

Pan African Center

NEWSLETTER

The
University
of Akron

From the Director's Chair

Billions in Charity, but not a Dime for Bush



Dr. Abel A. Bartley

I am constantly amazed at the willingness of the American people to waste their tax dollars. President George W. Bush has had the audacity to go to Congress and

ask for an \$87 billion appropriation for rebuilding Iraq. After spending nearly \$60 billion destroying Iraq in a fruitless search for phantom weapons of mass destruction, he now wants us to spend another \$87 billion to clean up his mess.

The president is asking for more money than we spend on welfare or education. It seems unreasonable to me that we would make sure that Iraq had a good educational system, working energy grid, and a workable health care system, even before we have fixed our own educational problems or figured out what caused the great blackout of 2003. And, we have 44.5 million Americans with no health care. Just imagine if President Bush were to add \$87 billion dollars to our education, welfare, Social Security or health care budget. We could transform this nation. Instead, after giving more than two trillion dollars in tax cuts, he asked that we borrow more money from our children and spend \$87 billion rebuilding a nation he chose to destroy in defiance of the world community.

Clearly, President Bush hoped to use the invasion of Iraq as his crowning act, proof that the United States was not going to just lie down while terrorism ran rampant. He also was cashing a check his father had written on a man who had clearly become a thorn in the free world's side. Bush also was using his get-out-of-jail-free terrorism card to do what the rest of the world warned him not to do. President Bush hoped that his relatively easy victory in Iraq would be a tribute to his legacy, solidify his reelection and reaffirm his honored place in history.

Well, God has obviously said, "Ha!" We find ourselves mired in a quagmire with no foreseeable exit. We are averaging about one American casualty

every day. That means that each week one family will lose a father, son, daughter or mother. As a historian, I am constantly amazed at how history repeats itself. As I listen to leading congressmen clamor for more troops, I am suddenly reminded of my cousin, who lost his arm after being shot in the shoulder in Vietnam. He was a patriot who did his duty. Even though he was forced to attend a segregated school where he received an unequal education, he still answered the bell when the nation called, just as his father had answered the bell during World War II. When he had his shoulder blown off and found that he could not write left-handed, there were no parades or congressmen praising him.

I could not care any less about Saddam Hussein. He and his regime clearly needed to go. I really believe that he was a loose cannon rolling around on the deck of life. However, I do not believe that he was worth even one American life. Getting rid of his regime was not worth one American child growing up without a father or mother. He was not worth diverting \$60 billion that could have been used to solve some of our pressing problems, like health care and education. He definitely is not worth stealing \$87 billion from my daughter and her generation — knowing that they will be facing a Social Security nightmare. It is time to cut our losses and allow the world to clean up our mess. If they want to take control of Iraq and establish a government, then I say more power to them.

We cannot afford to spend another \$87 billion on a failed policy. When I look at a rising unemployment rate, families barely able to pay their bills and people losing their homes to the fires that have ravaged California, I cannot accept such a wasteful expenditure. Oh, how I long for the days when we had leaders and not politicians. We need leaders who actually take principled stands and do what is right. If you ask me, I'd say, "We can give billions to charity, but not a dime to Bush."

**DR. ABEL A. BARTLEY,
DIRECTOR, PAN AFRICAN
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES**

Come Join Us

The University of Akron's Pan African Center for Community Studies is proud to announce its **2004 Black History Lecture Series**, which will feature several people who are leaders in their field. We invite you to attend these lectures. For more information, call the center at 330-972-7030.

Thursday, February 5

National Public Radio correspondent Juan Williams launches the series on Feb. 5. His talk, from 7 to 10 p.m. in Martin University Center, will begin our celebration of Black History Month and is the first in a series of events designed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Williams' lecture, "Thurgood Marshall: an American Revolutionary," also is the title for one of his books. Best known for his watershed work, "Eyes on the Prize," Williams most recent book is titled "This Far By Faith."

Thursday, February 26

On Feb. 26, Wayne Embry, former general manager of the Cleveland Cavaliers basketball team, will present "Race and Sports — an Insider's View" in Martin University Center from 7 to 10 p.m. Embry, who has vast experience in sports management, also has seen basketball as a player and coach.

Thursday, April 8

"Mound Bayou and the Tuskegee Machine" will be the topic for Dr. David Jackson, an associate professor of African American history at Florida A&M University, on April 8 in the Student Union, Ballroom B, 7 to 10 p.m. Jackson, who has written extensively on Charles Banks and his work with the Tuskegee Machine, will provide new information on the relationship between all-black towns and Booker T. Washington's program of racial uplift.

Thursday, April 22

Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice Alan Page will close out the 2004 lecture series on April 22 with a discussion on the significance and legacy of the *Brown* decision. Page, a Hall of Fame defensive tackle for the Minnesota Vikings, has become one of the most respected jurists in the country. His lecture will be held in the Student Union, Theatre from 7 to 10 p.m.

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Understanding Africa's Debt Crisis: Who Caused It and What Can Be Done

Africa is facing a debt crisis. In the past decade it has risen sharply and is now \$300 billion — equivalent to more than 100 percent of its gross national product.

African countries spend about \$15.2 billion per annum on debt servicing, which is equivalent to 30 to 40 percent of the continent's export earnings. Sub Saharan Africa spends more than twice as much on debt service as on basic health care. It is estimated that by 2004, Sub-Saharan Africa will have to spend a staggering 70 percent of its export earnings on external debt servicing.

Although African countries continue to honor their debt obligations, there seems to be no hope of ever paying it off, due primarily to high interest rates (Oxfam, 2000). As a result of the high debt service/export earning ratio, African countries cannot find enough resources to pay for education, health and other vital social services.

While the crisis could partly be attributed to internal mismanagement, most of the debts have been accumulated under World Bank and IMF management since the early 1980s. It was then that the World Bank and IMF-imposed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) on African countries as a precondition for acquiring new loans for debt relief, as well as attracting foreign investment. Structural Adjustment is the process whereby economic policies and relevant institutions are reformed with a view to enhancing economic growth, improving resource allocation, increasing economic efficiency and increasing the economy's resilience to changes in its domestic or global market (Gilpin, 1994). SAPs consist of a package of actions geared to enhance economic growth, including currency devaluation, inflation reduction, downsized public services, drastic cutbacks in government spending in education, health and welfare financial reforms and privatization of public enterprises export promotion. It also involves a large-scale reorganization of the economic system from state control to private sector management so that markets can be opened up and the forces of demand and supply can determine the prices of goods and services as well as access to them.

Rationale for SAPs

According to the IMF and other proponents of SAPs, the economic problems of developing countries are rooted in endogenous factors that serve as obstacles to development, and therefore need to be removed to pave the way for economic growth.

These 'obstacles' include unwarranted state

interference in the workings of the price mechanism, over-bloated public service, exchange control, investment in social welfare and state ownership enterprises that include operating public transportation, manufacturing and utility services.

SAPs became a standard prescription for all African countries regardless of the nature of their problems. In the words of former Zambian president, Kenneth Kaunda, "The IMF does not care whether you are suffering economic malaria, bilharzia or broken legs. It will always give you quinine" (Quoted in Cheru, 1989: 37).

SAP or HIPC? The same story

The World Bank and IMF claim that the implementation of SAPs almost invariably leads to poverty reduction, bridges the gaps between rich and poor, and between the rural and urban areas, and that countries that adjust tend to be better off than the non-adjusting ones (World Bank, 1994). And yet, many years later, SAPs have not resulted in the predicted improvements in living conditions.

Instead, in every African country that came under SAPs, the poverty level increased, access to services like health and education decreased, and all were caught in a quagmire of debt (Khor, 1998; Oxfam, 1999; 2000; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001; Ould-Mey, 1996). This is not surprising since the very nature of the programs condemn the participating countries into debt.

As Hittle (1992) aptly put it: "The World Bank is a body whose loans allow a country to go into debt in order to purchase developed country goods or developed country advice. The bank allows donors to create the appearance of providing 'billions of dollars' to economically stricken areas, when in fact, they are simply providing the billions to their own contractors to do work in less developed regions. The real transfer is, in effect, between the public and the private sectors of the developed countries." (Page 14).

Certain of the effectiveness of their programs, the World Bank and the IMF have always dismissed other alternatives. However, under the NGO community in the mid-1990s, these institutions were forced to admit the failure of their programs. The countries that were supposed to have improved living conditions following SAPS implementation instead became poor and indebted to the IMF, World Bank and western countries and banks.

The solution to the problem was for the affected countries to declare themselves

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Understanding Africa's Debt Crisis

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"Heavily Indebted Poor Countries." The IMF and World Bank launched the HIPC initiative in 1996 to ensure that no poor country faced a debt burden it could not manage. At the same time, the programs encouraged states to increase spending on the poor, school construction and teachers' salaries.

Like other IMF programs, the HIPC initiative was touted as a mechanism to break the poverty cycle and get these countries out of debt. However, a recent study by IMF staff reports that the program may not produce a sustainable economic situation. The study examined the performance of 12 African countries — all heavily indebted — courtesy of SAPs. These include Mozambique, Tanzania, Ghana and Cameroon, which represent a variety of economic conditions. The study indicates that more than 50 percent the countries sampled are estimated to be unable to raise enough revenue to pay for the spending programs called for by the IMF (Fedelino and Kudina, 2003).

Under the HIPC rules, countries are permitted to increase their expenditure on poverty reduction measures relative to the progress made in macro-economic stabilization. For example, the report says Tanzania is projected to increase its expenditure level by more than 4 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the previous fiscal year, to above 22 percent in 2002-2003. However, based on the current IMF framework, this may result in the country's swinging back into unsustainable debt levels. The author of the report writes that unless HIPCs improve their primary fiscal positions or grant financing is

sustained at current or higher levels, debt sustainability in HIPCs may prove elusive in the long term (Fedelino and Kudina, 2003). The report also warns that these countries are likely to move back into unsustainable levels of debt. Only higher taxes or more foreign aid will allow Africa's poorest nations to escape this fate.

What can be done

Are African countries being used as guinea pigs to test IMF programs that have never worked anywhere? Or, are they deliberately implementing programs that would ultimately enslave African countries to western governments and financial institutions? Or, is this the next phase of neo-colonialism? Your guess is as good as mine.

Since the IMF and World Bank, and by implication, Western countries, have played a role in pushing Africa into debt, the only viable option now is debt cancellation. This would enable the poor and indebted African countries to have a fresh start. The Scandinavian countries, Canada and a few other countries have led the way in canceling some of the debts. So far, creditors have agreed to cancel only 15 percent. More needs to be done.

Africans, people of African origin, and friends of Africa can all help. There is the need to continue lobbying western governments, the IMF and the World Bank to cancel all or most of Africa's debt. This is a moral imperative.

**KWADWO KONADU-AGYEMANG,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT
OF GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING**

A Little Bit of History

Akron is like many medium-size cities across the United States, except that it has The Dr. Shirla R. McClain Gallery of Black History and Culture. Since 1995, the gallery in the Buckingham Center on the University campus has featured exhibits that illustrate the contributions and accomplishments of the Greater Akron African American community.

A steering committee of community volunteers, along with faculty and staff of the Pan African Center for Community Studies, has done extensive research, and collected and archived various bits of history that might otherwise be overlooked or lost.

The gallery has not only sparked a reexamination of local history, it has changed the perception of many about what is history, and who are historical figures.

For example, elementary students on field trips to the gallery will often recognize a neighbor, an uncle, a cousin, a teacher, or someone at church. Likewise, many adults see someone they know and say, "I didn't know he did that!"

Our gallery illustrates the point that history is most often made by ordinary people doing something extraordinary — and we all have the potential to be history makers.

If you notice "untold" stories or oversights in the historical record, start gathering articles, pictures and memorabilia. By telling our stories, we define our place in our communities.

I encourage you to visit the gallery, where the exhibit, "Life on Howard Street: 1825-2002," will run through fall 2004.

You'll find that pictures, letters, articles and other memorabilia are used to trace the life of Howard Street and the African-American presence in downtown Akron. There are vignettes on the restaurants and nightclubs, hotels and boarding houses, retail establishments and professional offices that made Howard Street Akron's main economic thoroughfare at one time.

**DR. LATHARDUS GOGGINS II,
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MULTICULTURAL
PROGRAMS, OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT**

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Remembering the Brown Decision

“The United States always does the right thing, after it has exhausted all other options.”

— Winston Churchill

On May 17, 1954, our racial landscape changed forever as the American government finally caught up with the American creed — *Brown v. Board of Education* was one of the watershed events in our country’s history. Thurgood Marshall and his team of lawyers freed us from the chains of inferiority associated with blackness by putting the hopes and dreams of a people on their shoulders and arguing a case for democracy and equality.

With that decision, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that, just as Abraham Lincoln had said, we could not continue to go on as a nation half free and half slave. There are very few people who can understand the pain and humiliation associated with segregated education — a system that established a legacy of inequality that has forever marked African Americans with a badge of inferiority.

In declaring that separate educational facilities are “inherently unequal,” the U.S. Supreme Court fully opened the benefits of American society to African Americans. Marshall and his fellow lawyers did what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had argued some nine years later when he said we, African Americans, had come to Washington, D.C., to cash a check. The *Brown* decision can be viewed as the U.S. government finally approving a check written to all

Americans in 1868, when the 14th Amendment was ratified. In essence, that amendment dismantled the notion of two-tiered citizenship and halted the notion of superior and inferior as it related to citizenship.

It is a distressing notion that nearly 50 years later we are still grappling with the notion of a two-tiered citizenship. Today, as never before, we are challenging what it means to be an American with full citizenship. As we challenge the particulars of the Patriot Act, argue the pros and cons of affirmative action and debate the limits of immigration, we find ourselves revisiting the issues associated with the *Brown* case.

What does it mean to be an American? What are the rights, privileges and immunities associated with American citizenship? Can we really believe that we can establish a truly egalitarian multiracial democracy in a land wedded to capitalism and individual achievement? Will we ever be able to determine if “In God We Trust” means that we are a Christian nation or just a nation that recognizes the existence of a higher power?

As we look at today’s Supreme Court, we are frightened by the enormity of the task before them. Those seven men and two women have been entrusted with the responsibility to set the parameters of American democracy. The world

has made drastic changes since the *Brown* decision. The law now recognizes no distinction of race or gender. While Muslims are clearly more scrutinized in our post 9/11 world, they are free to practice their religion. The Episcopal Church has ordained an openly gay bishop. And, African Americans have found many more avenues of opportunity open to them.

However, we continue to fight over the notion of equality, especially as it relates to education. Many of our school systems remain segregated, not by law but by custom. African Americans and other minorities continue to lag behind Caucasians in several areas designed to measure progress, such as test scores, advanced placements and graduation rates. African Americans continue to have a much higher unemployment rate and are a rarity in the boardroom. Though we have made progress, it is obvious that the government has not released all of the funds stored in the bank of justice.

As we celebrate the progress of the past 50 years, let us never forget that there is much to be done. We may need another Thurgood Marshall to pry open the fingers of a stingy government and continue the progress toward full equality.

**DR. ABEL A. BARTLEY,
DIRECTOR, PAN AFRICAN
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES**

Not This Again!

When I was in the eighth grade I tried out for my junior high school football team. I remember spending my summer running, working out and learning how to play the quarterback position. As a naïve 13-year-old growing up in a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood in Jacksonville, Fla., I had no idea that my desire to try playing that position had social and political ramifications.

When the coach separated us according to position, he noticed that I went with the quarterbacks. He immediately came to me and said, “Abel, you can’t play quarterback. You are pretty fast; I want you to go with the defensive backs.” At that time I had no idea why he would not allow me to try out for that position. I quickly learned that there were certain positions that African Americans were not supposed to be able to play. Those jobs were reserved for Caucasians.

On Sept. 28, I got that same feeling when I heard Rush Limbaugh make his ignorant comments about Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb. Limbaugh’s statements showed that not only do we have a long way to go, I question if we have made any progress at all. I grew up supporting teams that had black quarterbacks. They were my heroes, people who beat the odds and bucked the system. Black quarterbacks like Dr. “Bomb” David Mays, Doug Williams, James Harris, Warren Moon and Joe Gilliam were the guys who always had me as a fan. They gave me hope that some day I could do what they had done.

What so offended me about Limbaugh’s comments was that, despite what conservatives contend, blacks never get anything free of struggle. By denigrating McNabb’s accomplishments and suggesting that he rode the coattails of

his defense was both ignorant and insensitive.

The Pittsburgh Steelers had one of the greatest defenses ever during the 1970s. No one would say that Terry Bradshaw rode his teammates’ coattails to four Super Bowls and the Hall of Fame. The Miami Dolphins had a perfect 17-0 season with the famous no-name defense, but it is Bob Griese who is in the Hall of Fame.

I was shocked that neither of the two African Americans working with Limbaugh on camera that day, Tom Jackson and Michael Irvin, challenged his remarks. They just sat there nodding their heads, totally oblivious to the insult. In my opinion, they should both be fired, along with Limbaugh. If they cannot decipher racist remarks, they should not be employed in the media.

It is bad enough that we have to be continuously bombarded with the lunacy of the pregame shows, as they defend even the most outrageous and offensive behavior of athletes, we should not have to endure the mindless ramblings of racists trying to pad their resumes with their “weekend warrior” knowledge of sports. Whoever had the bright idea of giving Limbaugh another platform to spew his racist venom should have his head examined. This is a man who has told an African American caller to “take that bone out of your nose and call me back,” and mocked African American leaders by derisively saying “ax” instead of “ask.” I was a loyal viewer of ESPN’s pregame show. I will no longer waste that time.

**DR. ABEL A. BARTLEY,
DIRECTOR, PAN AFRICAN
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES**

Brown v. Board of Education: A Selected Bibliography

May 17, 2004 marks the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kan.*, decision, which reversed the “separate but equal” precedent established by the United States Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896.

Although *Brown* desegregated education in public schools legally, African American citizens would find for years to come that they were still not accepted willingly in some of the nation’s education systems.

Governors, law officers and everyday citizens barred African American students from entering the schools of their choice in some states throughout the South. Riots would erupt, and lives would be lost in the process of integration.

One of the most recognizable symbols of that time is Ruby Bridges. As a child of 6, she encountered vicious crowds as the first black student at William Frantz Public School in New Orleans in 1960. The scene of the young girl flanked protectively by police officers as she walked to school became one of Norman Rockwell’s most famous illustrations.

Just as memorable was the scene that same year of Alabama Gov. George Wallace standing in a doorway of the University of Alabama to block Vivian Malone and James Hood, two African American students, from registering for classes.

The selected bibliography that follows captures this portion of the nation’s history.

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(Title unknown), Frank Diaz Escalet, Kennebunk, Maine,
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Young Men and Women, Africa Calls!

Recently I received a note from the director of the Akron African Initiative requesting my participation in a forthcoming forum on Africa's debt crisis. This grassroots effort by Africanists and friends of Africa in the United States and other parts of the industrialized world provides an avenue to discuss some of the key problems facing the African region and what the G8 (the rich) nations can do to help alleviate some of the hardships associated with the region's indebtedness.

While previous commitments may keep me from attending this forum, I think the ideas behind it are noteworthy. At the same time, there are other actions that individuals like you and I can take to uplift the lives of ordinary Africans. This realization is not new and is consistent with the black empowerment movement that is rooted in the works of Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Dubois.

Someone might ask, "How can a person like me living in Akron, Ohio, help Africa?" I will give you some examples of people from Northeast Ohio who are contributing in their own small ways to the betterment of Africans. I will point, in particular, to Ghana, my native country, as a case study.

Several years ago, while I was out shopping, a woman asked if I could try on a jacket she was planning to buy for her father (presumably I was the same size). As we conversed, it quickly became clear I was not a native. When she asked where I was from, I gladly said Ghana.

She replied that she had just taken a job with a Catholic organization based in Cincinnati. Since then, she has been in Ghana's Volta region

where she heads a girl's vocational school. When she returns to this area for visits, we try to meet to catch up on news from the old country.

When I was recently researching options for using solar power in Ghana, I discovered that there is a company here in the U.S. that has licensed the assembly and marketing of Global Sun Ovens to Solar Utilization Network International. In April 2003, SUN International opened an assembly plant in Accra, Ghana. The project is likely to help reduce Ghana's dependence on wood-based products for cooking and help implement reforestation programs. And guess who owns the franchise? A committed African American who hails from Canton and has moved to Ghana to undertake this venture.

There are several other examples of large and small companies throughout Northeast Ohio undertaking "big-time" business ventures in various African countries. Indeed, the returns on investment in Africa are probably higher than that in other parts of the world. Until the recent civil war in Liberia and before Firestone became Bridgestone, the Firestone Rubber Company operated one of its largest plantations in Africa. This means ties between Northeast Ohio and Africa go way back, as we say in my part of the world!

What do all of my ramblings mean?

Africa is ripe for business. Despite what we see on TV and sometimes read regarding the poverty of Africans, I can assure you that many people in African countries are quite affluent. They go on vacations, live the good life and consume as those of us who live in the developed world. And, for the most part, the cost of

living in many African urban centers is somewhat lower than in the United States. Visit and see for yourself the emerging Africa! If you're a student, go on an exchange program, such as the one the University has with Ghana.

To sum up, I say take full advantage of the "conducive" atmosphere that has been created by the governments of countries such as Ghana, Uganda and Botswana, and invest in Africa. Indeed, the call for help should not be construed as one-sided. Africa offers would-be investors a lot. Among the steps taken by African governments to attract foreign investors are:

Improved Environment: Trade liberalization, strengthening of the rule of law, improved legal and support institutions, better governance, improved transparency, better transportation and telecommunication.

Economic Reforms: Many African countries have stabilized their economies by the devaluation of overvalued currencies, reducing inflation rates and cutting budget deficits.

Private Sector Encouragement: A growing number of broad-based privatization programs are in place.

Better Investment Regulatory Framework: Most countries allow profits to be repatriated freely, and offer tax incentives and similar inducements to foreign investors.

Foreign Treaties: At the international level, about 37 African countries are now members of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and 42 are signatories to the Convention on Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States.

For more information, contact me at btakyi@uakron.edu or 330-972-6887.

BAFFOUR K. TAKYI, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY

In Memoriam: Dr. Marian A.L. Miller

"You would know the secret of death, but how shall you find it unless you see it in the heart of life? ... If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life. ... For life and death are one even as the river and the sea are one. ... For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun? And what is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tide, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?"

— Kahlil Gibran

The Pan African Studies Advisory Committee mourns the passing of one of its members, Dr. Marian Ann Leanora Miller, who died on Nov. 2, 2003 at the age of 52. She was a distinguished scholar and associate professor in the Department of Political Science here at The University of Akron.

The advisory committee members rejoice in having known and worked with a wonderful person whose heart and spirit always had love and concern for the less fortunate. Dr. Miller's undying interest in the welfare of underdeveloped countries was an asset to our program and to the world. Her concern for making the lives of others better, as evidenced by her research, "Transnational Corporations and Environmental Politics: Shaping Global Regimes" and "The Third World in Global Environmental Politics," is crucial to understanding the effects of large corporations and their environmental policies as they affect a large proportion of the world's people of color.

Dr. Miller was a founding member and past president of Jamaica Awareness and was instrumental in establishing a scholarship fund for needy Jamaican students. She also was involved in Caribbean Health Outreach, Inc., an organization that provides free health care to the underserved populations in rural Caribbean communities.

Her family has requested that donations in her memory be made to Caribbean Health Outreach, 4300 West 58th Place, Los Angeles, CA 90043.

Why Africans Born In America Cannot Unite

Absent of our actions through mass movements, as in the "Reconstruction Era" and civil rights/black power decades, Africans born in the United States have displayed little mass political unity. That is to say, Africans born in America have experienced the greatest leaps forward toward meaningful unity when we were in pursuit of collective objectives centered on campaigns for social justice. At the heart of these movements was a resurgence of African history and culture rooted in self-education through political struggle.

The question of culture is paramount in any consideration of building ethnic or national unity. In America the groups that have been the most successful in retaining their traditional cultures are the most united. We could even say there is a direct correlation between the degree of traditional cultural integrity and the level of unity within the political factions in the U.S. On this point Africans born in America could learn from Asians, European Jews and Latino peoples. In fact, "African Americans" who claim membership in American popular culture, by confusing citizenship with belonging to the American Nation, will have to reconcile the debilitating effects of being dominated by European/American culture while at the same time being the historical and continuing victim of that culture.

Amilcar Cabral, a Guinea Bassau Freedom Fighter, tells us in "Return to the Source" that "...the highest level of culture is the struggle for national liberation." Because people are defined by their history and culture, the African born in America by definition must manifest a dual-personality. To be African American places one in a no-win situation of supporting a society dependent upon your exploitation. This is the essence of the cultural dilemma facing Africans born in America. Within the African American, the African part seeks equality, self-determination and social justice while the American part directs us to leave behind any attachment or association with African history and culture, which is an essential factor in the African's quest for justice through national liberation.

Amed Seku Ture, former president of Guinea and leader of the Democratic Party of Guinea, provides us with a useful perspective on and definition of culture, beyond the superficial conceptions promoted by Western academia.

Culture, which is the totality of the material and immaterial equipment, works and constructive works, knowledge and know-how, languages, behaviors and experiences accumulated by the people in their efforts for liberation and to master nature and build a better society, should

not be ignored by the people if they do not want to compromise the future by forgetting the past. "Revolution, Culture and Pan-Africanism," Page 78.

The nagging contradiction for the African American continues to be that the prosperity of popular American culture has been achieved by the uninterrupted exploitation of the African in Africa and the Diaspora. As the Rev. Louis Farrakhan sang in the 50s, "The White Man's Heaven is a Black Man's Hell." This long-running oppression persists and is possible in part by the success of Europe and America in convincing many in the world that European/American culture is the universal culture, or should be.

Returning to the discussion of achieving African unity in America, the area of cultural philosophy is particularly enlightening. There is no escaping the necessity to possess harmonious social values and relations in the process of building unity. In traditional African culture the focus was on collective social and economic well-being. The renowned Pan-African historian John Henrik Clarke wrote that in Africa there was no great individual wealth and no poverty. Social justice was such that jails, insane asylums and orphanages were unknown. The phrase attributed to Karl Marx, "from each according to their ability and to each according to their need," reflected the communal nature of African culture and resulted in values such as humanism, egalitarianism, cooperation, collectivism and spiritualism (as opposed to religion). Africans around the world continue to practice these values, even if at the instinctual level.

Today, we Africans in America find ourselves laboring under Eurocentric values that are not only at the opposite end of the philosophical spectrum, but also are the most challenging barriers to our unity. The dominant European/American cultural values include elitism, opportunism, competition, individualism and materialism. These cultural values could only be practical for a society that is conquering or already rules the world. For the oppressed these values simply hinder the building of mass organizations leading to a genuine people's democracy.

Movement and organizational leaders imbued with Western cultural values often feel superior to their followers, place their personal interests before those of the people, jeopardize the organization through factional infighting when competing for top positions and often can be bought at the right price. Because these values are the rule and not the exception within African-American leadership, the mission of African unity in America is difficult at best and

In Memoriam Carolyn Stokes Reed



Carolyn Stokes Reed, who died on July 5, 2003, was a wife, mother, grandmother, churchwoman, community activist, dedicated University alumna and devoted

Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority member. She fulfilled these roles with extraordinary zeal and challenged others to do the same.

Carolyn, who worked as both a teacher and a principal, assumed a leadership role in every organization in which she served. She was a president of the Akron Elementary Principal's Association, the first black president of the Ohio Association of Elementary School Principals, a grand commandress of the Daughters of Isis of Ohio, a member of The University of Akron National Alumni Board, and the chairman of the Dr. Shirla R. McClain Gallery of Akron's Black History and Culture.

We celebrate the legacy of her love, her caring and her willingness to make room in her life for our needs unconditionally. Her mantle becomes ours.

unlikely in the near future. These failings can be overcome by what Kwame Nkrumah, former president of Ghana, and others have called the development of the "new African man and woman" — the synthesis of traditional African values and social relations with the political, economic and institutional sophistication required of modern times.

John Henrik Clarke consistently pointed out that Europeans in America have absolutely no incentive to provide the African with the type of education and training required to take their power. For the African-American who believes that America can be reformed and that racism will eventually evaporate under the heat of "moral-suasion," this truth may not be of any concern. But for the African in America who knows that "power concedes to nothing but power," the struggle for cultural self-determination supersedes the movement for civil rights. It is only when a people control their culture that unity is possible. And because we do not control our culture, Africans in America cannot unite.

**CARL LEWIS
ORGANIZER FOR THE ALL-AFRICAN
PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

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For more information, please contact Dr. Abel A. Bartley, director, in BCCE 64-A, or call 330-972-7030. You also can fax 330-972-8469 or e-mail us at ybrooks@uakron.edu.

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Anniversaries

This year, November brought the 40th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy — one of the most tragic events in our nation's history. I was not even born when he was killed, but I have talked to people who all confirm that it was a traumatic experience. Everyone was shocked and saddened by the assassination. Kennedy was a hero to many of the downtrodden. My grandmother talked about him with the same sympathetic tone she usually reserved for her beloved Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Nearly everyone who was alive during the Kennedy period either loved him or hated him, depending on where they stood on the political landscape.

As a historian, I am always amazed at what people look at when they judge the greatness of presidents. It is probably impossible to analyze presidents during their reign. Most people are usually poisoned in their analysis by their votes or political leanings. We either love or hate presidents based upon whether or not we voted for them. I have seen some of the most impassioned arguments generated over President Ronald Reagan and equally emphatic discussions about President Bill Clinton. While some hold Reagan in awe, others hate him with such intensity that they can hardly restrain themselves. The same can be said of Clinton.

Such is the case with President John F. Kennedy. An oft-debated question among historians is, "Do times make the man or does the man make the times?" Kennedy came on the scene at just the right time. The country as well as the world was in the midst of a massive struggle to free people from the chains of oppression. African nations were battling for their independence. In Asia, a

small-scale struggle by a seemingly insignificant country called Vietnam was beginning. In the United States, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was leading the troops fighting the civil rights battle.

Kennedy came with a promise that things were going to change for the better, and he was going to change them. He introduced an innovative program designed to lift up the downtrodden and make this country a more just society. He inspired young people to shake off the lethargy of the past and get involved in improving their world. By challenging the Soviet Union, he pulled the world back from the brink of nuclear destruction over a tiny island 90 miles south of Florida. Kennedy was a true enigma. He was a bridge between the old world of the imperialist United States and the new world of the Civil Rights era. He was a wealthy privileged politician who expressed sincere concern for the poor.

As we celebrate his memory, we should reflect on his legacy. Whether you loved or hated him, whether you voted for or against him, few presidents have inspired generations of Americans to action the way John F. Kennedy did. Many of the freedoms and improvements we see today can be traced to his initiatives. Because his presidency lasted little more than 1,000 days, it fell to his successor, Lyndon Johnson, to win support for many of Kennedy's programs.

The wonderful thing about anniversaries is that they give us an opportunity to evaluate past events and figures with the luxury of distance.

**DR. ABEL A. BARTLEY,
DIRECTOR, PAN AFRICAN
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES**