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## Keeping It Right

March 06, 2007

### Boy Makes First Class

Cobb Vision IX - Scouting



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March 03, 2007

### Oprah's Academy: Shrinking the Gap

I have been asking about the Liberal Impulse as an open set of questions, but there hasn't been much doubt in my mind that there is something we have in the West, in the Functioning Core, in Christian Charity that gives us plenty of good reasons to be do-gooders around the globe. Having been immersed in matters of security, I got a little imbalanced and various other parts of my brain went dead during a fascinating discussion in Baltimore. As soon as I got home from that discussion I remembered that I forgot to 'hew'.

HEW is Health, Education and Welfare, and these are products of the great engines of commerce we spin in America. Since I don't concentrate on these particular matters, although with Health I may begin, I wanted to hear from you all for giving some appeal and flavor to the utopian imperative - doing the most good for the most amount of people. When I speak about the superiority of America, I do so in the context of these liberal benefits which I view as infrastructural to nationhood.

With that background I have to say that what Oprah has done in her gift to South Africa is not only a quintessentially American act of generosity, but it is geopolitically sound too. This is exactly the kind of effort that gives me confidence that at long last Americans will see our potential to change the world for the better.

Oprah has been in this regard, a one woman drop squad. It is a sentiment that I think most successful African Americans harbor - this understanding that at one time in our lives we labored in obscurity waiting and hoping that somebody would

recognize our potential and lift us from our sad environments. We have felt this on both sides, as the patron as well. So much effort is spent on an ineffective patronage though. We lack the capital, but not the intent. Oprah, lacking neither has done the absolute right thing. I see her completion in this, and her place in history.

I didn't join the controversy over her decision not to place her academy in the US. I basically have nothing to add on that score. She did right.

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Tags: oprah, southafrica

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February 27, 2007

## Sean O'Sullivan

One more of the thousand points of light doing the right thing to shrink the gap.

O'Sullivan's latest venture is called [JumpStart International](#). JumpStart designs and builds housing developments and rebuilds Iraqi homes one house at a time--sort of like Habitat for Humanity--all with Iraqi labor.

At its peak, JumpStart had 3,500 employees clearing more than 500 destroyed buildings and rebuilding homes at 80 sites. Workers make about \$109 a month; the engineers who supervise them make nearly three times that amount, O'Sullivan says JumpStart's salaries are about 20 percent higher than the market wage, for those who can find jobs.

This is another example of American capital and know how working globalization towards just ends.

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February 21, 2007

## Lee Archer on Fox

[My Kinda Nationalist](#), **Lee Archer**, will be on the Oliver North show Sunday night on Fox.

In July of 1941, a small group of Americans, all of them volunteers, gathered at a tiny airfield in **Tuskegee, Alabama**. Their goal? To build a special fighter unit for the US Army Air Corps. It was not the planes they flew or the weapons they employed that made them unique. It was the color of their skin. In the 1940's our military, like our country, was segregated. And many inside Washington power circles believed black men didn't have the courage or the skill to fly combat aircraft. Forced to train and serve in a segregated unit, the Tuskegee Airmen would have to prove them wrong. And they did.

They overcame racism at home and abroad and by the end World War II, these pilots earned military respect for their air prowess. Nicknamed the "Red Tails" for the color painted on their aircraft, over 1,000 black aviators and thousands of mechanics and technicians were trained at Tuskegee. The Red Tails flew over 15,000 combat missions and destroyed over 250 enemy planes. But perhaps their most impressive accomplishment didn't involve destruction or death. They saved lives. As you will hear in this Sunday's episode, during Allied escort missions over Europe, these men never lost a bomber to the enemy.

Set your Tivos.

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January 13, 2007

## Muhammad Ali At 65

The other night on ESPN Classic, there was a retrospective on Muhammad Ali's career. It's one of the best. It's not complete by a long shot, but it has a certain edge on his career vis a vis the Nation of Islam and his conscientious objection that rub me

the right way.

I betrayed my father as a youth by writing to Muhammad Ali telling him that I wished he were my father. I should ask Pops if he remembers. I remember waiting for a reply, and somewhere dimly I think I got one. Ali had that kind of effect on me, he said what he meant and it flowed naturally. Ali's spirit was that of a candid and clear defiance. He defied all that expected him to be anything less than a free and full man, but even looking at that picture one cannot be fully apprised of his greatness. The dialog only goes as far as that narrative of the triumph of a black man over those whites who would deny him whatever.

This post is a reminder of what a champion he was outside of the ring, in profound ways that only a few people have come to understand. Perhaps one day we'll know the rest of the story.

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December 23, 2006

## David M. Porter



David is a friend of the family. I forget how lucky I am until I start touching base with friends and family around the holidays..

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – David Porter**, Director of Graduate Programs for the Howard University School of Business, and a veteran educator, entrepreneur, and consultant to cable diversity groups, has been named Executive Director of the [Walter Kaitz Foundation](#), according to the National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA), which oversees management of the Foundation.

Porter will commence his position with Kaitz on August 28, 2006 reporting to Kyle McSarrow, President & CEO, NCTA. He succeeds Debbie Smith, who departed Kaitz earlier this year to join the Human Resources department of Discovery Communications.

“David has provided inspirational leadership on diversity issues for two decades and has made a significant contribution to the advancement of diversity among large American companies,” noted McSarrow. “His expertise and insight, as well as his relationships with diversity leaders across the country, will help strengthen the Kaitz Foundation’s position as the pre-eminent supporter of diversity

initiatives in the cable industry.”

“I’ve enjoyed my relationship with cable diversity advocates and have admired the work of the Kaitz Foundation for many years,” said Porter. “I’m eager to help fulfill the Foundation’s mission to fuel the growth of diversity initiatives for the cable industry, and I’m excited to have the opportunity to expand and enhance the sterling legacy of the Foundation.”

Porter has served in his position at Howard University in Washington, D.C., since 2003. Prior to that, he was an assistant professor at the UCLA Anderson School and served as faculty director as well as co-creator of the UCLA African American Leadership Institute.

At UCLA, Porter helped develop the Executive Leadership Development Program of the National Association of Multi-Ethnicity in Communications (NAMIC), which in recent years has provided leadership training at the Anderson School to hundreds of NAMIC members and cable executives of color.

Porter also has held professional positions at Amoco, Pacific Bell, and Xerox; served as Treasurer of the National Society of Black Engineers; and consulted with numerous Fortune 500 companies on diversity-related issues.

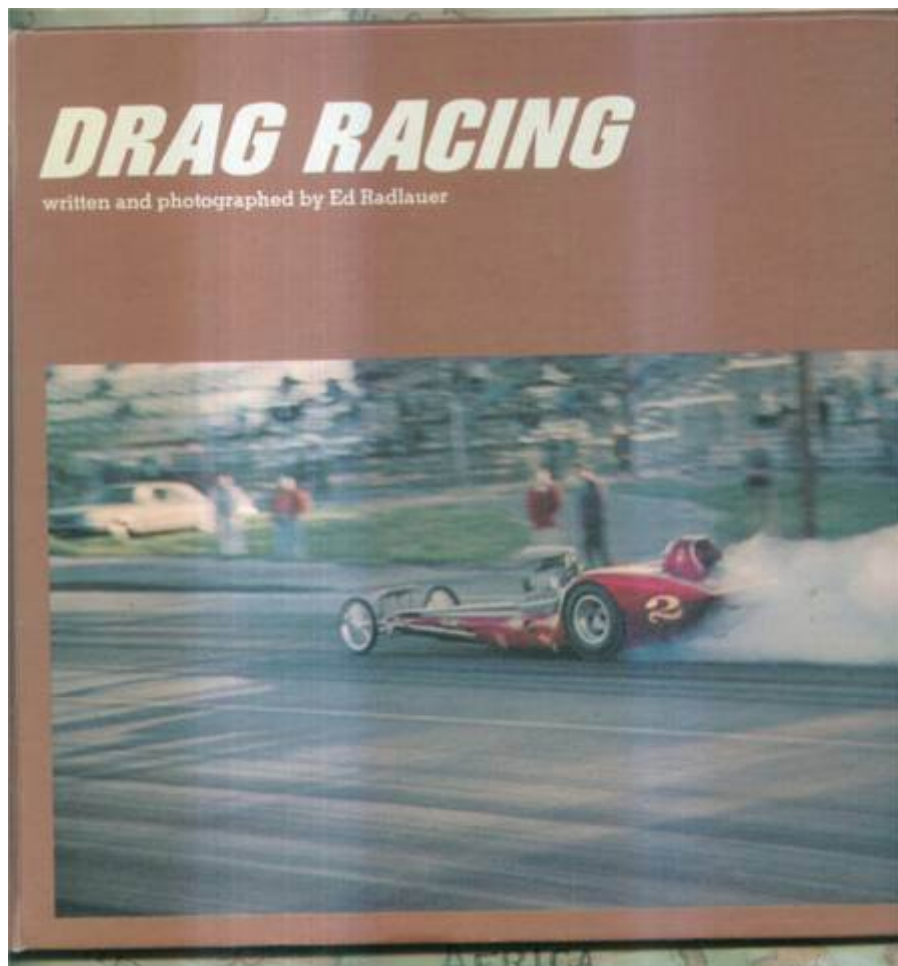
Porter holds five college degrees: a PhD in organizational behavior and a Masters Degree in Sociology from Harvard; as well as a Masters Degree in Industrial Engineering, a Masters Degree in Sociology, and a Bachelors Degree in Industrial Engineering, all from Stanford.

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December 19, 2006

## A Tribute to Ed Radlauer



I'm a speed freak.

Over the past few years I've recognized the deep gearhead in me coming out. As much as I dig writing and politics and cultural criticism and all that literary stuff, you can bet that a sporty car will always turn my head. There's no question in my mind that much of my engineer's gut was deeply influenced not only by science-fiction writers like Bradbury, Asimov et al, but also by a cat named Ed Radlauer.

I remember Radlauer the same way I remember Edmund Scientific, science sticker books and Danny Dunn, as a staple of my upbringing that raised my parents' eyebrows. Radlauer, however was the one that raised them in concern. When I was in the fifth and sixth grades, my folks thought I should be reading more difficult books. Radlauer's books were large books for kids with extraordinarily bright color photos of drag racers, chopper motorcycles, minibikes, dune buggies, baja trucks, bonnevilles racers and stock car and short paragraphs appropriate for third graders. But who cared about the paragraphs? It was all about those racing vehicles.

It turns out that Alibris had a decent selection of

Radlauer books so I picked up a few. [This one](#) brings back so many memories. Maybe they do for you too.

In his way, I think Radlauer along with Evil Knievel, Mickey Thompson and Dan Bricklin were the founders of the extreme sports movement. Sure there are some surfers and boarders in there, but I'd bet they were all influenced by these guys.

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December 08, 2006

## Robert K. McFerrin Sr

Baritone Robert McFerrin, the first black male soloist at the Metropolitan Opera, died November 24 at age 85. If you love Bobby McFerrin, then you probably remember his dad singing a piece in the cut 'Discipline' on the Medicine Man album. That's exactly the kind of singing I'm trying to find for my next bout of musical Recovery. Let Bobby know your love at [his website](#). A great piece can be found at [Playbill](#):

McFerrin, the father of vocalist and conductor Bobby McFerrin, was born in 1921 in Marianna, Arkansas, the fourth of eight children of a Baptist minister. As a child, McFerrin was discouraged from singing anything but gospel music, but when he moved to St. Louis in 1936 he auditioned for the choir at Sumner High School and was introduced to classical vocal music.

He received an undergraduate degree from Chicago Musical College in 1946, then moved to New York. In 1949, he appeared in William Grant Still's *Troubled Island* at New York City Opera and as Amonasro in *Aida* with the National Negro Opera Company. He joined the New England Opera Company in 1950.

In 1953, McFerrin won the Metropolitan Opera national auditions and became the first black male to join the company. He made his debut in 1955 as Amonasro, three weeks after contralto Marian Anderson became the first black to sing a principal role at the Met. His other roles at the house were Valentin (in Gounod's *Faust*) and Rigoletto.

McFerrin also sang the role of Porgy (played onscreen by Sidney Poitier) in the soundtrack of the 1959 film of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. He toured internationally as a recitalist and was also active as a teacher.

There is also info from [Shep](#):

Mr. McFerrin toured internationally, showcasing his rich, baritone voice in concerts and opera houses throughout Europe. He sang with the National Negro Opera Company and appeared on Broadway.

In 1973, Mr. McFerrin moved back to St. Louis, performing regularly at venues such as the Sheldon Concert Hall and the St. Louis Art Museum. Though a stroke in 1989 impaired his speaking ability, he was still able to sing. He continued to perform, teach and tour on a demanding schedule until 1998.

Mr. McFerrin often sang alongside his daughter, Brenda McFerrin of Anaheim, Calif., a recording artist, and his son, Grammy-winning conductor and vocalist Robert “Bobby” McFerrin Jr. of Philadelphia, who is best-known for the song “Don’t Worry, Be Happy.”

In 2003, Opera America honored the senior Mr. McFerrin with a lifetime achievement award. He earned a star on the St. Louis Walk of Fame in 2004.

Here was an extraordinary man and father. I'm sure he will be sorely missed. There seems to be nowhere I can find his music. Musicbrains could only locate [one track](#), and there's virtually nothing on the web about the **National Negro Opera Company**. If anybody knows something, let me know.

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December 01, 2006

## Don't Slow Down

[Harry Lennix](#) is the man most familiar to us as Commander Lock, the rival of Morpheus in the Matrix Reloaded. However without question his greatest role on screen has been that of Aaron the Moor in Julie Taymor's adaptation of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus.

I picked up the DVD recently for a song and I add it to my short collection. Having just finished viewing it for the third time ever, my recollection of its lessons, especially those of Aaron himself are different. [The first time](#), I was impressed by the fates that befall those who do the dirty work of empire, but this time I see Aaron the Moor in a completely different light. He is a force of darkness - the one that takes idle violent energy and channels it into complicated plots of destructive genius. I also saw the Lennix performance in the light of fatherhood. He illustrates a different kind of pride here.

This year he gave a commencement address to Santa Monica College, among his more admirable words were these:

Do Not Stop. Do Not Slow Down.

This is a phrase that had something of an Immaculate Conception for me. It isn't especially new, in fact it is the result of studying in a limited way the ideas of the most famous scientist of the 20th Century: Albert Einstein.

In 1905, while working as a clerk in a patent office in the town of Bern, Switzerland, Einstein imagined what it would be like to travel on a beam of light. If a human being were capable of speeding through space at the rate of 186,000 miles or so a second, what would he see? Would the beam of light become static? Would it appear frozen in place?

Well, the fact is that light is the fastest thing that we can measure in the known universe. And its speed must remain constant. Nothing can catch up to it. Ever. It must always be speeding forward at that enormous rate, consistently at 670 million miles per hour. Particle accelerators have shown us that anything with mass approaching light speed would increase in mass. As it increases in mass, as it becomes heavier and bigger, it takes an infinite amount of energy to keep it moving near that speed. Energy, since it must go somewhere, would be converted to into more mass. Therefore, since the speed of the light beam is constant and inalterable, no matter how fast we are going—it is time itself that must be altered.

The faster we go, the slower time goes. A person traveling at light speed would cease to be visible to us, and for that person, time would stand still.

It will come as no surprise to you that I am no Einstein, but perhaps you will agree with this basic conclusion: If you ever find yourself running out of time, when you are too busy or too fatigued to follow through on what must be done--just go faster. Time will slow down, so, in theory, as you accelerate, you will have more time. Always do more. Never stand still. Move faster, travel further, risk more, love harder, tell more truth, fight smarter, and always go forward. Time will cooperate. It's a fact of physics.

It's not often, in fact I imagine that in these days it is a particularly rare occasion when actors fill their proper roles in reminding us of our potential as human beings and through their art do the great deed of moral instruction and bringing light to wise lessons oft forgot.

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October 14, 2006

## David Brewer III: The Transformer



*"To everybody in this community, you can expect one thing: I am not a reformer; I am a transformer. I am going to transform this district into — not a No Child Left Behind Act district. That is a low star. This is a global, global economy. This is a world in which our children have to compete globally. We're going to shoot for world-class."*

-- David L. Brewer III

David Brewer has a distinguished military career, and now he's transforming into the latest hope for the public schools of Los Angeles. In a rather extraordinary political move, The LA Board of Ed has made their choice for the new Superintendant of the LA Unified School District and as the LA Times reports, they're very excited about him:

"Almost everything we threw at him, it seemed, he was able to relate to some experience he had had," said board member Marguerite Poindexter LaMotte. "He had a presence, a take-charge attitude.... He talked about potential solutions for many issues and was brutally honest about the few things he didn't know."

Hours later, a giddy board President Marlene Canter announced Brewer as the next superintendent of Los Angeles Unified School District.

Brewer's surprise selection culminated a seven-month search that saw scores of candidates — many of them well-known educators considered at the outset to be likely choices — fade, flop or withdraw. Although he was an ostensibly unlikely choice, several board members and others said that by the end, Brewer showed leadership skills, intelligence and a commanding, infectious personality that made him what they considered the obvious choice to lead the nation's second-largest school district.

Everything I've seen about this guy so far, bristles of Old School, and I look forward to see a no-nonsense attitude from this man. He seems fearless and not so worried about politics as he is about results, and when the man says 'world-class' I think he means it.

He promises to go to the communities of sub-standard and dysfunctional and request increasing participation between parents and school. Brewer wants to know what goes on after 6pm. He's a fan of Kozol's book Shame of the Nation. He's also got a 'drop squad' mentality with regard to getting kids outside of their environment and letting them see everything out there so that they become familiar with the world of choices they will have.

On this last point, I agree with him 110%. In his interview he said 'field trips' and he gave some personal examples of experiences that bear him out. It is my experience as well, in doing community service that often the best thing you can do for folks in substandard communities is get them out of their comfort zone and show them that they will have to learn how to experience other parts of the world. Even if it scares them to death. My kids here in the Redondo School District all look forward to going to Camp Keep. In the South Pasadena elementary school the kids walked to the Post Office (incidentally in the wake of 9/11, there were a lot of questions about anthrax) But even trips much simpler can be life changing. I still remember field trips I took in elementary school, to a science lab and to a bakery.

You can listen to his interview with Patt Morrison [here](#).

Brewer walks into a political poop storm with the usual suspects voicing usual complaints:

The top local teachers union official was in no mood to celebrate. "The idea that he has no grounding in K-12 is disturbing," said A.J. Duffy, president of [United Teachers Los Angeles](#). "And the idea that UTLA and the broader community were not consulted. I don't want to hear that his wife and family were teachers. That doesn't do it."

"A classroom is different from a battlefield," he added. "The goals and objectives are completely different. And it's disconcerting to a certain portion of teachers who are fighting against military recruitment on campus."

Others took no issue with Brewer but faulted the process.

"What they did was just another mistake," said Luis Sanchez, executive director of [InnerCity Struggle](#). Board members said they don't need legislation to collaborate, but "there's no collaboration that happened here. They basically told the mayor you have to agree with who we choose."

The [Rev. Frederick O. Murph](#), an African American and a Villaraigosa ally, said that it was a "low blow" for the board to act while Villaraigosa was out of town. But he called Brewer "an excellent choice" and a man of integrity.

So, let us watch and see. This is going to be interesting.

[Continue reading "David Brewer III: The Transformer" »](#)

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September 16, 2006

## Google Minds Unwasted Minds

[Google is sponsoring the UNCF](#). Tell a friend.

As part of Google's ongoing commitment to advancing computing and technology, we're pleased to tell you that the United Negro College Fund and Google have partnered to create the [UNCF/Google Scholarship Program](#). We hope this program will encourage students to excel in their studies, inspire them to become role models and leaders, and help remove the financial barriers for African-American students wishing to pursue an engineering degree.

On the strength of candidates' academic background and demonstrated leadership, we'll be awarding \$5,000 scholarships. Students must be enrolled in their junior year of undergraduate study at a UNCF Member College or University or at a participating Historically Black College or University (HBCU), and pursuing a Computer Science or Computer Engineering major.

[Tell your friends, or apply yourself](#) -- the deadline for applications is Friday, October 6.

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September 11, 2006

## Lomax Dead

[LA Observed reports:](#)

The [Wave reports](#) that the civil rights attorney and former police commissioner died last night when her car plummeted down a slope near her home in the Hollywood Hills. Lomax was 56. According to the story, Lomax was behind the wheel of her 2005 Jaguar when the car drove off her driveway, rolled down an embankment and landed upside down on Outpost Drive. Paramedics found her in full cardiac arrest. She was pronounced dead at Cedars-Sinai at 8:37 pm.

Lomax was on the police commission during the Tom Bradley administration at City Hall, served for a time as its president, and made an unsuccessful move in 1991 to oust LAPD Chief Daryl Gates that led to her resignation. Bradley



tried to appoint her in 1992 to the DWP commission, but her confirmation was rejected by the City Council over the Gates issue. She later represented Willie Williams when he sought to regain his job as chief of the LAPD. In 2001 Mayor James Hahn appointed Lomax to the Information Technology Commission. She had also been vice-president and general counsel for the Los Angeles NAACP.

Lomax could be counted on as a voice of reason during all of the squabbles between LA's various black communities and City Hall since way before the riots. She was always in command of the facts and could be counted on to be blunt when plain talk was needed. I can never recall her mau-mauing for headlines. A responsible party, she often spoke out on Airtalk with Larry Mantle. She'll be missed.

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September 08, 2006

## The Links

I've been thinking about the Links and the Wilfandel Club recently. They're still around.

### History of the National Organization

On the evening of November 9, 1946, Margaret Hawkins and Sarah Scott, two young Philadelphia matrons, invited seven of their friends to join them in organizing a new type of inner-city club. The two women envisioned an organization that would respond to the needs and aspirations of African-American women in ways that existing clubs did not.



Those co-founders embraced a threefold purpose for The Links. The members would contribute to the civic, educational and cultural milieu and this direction persists today. Based on these purposes, The Links would implement programs which its founders hoped would foster cultural appreciation through the arts, through development of richer inter group relations, and through the participation of women in social and civic responsibilities.

The first National Assembly was held in Philadelphia in 1949. Delegates were present from Atlantic City, Baltimore, Central New Jersey, Petersburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Raleigh, Saint Louis, Wilmington, Delaware, and Wilson Rocky Mount-Tarboro Chapters.

The Links organization was incorporated in 1951. Today, there are more than 11,000 members in about 270 chapters located in 40 states, the District of Columbia, and international chapters in Nassau, Bahamas and Frankfurt, Germany.

During the early years, the National Links organization directed the major portion of its Grants-in-Aid support to three other national organizations, the NAACP, NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Urban League. The organization possesses a life membership in the NAACP and supported the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund at its inception. In the 1960s, The Links, Inc., began a period of priority support for the United Negro College Fund. To date, The Links contribution to UNCF totals more than one million dollars. In its over 50 years of existence, The Links, Inc., has made its name almost synonymous with strong programming and philanthropy.

The National Program of the Links, Inc., consists of four facets:

- National Trends And Services
- Services To Youth
- International Trends And Services
- The Arts

In 1985, Projects L.E.A.D. (Links Erase Alcohol and Drug Abuse) was introduced as a national project of The Links, Inc.

The Links organization has four geographic areas, which are Central, Eastern, Southern and Western.

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September 04, 2006

## Steve Irwin RIP

Steve Irwin was my kinda guy, and now that he's gone he will be sorely missed. There have been all kinds of imitators, notably Jeff Kerwin, but after the great Marlin Perkins and the inimitable Jacques Cousteau, Steve Irwin was tops. Sure Jim Fowler handled all the animals on Wild Kingdom was the man, and after a while it was the younger Cousteaus who did most of the swimming. Irwin was always in the thick of the action, and he's gone out with his boots on.

Obviously he was a big hit in our household though we haven't watched him in some time. He was a genius of sorts whose energy and enthusiasm for his subjects was unbounded. There will never be another like him. Crickey!

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September 03, 2006

## Ed Brown: Point of Light

We've all got our ideological agendas. Not [Ed Brown](#), he's practical. Ed is one of those people I know but don't know. We've been in communication online at least ten years, but I've never met him in person. But that's not important. What's important is the work he has been doing on behalf of kids in his neck of the woods.

More specifically he recently met with the [Ehrlich administration](#) to discuss [improvement of public education in Maryland](#).

It was a wide ranging discussion that covered my bullet points, what the administration was doing, the work of the year-long education commission chaired by Lt. Gov. Michael Steele, strategies, problems, successes, and future plans. It was a true discussion. By that I mean, they hit the points they wanted to hit, but so did I and we exchanged ideas, some of which were new to them, some of which were not.

As part an parcel of his due diligence he discovered, not surprisingly, something that I think classically defines the sort of [political disputes](#) we will be encountering within black politics from this point forward. It is important to have an eye, as Ed does, on the goals which support our core values and not try to score political points out of a sense of oppositional posturing. Too long this has been a hallmark of 'righteous' black politics.

But more importantly than that, Ed represents the power of networks of intelligent folks who can shed light on what goes on in various cities. Within black politics and for issues of particular concerns to African Americans, we have yet to develop, sustain and publicize such informal networks. That has always been the aim of Vision Circle and it's one of the reasons I chose Ed to be a part of it.

As we move forward and Vision Circle is reborn, Ed's example will help show what we can do to inform our opinions and shape our politics. I think he represents the new kind of activist. I must also give props to [Akindele Akinyemi](#) who is (and has been) dutifully attending that same kind of business in Detroit.

Much props to Ed Brown. Make sure you check him out. And shout out some news his way if you live in Maryland.

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August 01, 2006

## Ralph Metcalfe

Just happened across the name Ralph Metcalfe. He was definitely a hero growing up.

**Ralph Harold Metcalfe** ([May 30, 1910](#) - [October 10, 1978](#)) was an [American athlete](#) who jointly held the [world record](#) for the [100 metre sprint](#). Ralph Metcalfe was known as the world's fastest human from [1932](#) through [1934](#).

Born in [Atlanta, Georgia](#), Metcalfe studied at [Marquette University](#) and equalled the record of 10.3 seconds on a number of occasions, as well as equalling the 200 metre record of 20.6 seconds. At the [1932 Summer Olympics](#) he virtually dead-

heated with his rival Eddie Tolan, with the medal awarded to Tolan only after extended study of the photograph. Both recorded a time of 10.38 seconds. He received a bronze medal in the 200 metre event at these games. Metcalfe competed again in the 200 metres at the 1936 Summer Olympics, placing second to the great Jesse Owens. He received a gold medal as part of the winning 4x100 relay team.

Metcalfe completed a master's degree at the University of Southern California. After his college career, he joined the armed forces and served in World War II. Metcalfe later coached track at Xavier University of Louisiana before becoming a successful businessman in Chicago, Illinois.

 Ralph Metcalfe

Ralph Metcalfe

In 1949, Metcalfe became a politician, first as an Alderman for the city of Chicago; then as a Democrat representing a district in Illinois in the United States House of Representatives from 1971 until his death in 1978. He was a co-founder of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC).

In 1975, Metcalfe was inducted into the United States Track and Field Hall of Fame (USATF) and named a member of the President's Commission on Olympic Sports.

The federal building at 77 W. Jackson in Chicago was named for Metcalfe when it was dedicated in 1991.

Metcalfe was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African Americans.

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July 31, 2006

## Greenwood's AfAm Resource

There's a new online resource in town. I don't know how much it costs, but they're talking big.

The widest ranging and easiest-to-use online collection on African American life ever assembled, The African American Experience is the definitive electronic research tool for African American history and culture from one of the most respected publishers in the field. The two primary goals: to provide rock-solid information from authorities in the field, and to allow African Americans to speak for themselves through a wealth of primary sources. Drawing on over 300 titles, and designed under the guidance of leading librarians, this database gives voice to the black experience from its African origins to the present day.

I signed up for a trial. More later.

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July 26, 2006

## Ray Bowen Helps Maryland Public Television

OWENS MILLS, MD, June 25 – Volunteers from all over Maryland come to operate the phones for Maryland Public Television's (MPT) donation drives. This Sunday, several employees of *Exceptional Software Strategies, Inc.* were among the volunteers taking pledges to support MPT's array of cultural, educational, and family programming.

*Exceptional's* Co-founder, Ray Bowen, was pulled aside by MPT for a brief interview to talk about the volunteer effort:

**MPT Spokesperson:** "I don't think you've ever been up here to answer our phones before. What made you decide to come up and volunteer?"

**Ray Bowen:** "Well, we don't have the opportunity—because of the work that we do—to be in the public. So this is a great opportunity to put a face to the company and allow us to volunteer and do good things."

Click the link to view the full video of [Ray's interview on MPT](#).

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April 21, 2006

## John W. Thompson



**John W. Thompson** is chairman of the board of directors and chief executive officer of Symantec Corporation. Under Thompson's leadership, Symantec has grown from a small consumer software publisher to the market leader for security and availability solutions to help customers manage their rapidly growing digital assets. With global operations in more than 40 countries, the company is viewed as a strategic partner to its customers, providing a broad range of security, storage, availability, and performance management solutions to help them proactively manage their IT infrastructure.

Prior to joining Symantec, Thompson was with the IBM Corporation where he held senior executive positions in sales, marketing and software development. Thompson was general manager of IBM Americas and a member of the company's Worldwide Management Council.

Thompson completed his undergraduate studies at Florida A&M University and holds a master's degree in management science from MIT's Sloan School of Management.

In September 2002, President George W. Bush appointed Thompson to the National Infrastructure Advisory Committee to make recommendations regarding the security of the critical infrastructure of the United States. In addition, Thompson has served as the chair of the Silicon Valley Blue Ribbon Task Force on Aviation Security and Technology to identify and evaluate technology-driven solutions to improve the security and efficiency of national and local aviation.

Now here's a confession. Symantec announced a fiscal problem this week and the stock took a hit on Wall Street. As soon as I read the story, my stomach took a dive. Why? Because I know that Thompson runs the joint. I sweated for him, momentarily, just like I used to sweat for Bryant Gumbel in the 70s when he first got on the Today Show.

On Monday, software company **Symantec** released a Form 8-K stating that the Internal Revenue Service has served the company with a notice of deficiency for a shortfall of close to \$1 billion for the years 2000 through 2004.

For 2000 and 2001, the IRS has stated that Symantec (nasdaq: [SYMC](#) - [news](#) - [people](#)) owes \$900 million in back taxes relating to transfer-pricing accounting between Veritas, which was acquired in 2005, and a foreign subsidiary. In addition, the IRS also seeks \$100 million arising from the company's 2003 and 2004 transfer pricing accounting.

Here's another confession. The thing that worries me most about being an activist black conservative is that all the cats like Thompson are Democrats and I'll never get invited to the right parties. Then again, he's way out of my league anyway. [Check out these numbers](#):

Total Annual Compensation 2.7 Million  
 Mkt Value of Exerciseable Options: 83.8 Million


Since it is my pet peeve this cycle to smack about the myth that black conservatives are getting rich off white conservative money, I just wanted to put a little bit of that in perspective. Here's somebody most folks don't even know exists, and I'd bet you anything that the money he's worth far outstrips what black conservative activists are getting from the likes of Sciafe and Co. I know I shouldn't be going off track when I just wanted to give the man props.. but hey. It's my blog.

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April 20, 2006

## Leon H. Sullivan

## Congressional Medal of Freedom

 Presidential Medal of Freedom Awarded by President George Bush

Recipient Rev. Leon Howard

November 18, 1991

Sullivan

The Reverend Leon Sullivan, a civil rights leader and pastor emeritus of the Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia, has devoted his life to the causes of liberty and justice. Reverend Sullivan founded the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, one of the largest and most prestigious job training organizations in the world. He later founded the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help. In 1971, Leon Sullivan was elected to the Board of Directors of General Motors, becoming the first black American to participate in the direction of a U.S. auto company. America honors this man of principle, who in word and example has shown so many people the way to freedom.

Most of us know the Rev. Sullivan as the author of the Sullivan Principles with regard to dealing with South Africa. I seem to recall that by doing so he got into a world of trouble here at home. Essentially, the Sullivan Principles were aligned with, and in fact were the cornerstones of Constructive Engagement.

When he died in 2001 Andrew Makyuth noted:

His Sullivan Principles, an ethical code of conduct for companies doing business in South Africa, gave legitimacy to the desegregation of work facilities and equal opportunities for black people at a time when the South African government balked at recognizing African trade unions.

As the antiapartheid movement accelerated and became more radical in the 1980s, the Sullivan Principles were derided as too tame, too gradual. But they set the stage for corporate divestiture from South Africa, contributing to pressure for the government's eventual capitulation, leading to the peaceful elections in 1994.

"The Sullivan Principles were the right thing at the right time," said Tom Manthata, a former antiapartheid campaigner who worked with Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the South African Council of Churches. He is now a member of South Africa's Human Rights Commission.

But if you listen to folks like 'The Flaming Grasshopper' you might hear rhetoric that goes a little something like this:

Remember apartheid South Africa? Remember the voluntary corporate code of conduct called the Sullivan Principles? Remember Reagan's "constructive engagement?" The Sullivan Principles and constructive engagement were a cover for "business as usual" in an effort to dispel criticism of the brutal suppression of the majority of the South African population, financially underpinned by U.S. corporate investments, bank loans, and trade.

...In the early 1970s, global corporations, including about 350 U.S.-based transnational companies, were pouring millions of dollars into racist, white-minority-ruled South Africa, to earn lots of money. Why not? There was cheap, controlled, and abundant black African labor, cheap natural resources, a western banking system, an industrial economy exporting products to Europe and the West, and a police and military state elected in a whites only "democracy" to keep the trains running on time.

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April 11, 2006

## John Hope Bryant

A national community leader cited by the past four sitting U.S. presidents for his work to empower low-wealth communities across America, an active advisor to the past two U.S. presidents, an author of BANKING ON OUR FUTURE, a book on youth and family financial literacy by Beacon Press, John Hope Bryant is a businessman, a former United Nations goodwill ambassador to the United States, a partner with former President Clinton in an effort to educate every child in Harlem, New York in financial literacy, a Presidential Appointee for President George W. Bush, a Young Global Leader for the World Economic Forum, the founder of Operation HOPE, and working with HOPE spokesman Ambassador Andrew Young, the

author of a new movement in America, and a clear and compelling vision for the eradication of poverty in the 21st century; a movement called the Silver Rights Movement.

John Hope Bryant is one of the most authoritative and compelling advocates for poverty eradication in America today. To the producer of the NBC Weekend Today Show John Hope Bryant is “a revolutionary of our times,” and to U.S. President George W. Bush, John Hope Bryant is “a social entrepreneur.”

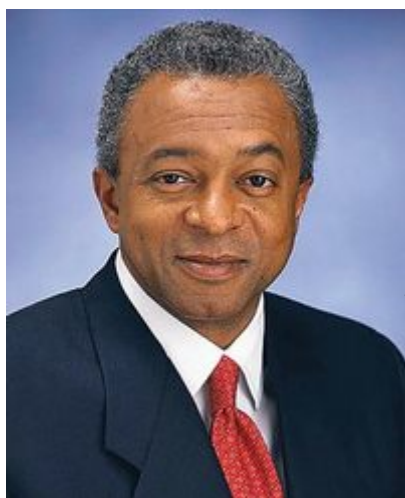


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February 22, 2006

## Stan O'Neal



Stan O'Neal, chairman of the board, chief executive officer and president. Merrill Lynch.

He heads one of the world's leading personal and institutional financial management and advisory firms, with offices in 36 countries and total client assets of approximately \$1.5 trillion.

Mr. O'Neal became chief executive of the company in December 2002 and was elected chairman in April 2003. He has held a series of increasingly responsible positions since joining the company in 1986 as vice president of investment banking.

He was named president and chief operating officer in July 2001 and served as president of Merrill Lynch's U.S. Private Client group from February 2000 until July 2001. He served as executive vice president and chief financial officer of Merrill Lynch from 1998 until 2000 and also held the position of executive vice president and co-head of the Corporate and Institutional Client Group (now Global Markets & Investment Banking) prior to that.

Previously, Mr. O'Neal had been in charge of Capital Markets and a managing director in investment banking, heading the financing services group, which included the high yield finance, restructuring, real estate, project and lease finance, and equity private placement groups.

Before joining Merrill Lynch, Mr. O'Neal was employed at General Motors Corporation in New York and Madrid. He held a number of financial positions at the company, including general assistant treasurer in New York, responsible for mergers, acquisitions and domestic financing activities.

Mr. O'Neal received a master's of business administration with distinction in Finance from Harvard University and is a graduate of Kettering University (formerly General Motors Institute).

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February 02, 2006

## New Schools in New York





Rod Bowen on the left of the podium, is helping lead the charge to reinvent education for the youth of New York City. I wasn't able to get a transcript of his keynote address to Mayor Bloomberg's ceremony yesterday but I have some snippets from the [NYT](#):

The schools announced yesterday will start with 100 students in the sixth or ninth grade or both, and will eventually grow to between 300 and 600 students — a size that will, it is hoped, foster a sense of intimacy to make it more difficult for students to slip through the cracks.

Among the new schools are the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism High School, which will join a collection of small schools that have replaced Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn; the East-West School of International Studies, which will open in Queens and teach children proficiency in Asian languages; and the DreamYard Preparatory School, whose principal, **Rod Bowen**, said he planned to use visual arts and theater to make math and other academic classes come alive.

Yes this is the same Rod Bowen of [Rising Circle](#). Yes he is my cousin. We're all very proud.

Also the event was covered by the [city government's website](#). The press release can be found [here](#).

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January 28, 2006

## **Fred Johnson: Amp'd Mobile**

As Vice President of Product Marketing, Fred Johnson brings a wealth of business savvy to the Amp'd marketing group, providing an acute sense of what works for the Amp'd demographic to help establish the company as a leader in wireless entertainment. Formerly with Apple Computer's Applications Marketing group, Fred was responsible for driving marketing and feature definitions for new product releases. Prior to his 3.5 successful years at Apple, Johnson served as Creative Director for Yahoo! Inc., where he oversaw the company's broadband services including streaming broadcasts, and private webcasts. He is the author of the best-selling book *Global Mobile: Connecting without Walls, Wires, or Borders*. Fred resides in Marina Del Rey, CA with his Fiance Elsa, and cat Baba.

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January 26, 2006

## **Blacks In the West Symposium**

Note the keynote. Way to go Uncle Ray!

FIRST BIENNIAL SYMPOSIUM FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH PATRONS: AMERICAN HISTORY, INC. (HRP)

Theme:

Blacks in the West, 1100-1899



## "Exploring the Black Frontier"

### Location:

Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Albuquerque Marriott

2101 Louisiana Blvd NE

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110 U.S.A

Phone: 1.505.881.6800

### Date:

June 14 - 17, 2006

### Objectives:

Objectives for this symposium are to:

- Provide a forum for leading experts in the area of American history.
- Promote the exchange of information and resources.
- Obtain support for collecting and cataloging historical data.
- Increase national and international awareness of this chapter in our history.
- Encourage academics to pursue further study in this area.

### Keynote Speaker:

**Dr. Raymond C. Bowen**, President Emeritus of LaGuardia Community College

His speech is entitled: "The Historical Significance of African American Education"

### Invitation:

We are thrilled that the Keynote Speaker for this event is Dr. Raymond C. Bowen, President Emeritus of LaGuardia Community College speaking on the topic: The Historical Significance of African American Education.

[Continue reading "Blacks In the West Symposium" »](#)

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## Real Talent

Admitting my bias, there are few things that are more impressive to me than seeing young black musicians pick up the Jazz tradition. It gives me a pure unadulterated sense of pride in our people and hope for the future. I come fully prepared to give props when I hear about new talent. But none of that prepared me for this twelve year old kid, even when he dedicated his performance to Tony Williams. So here's what I'm going to say today to everyone who is concerned that my lack of enthusiasm for Jamie Foxx betrays some kind of weird grudge or self-hate.

EVERYONE WHO HAS FORWARDED THE JAMIE FOXX EMAIL SHOULD ALSO PASS ON THIS LINK.

TONY ROYSTER, JR.

THAT'S REAL TALENT

If there is a conspiracy in Hollywood, it is to keep the idea of black clowns alive. But then again Hollywood is just doing what America wants it to do (except in the distribution business). But nothing can manipulate the pure genius of live instruments being played in classic styles. There's a big difference between star power and talent. There can be no denying Jamie Foxx's star power. He's getting the kind of exposure that a generation of black entertainers have broken barriers to achieve and he demonstrates that we're getting our cultural thing in order with less focus on race, more or less. However in terms of pure talent... well, he ain't got greatness in him, whereas this kid Royster is just oozing greatness.

Now the question about the future of black entertainment. Does black star power do right by black talent?

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January 24, 2006

## Dr. Terrence Roberts

Pops is always full of surprises. The one he dropped on me today was that he's known [Terrence Roberts](#) of the **Little Rock Nine** for many years. It turns out that he was one of the members of the Writer's Workshop in Pops' Institute for Black Studies back in the day. Well, of course Dr. Roberts has done well for himself and others. In recognition of same he will be honored next month.

In observance of Black History Month, Antioch University will pay tribute to our very own national hero, Dr. Terrence Roberts. Dr. Roberts will be honored for his heroism as one of "The Little Rock Nine" who confronted the Arkansas National Guard and helped desegregate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

6:00 p.m.

Refreshments & Live Jazz

7:00 p.m.

Reminiscences by Terry Roberts and recognition by the community

8:00 p.m.

A Drum Circle Honoring Dr. Roberts

(Your participation is encouraged. Drums will be provided or you can bring your own.)

Antioch University Los Angeles Room A1000

More info to come!

For address and driving directions, visit our website at [www.antiochla.edu](http://www.antiochla.edu)

There it is.

January 24, 2006 in [Keeping It Right](#), [Local Deeds](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)  
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January 07, 2006

## Tommie Shelby

Once upon a time, I killed Boohab. The reason? The birth of the Boondocks. I quit being a race man and persistent pain in the ass in cyberspace because I felt a little redundant. It's more accurate to say that rather like the dynamic of the fly in the buttermilk, once there are a sufficient number of flies, no individual needs to buzz so very loudly. And with that in mind, pursuant to my Conservative Conclusion, it is a great bit of fortune and synchronicity that I happened upon [this review of Tommie Shelby by Orlando Patterson](#). Read the whole thing. He's right where I am, almost to the letter.

Shelby directs his most forceful criticisms at the two other main forms of black identity politics: black power and cultural particularism. He maintains that the black power call to collective action based on exclusive black organizations is now inappropriate because of the economic and regional heterogeneity of the black population. It is also, he says, politically counterproductive since it risks alienating badly needed progressive allies among the nonblack population.

Shelby's powerful critique of black cultural particularism incorporates and supersedes all previous discussions of the subject. He identifies eight basic tenets of this tradition: blacks have a distinctive culture; they should collectively and consciously reclaim that culture; they should take pride in conserving and reproducing it; unlike white culture, it provides a valuable foundation for their individual and communal identities; it is an emancipatory tool in resisting white hegemony, providing an alternate set of ideals to live by; it should be accorded public recognition by the state; blacks, as the main producers of this culture, should benefit from it in financial and other ways; and as "owners" of this culture, blacks should be the foremost authorities and interpreters of it.

We hear these arguments all the time, sometimes subtly, often crudely. Most non-blacks are either contemptuous of them or quietly dumbfounded. Many simply turn a blindly patronizing eye. Shelby takes the arguments seriously, and

meticulously demolishes them all. He does not deny that there are distinctive forms of Afro-American culture. Far from it. His concern, rather, is with the ways black spokesmen think about this heritage and the chauvinistic claims commonly made about it, beginning with the questionable view that being black means one is, or ought to be, culturally black.

The laudable goal of promoting the finer aspects of black cultural productions, Shelby argues, in no way implies that every black person should root his identity in them or is under any obligation to cultivate them. And the fact that blacks have had to make a special effort to undo the centuries of denigration of black cultural creations in no way implies that a common cultural identity should undergird political solidarity. Further, just because blacks created some particular cultural form is not necessarily a good reason to value it, since there is a good deal in black culture, as in all cultures, that is without value. And he nicely extends previous criticisms that the tiresome proprietary claims made of black culture risk marginalizing both black culture and intellectuals.

My predictions are a bit harsh. I say, like with the bodies at the bottom of the Middle Passage, those who do not survive America will have no effect on its destiny and those that do will not have the patience, time, inclination nor power to properly represent or gain cosmic justice for them when all is said and done. So therefore, I'm taking Kujichagulia to its end, which is that you're on your own, brother. What's most important is that I say 'brother'. At some point in our distant histories, we went through the same things, but I cannot guarantee that for my descendants the understanding of those things will be anything more than theoretically sympathetic.

I am more likely to conclude that it will be the traditions of Christianity that will bind us together in the future, than any political program of uplift. Where Shelby defaults on matters of self-reliance for the poor masses, I say that's all you have, and the Spirit. Won't it be hilarious to see then, how the kind of crass commercial Christianity derided in caricatures of the Right that Progressives wind up prescribing for the least of their bretheren? You can't black politic your way into the economic mainstream, but you may be able to use faith in God, since Progressives won't allow you to have faith in America itself.

I feel that I ought to buy his book even though as with Ellis Cose' 'Rage of a Privileged Class' I feel I already know the conclusions. But I may as well have it on hand as Shelby enters the pantheon. I wonder then what to do with Glenn Loury. Hmm.

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December 17, 2005

## **A New Jack Network**

I just got a comment from somebody I'd like to get to know better, and it occurs to me that I've been sleeping on a particular aspect of Old School business. That is the business of business networking. Since I've been doing none of my own contracts in the past 9 months, I've gotten out of the day to day game of drumming up contacts and opportunities. Even though have my company on the back burner it is still alive. So where are all the black entrepreneurs and small business owners? Let's look around and do some linking here folks... Maybe even set up a directory - The Black Business Blogroll...

I'll start with the [Esteves Group](#), and then [Grupo Utopia](#).

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December 15, 2005

## **Randal Pinkett: Overachiever du Jour**

Randal Pinkett is the new [Apprentice](#). If I watched more network television, I would have been aware of this gent some time ago. Alas. Still it's never too late to give props to a fellow [NSBE](#) alum. With any luck his high profile will give more visibility to the class of African Americans I tend to favor, those who tend to be a bit more conservative than the average bear. Yet I know nothing of Pinkett's politics, I gather that the millions of viewers of The Apprentice know more than I and can give some flavor. Considering that he won this week within days of the execution of some other butthead who shall remain nameless, I think it does show the true diversity of African America. For those of you who are as clueless as I was 15 minutes ago, here's his bio:

Randal, 34, is the founder, president and CEO of his fifth venture "BCT Partners," a multi-million dollar management, technology and policy consulting firm based in Newark, N.J., that works with corporations, government agencies, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations. Born in Philadelphia and raised in Hightstown, N.J., he holds five academic degrees in engineering, business and technology including a B.S. from Rutgers University, an M.S. from the University of Oxford in England as a Rhodes Scholar, and an M.S., M.B.A. and Ph.D. from MIT. A former college championship track and field athlete, he has received numerous awards for his accomplishments as an entrepreneur and technologist including the National Society of Black Engineers "National Member of the Year." A Leadership New Jersey Fellow and Next Generation Leadership Fellow, Randal has been featured by Black Enterprise magazine and Ebony magazine in their "30 Leaders of the Future" issue. He is a proud member of First Baptist Church in Somerset, N.J., where he resides and is happily married to his wife Zahara.

This is the kind of exposure that people in my generation worried our heads about in the 80s as we entered the corporate white collar workforce in larger numbers than ever before. In those days when Bill Cosby was chided for being 'unrealistic', we struggle in relative anonymity. Today, Pinkett should raise few eyebrows in a nation who has been schooled. His educational achievements in reality far outstrip that of the fictional Huxtable and I think it is extra cool that such a story makes for entertainment.

I realize that the traffic has subsided on my website since the fathead Crip bit the dust, but I would hope there are some straggling defenders who might perhaps recognize that there are alternative role models. Not that I am big on the role-monkey business, I think achievement and excellence ought to speak for itself, but for every loser that makes the news, there is a winner somewhere unsung. Today is Randall Pinkett's day. Let's try not to forget that. He didn't just pop out of nowhere. He came from people. Might I be so bold to suggest that they are my kind of people, and I think they're your kind of people too.

More on Pinkett (an interview, pre-TV stardom) can be found over at [Ed Batista's blog](#).

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November 21, 2005

## **Derrick Wallace**

Rarely do the actions of any of the officers of local NAACP chapters make national news. The switch from Democrat to Republican of [Orlando's Derrick Wallace](#) is a bold and brave move to be applauded.

"I've thought about this for two years," Wallace said Tuesday afternoon, just a few hours after returning from the elections office. "This is not a decision I made yesterday."

It is, however, a decision that rang out like a shot among political circles.

Republican Party leader Lew Oliver described himself as "extraordinarily pleased," while Democratic leader Tim Shea said he was disappointed.

Wallace, a construction-company exec, was candid about the fact that his business life was a big part of his decision to change.

"It's purely a business decision. Ninety percent of those I do business with are Republicans," he said. "Opportunities that have come to my firm have been brought by Republicans."

Wallace is just doing what makes sense, his is a perfectly rational and understandable change. We in the Old School understand that it is not a long walk from our front porch to the front door of the GOP, and we don't have to change our values or priorities to walk in that open door. We merely have to change our attitude. Wallace' example proves that it's not too hard.

[McGeehee predicts](#) a 40% chance of Oreo Storm.

As I've tried to follow this story around the 'sphere, I have found almost no mention of Wallace or his branch before. The national NAACP site only gives a PO Box and a phone number - his branch like hundreds of other NAACP branches, has no website. What's clear is that he has been doing business with Republicans for a long time and that nobody (here) knew nor cared. So it raises a particularly interesting set of questions. First, how does one get to be president of an NAACP chapter? Wallace is clearly a big shot, having run for mayor of the city, and he's clearly pro-business having supported two GOP

candidates for mayor. When Republicans are mayors of the city, it's incumbent on those who want permanent influence to have an in with the Republicans. What's so crazy about that?

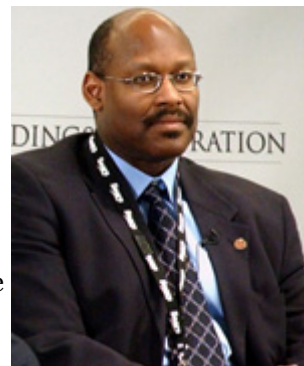
Anyway, there's a host of hateration going around that I'll catalog here when I finish my lunch.

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September 20, 2005

## Do You Know This Man?

This gentleman is probably the most unknown superstar on the planet. You have to admit that he's rather unassuming looking, and yet he has influenced American life in profound ways. I'm predicting that his next success is going to propel him into something of a cult hero, if he's not already that. His name is **Aylwin Lewis**.



OK here's a clue:

Aylwin Lewis stepped before an audience of about 80 people Sept. 8 and received an enthusiastic ovation. And consider who these fans were: H. Carl McCall, former New York State comptroller and gubernatorial candidate; Hugh Price, former president of the National Urban League; John Rogers, CEO of Ariel Capital Management; Charles Tribbett, principal at Russell Reynolds Assoc.; and more of the most powerful African Americans in Corporate America.

Now you're probably getting the idea that he may have something to do with business. You're right. But how big could this guy be? Can't guess? Alright, enough with the suspense. This is the man who made YUM Brands. Yes, that's right. He's the one whose idea it was to merge Taco Bell, KFC, Long John Silvers, Pizza Hut and A&W. Wow you say? But that's all in the past. Aylwin Lewis has been there and done that, now he's the CEO of Sears.

Huh? What? You mean that Sears? Yes, that Sears & Roebuck and guess what, KMart too.

From [Business Week](#):

I'm 51-years-old, and 51 years ago I didn't even have the right to think that I could have a job like this. I had great parents and I have a great wife. Growing up, we lived in the projects. I had big dreams.

But I could have lived a great American dream running a hundred restaurants for KFC. That would have been a nice career that would have been very good success, particularly for a black person. So it means a lot, keeping this door open. The history of this thing, the importance of this thing, yeah, you betcha it's important. And it's not a burden. It's a wind in my sail.

Now you know.

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September 17, 2005

## Brazile Comes Correct

 [Donna Brazile](#) has [shown herself to be a class act](#).

On Thursday night President Bush spoke to the nation from my city. I am not a Republican. I did not vote for George W. Bush -- in fact, I worked pretty hard against him in 2000 and 2004. But on Thursday night, after watching him speak from the heart, I could not have been prouder of the president and the plan he outlined to empower those who lost everything and to rebuild the Gulf Coast.

Bush called on every American to stand up and support the rebuilding of the region. He told us that New Orleans and the entire Gulf Coast would rise from the ruins stronger than before. He enunciated something that we all need to remember: This is America. We are not immune to tragedy here, but we are strong because of our industriousness, our ingenuity

and, most important, because of our compassion for one another. We are a nation of rebuilders and a nation of givers. We do not give up in the face of tragedy, we stand up, and we reach out to help those who cannot stand up on their own.

There's not much to add to that. But read the whole thing just in case you think that's she's just making nice.

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September 08, 2005

### Dream Center Success

I got the following from Pops and Deet this evening. They've been pulling weight.

deet came by this afternoon with a LOAD of clothing items. i took the to the unity center and, although they were grateful, they said they had enough clothes and were now looking for toiletries. the lady suggested i go to the dream center where a large number of folks were sent. i went and WOW!! the place is buzzin' with activity. a line of cars waiting to drop off all kinds of things. 2 dudes and a woman unloaded the avalanche post haste. they were polite and grateful (the big surprise is that they are l.a. folks!!) anyway, while i was there, "monique" from tv drove up in that big red benz in the foto. a bunch of folks flocked to her car to get autographs. she was all smiles. the dude came back to the



avalanche and said magic johnson and sugar ray leonard had been by earlier. he then flashed a super grin and said oprah is coming, too!! although i was just the delivery dude, i left with a real good feeling. the woman (whose back you can see in the unloading flick) said the need right now is for baby items. so, i will seriously deal with that tomorrow.

king deet called tonight and came up with a (typical king deet) good idea: go to the center and pick up a family and take them out to dinner! that got my mental wheels turning. take some folks to church or bowling or the beach or a park or (drum roll) the mountains. the kids would probably love meeting other kids, the possibilities are as endless as the caring of the human heart.....

if any of you can think of other ways to simply be involved and being decent to our new orleans/mississippi brothers and sisters

(of whatever color or kind), lemme know.....or contact the king of deets!

I'll forward any ideas of course. Remember. It's all about DO!

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September 04, 2005

### Russell Honore - The John Wayne Dude

*General Honore is a native of Lakeland, Louisiana. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry and awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Agriculture upon graduation from Southern University and A&M College in 1971. He holds a Master of Arts in Human Resources from Troy State University as well as an Honorary Doctorate in Public*





Administration from Southern University and A&M College.

General Honore has served in a variety of command and staff positions. His overseas assignments include tours in Korea and Germany. He served as Commanding General, 2nd Infantry Division in Korea; Vice Director for Operations, J-3, The Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.; Deputy Commanding General and Assistant Commandant, United States Army Infantry Center and School, Fort Benning, Georgia; and Assistant Division Commander, Maneuver/Support, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. Most recently, General Honore served as

Commander, Standing Joint Force Headquarters – Homeland Security, U.S. Northern Command.

General Honore's awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Army Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

I'm going to spend a little time on the people who are doing the right thing. I've already settled on my first favorite, Mayor Ray Nagin, who stuck his neck out and became the exact right kind of squeaky wheel. The details are all at Wikipedia. The first clue I had about Nagin was that he basically said, hey if you don't want to give me authority, then give it to Honore, clearly implying that the general had some bureaucratic BS to deal with in getting supplied as well. So let's follow Honore. His is the story I want to hear.

According to CNN, Honore did the sensible thing (as opposed to Blanco who wanted to give shoot to kill orders) with respect to giving the evacuees some measure of dignity:

"By-and-large, these are families that are just waiting to get out of here. They are frustrated; I would be, too. I get frustrated at the cash register counter when the paper runs out."

Hundreds of National Guard and active duty troops are carrying weapons in the city. But the way they carried those guns was a concern to the general.

He ordered all he encountered to point their weapons down, said CNN Pentagon Correspondent Barbara Starr, who was with the general. Honore repeatedly went up to military vehicles, National Guardsmen standing sentry and even to New Orleans police officers, telling them to please point their weapons down and reminding them that they were not in Iraq.

There's another article about him at the Stars & Stripes. He used to be the CO of the 2ID.

So while people are making punching bags out of Brown and Chertoff, the praise is pretty much universal for Honore. Pump it up.

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August 22, 2005

**Adam Hunter**

Today's Boston Globe profiles young Adam Hunter:

Hunter, who as an undergraduate headed Howard's chapter of College Republicans, sees himself as part of a younger generation of African-Americans. He is ready to cast aside traditional loyalties to the Democratic Party and forge his own political identity.

I've got vague memories of coverage of College Republicans out of Howard U, and perhaps Hunter is the same guy (oh yeah), but I think we will be hearing a great deal of similar stories as time goes by. By being the majority party, the GOP is destined to make sense of itself in recognition of its various factions. I continue to hope that the African American contingent grows significantly.

I haven't had nearly as much free time as when I was working my own business, so opportunities to speak on college campuses have been, and I've made no progress. However I will be in [Greensboro this fall](#). I am very curious to know how undergrads would react to me and my message, which is born of the experience I've had with progressive politics.

I would sum up my message thusly, African American collegians are more free than their ancestors to single-mindedly pursue their careers. They are less indebted to the idea that some racial catastrophe would 'set back the race' than any previous generation, and they should take advantage of that fact to make more bold attempts at achieving independent excellence. What African America needs is capital formation and a better sense of networking which is not burdened with false socialist politics. There is a lot more social space out there. Take advantage of it. Work towards internationalism. Discover America. Learn a different language. Understand multiple religious philosophies. Cultivate cultivated friends. Air dirty laundry. Differentiate with respect.

I say, of course, more power to young Mr. Hunter. Oh yeah, and start a blog.

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August 17, 2005

## My Kinda Nationalist

This afternoon at the airport where I lost my bluetooth headset on my way to Chicago, I looked forward to the peaceful moments above the country where I could [stop engaging my colleagues](#) on subjects of Gay Marriage and Black Militancy, both dubious concepts in which a great number of people other than me have invested much faith and rhetorical fire. Wouldn't you know the cover of Fortune magazine at the newstand dragged me back into the latter.

### Fortune begins:

In 1962—less than a lifetime ago—Harvey C. Russell did what no other black man had done before. He became a vice president of a FORTUNE 500 company.

The company was Pepsi-Cola, and Russell, then 44, had been a standout salesman in its Negro Sales Department for the previous 12 years. "Mr. Russell's promotion was based solely on merit," Pepsi's president, Herbert Barnet, told the New York Times a few months later. "He came the hard way and has been one of our brilliant young men for 12 years." But this milestone was not greeted with widespread rejoicing. The Ku Klux Klan called for a national boycott of Pepsi's products. The group flooded the country with handbills that read: DON'T BUY PEPSI AND MAKE A NIGGER RICH.

On the cover of Fortune are old heads and new-jacks, veterans all of that place we call Corporate America. Not long ago I was talking about how Black Nationalism bogarded Corporate America, and while some would call that a militant mindset, I would not. If we have that kind of epistemological difference, that's OK, but I am notorious for parsing words to the extreme, and I'd prefer if people used my terms. Nevertheless there was a particular individual who struck me as different than the rest. His name is [Lee Archer](#), and that's a funky webpage about him.

I also found this interesting clip about Archer:

Governor George E. Pataki unveiled a full-scale replica of a P-51 Mustang fighter as a permanent tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II at the American Airpower Museum at Republic Airport. The Governor was joined by Lt. Col. Lee Archer, a Tuskegee ace whose aircraft markings are featured on the Mustang, and by leaders of Long Island's veterans community. The replica will serve as a tribute to the challenge the Tuskegee Airmen faced in confronting a two-front war: the German Luftwaffe and American racism.

**Lt. Colonel Lee Archer** said, "Governor Pataki has been in the vanguard of the battle against racism in all its repugnant forms. It should come as no surprise that he would now take the lead in creating this fitting tribute to these veterans of 60 years ago. This Mustang represents every one of us who have been willing to fight—and to die—for our nation's liberties. In honoring the Tuskegee Airmen, you honor the inherent strengths of a nation where life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is a right guaranteed to all of us, regardless of race, color or creed."

That's what I'm talking about. Furthermore, here is part of the Fortune article on Archer:

General Foods sent Archer to the University of Pittsburgh to take a graduate course in financial management. He came back a venture capitalist. In 1973 he became CEO of Vanguard Capital Corp., General Foods' minority-business investment company. Two years later he also became CEO of North Street Capital Corp., the company's small-business investment arm; in 1980 he became CEO of Hudson Commercial Corp., a tobacco-investment arm. In those three roles he helped create 74 companies, including Essence Communications and Black Enterprise magazine. Archer also became a key advisor to the late Reginald Lewis in the leveraged buyout deal that created the conglomerate TLC Beatrice in 1987. "Lee is tough, just like my husband," says Loida Lewis, widow of the Beatrice CEO. "Lee constantly challenged him, which made him better."

The hardest part of his corporate career, says Archer, was knowing who was going to be fair and who wasn't. For the 17 years he was at General Foods, he kept journals with lists of names. The names are divided into two lists: white hats and black hats. The white hats "gave me a shot," he says. The black hats ... Archer stumbles, trying to pick the best bad word he can think of. "It can't be published," he concludes. He won't name names. For him it is enough simply to write them down.

One of the things I hadn't mentioned in the debate about militancy was a couple of books by Price Cobbs. One of them is entitled 'Black Rage' and the one published after that is '[Cracking the Corporate Code : From Survival to Mastery](#)'. I've only touched briefly on the subject of black organizational strategies, but I believe very strongly that what black nationalist organizations began in their move on Corporate America has been the most useful source of knowledge accruing to the state of African America. They owe their success to the inroads made by individuals like Lee Archer and others who put their heads down, rose up and offered a hand. I privilege this set of skills over those acquired through the integration of the Civil Service and of the Armed Forces, just so you know up front. I find men like Lee Archer to be heroic and worthy of emulation. He's what I would call an Old School pioneer.

Now how do I make the hookup?

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April 08, 2005

## Byron Allen: Who Knew?

OK I have to confess that I remember Bobby Rivers a lot, but I only remember Byron Allen a little. Like other mellow and slightly nebbish young adults of the brown persuasion, I took my share of ribbing for liking Bobby Rivers, the old VH1 host back in the late 80s. Maybe it was his sugary and bouyant personality that both endeared him to me and made me gag, but I thought Bobby Rivers had *something*. It was more that your basic non-threatening negro pose, he was engaging and pushed his personality all over everything like carmel fudge.

Byron Allen, on the other hand, didn't give anybody a reason to thing 'damn, is he black at all?' There was never any question about Allen's soul credentials. Back in those days there were six young black media stars. They were Bobby Rivers, Chuck D., Arsenio Hall, Byron Allen, Ed Lover and Dr. Dre. Nobody else was close, not even Janet Jackson, although she took over shortly thereafter.

Byron Allen seemed unremarkable at the time, but you couldn't help but notice how smoothly he just did the talk show thing. He was a natural and didn't push the boundaries like Arsenio, but then he didn't tip over my little black mental crab either. He never got me into the yellow zone pushing over to red my internal 'set back the race' meter. He just did his thing, cracked corny jokes and got paid. For those of you born after 'The Empire Strikes Back' know this: Tiger Woods isn't even close to being the first surprisingly charming black man who outclasses most of his peers.

I saw Byron Allen some time later doing some standup at the old Improv in West LA after his show was cancelled, and I thought to myself, this man is talented. He's funny and intelligent, what a shame that he peaked so soon. I'm glad I was wrong. Allen was nowhere near the peak. Still, I don't think any of us had any idea how paid Byron Allen has become. In today's news his Entertainment Studios (with the pathetically clunky [website](#)) [offered 2.2 Billion dollars to buy PAX](#). You remember PAX, well they're in trouble, and Allen is their knight in shining armor.

Everytime you read something about Lil Kim and shake your head in shame, you can read the following paragraph:

The former co-host of the hit 1980s show "Real People" said he has had preliminary discussions with Paxson as well as talks with investment bank Credit Suisse Boston and a number of private-equity firms about putting together a deal.

Allen said he also has had preliminary talks with General Electric Co.'s NBC, which bought a 32 percent stake in Paxson for \$415 million in 1999 in the form of preferred stock. NBC exercised an option in 2003 requiring Paxson to buy back the stake with interest. The matter is currently in dispute.

Falls under the radar? Shame. Nobody in the NBA is ballin' like that. Byron Allen could buy a football team. Hell, \$415 million is the payroll of the NY Yankees for three years, and that's just a fraction of the size of the deal that he's putting together. Now I know that deals are meant to collapse, and nothing is promised, but if he pulls this one off, it's going to be sweet.

You go, bro.

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April 07, 2005

## The Bigger Brotherhood

What's the scariest thing about being a conservative black? It's that you're friends with black conservatives, Republicans, Christian Conservatives, Right Wingers, Black libertarians and a host of other thoughtful, uppity and unbreakable blackfolks that everybody tries to marginalize in our democracy. But you can't put a team like that down, 'cause we've got Brotherhood.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, The Conservative Brotherhood strikes back. This afternoon I am pleased to announce three new writers to the fold.

### Tavares Forby

Young Mr. Forby knows his mind and he's not afraid to speak it. He's a Republican, an Electrical Engineer and he's straight out of Compton. An unusual combination? We think not. His precise logic, enthusiasm and straightforward attitude endeared him to the Brotherhood the minute we saw him online. We're proud to have him.

### Demond Hunter

Ole Sarge Hunter's back from Iraq taking care of domestic business. He's a dad, he's a NASCAR fan, he's regular Army and he's our kinda guy. Be sure to check out his blog, I think he's finally over the Tarheels' victory. Well, maybe not.

### Joseph C. Phillips

You may have heard him on [NPR](#), you may have read his essays, or you may have seen him at the Republican National Convention in NY. But even if you didn't know of him from TV or Film, you must surely have seen him on The Cosby Show. Joe is frat, and is a constant inspiration to me. Just being around him reminds me of the kinds of men a lot of our mamas raised us to be.

And you know what? There will be more before too long. How you like us now?

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March 31, 2005

## Reggie Mebane

Reggie Mebane was recently hired to manage a big part of the CDC. He's a friend of the family, so we had to pub him up. Reggie is a testament to hard work, humility and integrity. Congrats!

### CDC Leadership Profile:

Meet Reggie Mebane

As part of our series of leadership profiles, we continue with a profile of Reggie Mebane, MS, Chief Management Officer, Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases.



Name:

Reginald R. Mebane

MS Title:

Chief Management Officer, Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases (February 2005)

### **Responsibilities:**

Direct authority for business operations (including human capital, information technology, grants, facilities, administrative services, etc.) for the Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases (CoCID). He is one of seven Chief Management Officers (CMOs) who report directly to Bill Gimson, CDC's Chief Operating Officer.

### **First job at CDC:**

Current position

### **Path to public health:**

"My path to CDC started with my path at FedEx. I started working for FedEx in 1981 when I took a part-time position as a handler where I unloaded trucks, loaded planes, etc., while working toward my bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Memphis.

"While I worked at night at FedEx, I worked as a psychiatric case manager and psychotherapist in Memphis, during the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill. That was my first tie to public service, and I did that for about six years. That work taught me very valuable life lessons in leadership and humanity-that stereotypes are not accurate and that perseverance is the most crucial life leadership skill of all. As a result of this experience, I later became Chairman of the Memphis Health, Education & Housing Finance Board. The restructuring of this board under my chairmanship is my legacy to Memphis in making housing affordable to people of moderate income means.

"Over the years, I was promoted at FedEx-to manager, then senior manager and eventually, as part of the FedEx Leadership Institute, teaching leadership and management practices to FedEx employees from all parts of the company around the world. I also was the corporate lead for diversity training from 1995 to 1997. In 1997, I was promoted to Director of International Operations, where I was responsible for overseeing shipments to and from more than 200 countries.

[Continue reading "Reggie Mebane" »](#)

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March 30, 2005

## **Johnnie Cochran: Ordinary Hero**

It's going to take a long time to get out all I want to say about Johnnie Cochran, especially now that Harold Cruse is gone. I met Johnnie on several occasions and I was good friends with one of the attorneys at his firm in Los Angeles, the firm that was there before he got supersized.

Cochran was your basic hero, the kind of crusader who never went off the deep end, a man who understood what was possible and never stopped being a champion or a defender. I think **Ira Reiner** had some fairly uncouth things to say last night on Warren Olney's show, then again Ira Reiner is not famous as Johnnie Cochran, and it shows.

I knew Johnnie from the perspective of black cultural nationalism, which is nothing more or less than that set of values that make blackfolks work together within America for their common benefit. Johnnie represented black law because Johnnie not only did the work, the integrative mainstream work, but he did the meta-work, opening doors, showing pathways and mentoring. He wasn't just a symbol, he was an active part of the process of getting kids into the profession. As such, there was a certain amount of BS that flew by the wayside. You couldn't complain about blacks not being properly represented in the legal profession or that nobody was doing anything about police brutality, because not only was Johnnie doing that, he had a chain of folks he could point to. He was to black law students what [John Slaughter](#) has been to black engineering students - the man that made so much happen.

Johnnie had a unique way about him. He was larger than life in quiet ways. He was both unassuming and unflappable. He made you think that, here was a man who had everything going for him, and yet he remained personable. He wasn't just 'the

man' he was a node in a network, and when you knew that you could network with Johnnie Cochran, that was powerful inspiration indeed. At least that's how he appeared to me.

I first met him at a graduation affair. My friend 'Dianne' had just graduated from Law School and at the humble home of one of the others in her graduating class, people had gathered to munch, mingle and celebrate. There was an odd mix of the connected, family members, experienced attorneys, politicians and neighborhood folks and friends at the small gathering. Some of them whispered to me how much Johnnie had made connections with just about every organization of black law students. In the living room, the atmosphere was relaxed, while some serious political rap session was going down in the kitchen. There was a brief ceremony and Johnnie, along with the graduates decked in Kinte scarves, joined hands in a circle of prayer. Johnnie seemed, nothing more or less than everybody's kind and wise uncle.

What impressed me most about Cochran, was not the man himself but what he was trying to prove in the Reginald Denny case. If you haven't heard yet, he took on the LAPD in a new and unique way by defending the civil rights of a white man, at least that's the soundbite version. His case was essentially that Denny and several others suffered because police had made a strategic decision not to defend the lives and properties of people in black and latino neighborhoods. Since I am a big follower of Loury, Massey & Denton this was a new angle that made perfect sense to me. I don't know whatever became of the Denny case, but the implications of what might have been (and still may yet be) are fascinating.

Like most people, I know that Johnnie Cochran was police brutality's enemy number one. And I know that he was involved in most of the city's most notorious cases. What I didn't know was that 'If it doesn't fit, you must acquit' was not his idea. I'll try to find out more if I go to the funeral.

The last time I saw Johnnie was just a day before the OJ verdict. I saw him at the San Francisco airport. He stopped to say hello and I wished him good luck. He actually looked like he needed it.

Also: This time NPR got it right. I expect to hear a lot of idiocy about Cochran, but I'm not going to dignify it. I'll tell you that right now.

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March 20, 2005

## **Roland Gerhard Fryer, Jr**

Roland Fryer appears to be one of those brothers that I wished I had some way to keep up with. But I think any number of us are going to have some difficulty as he chips away at the convenience of the largely accepted. You see Fryer is aiming for DuBois, and people think he has a shot.

It's difficult to tell whether or not it's important to know what Fryer is trying to discover, a grand unified theory of... well what is it exactly? Blackness? Economic differences between blacks and whites? Implications of social patterns of behavior? But whatever it is, Fryer comes with street cred from the hard side of the tracks as well as all the props from the academic powers that be. And he looks to be assembling his drop squad at Harvard. Do you hear me? Homey from the hood is an economist at Harvard. Enough said.



I first heard about Fryer last week from a surprising email I got personally from Steven Levitt. Yes, that Steven Levitt. He gave me a little sideways intro and told me to watch out for the Sunday NYT Magazine. Having read it this morning and just (lazily) 40% done with Levitt's new book, certain things are starting to click. A little background.

The other night, when I took a picture with Sharpton and also met a young brother who considers himself one of the luckiest men in the world (Lahore, Karachi?), I was chilling with Spence and some very cool academics. One of them, Harwood, who teaches at Ohio State espied my galley proof of Levitt's new book Freakonomics. Spence was already jumping up and down when I showed it to him not two minutes after we first met. Harwood, who'll take Strata over SPSS anyday, practically snatched the book out of my hand and read it all night. When Spence talked about Levitt, he mentioned that it was difficult to believe he didn't have some black in him. I think perhaps we've found the answer, Fryer is a catalyst.



More accurately, Spence said of Levitt's work that he had to be white to do this - to ask the hardball questions and formulate them into the notable paper which became Chapter Three: Why Do Drug Dealers Still Live With Their Moms? Why? Because brothers in the 'hood are already deeply immersed in those economics, and it simply doesn't occur to any of them that this drug economy is worthy of study. The very act of asking all the dumb questions an outsider needs to was Levitt's advantage. Now consider this:

Fryer well appreciates that he can raise questions that most white scholars wouldn't dare. His collaborators, most of whom are white, appreciate this, too. "Absolutely, there's an insulation effect," says the Harvard economist Edward L. Glaeser. "There's no question that working with Roland is somewhat liberating."

Glaeser and Fryer, along with David M. Cutler, another Harvard economist, are the authors of a paper that traffics in one form of genetic theorizing. It addresses the six-year disparity in life expectancy for blacks versus whites, arguing that much of the gap is due to a single factor: a higher rate of salt sensitivity among African-Americans, which leads to higher rates of cardiovascular disease, stroke and kidney disease.

Fryer's notion that there might be a genetic predisposition at work was heightened when he came across a period illustration that seemed to show a slave trader in Africa licking the face of a prospective slave. The ocean voyage from Africa to America was so gruesome that as many as 15 percent of the Africans died en route, mainly from illnesses that led to dehydration. A person with a higher capacity for salt retention might also retain more water and thus increase his chance of surviving.

So it may have been that a slave trader would try to select, with a lick to the cheek, the "saltier" Africans. Whether selected by the slavers or by nature, the Africans who did manage to survive the voyage -- and who then formed the gene pool of modern African-Americans -- may have been disproportionately marked by hypertension. Cutler, a pre-eminent health economist, admits that he thought Fryer's idea was "absolutely crazy" at first. (Although the link between the slave trade and hypertension had been raised in medical literature, even Cutler wasn't aware of it.) But once they started looking at the data, the theory began to seem plausible.

That's what I'm talking about. Fryer is a catalyst and as such will be able to bring down to cases those things that we think we know but don't. This is about applying a curiosity abetted by the need to make sense of the African Experience in this land which may finally get the attention of harder science. How many times have I had to explain the lack of hypertension in my family to doctors? We're from Connecticut - we don't eat salty slave food. And yet it was only in the 90s that medical researchers first isolated diet from race in looking at hypertension in blacks. I think we stand at the beginning of a long series of discoveries about how African Americans really do live that stands outside of the accumulated pile of wobbly theory, idiot conspiracies and dismissal.

A while ago, Cornel West stunned me with an idea. He essentially posited that blackfolks don't do 'enlightened self-interest' and don't fit into economic models because we have a psychic hunger for things other than the fungibles of the American economy. In other words, African Americans were receptive to two kinds of economies, the one for everyone, and our own unique afro-psychic one. It was a difficult argument to counter at the time so I accepted it. But ultimately it was my acceptance of Loury's economic view that I think set me right. It is also the difficulty I have in sustaining any discussion about Ujamaa vs Capitalism that gets me steamed, but simply looking at things from an economist's perspective, that of incentive, we're right back into economy. (And yes I do pay my kids to get good grades). Fryer is going to have plenty opportunities to start knocking back old ideas and finding interesting new sets of facts about African American life, but not only Fryer himself, but a new generation of researchers who are not Andrew Hacker, Manning Marable or Daniel Patrick Moynihan. That is a change that is long, long overdue. Who knows which way he's going, but stick him and McWhorter in a room and you've got enough thoughtful dynamite to inject some science into what has too long been speculative (Not to mention well.. how exactly do you describe this?)

I've not studied the economics of the ghetto enough to be surprised to learn much new, but I've been around enough people who've lived there and elsewhere to know much that we do hear ain't right. So much of it is tied to the interests of a dumb national debate that rarely does anything that sounds like truth shine through. I have a good feeling that scholars like Fryer will make a difference.

Now there are the existentials.

I suppose it's rather intriguing that anyone who grows up in close proximity to scary things, like drug dealers and violent knuckleheads, ends up at Harvard. I would expect a certain amount of 'hair touching' in any profile of an up and coming academic star. However I do have some concerns that young Fryer get the blunt end of gratuity. According to the story, Fryer is a phenomenon of self-discipline whose work ethic propels him through. Like a sea lion, he can hold his breath while fishing. I've lived in Boston too, and I've called it the coldest city in the world - a place so white that even the Nike basketball shoe commercials don't have brothers in them. But I am wishing upon Fryer an existential network that keeps the flavor alive (whatever flavor he desires, whatever oxygen he needs). It's impossible to tell, through Dubner's eyes how Fryer might consider his own place or his ability to breathe freely. He may be dreading that he grows gills, he may be perfectly comfortable. All of us 'exceptionals' have some degree of a strangeness about our blackness given our individuality and rareness, and none of us are immune. To this day people aren't quite sure how to take Sowell or Loury, and the more we hear about their own personal demons (speaking of Loury) the more we leap to conclusions about the political spin given their economic work. No matter where Loury goes or what he does, it's always Loury vs D'Sousa or Loury vs Drugs. America doesn't treat black academics well, period. We don't know them, they don't know us. It's a strange relationship. Me personally, I hate on 'em because they don't blog or otherwise show up anywhere they can't get paid or gather up brownie points for their strange rituals and rites of passage. Hmmm. Maybe I ought to join the forces of evil and hack LexisNexis too.. or maybe that's just journalists. (On the other hand, everybody loves Skip - mostly)

Still in all there is much good news in that Fryer gets to grow up and do in a nation that's much better for him to air whatever laundry we've been hiding under the bed. And I'm betting that he won't hesitate. For a gadfly like me, there are worlds to be spun and a great deal of my Socratic needs the kind of ammo I believe he is likely to provide. And yet I do wonder whatever happened to Brent Staples.

What do I do? I do business intelligence - so I know myths about 'corporate America' are overbroad and simply don't apply. I have the numbers and computer models to show it. If the China Deal had worked, on the other side of that I would have built XRepublic and then sat down to study some economics. I've always wanted to know what I believe that men like Fryer and Levitt seem poised to present, which is some juicy detail at the micro. How do the numbers work in this neighborhood, that neighborhood? And is that neighborhood like my neighborhood? And I just did that geek thing out of curiosity and a little bit of myth-questioning over the question of the 'black mecca'. Imagine what we're going to get when the pros come with the hardline. (Damn, this reminds me of an email I haven't responded to..sorry Kevin G.)

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February 07, 2005

## Condi's Black Ops II: Tyrone Willingham

According to the [WaPo's Russakof](#):

Perhaps Rice's biggest impact on Stanford football was as provost in 1994, when according to [Tyrone Willingham](#), she was "very, extremely instrumental in my becoming head coach."


Rice as provost and Willingham, one of the few African American head coaches in Division I-A, sent a powerful signal of Stanford's vision of opportunity, recalls athletic director Leland. In 1999, Willingham coached the team to its first Rose Bowl appearance in 28 years, and Leland remembers watching the game that clinched the bowl berth from the press box with Rice. With two minutes to go, Leland says, Stanford recovered a fumble, sealing the victory, "and right then, Condi jumped up and cried out, 'There is a God!' I said it was fitting that for 4,000 years we've debated this question, and Condi Rice has settled it -- at a football game."

I had heard that Rice was a big football fan, but I really had no idea until I read this piece. Thanks [George](#).

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January 27, 2005

## James McLurkin

 James McLurkin is a daring innovator who has helped to push the frontiers of microrobotics. Awarded the prestigious Lemelson-M.I.T. Student Prize, his inventions range from a tiny self-contained autonomous robot that was the smallest in the world at the time—named Goliath, it measured a little over one inch per side—to his current research project: constructing the largest fleet of autonomous robots that have ever worked together to carry out cooperative, real-world tasks.

Called SwarmBots, McLurkin's tiny robots (they measure 4.5 inches) are programmed to emulate the behavior of bees with the capability to cluster, disperse, follow and orbit. Equipped with bump sensors, a self-charger, a radio modem and an audio system, the robots are autonomous yet travel in a fleet. When one robot makes a discovery, it signals the group to execute the task together.

The implications of McLurkin's groundbreaking work are far-reaching—from clearing fields of land mines to searching for survivors in the aftermath of a natural disaster to mapping the surface of Mars. With his initiative, creativity and extraordinary inventiveness, McLurkin is a natural speaker and educator. At the podium, he discusses the possibilities of robotic research and the future of his swarm robots, and, for younger audiences, illustrates the fun in inventing and engineering.

Inventing since the age of three, McLurkin's inspirations came from Lego bricks, model trains, video games, BMX bicycles and his parents—who were key role models. He is now a role model to many as a teacher in The Saturday Engineering Enrichment and Discovery Academy at M.I.T. (a college preparatory program).

A Long Island, New York native, McLurkin went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for his undergraduate studies in electrical engineering. He received his master's degree in electrical engineering from the University of California at Berkeley. He is currently working on his Ph.D. in computer science, also at M.I.T. Since 1999, McLurkin has also worked as the lead scientist and manager for the Swarm Robotics Project at iRobot in Burlington, MA, developing algorithms for large communities of autonomous robots.

As an undergraduate at M.I.T., McLurkin built twelve cubic-inch robots and programmed them to simulate the behavior of an ant colony. His robotic ants are currently featured as part of Invention at Play, an interactive traveling exhibit that focuses on the similarities between the way children play and the creative processes used by innovators in science and technology.

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January 24, 2005

## Jonathan Rodgers



*"I am a child of television and for 50 years of my life, I've wanted there to be a channel like this. This is an idea that is long overdue...the programming will be worthy and the demand will be voracious. TV One will give the African American community something to be proud of."*

—Johnathan Rodgers | CEO

Johnathan Rodgers has been named president and CEO of a new cable television network targeting adult African American and urban viewers that will be launched later this year by Comcast Corporation, the nation's largest cable operator, and Radio One, the largest radio broadcaster primarily targeting African-American and urban listeners.

Rodgers was president of Discovery Networks U.S. for six years, where he was responsible for the programming, marketing, research, distribution, operations and ad sales of the highly regarded television group which included the Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet, Discovery Kids and the Travel Channel.

"Johnathan has an incredible track record in operating top-quality, financially successful television ventures," said Alfred Liggins, president and CEO of Radio One and chairman of the to-be-named cable network. "While at the Discovery Networks he helped launch Animal Planet and re-launch the Travel Channel. That experience plus his strong programming skills will be invaluable as we move forward with this new enterprise to bring high-quality entertainment programming to the African American and urban television audience."

"I am delighted and honored to be a part of this historic new enterprise," Rodgers said. "I am confident that Radio One's marketing prowess in urban markets combined with Comcast's tremendous resources and experience in cable operations

and programming will help ensure that this network becomes a prime destination for adult television viewers,” Rodgers said.

I'm on the late freight with regard to **TV One**. I had heard about it but I didn't know that it had progressed this far. I picked up some buzz about it this weekend at a birthday party. A friend of a friend is involved with the channel. I'm looking forward to seeing it in the lineup.

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## Black Self-Help Info

**Ed Brown**, one of my colleagues at [Vision Circle](#) and a long time Internet personality is putting his time and money where everybody else's mouth seems to be at. He is gathering together an online resource directory of black self-help organizations.

His new website, appropriately named [Black Self Help](#), is just underway. Nothing fancy today, but you just wait.

It's interesting that this idea is not a new one but it doesn't seem to have been fulfilled after a whole generation of Internet technology. When I first started on the net back in '93, and built [The Cool Zone](#), I wanted to do something like this. Surely **Carter Bing** had the same idea when he got [The Drum](#) rolling. Ed has been around since those days and I'm sure has learned his lessons well, so I expect that his efforts will far surpass those, given the tools and technologies he will have at his disposal.

Back in the days of The Drum, it was unthinkable that blackfolks would own their own web servers. Now it's trivial. Hmm. Maybe it's time to have a second look at some of the concepts we considered impossible a dozen years ago. Just recently over at [Prometheus 6](#), the old impetus raised its head. So I suspect that inevitably there will be some stunning resources available to us - far beyond the realms of the old hackneyed Fedix and Molis.

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January 20, 2005

## Faye Anderson Strikes

Faye Anderson has entered the blogosphere. This changes things.

If there is anyone capable of giving a new level of detail on things Republican & things black, it will be Faye Anderson. Her arrival on the scene is timely and she debuts with a [scorcher on Armstrong Williams](#).

It goes without saying that Anderson is a key figure in the public debate about the future of American politics. The proof can be found in conversations that have taken place behind her back, some of them [here at Cobb](#). Her PoliticallyBlack.com was a pioneering website going back several years, and there is every indication she has been most everywhere black Republican activists would want or need to go, save the Promised Land.

So mark me one as excited to hear more from this insider.

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January 15, 2005

## Renford Reese

I had the distinct pleasure this morning of meeting Dr. Renford Reese of Cal Poly Pomona. He gave a brief accounting of some of his work in multicultural interaction at Ofari's Saturday morning roundtable. I really love his attitude.

In 1996, Renford Reese received his doctoral degree from the University of Southern California's School of Public Administration. He conducted his doctoral research on ethnic conflict and intergroup relations at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in Geneva, Switzerland. He received his Master's degree in public policy from the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies in 1990. He received his Bachelors of Arts degree in political science

from Vanderbilt University in 1989. He is the founder/director of the Colorful Flags program and teaches in the political science department at Cal Poly Pomona University.

Reese has a couple of books out and he sold every copy of American Paradox that he brought with him. Although much his talk today was about the Colorful Flags program, I'm really interested to hear what he has to say about the LAPD which is the subject of his latest book, Leadership in the LAPD: Walking the Tightrope. I took a moment to find out whether or not an old rumor that I heard was true, and Reese didn't think that there was much to it. This was that when the Christopher Commission had assembled a list of rogue cops that ought to have been fired, demoted or disciplined that Mark Fuhrman was on it. This was among the things known about Fuhrman by Marcia Clarke and Chris Darden, and while Johnnie Cochran decided to trounce him about the N-word, this was other incriminating evidence. Of course going to public events and schmoozing with folks is a great way to find out crazy stories like these, (and some like these) and it's not very often you get to check them out with people who make it their business to know better.

Reese, by the way, is the man who was assigned to mentor Rodney G. King and has some extensive contacts with roughnecks in prison education programs. As well, he has collaborated with Jim Brown through his Amer-I-Can program. But what impressed me most about him was that he has a personal touch and a personal approach to problems of race that are simple, thoughtful and powerful. He's a great storyteller, and which is something I aim to be.

I'm looking forward to hearing a lot more from and about Renford Reese.

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January 08, 2005

## Smile



In the process of cleaning up my closet and otherwise reorganizing stuff in My Terabyte, I came across this woodcut from my cousin. It was the opening title for his [MFA thesis exhibition](#) 6 years ago. [He's doing well](#), thank you. Just thought I should share a little bit of the magic.

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November 03, 2004

## More About The Society

It's not the Quad A, AAAA but the AAAS. Society not Association. My bad.

## MISSION

The African-American Alumni Society ("the Society") was established in 2000 with a core mission to assist in the advancement of Loyola High School of Los Angeles through the united efforts of its alumni as well as to foster the continued cordial relations of the Loyola alumni in the African-American community. The Society seeks to recruit qualified African-American prospective students for entrance into Loyola High School. The Society also seeks to support the development and advancement of African-American students of Loyola High in efforts to secure their successful matriculation.

The Society seeks to generate and maintain the active interest of all Loyola alumni in its regular business. The Society assists with the development of Loyola High School and the fulfillment of Loyola High School's mission, through fundraising and public relations efforts. The Society provides the African-American alumni with regular opportunities to assemble and maintain valued relationships through the promotion of alumni events and religious activities. The Society acts in accord with the values of the Catholic, Christian and Jesuit nature of Loyola High School.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

### Community, Outreach Tutoring Program:

Established in 2000, this initiative offers 8th grade students from targeted Catholic and private schools the opportunity to hone their math, English and interviewing skills in order to gain admissions to the Catholic high schools of their choice. The program is offered free to the students through the generous support of the Loyola community. To date, more than 900 students have participated in the program, including 50% of the African-American students in this year's Freshman class.

### Black History Month Outreach Program:

Established in 1999, this initiative offers Loyola alumni and underclassmen the opportunity to return to their respective elementary schools and give testimony to their individual experiences while a student at Loyola, and in their current profession. The goal of the program is to impress upon our young men and women the value of ~ a Catholic education, and of attending a premier Jesuit educational institution.

### St. Peter Claver Scholarship:

Established in 1992, this scholarship offers need-based assistance to African-American students with exemplary conduct. The scholarship has been successfully endowed with \$462,000 through the generosity of the Loyola community. To date more than 64 awards averaging \$2,745 have been given to deserving Loyola underclassmen.

### Welcome Back Reception:

This annual gathering of Loyola's African-American alumni, underclassmen and their families offers the opportunity of fellowship and discussion regarding the Loyola experience.

## INITIATIVES UNDER DEVELOPMENT

### Mentor Network:

It is widely recognized that a young man will transition into adulthood more effectively when shown the correct path from one who has walked it before. The objective of this important program is to pair underclassmen with Alumni in order to begin teaching them the opportunities and responsibilities that lay ahead in their development beyond the halls of Loyola. It is anticipated that the Mentor Network program will begin in the Spring of 2005.

### African-American Alumni Society' Scholarship:

Administrative processes are almost complete in the establishment of this merit-based scholarship to support and recognize the accomplishments of African-American scholars at Loyola. Requests for endowment support will begin in January of 2005.

[Continue reading "More About The Society" »](#)

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