



# The Oracle

SPRING 2008

## Profiles in Manhood



Omega's Grand Officers

Conclave Edition

Moving Toward Theo-Political Incorrectness. Page 14



This photo was taken earlier this year following a Supreme Council meeting. (L. to R.) Standing: Brothers Antonio Knox, Walter Body, Carl Blunt, Brian Gundy, Farrell Duncombe, Charles Bruce, and Michael Adams. Seated: Brothers George Grace, and Warren Lee.

## THE ORACLE

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# CONTENTS

## special feature

### 4... PROFILES OF OMEGA'S LEADERS

### 3... A POEM BY BROTHER KARL J. COLEMAN

## articles

<b>CRISES IN EDUCATION</b> .....	11
By Brother Troy Crayton	
<b>THEO-POLITICAL INCORRECTNESS</b> .....	14
By Brother T. Anthony Spearman	
<b>BRANDING IN OMEGA</b> .....	18
By Brother Charles Johnson	

## departments

Message from the Editor.....	2
Letter to the Editor.....	7
Profiles of Contributing Writers.....	8
Omega Firsts.....	9
Book Review.....	21
Omega Chapter.....	22
Grand Officers.....	26
District Representatives.....	27
Guidelines for Submission.....	28



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Our beloved founders perceived our cardinal principles-- manhood, scholarship, perseverance, and uplift to be virtuous precepts each brother should attain. Manhood is listed among the other principles which

have qualities that are universally agreed to be worthwhile, non-controversial, and easily defined. Manhood, operationally defined by some as the adequacy of male role performance, has been extensively researched and heavily debated, especially among those who would find it suspect as it applies to the black male.

But, could manhood be both a privilege, and a problem? Perhaps if perceived as maleness or masculinity, manhood is a privilege. A casual glance at American society reveals the advantages men have over women. For example, men are more privileged than women in economic participation. There remains unequal remuneration for equal work. Women do not enjoy equal economic opportunity where they have equal access to the general labor market. Women are not as privileged as their male counterparts in politics, and are grossly underrepresented in decision-making structures. Manhood then, if understood principally as maleness, is privilege.

When adding the qualifier black to manhood, we gaze upon a painful contradiction. What Omega men experience as our eternal shrine, is the painful reality that being a black man is perceived to be a problem for some. Dr. W. E. B. DuBois wrote in his classic "The Souls of Black Folk"...

"Between me and the other world there is an unasked question: unasked by some through

feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All never the less flutter around it. They approach me in a half-hesitant way...how does it feel to be a problem they say..."

As a black man, I have tried to come to grips with why, unless I'm wearing a suit, whites generally will not sit next to me on the train; why when I walk down a street lined with cars in Miami I hear a symphony of automatic door locks going off. That's a problem.

I can see myself in the experience of Brother Earl Graves, Ivy League graduate, elegantly dressed businessman, publisher of Black Enterprise Magazine being stopped and frisked, briefcase in hand, by a police officer searching for a criminal described only as a black man with short hair. That's a problem.

There must be a CH-factor present in defining black manhood. That in order for one to say he is a real black man, this factor must be present. Character is one of those ingredients of the CH-factor essential to manhood. As stated by our revered founder Bishop Edgar A. Love, "In considering members in Omega, the first consideration is for MANHOOD. This, of course, is character. First and foremost, a Que must be a man of sterling worth, with unsullied character." Being Christian is

Continued on page 10



## A POEM



**Brother Karl J. Coleman, M.A.** is a police officer in Denver, CO. where he has served for over twenty years. He is also a Captain (Infantry) in the US Army Reserves. Currently pursuing a Doctorate in Management from the University of Phoenix, Brother Coleman is a member of Chi Phi Chapter in Denver, CO.

***E. E. for Margaret***  
*by Brother Karl J. Coleman*

Holding my hand you guided me by and up  
 and through and all the while  
 knowing, loving, caring, watching  
 you were all to me, how I love you so

My journey with you was brief, bittersweet;  
 love and truth you helped me meet.  
 You kneeled to me, as I couldn't reach so high  
 scold, love, hugs; lullabies

As I grew older you were not the same  
 In my grief and anger, only you were to blame  
 pointing, yelling, grabbing, loving  
 God knows I needed you; then as now

As I fell, from your hand I pulled away  
 No matter your cost and my blame, you'd stay  
 You were already where I needed to be  
 a reminder by word, of that which you knew

Of loving; I knew little enough  
 By patience, a smile, I see eye to eye.  
 In amazement to me, in short time spent  
 As I passed your shoulder, how wise you grew

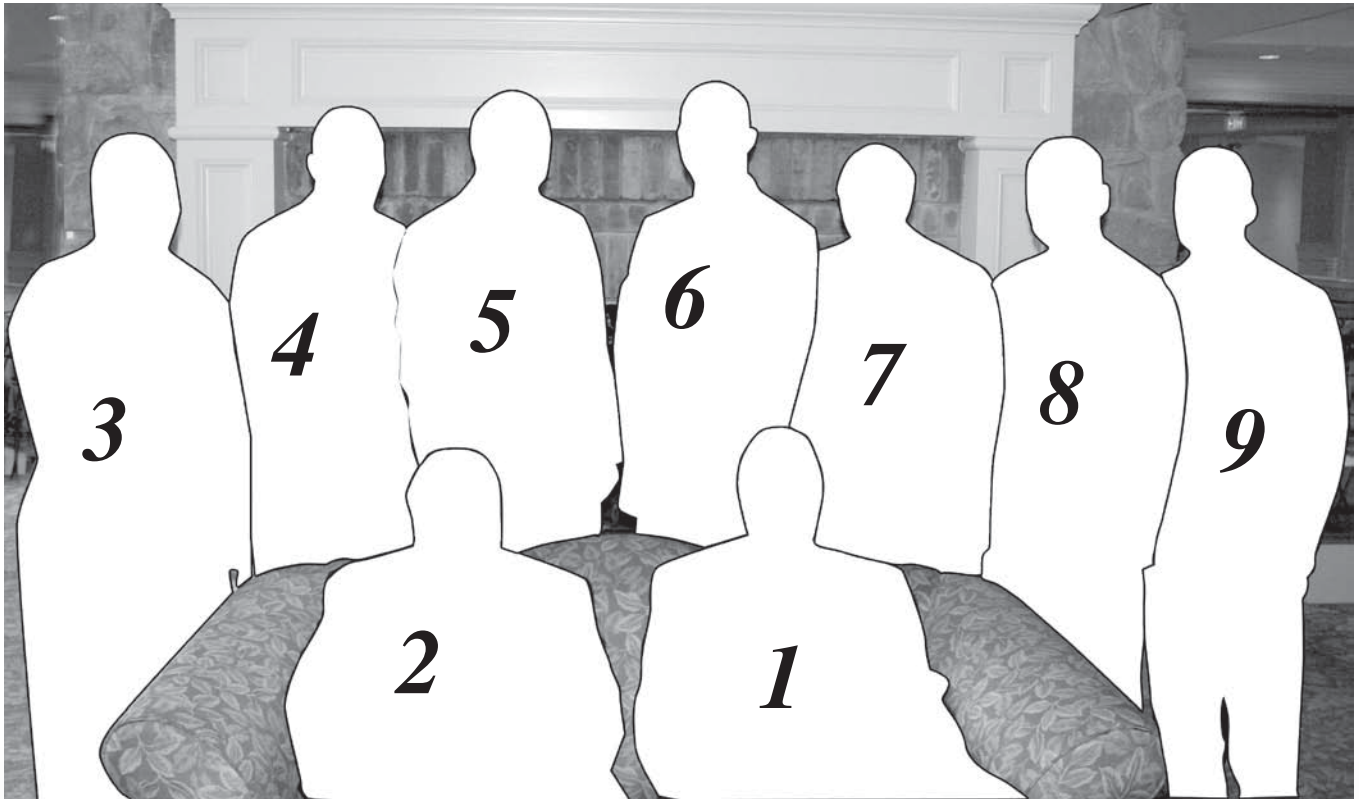
Laughing, crying, seeing, knowing  
 Your shortcomings were some of the same  
 I had passed you in height to see just above  
 but my size didn't yield the stature you'd sown

You're gone now, as I didn't wish.  
 I had much more to say and yet to do  
 and as you went; my courage was not  
 greater still; my loss, my pain

If I am not, you were and will  
 yours I can't hear, and mine beating still.  
 I an I, your spirit near  
 ever my guide, no matter my fall

You are still here, though you are gone  
 my heart, my soul, my me, my Mom.  
 From you I learned all, my laugh, my cry  
 life, love, God; goodbye.

# MEET OMEGA'S LEADERSHIP



**1. Brother Warren G. Lee, Jr. - 38th Grand Basileus,** is a financial management consultant based in Dallas, Texas, where he is the principal in the firm of Warren Lee & Associates. He works with small and medium size companies in the areas of organizational design, profit planning, taxation, and administrative logistics. Brother Lee has more than 20 years of experience in his practice areas. Brother Lee also assists, counsels, and has professional working relationships with several churches and other religious organizations in ministry and administrative development.

An active community leader, Brother Lee is member of the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce, the Irving Branch NAACP, Metro Crest Chamber of Commerce and the Dallas Community College District Accounting Advisory Committee.

He is a member of the Mount Pisgah Baptist Church where he serves on the Deacon Board, chairs the Ministry Leaders' Roundtable, and has been Trustee chairman,

Sunday School teacher and the Evangelical Choir president.

Prior to becoming the Grand Basileus, Brother Lee served for four years as First Vice Grand Basileus, six years as Grand Keeper of Finance, two years as Second Vice Grand Basileus, and two years as an Undergraduate Representative.

As a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Warren has served on most chapter, district and international committees. Warren has also been instrumental in establishing several affiliate organizations under Omega's corporate umbrella.

He is married to the former Loraine Green and is the father and grandfather of three. Warren's son, Warren III, is also a member of the fraternity.

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**2. Brother George Grace - Immediate Past Grand Basileus**, recently retired as an Executive Manager from BellSouth where he had earned several executive promotions since starting there as a management trainee in 1974. As regional manager Brother Grace was responsible for phone service for all city government municipalities in Palm Beach, Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties in Florida and for several of their emergency 911 systems.

Brother Grace, originally from Bartow, Florida, entered Tuskegee University in 1967 on a football scholarship, and was the captain of the team from 1967 to 1970. Following his graduation Grace began work as a production supervisor for General Motors in Pontiac, Michigan.

Grace joined the Omega Psi Phi fraternity in 1973 when he began graduate school at the University of Miami (Florida). He was recognized by the other members of his chapter as a leader with great potential to serve Omega on an even larger scale. So accepting the challenge, he took his first position as an officer at the local chapter of Omega Psi Phi. There he sat on every committee and moved from Chapter Basileus into district and state offices. Grace became Grand Keeper of Records and Seal in 1998 and was elected Grand Basileus of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity in 2002.

As Grand Basileus, Grace focused on changing the economic plight of minorities in America through better education, greater involvement in the political process, and early training in economics and money management. With Grace's vision the fraternity adopted as its theme: Economic Empowerment, Leading to Social and Political Change.

Brother Grace is married to Barbara, and they have three children: Jerhonda, Gregory, Keenyn.

**3. Brother Antonio (Tony) F. Knox - Grand Keeper of Finance**, has been dedicated to the fraternity for over 30 years. He began his journey in Omega through North Carolina State University's Kappa Lambda Chapter in 1978. He was a member of that chapter's charter line. He has been a two-term Basileus of the Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. in Raleigh, ascending to become the Sixth District Representative. That position gave him responsibility for all the fraternity's chapters in North Carolina and South Carolina, the second largest district within the national fraternity.

Also, in the fraternity, Knox has held several positions in the Sixth District, and International offices with numerous fraternity honors and awards. Even with his dedicated support for the fraternity's service, Brother Knox has stayed close to his community. He has served as the Chairman of the Board for the Garner Road YMCA and Chairman of the North Carolina State University Chancellors Advisory Committee.

He received his undergraduate education at North Carolina State University and was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management and Economics. He is married to Angela Dickson Knox and they have two children, Antoinette Knox, who was Miss Hampton University 2005-2006, and a son, Antonio F. Knox Jr., a sophomore and gifted student / athlete at Columbia University in New York.

**4. Brother Walter G. Body - Grand Marshall**, is a segmentation manager with the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. He is responsible for the sales and distribution of Coca-Cola products produced from the Birmingham Center.

Brother Body began his college journey at Knoxville College, and was initiated in the Spring of 1976 into the folds of Omega through Beta Epsilon chapter. Later he graduated from Miles College in with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. Fraternally, Brother Body has been a very active member of Omega having served in several capacities including, Chapter Basileus, Keeper of Records and Seal, State Representative, and International Chairman of Economic Development.

Also an active member of the Birmingham community, Brother Body is vice president of the board for the Children's Dance Foundation, and a board member of the Carraway Foundation. Brother Body is also a member of the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church where he serves as a Deacon.

He is married to Vanessa (Falls) Body and they have four children; Candace, Tiffany, Courtney, and Cory.

**5. Brother Carl A. Blunt - First Grand Basileus**, was initiated into Omega Psi Phi Fraternity through Sigma Iota chapter in Oakland, California on April 7th, 1978. He "came up" through the ranks by serving as chapter committee chairman, Vice Basileus, Basileus and has been

recognized by earning numerous awards including chapter Omega Man of the Year multiple times.

On the District level, Brother Blunt maintained his active involvement and received several awards by serving on numerous committees, including 1980 Conclave "Smoker" chairman, Deputy District Marshal, District Newsletter Chairman, Northern California State Representative and served as the District's first Intake Chairman.

Brother Blunt was elected and served as the 12th District Representative an unprecedented two non-consecutive terms. From 1993 to 1995 as a member of Sigma Iota, and 1998 to 1999 as a member of Phi Iota.

Brother Blunt served on the Supreme Council (under five Grand Basilei), and as the International Social Action Chairman

Prior to his election as 1st Vice Grand Basileus he served as the Grand Keeper of Finance. Brother Blunt retired in April 2005 from Bank of America, as the Senior Vice President of mortgage lending for the Southwest Region. His area of responsibility covered the states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and a portion of Texas.

Brother Blunt holds a Bachelor's Degree from San Jose State, a Master's Degree from San Francisco State and is currently completing his PhD. He and his wife Jacqueline split their time between residences in Scottsdale and San Francisco, visiting their 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

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**6. Brother Brian S. Gundy** - Second Vice Grand Basileus, a native of Monroe, LA. is currently an Undergraduate Development Officer for Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. He travels to all colleges and universities where Omega's chapters are housed to evaluate and facilitate proper chapter operations and fraternity decorum. Brother Gundy's leadership began in junior high school, and continued throughout his college experience where he was named Student Director and Head Drum Major for the World famous Grambling State Tiger Marching Band. Also while a student at Grambling, Brother Gundy joined the ranks of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity. He received his Bachelor of Music Education degree in 2007.

Prior to becoming the 2nd Vice Grand Basileus, he served as the Chapter Chaplain, Social Action Chairman, and step captain for his local undergraduate chapter at

GSU. He also served on the Grand Tribunal and as the Undergraduate Representative to Omega's Regional Council for the South, for the state of Louisiana.

He is a member of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Atlanta, GA where he also resides.

Brother Gundy is the son of Adora Bell Gundy, a native of Bernice, LA. and Joseph Michael Gundy, a native of Rayville, LA. Both parents reside in Dallas, TX.

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**7. Brother Farrell Jackson Duncombe, Sr.** - Grand Chaplain, currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Saint Paul A.M.E. Church, the home church of Mrs. Rosa L. Parks, in Montgomery, Alabama. He formerly served as Presiding Elder of the Montgomery District African Methodist Churches – Ninth Episcopal District for nine years.

Upon graduating in 1959 from the Booker T. Washington High School in Montgomery, he received the Bachelor of Science Degree in Music Education from Florida A&M University in 1963. It was while a student at FAMU that Brother Duncombe was initiated through Upsilon Psi Chapter, and became a member of our beloved fraternity. Brother Duncombe has advanced degrees from Alabama State University, International Seminary, and an honoray doctorate from Monrovia College in Liberia, West Africa.

Besides his six terms as the Grand Chaplain for our fraternity, Brother Duncombe has served as Basileus and Chaplain for his local chapters throughout his career. Brother Duncombe is responsible in large part for reviewing and revising the wording of the Omega ritual.

His other Civic and professional affiliations include memberships in Kappa Kappa Psi Honorary Band Fraternity, Inc.; Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity; American Beauty Lodge F&AM; Board Member, Cleveland Avenue Y.M.C.A; Board of Trustees, Daniel Payne College; and, Board Member, Capital City Boys and Girls Club. Updated the wording of the Omega Ritual for more clarity and effectiveness.

Brother Farrell J. Duncombe is married to Juanita Delores Harris and they are the proud parents of two children: United States Army Lt. Col. Farrell J. Duncombe, II. (Antoinette), and Mrs. Djuana T. Wilson, Card Services Manager for First Tuskegee Bank.; and they are the very proud grandparents of Farrell Jackson Duncombe, III, and Loryn Nicole Duncombe.

**8. Brother Charles Allen Bruce** - Grand Keeper of Records and Seal, is originally from Alton, Illinois and in high school was a member of the National Honor Society and lettered in Track and Cross-Country. Charles received a National Merit Scholarship and received his degree in Electrical Engineering from Purdue University where he entered the Fraternity through Rho Sigma Chapter in 1969. Charles began his career with the General Electric Company where he held management positions in Product Design and Manufacturing Operations

In 1988, Brother Bruce was invited to Washington, D.C. by President Reagan to receive a Certificate of Merit from the Congress of the United States for his contributions to the science and profession of Quality Assurance. Brother Bruce joined the Emerson Electric Company in 1990 as Director of Quality and was recently promoted to the position of Vice President, Process Improvement.

His working career has provided him opportunities to travel extensively in Europe, Asia, Mexico and South America. Brother Bruce is a Life Member the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and has previously served the Fraternity as a Chapter Basileus, District Marshall, Chairman of the International Achievement Committee, Chairman of the International Recommendations Committee and 10th District Representative. In July of 2006 at the Grand Conclave in Little Rock, Arkansas, Brother Bruce was elected to the Office of Grand Keeper of Records and Seal.

Brother Bruce and his wife, Sandra, are the parents of one 20 year-old child , Lyndsay Nicole, who is a student at Indiana University. Brother Bruce is the son of Rev. and Mrs. Willis A. Bruce of Alton, Illinois

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**9. Brother Michael R. D. Adams** - Grand Counselor, is a partner in the law firm of DeCuir, Clark & Adams, L.L.P. Brother Adams was born in Bogalusa, Louisiana and attended Southern University. While a student at Southern, Adams was the Student Government Association President for two years, and in 1985 received the Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. He pursued a law degree from the Southern University Law Center, and in 1988 received the Juris Doctorate degree. Later that year Brother Adams was admitted to the bar in Louisiana and U.S. Middle and Eastern District Courts of Louisiana.

Brother Adams is very active in his community and is a member of several organizations including the 100 Black

Men of Metro Baton Rouge, Capital Area Baseball League, A.C. Lewis YMCA, and the Louisiana Advisory Council to the United States Civil Rights Commission. He is chapter basileus for the Lambda Kappa Kappa Graduate Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc in Baton Rouge, LA.

Brother Adams is a member of Gloryland Misisonary Baptist Church, where he serves as the Chairman of the Deacon Board.

He is married to Brunette Hillard Adams, and they have three children; Langston, Lyle and Elise.

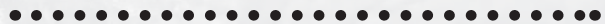


## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Bro. Richardson,

I just reviewed the Winter 2008 Oracle. It is good to see in print the intellect that runs through Omega. The diversity of the articles shows the diversity in our fraternity. Just another example that Omegas not only play and work hard but think hard as well.

Bro. John Berkley  
Vice Basileus, Pi Omega Chapter  
Baltimore, MD



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

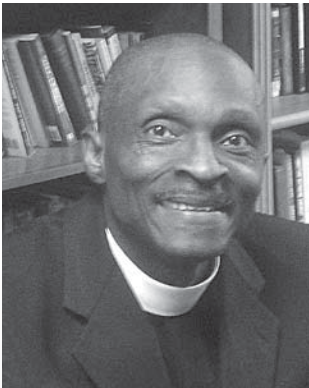




## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

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

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

***Brother Theodore A. Spearman, D.Min.***

is the Senior Pastor of Clinton Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, in Hickory, NC. Prior to that assignment Brother Spearman was the Dean of Student Affairs at Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, NC. He is the former basileus, and a member of Tau Alpha Chapter, in Hickory, NC.

***Brother Charles Johnson, JR., M.A.***

is a retired Director for the U. S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Team in Dallas Texas. Brother Johnson has served the fraternity since July 2003 as the moderator and facilitator for our National Leadership Conferences and as the Moderator at our Grand Conclave in 2004 and 2006. Brother Johnson entered Omega through Eta Chapter at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi in December 1963. Brother Johnson holds the MBA from Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH and the Bachelor of Science degree from Alcorn A & M College Lorman, Mississippi.

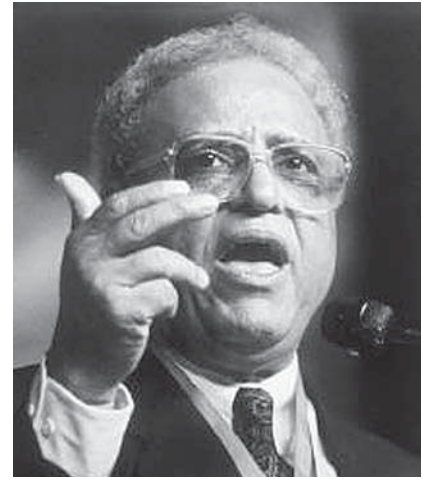
## OMEGA FIRSTS



Brother Lawrence Douglas Wilder



Brother Jesse Louis Jackson



Brother Benjamin Lawson Hooks

Throughout American history great Omega men have successfully broken racial barriers to become first in respected fields of science, sports, politics and other professional areas. Those listed below are but a few of the men who represent a generation of college educated and charismatic brothers, who with lives of courage and quiet dignity, achieved major cultural milestones.

**Brother Carter G. Woodson** organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, September 9, 1915 becoming the first serious study of Black Life in America.

**Brother De Hart Hubbard**, a University of Michigan sprinter; was the first African American to represent the United States in the Olympic Games (1924).

**Brother Frank "Tick" Coleman** was one of the first black Eagle Scouts, earning and receiving this award October, 1926 at the age of 15. Coincidentally, Brother Coleman was born in 1911.

**Brother Charles Richard Drew** was the first person to develop the blood bank. His introduction of a system for the storing of blood plasma revolutionized the medical profession. Drew first utilized his system on the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific during World War II. He organized the world's first blood bank project in 1940 - Blood for Britain. Brother Drew also established the American Red Cross Blood Bank, of which he was the first director.

**Brother William H. Hastie** was both the first African-American governor of the United States Virgin Islands

(1946) and the first African American judge on a Federal appeals court (1937). He was considered by some as a pioneer of the civil rights movement in the United States.

**Brother Walter Ridley** became the first black to receive a doctorate degree from a United States southern state university when he received the Ph.D. at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville June 23, 1953.

**Brother Robert Clifton Weaver** served as the first United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (also known as HUD) from 1966 to 1968. He was the first African American to hold a cabinet-level (Presidential Cabinet) position in the United States.

**Brother Robert Henry Lawrence** successfully completed the Air Force Flight Test Pilot Training School at Edwards AFB, California in June, 1967. That same month he was selected by the USAF as an astronaut in the Air Force's Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program, thus becoming the first African-American astronaut.

**Brother Benjamin Lawson Hooks** was nominated as a member to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) by President Richard M. Nixon in 1972. Shortly

thereafter the United States Senate confirmed the nomination and thus Brother Hooks became the first African American to be appointed to the Commission. He served as a member of the FCC until July 1977.

**Brother Clarence E. Lightner** was the first popularly elected mayor of Raleigh, North Carolina and the first African-American elected mayor of a metropolitan Southern city. Brother Lightner, a Democrat, was also the first and to date only black mayor of Raleigh, serving in office from 1973 to 1975.

**Brother Clifford Alexander**, lawyer, businessman and public servant was the first African-American Secretary of the Army. He served in that position under the Carter Administration from February 14, 1977, to January 20, 1981. During this time he concentrated upon making the all-volunteer Army work, stressed programs to enhance professionalism, and emphasized the award of contracts to minority businesses.

**Brother Jesse Louis Jackson**, in 1984, became the first African-American male to mount a nationwide campaign for President of the United States, running as a Democrat.

**Brother Lawrence Douglas Wilder** was the first African American to be elected as governor of a U.S. state, and the second to serve as governor. Brother Wilder served as Governor of Virginia, its first African-American, from 1990 to 1994.

**Brother Vernon Eulion Jordan, Jr.** was selected in 1992 to be an advisor to President Bill Clinton, and served on his transition team, the first time in recorded history an African American had been chosen for such an important position.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

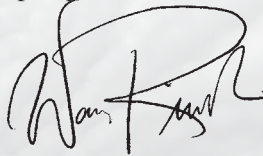
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another necessary component of the CH-factor. For true manliness encompasses the traditional Christian conception of manhood which includes chivalry. Men who are Christians aim always to be honorable, honest, generous, just and protective of women and children. These Christian qualities are 'worth dying for'. Charity is also a critical component of the CH-factor. Relief to the oppressed, and generosity to those less fortunate are vital activities for black manhood. When these are present in our maleness, I submit that we do our part in diminishing the stereotypes that are wrongfully perpetuated and reduce the fears that shroud the perception of our worthiness.

A black male cannot afford to allow manhood to be something extraneous to our existence, as the color of one's eyes or hair. But black manhood must be intrinsic

to our being. Black manhood must embody the very essence of our being.

This issue highlights the leaders of our beloved fraternity who demonstrate the virtues of true manhood in their various professional arenas and personal lives. These men are not just existentially men of Omega, they are essentially men of Omega. May the Lord prosper our efforts.



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



on these benchmark tests. This exercise of student's "(reciting) their lessons correctly" while not even being allowed time to memorize, as Dewey warns against on both tasks, frighteningly accelerates the crisis.

### Influence of the Nature of Studies

There are three types of studies according to Dewey. Those three types of studies are: the acquisition of skill; acquiring of knowledge; and an appeal to abstract thinking, also called either "reasoning" or disciplinary studies. Each type has its 'special pitfall,' as Dewey calls them, in its application in educational endeavors. The general problem with rigid methods toward acquiring the fruits of each type seems to lie in the inability to apply each type to each individual result or need. There are, however, more specific explanations for failing to acquire said fruits of affective application of each student respectively.

An idea may be developed by an individual, quite possibly very profound in potential, but can be lost due to that individual's inability to conform said thought to addressing said results. An additional dimension to this dilemma seems to only be magnified if one has only been 'trained' in a system that values quantitatively measured performance rather than a qualitatively measured performance. Although faculty knows that a qualitative measure is more in-line with achieving the growth of students academically, all too often administrations requires quantitative measures while inhibiting the teacher's ability to fully employ the truly effective, qualitatively amenable, teaching methods. These methods are directly related to the Deweyian suggestions provided thus far. Testimony to this end is universal among staff meetings in the school to both Administration and third-party small school coaches/facilitators. A more collaborative perspective and suggestion toward adopting a more qualitative measure are explored in the final section of this paper.

The next type of study is the *acquisition of skill*. The environment within which skill is most valued, and not the manner in which said skill is acquired, only manifests false results. As stated, "Sheer imitation, dictation of steps to be taken, mechanical drill, may give results most quickly and yet strengthen traits likely to be fatal to reflective power." The importance, or value, is in the pupil producing a thing "with no knowledge of any reason except that by so doing he gets his result more speedily...." (Dewey, 2006, p. 336)

And third, there is the type of study called *the acquiring of knowledge*. Dewey, in defining knowledge, makes the distinction between the foundation of information

and wisdom. Information requires no special training in its acquisition; for it is "merely acquired and stored up." On the other hand, wisdom is useful information wherein the finest fruit of the training of thought is displayed, not an end in itself, but useful in moving one toward satisfying an end-in-view. The ideal that Dewey is attempting to convey seems to be represented in three statements. Intelligence provides the possibility for the acquisition of skill. Knowledge by osmosis only contributes to the potential for falling prey to the pitfalls of acquiring skill, for example. For knowledge by osmosis is only superficial and not constitutionally bound. Said differently, one tends to trust more in acting upon an experience similar to one already successfully navigated for one's self. Now, if one must act given an experience only heard about indirectly and now bringing to bare its presence, one tends to act more timidly or not at all. Knowledge as acquired by interacting experiences seems to therefore be superior, for the acquisition of knowledge is not a 'spectator sport.' And that the requisite for memorization is not a wholly fruitful form of thinking.

### The Influence of Current Aims and Ideals

The *instruction* and the *moral discipline* reflected in an educational system are indicative of current aims and ideals. (Benne and Garrard, 2003). When considering instruction and moral discipline, the value seems to be placed more on the ideal product rather than that of the mental process. The 'conducts of life,' i.e., moral discipline or behavior, is acknowledged as the deepest problem to address in not just the educational life, but life in general.

When endeavoring to address an issue of behavior, it is of essential importance to engage the student in active inquiry and careful deliberation. For in this manner one is best assured of forming the most favorable habits toward learning usefully. The academy, as dictated within its comprehensive plan, seeks to increase discipline including more strict rules toward suspension, expulsion, and removal from the classroom. An example of the more restrictive discipline policy is reflected by the attendance component. (For example, excessive absences can lead to suspensions.) There are limited remedies within disciplinary policies. Many make assignments to some form of special or alternative education. Clearly these methods are antithetical to a productive method of discipline toward 'training in thought.'

### Conclusion

The intentions of school districts, administrators, faculty and staff toward the betterment of the educational environment seem to be noble, but conflicting. There is an incongruity in holding on to a failed method of

education (quantitative, results oriented), and on the other hand, realizing at some level the importance of implementing a system of learning similar to the one conveyed by Dewey in 1910 (qualitative, process oriented). Unfortunately, Dewey only gives hints towards how one may transition from the quantitative to a qualitative educational environment. This problem was addressed in a 1997 article by Eugene Eubanks, Ralph Parish, and Dianne Smith titled *Changing Discourse in Schools* (Eubanks, et al, 2003). Eubanks et al calls the maintaining of current schooling practices and results as Discourse I, and, the implementation of a substantial school reform as Discourse II.

According to Eubanks et al, one must first realize that Discourse I is the prevailing thought. Critical theory analysis will assist us towards the dissipating of unconscious barriers such as existing cultural norms, ways of thinking, and accepted practices, that make it difficult to engage in objective evaluation of the systemic problems inherent in the theoretical underpinnings of Discourse I. Eubanks claims further that by definition, Discourse II creates an educational environment that is continuously evolving and developing because the participants are continuously evolving due to learning. Therefore, Discourse II, naturally conflicts with Discourse I because of its ever changing components that are "part of a purposeful structure." (Eubanks, et.al, 2003)

To resolve this conflict in paradigms between Discourse I and Discourse II, one must consider how each perspective's underlying beliefs was acquired. According to the basic pragmatic principle purported by both Peirce and James, belief is the basis for developing habits. Upon reconciling two conflicting beliefs, one must determine whether said belief and subsequent habit, is based on a *priori* reasoning, authority, tenacity, or via scientific method. This distinction is made by Peirce and its relevance is significant. Although a measure of meaning lay among each type, Peirce purports that the most objective basis for belief is the belief that is substantiated by the method of science; for the other methods lay in some more distinctive, and therefore fallible, human determination. Therefore, an analysis of Discourses I and II should be objective and scientific in order to determine common beliefs and underlying values.

Lastly, upon determining mutual beliefs, and scientifically concluding that Discourse II satisfies the ultimate goal of those beliefs, all involved must be aware and willing to allow the natural evolution of change to occur. This will not take place without conflict. For without the conflict, there can be no real change can occur. The change

process is natural, continual, evolving, and susceptible to chance events.

Thus, if one considers each discourse as distinct paradigms, there are two possible ways to author a change from one to the other. The first is through an abrupt and "violent" collision and overriding of Discourse I by Discourse II through changes in policies, recruitment, hiring, training practices of administrators and faculty, and a policy driven shift in curricula. The second method is more gradual, more civil, where doubts of one become so insurmountable that the beliefs and/or habits of its consistency are eventually eroded. Given an eroded foundation, no house may stand.

In summary, this writer endorses Dewey (supported by James and Pierce) who purports a qualitative method of training in thinking as opposed to training students for results. In this model, both the student and the teacher, engage in qualitative and therefore evolving, discourse on learning, which allows them to adapt to and interact with their environment and course materials, while continuing to grow more wholly toward fulfilled, and successful results. While grades and test scores are important for school success, training a student to think is important for life.

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# Moving Toward Theo-Political Incorrectness

By Brother T. Anthony Spearman, D. Min.

As a pastor I am extremely concerned with what I refer to as the somnambulistic state that has overcome African Americans, a people of color. I feel compelled to ask the rhetorical question, "Is Dr. USA clever enough to manufacture, prescribe and dispense a dose of tranquilizer to at least three generations without their knowledge?" Martin Luther King, Jr. would have answered a resounding yes and so do I. In his Letter From Birmingham Jail, King responded to some criticisms calling his activities, "unwise and untimely." In that treatise King said,

*"Actually time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."*<sup>1</sup>

If we are to use time constructively 'the appalling silence of the good people' must end. We seem to have grown content with our injection of the drug of gradualism which delays justice and maintains injustice. Our silence is a shameful condition. Even more shameful is our choice to remain in our shameful condition which reduces us to the prototype 'Steppin' Fetchet' our forefathers sought so hard to rise above.

Have we been so entrenched in imperialistic ideologies and plantation-like philosophies that we have taken our eyes off any Promised Land? Have we once and for all time made our decision to live out our lives in Egypt, cozying up to governmental powers on the right or cushioned by secular organizations on the left? In my mind that amounts to nothing more than mental castration. We are not eunuchs! We are men. So why do we conform to a political system that wraps itself in the mantle of professed Christianity while its vicious practices crush the lives of millions? This 'democratic' system was driven by an overpowering practicality that developed a network of intricate controls in the southern states, backed by laws, courts, armed forces, and race prejudice of the nation's political leaders.<sup>2</sup> It still prevails today. This system demonizes victims and heaps praises on their oppressors. This system rewards the rich as it punishes the needy. How long will our silence conform to the 'Massa's' rule?

With nooses being hung all over this 'land of the free and home of the brave' the evidence is quite clear that a clarion call to break away from conformity is upon us. To people of African descent, the noose is seen as a racially charged symbol, depicting the once widespread lynching of African Americans. It is an icon of butchery and badgery, slavery and savagery. Say what you will or may, the noose is not a trinket with which any of us choose to play. African Americans view the hate filled image as a blatant threat that someone seeks to denigrate, emasculate, annihilate and eradicate us as a people. We are not as free as some think we are. We have not come as far as some think we have come. As a matter of fact we are still being lynched.

The multitudinous disparities that plague people of color are 'noose' enough to deal with. They will inevitably asphyxiate the life out of us if we continue to sit passively believing that God's will for us is to live oppressed lives. Does this type of oppression offer passage into the kingdom of God? If so then why did God call Moses to go tell old Pharaoh to let His people go? His will was already being carried out. Furthermore if God purposed us to live oppressed lives then Christ's words "I have come that they might have life and have it to the full (John 10:10b KJV) would be empty to us and meant only for the 'have-mores' favored by George W. Bush. There is too much evidence to the contrary.

Apparently a great number of Omega Men similarly agree that conformity is no longer acceptable. Wherever I have gone fighting for the cause of justice it has been encouraging to see so many beloved fraternity brothers on the front lines. When justice workers took a stand against Smithfield Foods in Tar Heel, NC, whose workers are being forced to work under some of the most brutal conditions in the US, Omega Men were there. When marching for the Jena 6 in Jena, Louisiana, whose story proves that an ambitious District Attorney can ruin young black lives with the stroke of a pen, Omega Men were there. When Marching on Hate Crimes in the nation's capitol, Omega Men were there standing upon the four cardinal principles that demand movement toward Theo-political incorrectness.

Theo-political incorrectness is a term used to describe actions that cause offense to the present diseased political system. It is supported by a true and correct interpretation of Romans 13:1-7<sup>3</sup>. We are not to frivolously disregard

civil authority unless governmental authorities are clearly not promoting civil order. When Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee (D – Texas) passionately confronted Donald Washington, the first African American in the post of U.S. Attorney for Louisiana’s Western district at the recent Congressional Hearings on Jena she demonstrated Theo-political incorrectness. When the Christ said to the disciples, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night” (Matthew 26:31b KJV) He was offering a description for Theo-political incorrectness. It is diametrically opposed to imperialistic ideologies. It militates against any present power construct which has a form of godliness that actually denies the full power of God. It will not shrink in the face of adversity. It courageously confronts that which gives the appearance of evil. When we move toward Theo-political incorrectness we are forced to take sides against every action, system, policy and institution that excludes any of God’s children from the fullest fruits of life for any reason.

One of the past presidential administrations that screamed for the application of Theo-political incorrectness was that of Ronald Reagan. Reagan cut funds for the already under funded community health centers by eighteen percent and denied seven hundred fifty thousand Americans access to health services. Reagan rendered two hundred thousand severely disabled people ineligible to receive their only source of income, disability. He cut federal housing by two thirds and supported the apartheid regime of South Africa without ever uttering a word of criticism. We silently allowed the ravaging of African American life until the present political administration led by George W. Bush now roars for the application of Theo-political incorrectness. Bush continues to exclude millions from the fullness that life has to offer.

The sheer audacity of both these men looms large. Both dared to suggest that God and their Christian faith guided their presidential policies...

The record of George W. Bush is more disgusting than Reagan’s. In the early days of his campaign Bush repeatedly affirmed, “I believe God wants me to run for president.” Then Bush tried to eliminate overtime pay for eight million workers. Bush refused to extend

unemployment benefits for those forced from the workforce by the economic recession. His tax cuts make the rich richer. The war Bush got us into supports cronyism. His VP Dick Cheney profits daily every day the war drags on. The number of Americans living below the poverty line without health insurance has increased by three million. Thousands of home foreclosures have been forced upon African Americans and the list goes on.

The sheer audacity of both these men looms large. Both dared to suggest that God and their Christian faith guided their presidential policies. According to Paul Achtemeier,

*a government that claims for itself the total and absolute devotion which a creature can give only to its Creator, ceases in the moment it makes that claim to be an agent of divine order, or a divine servant. It has become instead an idolatrous opponent of the living God.<sup>3</sup>*

Both policies militate against the teachings of Jesus which are filled with admonitions to care for the poor and dispossessed. Yet the audacity of Reagan and Bush signifies a deeper problem.

In short, both policies contradict the doctrine of the Judeo-Christian tradition which respects the integrity of others, all others. As Jesus once told his disciples, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you” (Mark 10:42 NIV). Hence the problem which lies beneath the problem is the belief system of those who function as the religious guides of these two American leaders. When we dig to the root of that belief system we discover that this nation’s politics are deeply embedded in idolatry.

Howard Zinn writes of a Catholic priest in the Americas named Father Sandoval who wrote to a church functionary in Europe to inquire whether the capture, transport and enslavement of African blacks was legal by church doctrine. A letter dated March 12, 1610, from Brother Luis Brandaon to Sandoval provides the answer:

*Your Reverence writes me that you would like to know whether the Negroes who are sent to your parts have been legally captured. To this I reply that I think your Reverence should have no scruples on this point, because this is a matter which has been questioned by the Board of Conscience in Lisbon, and all its members are learned and conscientious men. Nor did the bishops who were in Sao Thome, Cape Verde, and here in Loando – all learned and virtuous men – find fault with it. We have been here ourselves for forty years and there have been among us*



*very learned Fathers...never did they consider trade the trade as illicit. Therefore we and the Fathers of Brazil buy these slaves for our service without [emphasis mine] any scruple...<sup>6</sup>*

Upon the altar of this nation's politics is a warped theological construct which holds certain truths to be self evident, that all men are not created equal. These colonists used scripture for additional support.<sup>7</sup> One passage in particular about Noah and his son Ham (Genesis 9:20-25) was used to consign 'fetish-serving benighted Africa' to everlasting servitude. People of color came to be viewed as nothing more than beasts of burden that possessed no soul.

In the uncertain days of late 1860 and 1861, the pulpits of the United States were transformed into instruments of political theology.<sup>8</sup> The will of God as revealed first in the Scriptures and then through the workings of divine providence was clear to ministers as individuals; however, as a group quite a different story emerged. On no subject was the cacophony more obvious and more painful than on the question of the Bible and slavery. This country was in the midst of a full blown theological crisis.

During those times, Henry Ward Beecher, the most renowned preacher in the North, viewed slavery as the evil for which the United States as a nation most desperately needed to repent and called it "the most alarming and most fertile cause of national sin."<sup>9</sup> But that same Bible spoke differently to those who rose to speak in the South. The South's most respected minister, James Henley Thornwell took an opposite position. Slavery, to him, was the "good and merciful" way of organizing "labor which Providence has given us."<sup>10</sup> It was an intricate and powerful system of control developed to conserve a way of life.

Further research disclosed that Lyman Beecher, although the father of Henry Ward Beecher, opposed abolitionism and its radical position and refused to offer classes to African Americans. These events sparked discussions about abolition that led to the beginning of the Civil War. The elder Beecher was a leader of the Second Great Awakening of the United States. Interestingly enough, the Disciples of Christ the denomination to which Ronald Reagan held membership grew out of that movement.

What does all this mean? It means that a complex web of historical threads have been weaved together to ensnare us. Disentanglement from the web of complexity will never occur apart from a due diligence to battle against it. We cannot afford to give up or slow down. If we retreat to silence we dig our own graves. At the time of the adoption

of the Constitution, the whole country seemed to have had but one judgment, one wish, and one prophecy – that the whole continent should be dedicated to liberty. The task, as I see it, is to continually expose the idolatrous system for what it is. Foundationally speaking it is ensconced in a fundamental theology that still prevails in this country. It is a theology that breaks the backs of the oppressed by convincing them that God is on the side of the oppressor and holds them responsible for their situations in life. In order to break free of the web that grips us we need to become more spiritually astute and resurrect the true nature of the Christ which can lead our people toward victorious living.

Recently a colleague recommended that I read a book that far exceeded my expectations. It was entitled "The Politics of Jesus" by Obery M. Hendricks, Jr., a biblical scholar, activist and minister. In the text Hendricks offers some amazing insights to the true revolutionary nature of the teachings of Jesus Christ and how they have been corrupted over time. Hendricks' scholarly brilliance re-creates the life and mind of the Jesus our world needs today; whose first coming was incredibly radical. But down through the years that radicalism has been diluted into the meek and mild servant who does nothing more than to maintain the status quo. Confronted by the types of global wars being waged in our world today, including gender-ism, terrorism, racism, tax relief-ism, political-ism, socioeconomic classism, Christians everywhere need to lay Mary's little baby to rest in the manger in exchange for the Christ who willingly died on an old rugged cross, yet still lives in the hearts of many; the Christ who gives voice to the voiceless and dignity to the disgraced; the Christ who sharpens the double edged sword of God's Word so that it instantly transforms and heals the heart. His goal was the realization of the kingdom of God. I am always looking for ways to unleash the power of Jesus so that my people can live victorious lives.

I was particularly impressed with one of the insights found in Hendricks powerful book; one brought forth in Part two of the text. There he refers to Jesus as a strategic leader whose tactfulness was proactive and intentional. By using Mark 5:1-10 Hendricks conveys a stunning prophetic message that speaks truth to power.

*They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day*

*among the tombs and in the hills he would cry and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he [emphasis mine] begged Jesus again and again not to send them [emphasis mine] out of the area. (Mark 5:1-10 New International Version)*

Note the emphasis placed on the pronouns in verse ten. The man in the text is being viewed allegorically as a representative character or a group of people and the evil spirit is being viewed as something that has possessed the people and caused such self-destructive chaos among them. The question then becomes who or what was that force or demonic presence that had them possessed? The demon identifies itself as "Legion; for we are many." At the time that Jesus lived, "legion" referred to none other than the Roman legions, the powerful and brutal Roman army, which, in fact, had occupied – was in possession of – Israel.<sup>11</sup>

The United States of America under its present construct is Rome revitalized. She is a country with an unclean spirit. If the man in the text represented African Americans living in the tombs with an unclean spirit, how would you respond? We are guilty of the spread of this unclean spirit unless we rise against it. During these critical and perilous social times, when our people and our country have been plagued by a plethora of disparities, it is imperative that we break from our appalling silence. The present system ravages communities and devastates families. It disenfranchises fathers and produces gangs. What have you done with the God given artillery you have to fight such a great evil? Have you withdrawn to an 'appalling silence?'

I refuse to prostitute the pulpit God gave me to teach untruths for then I could not expect my people to do differently. The payoff for silence results in children deprived of worthwhile educations. The payoff for silence is millions of seniors who have little to no health insurance to pay for medicines that far exceed their meager incomes. The payoff for silence is victimization by unscrupled predatory lenders who snatch our real estate. The payoff for silence results in the payment of 30% more for mortgages than our counterparts. The payoff for silence results in the upsurge of a black KKK and inordinate numbers of blacks being incarcerated. All of these are symptoms of our silence and evidence of an unclean spirit.

Embedded in our cardinal principles is a formula capable of leading people to victorious living and upon them we must stand. Our manhood will have to be courageous enough to elevate us from the stigmatic 3/5th compromise proclaimed for us to recover the 2/5th increasing the value of our people. Our scholarship will have to be sharp enough to cut through our present entrenchment to systemic slavery and land us safe on freedom's side. Our perseverance will have to be resolute enough to challenge the principalities and powers that seek to destroy us and the quality of our uplift will have to be so self-sacrificing that we will naturally love our neighbor as ourselves.

As a person I have made a commitment to confront tyranny exercised in the name of religion. Justice has yet to roll down [in this land] like the rivers and righteousness as a mighty stream (Amos 5:24). Therefore I militate against any force that delays and denies justice. Hence I will follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you (Deuteronomy 16:20 NIV). I will continue moving toward Theo-political incorrectness.

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# Branding in Omega

## Claiming Our Future

A frank discussion of the ills facing the Black male and an appeal to Black male Greek letter organizations to intercede. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. is cited as being uniquely positioned to have an immediate impact.

*By Brother Charles Johnson, Jr.*

State Senator Anthony C. “Tony” Hill (D-FL) is on a mission. He says, “Let’s shut down a prison and close a funeral home.” In addition, he wants to bring branding to Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. However, I am getting ahead of myself. After exchanging pleasantries, we sat down across the table from each other and I opened the conversation with the question, “are black men under attack in America?” He paused for a moment and answered the question with a question, “When have we not been under attack?”

Over the next hour, we talked generally about the numbers that affect black men in America. Since the conversation, I have collected the following facts.

### Statistics Show Black Men Worse Off

Black men suffer far worse health than any other racial group in America. There are a number of reasons for this. They include racial discrimination, a lack of affordable health services, poor health education, cultural barriers, poverty, employment that does not carry health insurance, insufficient medical, and social services catering for black men.

### Black Male Health Statistics:

Black men live 7.1 years less than other racial groups. They have higher death rates than women do for all leading causes of death. They experience disproportionately higher death rates in all the leading causes of death. Forty percent of black men die prematurely from cardiovascular disease as compared to 21% of white men. They have a higher incidence and a higher rate of death from oral cancer. Black men are 5 times more likely to die of HIV/AIDS than any other group or cohort. That is the subject of another article.

### Other Health Statistics

Forty-four percent of black men are considered overweight, 24% are obese. Black men suffer more

preventable oral diseases that are treatable. They have a higher incidence of diabetes and prostate cancer, and a high suicide rate. It is the third leading cause of death in 15 to 24 year olds <sup>1</sup>

The number of inmates in adult correctional facilities in the United States has topped two million for the first time, the Census Bureau said on September 27, 2007. But in a reversal from 2000, more Americans over all now live in college dormitories than in prisons.

A number of studies, including one by the Justice Policy Institute, which advocates alternatives to incarceration, have pointed out that over all, more black men are in prison than are enrolled in colleges and universities. <sup>2</sup>

The number of state and federal prisoners in 2006 was more than double the prison population in 1990 and up slightly from nearly 2 million in 2000. Women accounted for 10 percent of the inmates in 2006, compared with 8 percent in 1990.<sup>3</sup>

It all seems so overwhelming, so what do we do? Where do we start to turn things around? We start by changing the paradigm from “me” to “we”. We must eliminate the implicit message flowing from the notion – my family and me are doing well; you and your family can go to hell.

Organizations like Omega Psi Phi fraternity, Inc., must come out of the shadows and deliberately posture themselves for more visibility based on accepting a higher stake in the outcome of the problems. Senator Tony Hill believes the following concepts offer a solution to the problem.

### Branding In Omega

The branding I am referring to is the type described by Wikipedia on the internet. Brand management is the application of marketing techniques to a specific product, product line, or brand. It seeks to increase the product’s

perceived value to the customer and thereby increase brand franchise and brand equity. Marketers see a brand as an implied promise that the level of quality people have come to expect from a brand will continue with future purchases of the same product. This may increase sales by making a comparison with competing products more favorable. It may also enable the manufacturer to charge more for the product. The value of the brand is determined by the amount of profit it generates for the manufacturer. This results from a combination of increased sales and increased price.

Senator Hill believes our survival and success are in education. There is an apparent absence of strong black male role models in our schools. This absence may contribute to the uncertainty and indifference experienced by black boys from kindergarten to high school. The statistics show the result of this uncertainty and indifference – black boys acting out their frustration by becoming unruly in the classroom. What follows are discipline issues and unusually high referrals to special education.

...the percentage of Black students in classes for educable mentally retarded pupils has exceeded the generally accepted 2% expected level...

Kimberly Suzette Peterz writes in her article entitled *The Overrepresentation of Black Students in Special Education Classrooms*<sup>4</sup>, “The Florida Department of Education, a state which keeps some of the most accurate records on the racial and ethnic composition of special education classrooms, reports that for the last past five years the percentage of Black students in classes for educable mentally retarded pupils has exceeded the generally accepted 2% expected level<sup>5</sup>. Not only is this data alarming, but it has also been recognized that some Blacks, mostly males, are misdiagnosed or misplaced into special education programs. The numbers are disproportionate and an overrepresentation of Black placed in special education. A continuing problem in the public school system is the disproportionate and overrepresentation of Black students in certain types of special education classrooms<sup>6</sup>.”

So, what is the connection between unruly black boys in school and branding? Currently, very little; but if Senator Hill has his way, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity will become an agent of change. To start, we must own the problem. What is happening to our children in our schools is our problem. We cannot ignore it, quarantine it, or blame it away. It is. And if we ever hope to stand on equal footing with others in this country and in the world, we must be deliberate in our approach to resolving the problems that confront us.

The first beachhead lies in the elementary school classroom. Many of the statistics say, without saying, the absence of a strong black male image in our schools is detrimental to the development of black male children. I think it is important to note that this is not another indictment of black men. Throughout our history in this country and the world, we have always had individuals who acted with extraordinary insight, spectacular vision and tremendous courage in the fight to save us as a people and, in particular, our children. Even now, projects and programs abound with very narrow objectives and outcomes.

For example, some of the main issues surrounding the operation of mentoring programs for minority youth are outlined and illustrated through the example of the Male Youth Project, a church-based program in Washington, D.C. Screening, orienting, and rewarding mentors are aspects of program operation that are fundamental. Other issues include the youth to mentor ratio, the question of time commitment, and program costs. Where to have the program, how to involve parents, and the question of matching mentors by race are other aspects that cannot be ignored. The Male Youth Project aims to assist young men in their transition from boyhood to manhood. Youth are grouped into teams by age, and each team is headed by a mentor. This approach solves the problem of too many youth and too few mentors<sup>7</sup>.

For over 40 years, Philmore Graham, his wife, JaMella Nelson Graham and Junior Director Richard Cross, have provided a safe haven for Vallejo California’s youth, expanding its services from academic assistance and recreational activities to include programs designed to meet the challenges faced by today’s youth. Members now receive health information, counseling on social involvement, peer pressure resistance training, computer training, career exploration information as well as daily academic assistance. In 1990, after more than two decades as a Boys Club, the Club opened its doors to girls and became the Continentals of Omega Boys and Girls Club, Inc. Club members also participate in summer reading and math clinics, cultural activities, field trips, and attend

professional sporting events. Members are required to read a book each month and to prepare a book report on each book read. This practice has enabled members to increase their reading comprehension and vocabulary skills and assisted more than 70% of the Club members to achieve honor roll status<sup>8</sup>.

There are other shining examples in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Texas, and Indiana. Notwithstanding, their success, they are treating symptoms and not the cause. Senator Tony Hill believes organizations like the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. are uniquely positioned to impact the threat to Black Men in America. Here is his five point plan for attacking the problem.

1. Design a marketing campaign to encourage more Black Males to enter the teaching profession; particularly at the elementary levels.
2. Establish Leadership Institutes to underscore the value of teaching and high academic accomplishment.
3. Expand the notion started in Florida to have a National Signing Day for Academic Achievement.
4. Through our extensive Chapter network, attend every local school board meeting and monitor plans and policies that have a potentially adverse impact on black male child development.
5. Use our network of Public officials, church leaders, and community activists to ensure appropriate funding for the initiatives resulting from this campaign.

I have often heard it said, “no one can save us from us but us”. After talking with Senator Hill, I now understand with a new clarity, just what that statement means. We need men of good will, Omega men, to add their considerable voice, energy, and commitment to the resolution of this problem, NOW! We can no longer afford the luxury of laxity, expecting that someone else will do it. We must embrace the notion that “if it is to be, it is up to me”. Our children and grandchildren are depending on us.



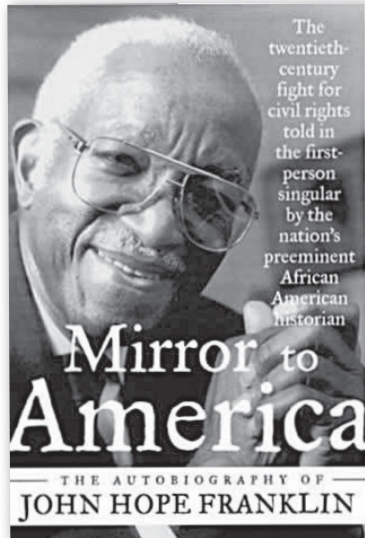
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“There can be no democracy without economic equality. Thomas Jefferson said that when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. There can be no brotherhood of man without a brotherhood of dollars. I have another theory. It is based on economic and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

*- Melvin Tolson, ... Oct. 19, 1940*

## BOOK REVIEWS



## Mirror to America

*John Hope Franklin, Ph.D.*

*Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 401p*

Renowned historian, America's most valuable citizen, and true role model are just a few ways Dr. John Hope Franklin has been described by those who know him. Besides his 1947 classic "From Slavery to Freedom" this book "Mirror to America" is perhaps the most important and impressive of the more than twenty he has written. His frank, yet modest reporting of repeated experiences of racism in America and how he was able to maneuver through a system designed to discredit and disqualify him is must reading. When asked recently how he thought America had advanced since 1954, Franklin, now in his 90's remarked: "We might be better off in some ways. But as long as we have more blacks in jail than in college, as long as we have more blacks unemployed than we have in college, as long as we have a system which will not provide adequate and decent affordable housing even for people who can afford it, we're not very far. I cannot be persuaded that we have moved very far if we are not trying to do something in the way of remedying a society that condemns most of its promising young black men to a life of degradation—a life of despair—unless our society believes they are inferior mentally and socially. And if, as a society, we are that demented, we are in terrible shape."



## Visions for Black Men

*Na'im Akbar, Ph.D.*

*Mind Productions, 90p*

Na'im Akbar, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist at Florida State University. He is also a prominent lecturer, author and recognized expert on the psychology of Africans and has written several books, the most popular being "Visions for Black Men". I bought this work after hearing Dr. Akbar speak at my church in 1994. Now, I use this book as a resource when I'm preparing to speak to black college students, or present lectures to seminarians. The most powerful section of the book is the first chapter, "From Maleness to Manhood" which by the author's own admission should be called "From Maleness to Manhood: The Transformation of the African-American Consciousness, or For Colored Boys Who Have Considered Homicide with Manhood was Enough."

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

The scientific way Dr. Akbar articulates the actions and habits of males, boys, and men give all black men a measuring stick of our own personal development. This book can be used as a devotional, and with only 90-pages should take no longer than two days to read. It is simple to read, easy to internalize, and hard to forget.

# Omega Chapter



**Arthur J. Armstead, Sr.**  
*Educator.*

Hampton, VA - Brother Arthur J. Armstead, Sr. was born to Henry Clay Armstead and Essie Ash Armstead on Nov. 25, 1925 in St. Stephens, Alabama. Brother Armstead was the sixth of eight children born to his parents, and the second son.

He had been a resident of Hampton since 1948. Brother Armstead graduated from high school from Snow Hill Institute in Alabama. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Science and a Master of Arts degree in Administration and Supervision from Hampton Institute. He earned certificates in gas chromatography and infrared spectroscopy from Fisk and Vanderbilt Universities respectively. Brother Armstead also completed postgraduate work at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion University.

Brother Armstead's professional experiences included: medical research technologist and clinical pathologist for the US Government and various Hampton area hospitals; teacher of biology at Marian Anderson High School in Elizabeth City, NC; assistant principal and teacher of biology, physics, and chemistry in the Hampton school system; in 1990 he was honored as Hampton Teacher of the Year; and science instructor at Hampton University. He also served three years in the US Navy and eight years in the US Army Reserves. Brother Armstead was an active member of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Hampton, for over 50 years, serving in such varied roles as: finance secretary and treasurer; member of the Trustee Board; president and member of the Senior Choir; member of the Sunday School; and Class Leader. He also served in various roles for the Lay Organization of the A.M.E. Church.

He was also active in other aspects of the community including scouting, little league sports, AAU Swimming, the NAACP, and volunteering for the Community Action Agency. He also served as a volunteer tour guide at the

Virginia Air and Space Museum in downtown Hampton. Brother Armstead was initiated into the Fraternity by way of Gamma Epsilon Chapter in 1951 during his college days at Hampton Institute. He was a past Basileus of the Zeta Omicron Chapter (1987-1990) and was once honored as Omega Man of the Year (1988). Brother Armstead was awarded his pin for 50 Years of Service at the 2002 Grand Conclave.

Brother Armstead was also a member of Eastern Star Lodge No. 13. He enjoyed many hobbies over his lifetime including reading, fishing, sports, and gardening. But of all his hobbies, vegetable gardening was his favorite. He was nicknamed 'Gardener Extraordinaire' by several of his local horticulture peers, and he certainly lived up to the name. Many local gardeners tapped his knowledge and experience for gardening tips and advice, and his family and friends enjoyed eating his vegetables and fruits over many years.

Brother Armstead entered Omega Chapter Friday, November 3, 2006, at Sentara CarePlex Hospital, Hampton, VA. He leaves to cherish his memory a loving wife of 52 years, Mary S. Armstead along with three children and their spouses.



**Bennie Bowman**  
*Entrepreneur*

Columbus, OH --Brother Bennie Bowman was born on January 24, 1926 in Spartanburg, South Carolina. He entered Omega Chapter on January 2, 2008. Brother Bowman attended Carver High School in Spartanburg and after his senior year was drafted into the U.S.

Navy. After serving his nation proudly during World War II, he enrolled at Allen University in Columbia, South

Carolina. Brother Bowman was initiated into Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc, through Mu Sigma Chapter on April 13, 1949. He received his B.S. degree in Physical Education in 1950. While at Allen University, Brother Bowman met and married his lovely wife, Bessie Lena Johnson.

After relocating to Columbus, Ohio he worked at the Defense Construction Supply Center for several years before becoming a clerk with the United States Postal Service. After retiring from the Postal Service in 1985, Brother Bowman started his own business, BYB Remodeling.

Brother Bowman was an active and dedicated member of Mu Iota Chapter where he served as Basileus, Vice-Basileus and co-chaired the Christmas and Founder’s Day Banquets. He was also a dedicated member of the Mu Iota Chapter’s annual scholarship golf tournament. Because of his dedicated service and commitment to the ideals and principles of Omega, he was honored over the years with the Omega Man of the Year award and several Brotherhood awards.

Brother Bowman was a faithful member of Mt. Vernon Avenue A.M.E Church where he was Trustee Emeritus and a member of the Senior Ushers Board. He was a mentor to many young brothers as well as other young people in the community. He was a fair and upfront man who will be truly missed.



**Earnest Lee Davis**  
*Army Master Sergeant*

Abilene, TX - Brother Earnest Lee Davis was born and raised in Hubbard, Texas. He graduated early as an “A” honor student from Phyllis Wheatley High School. Shortly after his graduation from high school he enlisted in the United States Air Force and served honorably for twenty-six years.

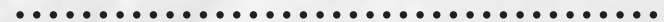
His military career led him to be assigned to numerous places; such as, Nebraska, Greenland, France, Thailand(Southwest Asia), California, England, and Texas. As a divorcee (in his later years), CMSGT Davis

continued to raise three children, Chequitha Rhnee Davis, Earnest Arvan Davis, and Eric Arness Davis as a single parent.

CMSGT Davis was not only a superior father and loved his beloved family who lived in Texas, but he was one that was a devout Christian. Brother Davis was a humble humanitarian that had many talents, and cared deeply about the people he came in contact with. His civic, community, and fraternal affiliations included: Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Brown-Hill Church of Hubbard Texas, Free and Accepted Masons, and Hospice of Abilene. CMSGT Davis’ military accomplishments included a Fuel Technology Degree from the Community College of the USAF; He was named best at his job in the entire USAF (1979), and the best among USAF units in Europe (1978). He received the 15th Air Force (1992) and Senior Enlisted Manager of the year award (1983). CMSGT Davis’ academic accomplishments included: an Associate of Arts Degree in Psychology from Solano College, Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology from Sonoma State College, Master of Arts Degree from Vanderbilt University, Master of Arts Degree from Chapman College in Education and was working towards a Ph.D. from North Texas State University, in Denton, Texas at the time of his demise. In addition to the aforementioned accomplishments, he was an avid guitarist, had earned his private pilot’s license, real-estate license, and had secured his teaching credentials. Brother Davis obviously had many talents which he used to serve people love God.

While serving in the military in Vallejo, California, Brother Davis became a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. through Theta Pi chapter.

Brother Davis entered Omega Chapter while serving on active duty at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas on December 20, 1983 at the age of 44 and is buried at the Valley View Cemetery located in Hubbard, Texas.



*“Manhood Laid Low”*



**Frank R. Jackson, Jr.**  
*School Administrator*

Louisville, KY – Brother Frank R. Jackson, Jr. was a native of Birmingham, Alabama and received his undergraduate degree from Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama and earned a graduate degree from Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky.

Brother Jackson was a retired public school administrator having served in his last assignment with the Jefferson County Public Schools as an Assistant Principal at DuPont Manual High School. He was active in his church, Harrods Creek Baptist Church, and his community, serving as past President of the Harrods Creek/Prospect Neighborhood Association. He was an active and faithful member of Omega, serving as Basileus of Theta Omega Chapter and was an active member of the Alabama A&M University National Alumni Association, Louisville, KY Chapter.

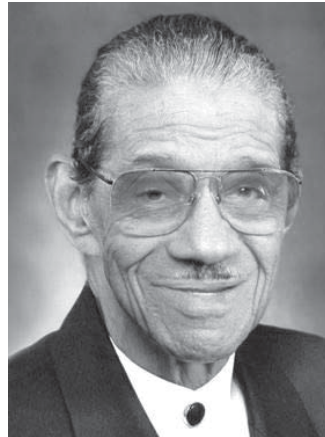
Funeral services for Brother Frank R. Jackson, Jr. were held on Saturday, December 29th at the Resthaven Chapel in Louisville, Kentucky. Brother Jackson entered Omega Chapter on Monday, December 24, 2007 at Christopher East Health Care Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

His parents, Reverend Frank R. Jackson, Sr. and Mrs. Susie Jackson and his wife, Joselyn McDowell Jackson, preceded him in death. He is survived by his daughter, Carol Lisa Taylor (John) of Houston, Texas; four granddaughters, Tiffany and Jessica Willie, Amanda and Madison Taylor all of Houston, Texas; his companion and caregiver, Mildred “Millie” Goodman and a number of cousins and other relatives.

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*“Blessed are the dead  
who die in the Lord...  
they will rest from their  
labor, for their deeds  
will follow them”*

*—Holy Bible (NIV) Revelation 14:13*



**Conrad O. Johnson.**  
*Music Educator*

Houston, TX - -Brother Conrad O. Johnson was born November 15, 1915 in Victoria, Texas. He was nine when his family moved to Houston. Following studies at Yates High School, he attended Houston College for Negroes and transferred to Wiley College in Marshall, Texas. While attending

Wiley College, he was initiated on November 7, 1936 into the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. through Theta Chapter.

He started his career in music education in 1941 and, following a thirty-seven-year career, retired from his position at Kashmere High School in 1978, but continued to remain active in shaping music in Houston by conducting summer programs and in-home tutoring.

Johnson was a proficient musician in his own right and, at one point, played with Count Basie. Erskine Hawkins tried to convince him to join his orchestra, but Johnson declined, citing a love of teaching and obligations to his family. Later, Johnson made his lasting contribution to music by forming the Kashmere Stage Band, a renowned high school orchestra that won a number of awards during its decade-long run, and was considered by many to be the best high school jazz orchestra in the country. Known to many simply as “Prof,” Brother Conrad Johnson is perhaps the most widely recognized and beloved music educator in Houston. Highly respected as a versatile, passionate saxophonist and leader of the band, Conrad Johnson and His Orchestra, The Diminutive Octogenarian was for over 50 years a major force in shaping the Houston sound. That sound, according to Roger Ward of “Living Blues Magazine,” was a rich synthesis of the seemingly antithetical elements of down-home Texas blues and sophisticated jazz. Because of his work, the Conrad O. Johnson School of Fine Arts at Kashmere High School is named after him. He was also inducted into the Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame in 2000.

Conrad O. Johnson entered Omega Chapter in Houston on the afternoon after his former students staged a celebration in his honor. The gala Saturday night concert, which was filmed by a documentary crew, was described by the students as “the greatest 92nd birthday gift that he could have ever requested”. He was a member of Nu Phi Chapter in Houston, Texas.

## UPLIFTING WORDS

“The most enduring contributions made to civilization have not been made by brawn, they have been made by brain.”  
 -- Benjamin L. Hooks

“When you control a man’s thinking you do not have to worry about his actions.”  
 --Carter G. Woodson

“If you play a tune and a person don’t tap their feet, don’t play the tune.”  
 -- Count Basie

“I don’t know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody”  
 --Bill Cosby

“Not failure, but low aim is sin.”  
 -- Benjamin E. Mays

“The first black president will be a politician who is black.”  
 -- Doug Wilder

“The library is the temple of learning, and learning has liberated more people than all the wars in history”  
 --Carl T. Rowan

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

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

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

# GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION TO THE ORACLE

## THE MISSION

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

## CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

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

## AUTHOR GUIDELINES

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

To help facilitate the review and communication process, only electronic submissions are accepted. They should be in IBM-compatible Microsoft Word format and sent as an e-mail attachment or on a CD. ***The e-mail address for submissions is wtrichardson@bellsouth.net***

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

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



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An aerial photograph of Birmingham, Alabama, showing a dense urban landscape with a mix of modern high-rise buildings and older brick structures. The sky is clear and blue. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

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