

# Pan African Center

## NEWSLETTER

The  
University  
of Akron

## Open for Business

On behalf of the staff, faculty and administration of The University of Akron's Pan African Center for Community Studies, I would like to welcome you to our new center. We have gone back into the future, combining the academics of the Pan African Studies Program with the community-centered Black Culture Center to create something new and exciting for you. The Pan African Center for Community Studies is an innovative gathering place that combines the best of the academic world with the best of the social and community world.

In the Dr. Shirla McClain Gallery of Akron Black Life and History, you can see the history and experiences of African Americans who helped develop this city. The Pan African Studies Black History lecture series continues to bring top-notch intellectuals to share their research with the greater Akron community. This year, we were very excited about the list of scholars who volunteered their services. Drs. William Julius Wilson, Houston Baker and Winthrop Jordan shared their research with us. Their presence was due in large part to the partnership between the University and the business community. ALLTEL Communications Products, Bank One, the Akron Beacon Journal and the Stewart & Calhoun Funeral Home have contributed funds to make this lecture series a reality. We thank them for their support.

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## *From the Director's Chair*

### Oh, I Know People are not Going to Like This One!



*Dr. Abel A. Bartley*

During slavery, on holidays the slave owner would usually butcher a hog to eat with his meal. He took the best parts of the hog and then gave what was left to his slaves. Every part of the hog was utilized in the meal. After the slave owner got the meaty parts of the hog, the slaves were left to fight over the intestines, where we get chitterlings, the feet, head, ears and neck bone. These were the parts the slave owner refused to touch, but they were good enough for the slaves. This practice led to a pattern of African Americans always getting what is left over once Caucasians have picked out the best parts. You are wondering where am I going with this?

I was amazed when President George W. Bush recently came out publicly against the University of Michigan's affirmative action program. Bush argued that he opposed people who were more qualified being passed over by people with less stellar marks and credentials. The reason I was so upset was that his position was not a principled position. President Bush can be seen as an affirmative action baby. However, he would not call his special perks affirmative action. They are called legacies and privileges. He got into schools that he was clearly not qualified to attend simply because the schools wanted regional diversity. Bush was a C-student who went to Yale. Clearly, there were more qualified students who were rejected by Yale when Bush got in.

He used his father's name and legacy to catapult himself into the governor's mansion in Texas. Clearly, there were Republicans who had more experience with better credentials than George Bush when he ran for governor. Then he recycled his father's friends and advisers to put together a successful campaign for the presidency. He had no problem connecting himself with the legacy of his father and, more importantly, Ronald Reagan. President Bush reminds me of so many African American conservatives who have used the affirmative action bridge to get over and then said, "Well, I am over so let's burn the bridge down." Bush's presidential performance has been praised,

however, without the special perks, he would have never had the opportunity to shine.

The reality is that affirmative action is not a tool for incompetents, but instead a key to open doors to people locked out of opportunities. When we look at all of the corporate scandals and poorly performing businesses in America, no one can convince me that the people in leadership are the best people for their jobs. Often, opponents of affirmative action cry, "No quotas! No quotas!" That's an interesting position when you consider that they had no problem with quotas when the quota system said "no blacks," as it did before the civil rights era. I find their position disingenuous because they had no problem with quotas when the quotas benefited them. There are no Horatio Alger stories today. We all have help pulling ourselves up.

Let's stop fooling ourselves. The opponents of affirmative action are not afraid that less qualified people will get jobs. They are afraid that African Americans and other minorities will get jobs. Caucasians have been the major recipients of



*(Title unknown)*, Frank Diaz Escalet, Kennebunk, Maine,  
<http://www.gwi.net/~escalet>

affirmative action in America, but before it was opened to minorities we did not call it affirmative action. African Americans make up just 12 percent of the country's population, while Hispanics make up another 12.3 percent. If every Hispanic and African American was given a white-collar job in America,

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## Pan African Center Newsletter

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### **We welcome articles. Submit to:**

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# SEE

*There is a cure for the ugliness society has placed in your mind  
Telling that dark equals ugly and it was only a matter of time  
See, after you hear this for so long, you start to believe  
And when we start to believe in lies what a tangled web we weave  
Telling each other we are ugly because our skin is too black  
So if beauty is in the eye of the beholder  
I'd be the pupil  
Now what do you think about that  
No sir, not ego-trippin' at all  
Don't step on my shadow when you walk by  
You might trip and fall  
Like you fell into the picture of what modern beauty was supposed to be  
Blond hair and blue eyes were characteristics, which were never meant for me  
But you may be surprised to hear that I am pacified with my black hair and thick lips  
And it's hard to carry the burdens of myself and my black man without broad shoulders and big hips  
It would have been hard to find tears for my people without these dark eyes  
As I seek Jesus for answers to my persistent questions of "when Lord" and "why"  
Not saying that I am better because of the fact that I'm black  
It's just that I'm fed up, so I'll get up, and sometimes fight back  
You have the right to your opinion; just don't say it to me  
And we are all entitled to our freedom, say the powers that be  
For you will never understand the pain that comes from watching my black brother  
swing from a tree as a reminder to keep his hands off the white man's things  
And they would often say that we were as black as the midnight skies  
Sneaking into our huts to trace the constellations on our thighs  
Impregnating us with mixed children that we continued to love  
Because love is an emotion we seem to have plenty of  
See, there was a time when we raised our children and yours  
And instead of grannies we were mummies and only good for doing chores  
But just like the strangled soul of a premature child, we continued to endure  
You can take them from their continent, but you cannot remove them from home  
Because home is a state of mind that cannot be valued and then sold  
Like the oily black body that stood on a block of wood for retail and resale, an imported good  
And it may seem amazing that in the midst of these facts  
That no matter what I call myself, you will always see me as the color black  
But I'm not angry, because the pain ends with me  
The future holds better images for the new youth to behold  
Free your mind  
And SEE ...*

**IVIE ERO**

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# Let's Look at Thurgood Marshall

As conservatives in and out of government continue their attacks on affirmative action and racial justice, I think that it is important that we look back to see why we developed laws to protect African Americans' legal equality.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of state-sanctioned segregation in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, legally establishing the strange principle of separate but equal as the law of the land. This ruling dismantled the intent of the newly ratified 14th amendment, which was designed to create legal equality among Americans and the notion of color blindness in the U.S.

The Supreme Court ruled that because African Americans were so different from all other groups, it was legal to separate them from Caucasians as long as the state mandated equal facilities. The result of this ruling was that African Americans were relegated to a second-class status in every setting where Caucasians were present. Jim Crow segregation created a badge of inferiority, which handcuffed African American children for generations. They were drilled with the notion that they were not as good as Caucasians and, therefore, had to sit idly by, accepting inferior conditions simply because of their color.

Before Rosa Parks sat down, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. began dreaming and Malcolm X promised to use any means necessary, Thurgood Marshall was using the courts to fight for African American freedom. Marshall was born on July 2, 1908 in Baltimore, Md. As a child, Marshall was instilled with a fighting spirit from both his mother and father who told him to handle racial insults immediately. This determination to fight racial slights resulted in several violent skirmishes for the young Marshall.

He completed high school in 1925 and then graduated cum laude from Lincoln University. Other great students during Marshall's years included Cab Calloway, Langston Hughes and Kwame Nkrumah.

After graduation, Marshall wanted to attend the University of Maryland's Law School, but it did not accept blacks. This angered Marshall and changed the trajectory of his life. He applied for, and gained admission to, Howard University's Law School. While there, he was tutored by

the brilliant legal scholar, Charles Hamilton Houston, who instilled in the young Marshall a commitment to social justice and racial uplift. Marshall believed Houston's rhetoric that lawyers could be divided into two categories — social engineers and social parasites.

Howard was a breeding ground for lawyers who were expertly trained in Constitutional law. Houston encouraged all of his students to use the Constitution to change society and end racial injustice. As Marshall began his career, he immediately attacked the separate but equal doctrine demanding equality as outlined by the 14th amendment.

After a brief foray in private practice, Marshall joined the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, where he worked on civil rights cases. Between 1933 and 1954, Marshall maintained a steady and consistent attack on the legal foundations of America's segregationist system. This attack culminated in the now famous *Brown v. Board of Education* case, which struck down the separate but equal policy — the linchpin of segregation.

Even though Marshall is most remembered for this victory, there are hundreds of others. One of the most important cases Marshall argued was *Smith v. Allright*, which eliminated the Texas White Primary — opening the southern Democratic Party to African Americans. Marshall also was instrumental in ensuring fair treatment for African Americans arrested by racist judicial systems in southern cities. Marshall had several death penalty convictions thrown out and reductions made in several unfair sentences. He battled the U.S. military during the Korean War, demanding equal treatment for African American soldiers who were charged with military crimes.

Marshall was a harsh critic of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others involved in the protest activities associated with the civil rights movement. As a lawyer trying to get the country to obey its laws, he viewed it as counterproductive for African Americans to deliberately break laws. He was a voice of moderation with an uncompromising spirit on social justice issues. Marshall was hated by southern racists, but respected by proponents of racial justice and equal rights. His dedication to integration and racial equality was never the position of all African Americans, but it was the position of most associated with civil rights.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed Marshall to the U.S. Court of Appeals, where,

between 1961 and 1965, he wrote 112 opinions — none of which were ever overturned.

Between 1965 and 1967, he served as solicitor general for the Johnson Administration and won 29 of the 32 cases he argued before the Supreme Court. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson nominated Marshall for the U.S. Supreme Court to replace Tom Clark.

After a long and bitter confirmation hearing, Marshall was confirmed as the first African American to be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court. He understood the significance of the appointment and was careful to look out for the rights of oppressed people. He was instrumental in framing the famous *Roe v. Wade* decision protecting a woman's right to choose. While serving with Chief Justice Warren Burger, Marshall spent much of his time fighting the rising tide of conservatism sweeping through the nation, often verbally jousting with fellow justices. He was pained to see the high court's equivocations on school integration issues such as busing. He understood the importance of representing African American interests as they related to the law, because he had a unique perspective on the origins of those laws.

In 1991, Marshall retired from the court. On Jan. 24, 1993, at age 84, he quietly passed away.

The tragedy of today's court is that Marshall's legacy left the court with him. There is no one on the modern court who is as interested as Marshall was in protecting minority rights. The only African American representative on the court today, Clarence Thomas, is so busy looking out for majority rights that he has completely forgotten about minority rights.

Thurgood Marshall, where are you when we need you? If we want to protect the integrity of the 14th amendment, we need to replace justices who think like Clarence Thomas with people who think like Thurgood Marshall. Individuals whose primary interest is the rights of oppressed people and minority rights, not majority rights. The courts are there to protect and defend, not oppress and dictate.

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

## Congressman Warns Anti-war Demonstrators About 'Blowback'

Congressman Sherrod Brown joined the Akron community war protesters on Feb. 15 at the New Covenant Presbyterian Church, as did many community leaders who were deeply troubled by the Bush administration's rush to preemptive war against Iraq.

In his presentation, Brown shared his conviction that the crusade against Iraq would only intensify the "blowback," or terrorist attacks, on the U.S. and its citizens. He said the term was invented by the CIA to refer to the unintended consequences, or payback, for policies and often covert actions of U.S. operations abroad — actions about which the American people have no knowledge.

Brown's remarks reflect a careful reading of the book, "Blowback — The Costs and Consequences of American Empire," (New York: Owl Book, Henry Holt Publishers, 2000), written by the distinguished East Asian scholar, Chalmers Johnson, who is president of the Japan Policy Research Institute and a professor emeritus at the University of California, San Diego. He published "Blowback" a year before Sept. 11, 2001 and predicted this kind of terrorism because of policies and actions "kept secret from the American people" (Page 8).

Johnson explains that the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, was probably

retaliation for a 1986 Reagan administration aerial raid on Libya that killed President Muammar Gaddafi's stepdaughter.

The scourge of cocaine and heroin use that has claimed so many victims in American cities in the past 20 years was probably partly caused by Central and South American military officers or corrupt politicians that the CIA or Pentagon has trained, supported, and/or installed in high positions in their countries, writes Johnson. The Nicaraguan contras for example — while American agents looked the other way — facilitated the sale of cocaine in American cities in order to raise money for arms and supplies against the Sandinistas.

The list goes on and on, and is well known to many who keep informed on international affairs — and exhibit a fair amount of skepticism when the American media reports on brutal acts of "terrorism," "drug lords," or "illegal arms merchants." An Akronite who sat next to me at the anti-war rally turned to me and said, "I didn't know what blowback meant before. I'm glad Brown explained it."

The anti-war meeting was impressive, not just for the large numbers of participants, but also the wide range of community groups represented. Moderated by Shenita Johnson, co-director of The Way for Christ Ministries, the speakers included Professor Kathy Felty of the UA Campus Community Against War, Dr. Ilсан Haque of

the Islamic Community Center, the Rev. Stephen Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, the Rev. Anne Hagler of New Covenant Presbyterian Church, John Kolber of Labor Local #894 and Dana Williams, student and human rights activist at The University of Akron.

One of the most interesting presentations was by Marco Sommerville, president of Akron City Council. He said that since the council unanimously approved a resolution against preemptive war in Iraq several weeks ago, the mayor and members of the council have received a great many letters of support for their action — and more hate mail on this issue than any other in their memory.

Sommerville's remarks raise an important question. Just what is patriotism? And as the war drums beat harder and the "Patriotic Act" silences dissent, maybe each of us needs to take a little time out and examine the administration and mainstream media's presentation of the case for war.

Read Johnson's book, go to the Internet and read through the pages of the "Patriotic Act" and the suspension of basic civil liberties that it outlines. Maybe this is the greatest act of patriotism that any one of us can perform right now if we sincerely care about our country!

**JANE KATE LEONARD**  
**PROFESSOR OF HISTORY**



*Dun Kilt ma Chile!*, Frank Diaz Escalet, 1996, Kennebunk, Maine  
<http://www.gwi.net/~escalet>

## Open for Business

*Continued from cover*

We are very excited about the many new opportunities to research important issues and problems facing the surrounding community. We are already engaged in a thrilling research project to document the history of all of the African American churches in and around Akron and Cleveland. Once we have completed this task, we will look at businesses and schools. We want to become a clearing-house for this information and further integrate the University and the community.

By compiling this information and making it available on the fastest growing research medium in the world — the Internet — we are bringing the world to you. The Pan African Center for Community Studies is especially important to me because it allows me to combine my two passions, African Americans and urban areas. Akron is a very important city with a rich history and culture. It is a gold mine just waiting to be mined. With the help of my graduate assistants and the support of the University and the Akron community at large, we will be able to conduct some groundbreaking research on this wonderful city. Equally important, we will be able to link The University of Akron with the African American community in a partnership that benefits both parties.

I am a dreamer who has big plans for this center. I envision a \$1.5 million complex with a \$3.5 million endowment. Anything is possible when you believe.

I invite you to visit The University of Akron and check us out while you're here. Participate in one of our programs or just drink in the culture and heritage found at our center. You can find us in Buckingham Center 64. We would love to meet you and show you some of the many activities in which we are involved. You can talk to me, or my assistant director, Lathardus Goggins. We hope to see you soon.

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

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## The Responsibilities of the Public Citizen

One way to fulfill our responsibilities as public citizens is to invite our local leaders to learn from the scholars who speak in the Pan African Lecture Series. If they can't attend, we should call them up and tell them what we've learned! Akron's problems are not unique, and many useful ideas can come from these lectures to improve the quality of life in our community.

On Feb. 6, the first lecturer in the series was sociologist Dr. William Julius Wilson. He spoke on the dynamics of job loss and racial tension in working-class and poor communities in Chicago neighborhoods, topics very pertinent to many of our local neighborhoods. In fact, the recent Akron Beacon Journal feature on North Hill illustrated some of Dr. Wilson's findings. Much of Ward 1 is in North Hill, so I invited Daniel Horrigan, the Ward 1 representative to city council, to join those of us who had dinner with Dr. Wilson before the lecture. Mr. Horrigan appreciated meeting and speaking with Dr. Wilson, a scholar whose expertise can help solve some of our community problems, and especially some of the challenges presented in Ward 1. The William Julius Wilson lecture may well result in some practical improvements in city council's management of Ward 1.

The Pan African Lecture Series offered us another wonderful learning opportunity by bringing Houston Baker to campus on Feb. 27.

I first became aware of Dr. Baker when I began to use his edition of the Frederick Douglass autobiography as a text in Basic Writing, which requires a great deal of reading and writing to help prepare inexperienced writers for the myriad writing assignments they will face as University students. Dr. Baker's lucid, accessible introduction gave students and teachers the foundation they needed for responding to Douglass' accomplishments and his eloquent writing. At the time, I didn't know that Dr. Baker also is a poet and a literary and cultural critic.

Dr. Baker is a very productive scholar. He has written, contributed to, or edited, 34 books that are among our holdings in Bierce Library. Dr. Baker's interests include blues and rap music as well as the overarching domains of African American and Pan African studies, cultural studies and the intellectual life of African American women and African British individuals.

Dr. Baker's lecture on the Harlem Renaissance may have given us some ideas for an artistic renaissance for Akron. Now that heavy industry is no longer the primary feature of the region, the arts

have become an even more important contributor to community life. We have a strong beginning in Gospel Meets Symphony, the expansion of the Akron Art Museum, the renewal of the Civic Theatre, Summit ArtSpace, Ohio Ballet and numerous galleries, theatre groups and other arts organizations. But more talent lives in our community than these organizations can accommodate, and perhaps we can learn how to enhance our venues and audiences.

**MARY KING**  
**THE WRITING LAB**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS**

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*From The Director's Chair*

### Oh, I Know ...

*Continued from cover*

Caucasian men would still dominate corporate America. In a nation that tolerated slavery and legalized racial discrimination for more than 150 years, it is not surprising to me that there would be opponents to affirmative action. These are the people who are afraid that African Americans might get a good part of the hog.

The next time you are concerned about affirmative action, you go to any business or workplace and ask to see all the people with salaries above \$150,000. You count the number of African Americans and Hispanics in that group and then judge affirmative action. Don't fool yourself — no one gets to where they are by themselves. We all get help from someone. I applaud Colin Powell for his courage in bucking the administration and recognizing what the privileged Caucasian men and smiling African Americans around him apparently could not — the country still has problems with race and we need safeguards to ensure that those locked out get a chance. Affirmative action is not always a black and white issue, but racism is. Sincere people have had difficulty with this program because they don't understand the history behind it. I have no problem with that — people cannot be blamed for their ignorance. However, no one can argue its success in diversifying this nation and opening opportunities for others.

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

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# Black Migration in North America

Since blacks were forcefully brought to North America, they have migrated north to freedom from slavery and violence, and moved to cities from farms for economic reasons and opportunities denied in many regions. In the past 30 years, we've seen a reverse migration of African Americans to the former homes of their parents and grandparents. This selected bibliography provides some sources that trace the history of the migration and the present trend of reverse migration to the South.

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**BENNIE P. ROBINSON**  
**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY**  
**LIBRARIES—REFERENCE DEPARTMENT**

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# *I t i s t o o s i l e n t*

*It is too silent  
I hear nothing  
It is a contradiction to be  
colored and quiet  
Let the shades make sound  
Let the browns bellow  
And the blacks scream  
Hear the yell of the yellow  
And the call of the cream  
Hear the pounce of black panthers  
Or the voices of soulful church choirs*

*I need the noise  
It is too silent  
It is a contradiction to be colored and quiet  
Hear the stomp of sandy Egyptian feet  
as they build the sphinx  
Listen to the singsong sermon  
of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
Hear the feet of the Kenyan people  
as they easily trod one mile  
And the chatter of the white teeth of the Sudanese  
who often smile  
Make noise  
Disrupt something!*

*We need the noise  
It is too silent  
It is a contradiction to be colored and quiet  
Hear the emotional words of Malcolm X  
Words far too powerful for schoolbook texts  
But I hear them anyway  
Malcolm X's eyes were too colored  
for him to be quiet*

*Hear the noise of the Underground Railroad  
All of those who kept on going  
were in their minds always knowing  
They would rather die  
Do not deny it  
Hear the clankity-clank of the chain gang  
Working in the hot summer's heat  
The tones that sand  
hit the ear with a bang  
Tones that guide weary feet*

*I enjoy the noise  
of those enduring boys  
A hum to not be defeated  
No matter how badly they were treated*

*Still the noise is needed  
Do not deny it  
Allow yourself to riot  
After all, it is a contradiction  
to be colored and quiet*

*So let us color the world with noise*

**IVIE ERO**

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# One Hundred Years Later

One hundred years ago, W.E.B. DuBois wrote in the now classic, "Souls of Black Folk," "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line..." With the advantage of hindsight, we now can confirm that DuBois was correct. Unfortunately, as the United States of America enters into the 21st century, the problem of the "color-line" is still not resolved.

Across the board, race is still a factor in predicting quality of life. In America, being black is a risk factor for "life." Being black is associated with the likelihood of having heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and colon cancer. It increases the chances of receiving improper medical treatment, being classified with a learning disability, expelled or suspended from school, or placed in non-college preparatory classes. Later, it can mean being turned down for mortgage or business loans, "followed in a store," pulled over by the police, or unjustly incarcerated.

Being black in America is such a problem that a recent study found that placing a "black-sounding name" (Tyrone, Malik, Renee, Mileka) on a resume makes it less likely to receive an interview than the same resume with "white-sounding names" (Todd, John, David, Ashley, Susan). In almost every sector of American life, being black correlates with diminished opportunities, health and overall quality of life.

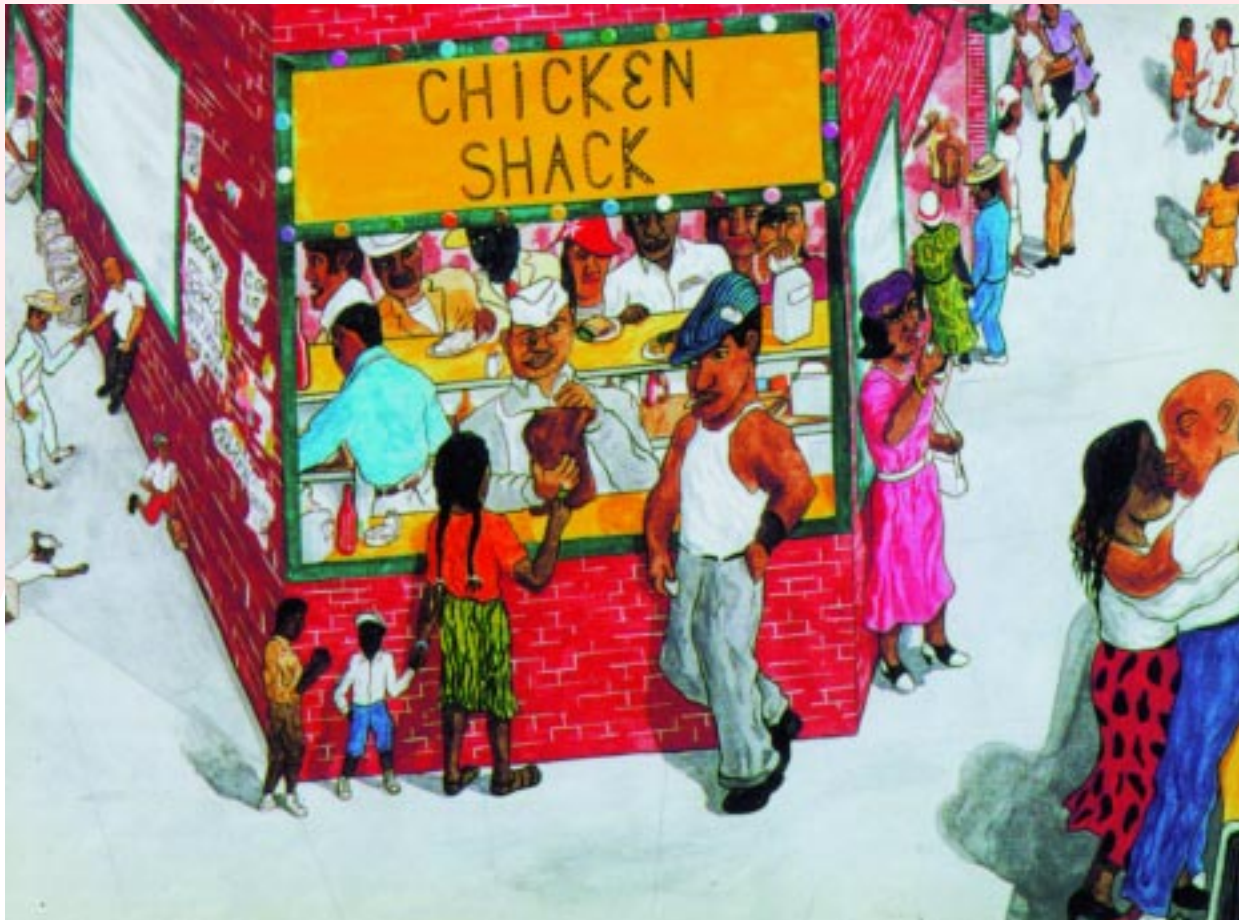
The issues of the current "color-line" are made more complicated with the changing U.S. demographics. According to the Census 2000, there are more people categorized as Hispanic than black/African American. This changes the U.S. debate on race and ethnicity in some every interesting

ways. For the second time in its history, mainstream America has to deal with a "free" non-euro population that has its own language, culture, heritage, homeland and sense of itself that is not based on the interpretations of "White America." The last time, American society solved its "problem" with genocide and displacement.

In 2003, such barbarianism is hard to conceive. Andrew Hacker suggests in "Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal," that white privilege and status will be bestowed upon those groups that are willing to adopt an Anglo/Eurocentric world view, thus preserving its domination. But whatever the change, the "color-line" is changing.

Now more than ever, we African Americans must authenticate our own existence. We must define ourselves for ourselves, and no longer depend upon the definitions handed to us. This means that we must seek out and support those people and organizations that are teaching, researching and advocating for the African experience in the United States and throughout the world. We must not apologize for expecting our basic rights as humans to be recognized and fulfilled. If not, in another 100 years, we may find ourselves further marginalized in ways we never thought possible.

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*"Jivin' at the Chicken Shack"; Frank Diaz Escalet, 1996, Kennebunk, Maine*  
<http://www.gwi.net/~escalet>

# The Trouble with Social Integration of African American College Students at Predominantly White Institutions

Since the 1960s, African American students have increasingly enrolled in predominantly white higher education institutions (PWIs). As a result, many African American students began to address specific policies and practices that they felt isolated them from each other, their communities, and full participation in campus life. Frustration erupted between 1968 and 1971, when many PWIs experienced sit-ins, takeovers, or demonstrations by African American students making demands of the administration (Young, 1991). Many administrators saw the creation of black cultural centers at the PWIs as providing a service that would help black students “better” adjust to the college environment.

According to Young (1991), two general operating philosophies of black cultural centers emerged — Laager and Oasis. Laager philosophy operates the cultural center as a safe haven for African American students feeling under attack. The Oasis philosophy operates the cultural center as a welcoming environment to all who wish to engage in cultural activities and initiatives. The reality is that most cultural centers operate somewhere on the continuum between Laager and Oasis.

The creation of black cultural centers and the adoption of nondiscriminatory rhetoric, practices and policies facilitated the increase in African Americans attending PWIs. However, the changes did little to eliminate the racist attitudes and perceptions that existed, nor did it prepare African American students to successfully navigate the social and academic environs found on the college campus (Young, 1991). According to Bennett (2002), the prevailing theme in the research on minority students at PWIs is a feeling of culture shock and alienation due to the conflicts between the students’ home culture and university expectations.

In “Blacks in College,” Fleming (1991) compared and contrasted students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and PWIs. Fleming found that HBCUs provide an atmosphere that allows for more opportunities

for friendship, to participate in the campus life, and to feel some sense of progress and success in their academic pursuits. Fleming states there is a connection between intellectual and social issues and that academic performance may equal or exceed the sum of intellectual and social adjustment. Furthermore, Fleming asserts that African American students at HBCUs more successfully make the social adjustment than do African American students at PWIs.

In his discussion of why students remain or leave college, Tinto (1993) makes a similar observation within PWIs. He recognizes that the majority of colleges are comprised of several communities or “subcultures.” Rather than conforming to one dominant culture in order to persist, students would locate at least one community in which to find membership and support. Tinto explains that membership in a community helps to create safe havens and enclaves. Herein lies the problem for the many PWIs with African American students.

The goal of many PWIs is to treat all students the same. Often this translates into some form of “color blind” policy (Ware, 2000; Plous, 1996). This notion is consistent with the Eurocentric paradigm, which forms the ethos of many PWIs. A major component of the Eurocentric paradigm is the propensity to rank things that are different, thus assigning a value of superior and inferior (Ani, 1994). Therefore, from the Eurocentric point of view, to remedy issues of superiority and the resulting discriminatory practices, one must not perceive difference. Consequently, fairness or nondiscriminatory practices are perceived as sameness, regardless of the specific needs or experiences that students bring to the campus (Plous, 1996).

In a discussion of cases affecting affirmative action, Ware (2000) asserts, “The opponents of affirmative action invoke ‘color blindness’ to support their interpretation of the Equal Protection Clause.” Ware continues, “However, 30 years of antidiscrimination laws have not eliminated the effects of three centuries of discrimination. Rather than advancing the cause of racial equality, a ‘color blind’ standard in this context will simply prolong the racial hierarchy that persists.”

Crenshaw (1988) explains that the overt declaration of white supremacy ended with the Jim Crow era, when official acts of discrimination were outlawed, but there continues to be an influence of the “white norm.” She states, “The white norm, however, has not disappeared; it has only been submerged in the popular consciousness. It continues in an unspoken form as a statement of a positive social norm, legitimizing the continued domination of those who do not meet it.” Color-blind policies do little to change the racial milieu. According to Plous (1996), “Unless preexisting inequities are corrected or otherwise taken into account, color-blind policies do not correct racial injustice — they reinforce it.” Though taking different forms, it is this cycle of white domination that many scholars have alluded to as an institutional barrier to the social and academic integration of African American students.

Often, PWIs will develop programs and services designed to incorporate African American students into a “healthy” society. Such programs and services generally characterize African Americans and other caste-like minorities as “disadvantaged,” “culturally deprived,” “dysfunctional,” “at risk,” “permanent underclass” and other nomenclature derived from a deficiency analysis (Freire, 1970; Ogbu, 1986, 1974). They assume the so-called disadvantages and dysfunctions are rooted in the pathology of African Americans rejecting a “healthy” society and its values. Subsequently, this further perpetuates the domination of American mainstream ethos and the social isolation of all things African (Ani, 1994; Freire, 1970; Patterson, 1982; Woodson, 1933). In a discussion of the affect of racism and discrimination on African American student development, N.O. Imani has summarized that African American people structure their attitude toward relevant social environments in the context of the sustaining or nonsustaining dimensions of the treatment they receive in those environments. Both the actual experiences as well as the collective sociocultural evaluations of such treatment is communicated through the collective and becomes part of the living script of sociopsychological positioning vis-a-vis the relative

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# The Trouble with Social Integration ...

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environment. When such treatment is negative, it constitutes the relevant environment as a threatening spatial configuration. In the context of threat, the responses range from confrontation to withdrawal to surrender. Surrender leads to a student capitulating to white supremacy by endorsing the dominant environmental transcripts and thereby ensuring that the resultant graduate will not engage the critical needs of the community upon completion of academic tenure. Withdrawal leads to a loathing toward the resources and personnel of the institution, either leading to academic failure outright or to a lower level of engagement, which impairs professional development and occupational opportunities. Confrontation provides psychological sustenance and communal connection, but in the context of the Eurocentric academy, may bring about similar impairment of academic and academic-related opportunities.

For those of us concerned with the success of African American students, we must continue to identify, research and advocate for ways to better socially integrate African American students into the college environment. Contrary to the current push for "color blindness," African-centered approaches have the greatest potential for developing strategies for facilitating resiliency and persistence in African American students. We, as faculty and staff, must seek to build a community in which students can be a part. We must proactively seek to connect with students in meaningful ways. It is through these relationships that, on one hand, faculty and staff can "affectively" challenge, mentor and affirm African American students. On the other hand, African American students are made aware of the ongoing struggle of which they are a part, and can better support and advocate for African American faculty and staff. Collectively, all will be better positioned to change the campus environment.

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## Smart Weapons Dumb Children

As the United States spends billions of dollars destroying Iraq and demonstrating our mastery of technology and weaponry, I can't help but think that we are highlighting what is wrong with the federal government's spending priorities. Each night as I sit in front of my television watching the war unfold, I am amazed at the sophistication of American weaponry. We have the world's smartest weapons because we spend billions of dollars each year building, testing, maintaining and developing them. At the same time we have some of the world's dumbest kids, because we don't have the same commitment. Just imagine what America would look like if we reversed the spending on education and the military. Would we have the world's smartest kids and the dumbest weapons?

One of the most pronounced crimes against humanity is what we are doing with urban education today. While we get ready to spend \$444 billion dollars a year on our military, we have urban schools that could qualify for demolition.

Their roofs are falling in and their infrastructure is shot. America has millions of taxpayers who have no health insurance and millions more living below the poverty line. When you compare our commitment to have the world's greatest military with our commitment to have the world's greatest educational system, they don't match up. President Bush received great fanfare with his "leave no child behind" rhetoric. If you judge him based upon his spending priorities, one would have to conclude that his program would better be described as "leave no weapons program behind."

It's time that we stop the madness. When do we say enough is enough? We have the world's most powerful military. We have enough bombs to destroy the world more than 30 times. We no longer have the Soviet menace. Why not take a few dollars out of those smart weapons programs and put them into smart children programs? If given a choice, I would prefer smart children to smart weapons any day.

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# Time For A Black Tax

I, like many people around this country, stand in awe of the young high school phenom Lebron James. Clearly, this is one of the most exciting future prospects to come along in some time. He has all of the tools to be a huge basketball success. The contract numbers people talk about are astounding. I applaud the young man for his skills and I wish him all the best in his career. However, I think that Lebron James is a perfect example of why it may be time that we look into a “black tax.” Lebron James’ story is following a familiar path so many promising African Americans have traveled.

Now before you grab the tar and feathers, let me explain. African Americans are a unique people. We have a long ugly history of being discriminated against and segregated. It took a long protracted fight for us to gain the few privileges we now enjoy. It saddens me to see someone like Lebron James, who will undoubtedly make millions of dollars, follow the same path that so many other talented young African Americans have traveled. They will be rich today and broke tomorrow and the larger community will not have benefited from their talent. African Americans, like no other people in this country, can truly say that they stand on the shoulders of their forebearers. None of us came full-grown from the head of Zeus. We owe a debt to our forefathers and to the countless others who struggled, bled and died to open opportunities for us. All African American millionaires should be forced to take African American history so they can understand the debt of gratitude they owe to their community.

When I see Leon Spinks broke and working as a janitor in St. Louis, or Mike Tyson, nearly broke and reduced to being a buffoon character desperately trying to be taken seriously, and countless other athletes, actors and entertainers who made millions, but are now broke, irrelevant figures, I feel that they have squandered a wonderful opportunity to lift the race. As Malcolm X once said, African Americans are the only group that uses athletes and entertainers as spokespeople for the group. It is a sad reflection on our values that the only people who know how we feel are the privileged few who have made it.

So, what do I want? I think that it is time that we introduced a “10 percent black tax” on every African American who earns a salary of \$500,000 or more. This money should be put into a special fund to finance organizations, schools and programs vital to the African American experience. We should use part of this money to develop an African American think tank to train intellectuals

who can serve as spokespersons defending positions and programs important to African Americans. Some of the money should be used to support the chronically under-funded historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and end the discussions on affirmative action. If they don’t want us at their schools, then we would have viable alternatives in the HBCUs.

Some of the money should be used to improve the schools and housing in the inner city areas that produce most of this talent. Programs to encourage home ownership over renting and life skills training should be paid for through this fund. We also need scholarships and awards for teachers who demonstrate an ability to reach students in failing schools. Part of the money should be spent building professional schools for African Americans to increase the number of trained black lawyers and doctors so that we change the annual report which suggests that African Americans receive inferior health care services.

Some of the money should be spent on voter education programs, which help African American communities empower themselves. In essence a “black tax” would allow African Americans to do all of the things we are currently begging Caucasians to do for us. I know that there are not a lot of African Americans who earn that kind of money. I know that this seems like an unfair burden on a few wealthy individuals who are already doing so much. I even know that many African American millionaires have no connection at all with African Americans and have their own agendas and organizations.

However, that is the point. Whether they recognize it or not, they owe a debt to those who came before them and those who will come after them. No one would have seen Michael Jordan fly without Rosa Parks refusing to stand. No one would have seen Denzel Washington act without Bert Williams paving the way. Without women like Dorothy Dandridge and Lena Horn, we would never have had a Halle Berry. They owe their success to past generations and they have an obligation to ensure future generations have opportunities as well.

While I understand that people are entitled to spend the money they have earned as they see fit, I also understand the need to recognize our civic

and social responsibility. The unique history and heritage of African Americans makes it absolutely essential that we support our own entities. We cannot depend on the federal government or Caucasian philanthropists to do for us what we can do for ourselves. When I hear about the precious few African Americans with resources squandering their precious funds on riotous living, I cringe at what our forefathers would think. We don’t have one penny to waste. The problems and needs are far too great. With the attacks on affirmative action and the general drift toward conservatism sweeping our nation, it is necessary that we be in a position to help ourselves.

We could radically change this country and our community if we rejected the selfishness encouraged by capitalism and invested in our community. Imagine kids graduating and actually knowing how to read. Imagine, 1 million African American men opening businesses instead of sitting in jails. Imagine 250,000 productive African American families, instead of 250,000 single mothers. Imagine having African American institutes of higher learning that are world renowned for producing scientists, doctors and engineers. It can happen. A “black tax” will not solve all of our social problems, but it would go a long way toward solving some of our economic problems and improving the image of African Americans worldwide. So as Congress debates tax cuts, I favor a “black tax.”

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## I Will See Them In The Stars

One of my favorite commercials is the one which says, "There are two times when it doesn't matter who your neighbors are, in the grave and in the nursery." I would like to add one other place where your neighbors don't matter, and that's in space. Our country has suffered another tragic blow with the loss of seven brave heroes in the crash of the space shuttle, Columbia.

As a young man, I dreamed of being an astronaut. They seemed to be the bravest, most exciting people in the world. The space shuttle was a microcosm of the peaceful world we all hope to see. There were Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, blacks and whites all working together to accomplish a task. They were not arguing over land or trying to place one another in racial or ethnic hierarchies.

Life can really be cruel sometimes — they could do in space what we can't seem to do on earth — live together as brothers and sisters. The space program represents the world's best hope for cooperation. Former enemies become friends as they work together to build an international space station. As someone who recently lost a family member, I understand the pain their relatives and loved ones must be feeling. I did not know any of them, yet in a strange way, I connected with all of them. They were us — you and me. They were preparing the way for us to rise just a little bit higher. There are many who ask, "Why are we going up in space anyway?" Well, my answer to them is, "Because it is there." Space is the place where we rise above ourselves.

By nature, man is a curious creature. We need to have answers to our problems. It is this curiosity that has led to so many important discoveries. When you think that astronauts earn just \$57,000 to \$80,000 a year, you know that they are not in it for the money. They risk their lives because they have an unconquerable desire to do what others are afraid to do. They break through the silvery clouds and touch the heavens.

I wondered why it was so important that we broke the confines of gravity and explored space. After sitting around and seeing all of the problems facing our world today, it occurred to me. The higher you are, the smaller your problems seem. For so many of us, we should get on a space shuttle and take a trip. Every now and then when you become discouraged about how bad things are down here, you should get on your space shuttle and rise high above your problems. If you fly on a plane, every city looks beautiful. The higher you are, the more alike each place looks. It is only when you get down to ground level that things become magnified. Maybe what some of our leaders need is a trip on the space shuttle.

So, in tribute to our fallen heroes, I say, "Thanks for rising so high that you left us an example of cooperation that we all can emulate. Take your rest, you deserve it. You have left us a theme for life — cooperation and unity is achievable. Keep flying high. When I am discouraged about life down here, I will just look for your examples in the stars. As the song says, 'I'll be looking at the moon, but I'll be seeing you.' You will be missed, but your example will live on."

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