of African Americans in this country—milestones like the year 1619 (before the Mayflower); slavery itself; the year 1808 (the abolition of the slave trade); the abolitionist movement; the year 1863 (the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation); the Reconstruction period; Jim Crow; the Niagara Movement; the race riots of the early 1900's; the Harlem Renaissance; the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision; the Civil Rights Era; the Black Power Movement and so on. Now, I definitely haven't dismissed any of those historical events—no, not at all. However, for me, at this point there are only two real dates of consequence—1619, the year the first African arrived here, and 1980, the year crack cocaine hit the community. (I had to pick some date, so for round numbers sake, I'm picking 1980).

The choice of the first date is pretty obvious. That's when all this madness began. So here's my case for the choice of the second. This horrible thing called crack cocaine has just wrecked everything, turned things upside down and inside out, and sent us reeling. Most notably it's destroyed our base, our most precious asset, our most valuable commodity—the family. No matter how bad it's been—from slavery to Jim Crow, from southern segregation to northern ghettos—nothing was stronger and more sacred than our desire to take care of, love and nurture our children. And certainly nothing could overpower our mothers' desire



to love, parent and nurture us. Papa may have been a rolling stone, but mama (and grandmama) were rocks of Gibraltar.

You hear what I'm saying folks? The most important thing in a society, in a community, in a neighborhood is the raising of the children. If that doesn't work, then nothing works. If that doesn't work then you don't have civilization, you have chaos. Don't you think that something that can take away the desire, the will to parent is pretty significant? I'll say it one more time: to me, crack cocaine is even worse than slavery, because it's a force stronger than motherhood!

So let me tell you what this means in terms of black history. It means that to me this is not the year 2007 A.D. (after the death of Christ), but the year 27 A.C. (after the mass introduction of crack to our communities), and that means that everything has to be viewed in a different light. It also explains some things for me. This is the first generation of black children that has not done better than their parents. Know why? It's the A.C. generation. This is the first generation of young people that has not taken the baton and moved things forward. Know why? It's the A.C. generation. Wonder why there are so many children in group homes and in the foster care system—it's the A.C. generation. To the A.C. generation, family is not mother and father, children and marriage, but 'baby mama and baby daddy' and child support. History and culture? forget it. The A.C. generation doesn't know it and can't see the relevance of it. Revolutionary thinking, big picture analysis, long range planning—it ain't happening (until you end up in prison and do some serious reading and reflection—and sometimes it doesn't even happen then). In fact, just about anything that isn't about right now, right here doesn't merit any real thought or serious consideration.

The most important thing in a society, in a community, in a neighborhood is the raising of the children.

The current version of commercial hip hop—what's played on the radio and seen on the video channels—is the music of the A.C. generation. Only in this generation could pimpin' be a good thing. The music is all about being a playa, a pimp, a gangster or a thug; about money, cars and jewelry (bling bling) and going dumb and stupid. Oh, and totally, and I mean totally degrading women—our sisters, our mothers and our mothers to be. Commercial hip hop

contains nothing meaningful about God, spirituality, education, history, consciousness or revolutionary thought.

So here is what I propose in order to begin to get this community thing back in order. I suggest that we give this period in time a name, so we'll at least have some idea of what needs to be done and what priorities and policies have to be put in place. I suggest calling this time in history Recovery (You remember the period after slavery was called Reconstruction?) In my way of thinking, nothing can be taken for granted. The basics have to be taught all over again—“Yes, family is important. Yes, education is important. Yes, history and culture are important, and, oh by the way, please don't collude in your own oppression”—these kinds of things. Yeah, we've got to go back to the basics and the ones who can really help with this are the B.C. folks—those who have some memory what the community used to be like, before crack. Whenever I talk about how back in the day anybody in the community would look out for you and would even discipline you if necessary, the A.C. folks aren't really sure this isn't some sort of fairy tale!

It's only because I've seen some good, even great things in my lifetime that I'm able to make these statements and propose these things. The community is my life; it's all I've ever done, and to me it's the single most important thing—not movie stars, sports figures or music celebrities—they all came from the community anyway. We—all of us—have to decide if we want things to get better—and that's not going to happen on its own. It's going to take a lot of effort by those of us who remember what it was like and those of us who have heard about what it was like and wish it was that way again—only better. I'm down for making something happen; are you?

“You can turn painful situations around through laughter. If you can find humor in anything, even poverty, you can survive it.”

– Bill Cosby

## UPLIFTING WORDS

“Hold fast to dreams, For if dreams die, Life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly, Hold fast to dreams, For if dreams go, Life is a barren field, Frozen with snow.”

-- Langston Hughes

“It isn’t a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream..”

- Benjamin Mays

“I’m here because I stand on many, many shoulders, and that’s true of every black person I know who has achieved.”

- Vernon Jordan

“Both tears and sweat are salty, but they render a different result. Tears will get you sympathy; sweat will get you change.”

-- Jesse Jackson

“Our challenge is to continue to work and uplift humanity.”

- Warren G. Lee Jr., 38th Grand Basileus

“I can accept failure, but I can’t accept not trying.”

- Michael Jordan

“In considering members in Omega, the first consideration is for MANHOOD. This, of course, is character. First and foremost, a Que must be a man of sterling worth, with unsullied character.”

- Bishop Edgar A. Love, Founder

**Editor’s Note:** Members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. are invited and encouraged to submit quotes from legendary and respected members of our beloved fraternity. Submitters are responsible for accuracy of quotes.



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“We have worked too hard,  
fought too long, and struggled too  
much to allow those who do not  
truly love Omega to destroy our  
beloved fraternity”

-- Dorsey C. Miller Jr., 35th Grand Basileus



# GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION TO THE ORACLE

## THE MISSION

The ORACLE, published quarterly, solicits manuscripts that challenge existing ideological and theoretical boundaries on national and international fraternity issues, particularly our organization's Cardinal Principles. Through the inclusion of compelling, thought-provoking perspectives, The ORACLE intends to serve as a catalyst for stimulating and encouraging dialogue, for presenting the high standards of our organization, and for transforming any negative thoughts about our beloved fraternity. Brother Samuel Shepard, one of the outstanding editors of the ORACLE, stated in 1974 "the ORACLE optimizes our philosophy, our way of life – depicting in words and pictures our present, past and prospects for the future; our dedication to the perpetuation of our four cardinal principles and our desire to guide and keep our brotherhood in the path hewn out of a wilderness by our four Founders; the need to face the world of reality with dignity and a sense of direction."

## CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The ORACLE solicits manuscripts that challenge existing ideological and theoretical boundaries on national and international fraternity issues. While themes are outlined periodically for upcoming issues, the editorial board of The ORACLE welcomes, at any time, submissions on diverse, substantive topics that contribute to the advancement of our fraternity.

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Manuscripts submitted to The ORACLE should not be submitted simultaneously to another publication, nor be under consideration by other publishers at the time of submission. Manuscripts should be original material and preferably not published previously.

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All manuscripts must be formatted for blind reviewing. A separate title page with the author's name, affiliation, preferred mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address should be provided to ensure anonymity in the review process. If more than one person has authored the manuscript, please provide contact information for all authors and indicate which person is the corresponding author.

An abstract of no more than 75 words must accompany the manuscript. Submissions should be typed double-spaced for 8½" x 11" paper. Article length should not exceed 4,000 words, including quotations and references. Pages should be numbered. The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition, should be used as a guide for formatting manuscripts and reference style. To preserve the advantages of blind reviewing, authors should avoid identifying themselves in the manuscript.

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America. Cosby continues the speech began in 2004, and with his long-time friend psychiatrist Dr. Poussaint address the crises of people who are stuck because of feelings of low self-esteem, abandonment, anger, fearfulness, sadness, and feelings of being used, undefended and unprotected. The authors aim to help empower people make the daunting transition from victims to victors. Come On, People! is engaging and loaded with heart-piercing stories of the problems facing many communities.

In this tightly-written, well-crafted manifesto, Cosby and Poussaint address, in turn, the topics of: "What's Going on with Black Men," "It Takes a Community," "We All Start Out As Children," "The Media You Deserve," "Healthy Hearts and Minds," "The High Price of Violence," and "From Poverty to Prosperity." Simply reading these chapter titles demonstrates that "Come on People" holistically addresses the social ills of a people, wisely looking both at individual responsibility and societal/cultural influences.



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