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# Southwest Digest

December 18 thru December 24, 1997

VOL. XXI, No. 51

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An Independent Pictorial Newspaper for All People • Primarily Serving the Black Population of Lubbock County and the Surrounding Area • Black Press of America

## NATIONAL NEWS

### Benjamin Muhammad Named New Leader of New York Mosque

Minister Louis Farrakhan has named Benjamin Muhammad (formerly Benjamin Chavis) head of Muhammad Mosque #7 in New York City and East Coast Regional Minister. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad has described Mosque #7 as the heart of the Nation of Islam while Chicago's Mosque #7 is the Head. This appointment, he continued, is designed to utilize Muhammad's years of experience and suffering in the Black liberation struggle and his relationships with a broad spectrum of leadership in religious and civic circles. Farrakhan also explained that Chavis will bring a "fresh view" to the national development of the Nation of Islam. He cited his activist role with youth and the poor and his ability to effectively interact with diplomats in his outreach to representatives at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Speculations surrounding the change in leadership at the Mosque caused some local rift in the New York community for several months. Some have objected to the "demotion" of Min. Kevin Muhammad, the outgoing leader of the Mosque, who they believed had done much to benefit the community. Min. Muhammad, will continue as minister of the Mosque in Manhattan and will assist Min. Benjamin as his East Coast regional assistant.

### Study Shows African-American Males More Likely to Lose Motivation to Academically Succeed

African-American boys, compared with Whites, Hispanics and African-American girls, are "particularly and perhaps uniquely" vulnerable to "academic disidentification," the phenomenon in which success or failure in school ceases to matter to the student, according to a new survey. According to the author, Jason W. Osborne, MA, the correlations between self-esteem and achievement scores and self-esteem and grades provide a measure of the students' degree of academic identification or disidentification: Self-esteem rising or falling with grades and achievement scores indicate stronger academic identification. Over the course of the study, there were few substantial changes in the relationship between self-esteem and achievement scores, except for African-American boys. For this group, these correlations declined dramatically. There was very little support for the idea that African-American girls are similarly affected. The findings come from a four-year study for nearly 25,000 high school students across the United States and is reported in the December issue of the Journal of Education Psychology, published by the American Psychological Association (APA).

### Group Aims to Empower Black Investors

The Coalition of Black Investors (COBI) is a new national organization created to address some of the economic inequities facing African Americans. COBI's leadership is comprised of African-American professionals who appreciate the importance of saving, investing, and communication about money, organizers explained. "COBI was formed to address the unequal distribution of wealth, power and resources that has stagnated growth in Black communities across America," said Duane Davis, a spokesperson for the group. "In response, COBI is creating a Black economic network to serve the large and long-neglected population of African-American savers and investors. We want to help African Americans create wealth and increase ownership through investments in public and private enterprises." COBI is seeking new members—individuals and investment clubs who want to share knowledge and communicate with each other. For more information contact COBI at (910) 945-8977, website: <http://www.cobinvest.com> or by email at [cobinvest@aol.com](mailto:cobinvest@aol.com).

## BIG ECONOMIC GAINS LIFT VERY FEW CHILDREN OUT OF POVERTY

### Numbers of Uninsured Children and Working Poor Families Hit Record Highs

Washington, D.C. — The Children's Defense Fund today expressed disappointment in the virtually unchanged child poverty rates for 1996, even while median income rose. The rate of child poverty declined by only three-tenths of one percent from 1995 to 1996, and rose slightly for children in working families. "Many claims have been made about families who have left welfare," said CDF President Marian Wright Edelman. "While far too little is known about their children's well-being, today's data warn us that many are failing to rise out of poverty, and, even worse, some are losing their health coverage as well."

"In the fifth year of economic recovery, our children deserve a fair share of the fruits of economic growth, but they are being denied it," said Edelman. The child poverty rate is higher than that of any other age group (the child poverty rate was 20.5 percent in 1996, compared to 13.8 percent for all Americans). Likewise, more than two-thirds of all Americans losing health coverage in 1996 were children.

A number of records were set in this year's poverty statistics:

- The number of poor families with children headed by someone who worked during the year reached 3.6 million in 1996, higher than any year since 1975, when these data were first available.
- The number of uninsured children through age 18 rose to 11.3 million in 1996, or 15.1 percent of all such children — the largest numbers ever recorded by the Census Bureau.

- 69 percent of all poor children live in a family where someone (not always the head of household) worked in 1996, also a record high, and up from 61 percent as recently as 1993.
- 1996 marked the first year on record in which Hispanic children were the poorest racial/ethnic group of children. Child poverty rates increased slightly for Hispanic and White children (to 40.3 percent and 16.3 percent respectively), while declining slightly for Black children (to 39.9 percent). Although poverty rates were higher for Hispanic children in 1993 and 1994 than in 1996, poverty rates were even higher for Black children in those years.

CDF pointed out that, at the extremely slow rate of progress in reducing the number of children in poverty from 1995 to 1996, it would take until the year 2012 just to get the child poverty rate below its 1979 level.

CDF concluded that today's health insurance statistics show the compelling need for states to move quickly to implement the new child health insurance program Congress passed this summer. "Children in low-wage, working families with incomes too high for Medicaid — exactly the group targeted by the recent child health bill — are falling through the

ever-widening hole in the employment-based insurance system," explained Edelman. "We call upon every Governor and state legislator to use the \$4 billion a year in new child health grants to make sure these children get the health coverage they need to grow up healthy and strong."

CDF also pointed out that the rise in the numbers of children whose parents work but still earn below-poverty wages suggests that, as the 1996 welfare law takes full effect (it only began to be implemented at the end of 1996), it is unlikely to lift many children out of poverty. "If children with working parents are left in poverty and without health coverage, the real job of helping families move from welfare to work is not yet done," said CDF's Family Income Director Deborah Weinstein. "We need more action to support families, lift working families out of poverty, and keep near-poor families from slipping back. Far more aggressive child support enforcement, a boost in the minimum wage to restore its poverty-fighting value, and training to give parents better access to full-time, year-round employment are what children need," said Sherman.

A full-time, full-year minimum wage job, even after the recent minimum wage increase, will still only support a family of three at 83 percent of the poverty level. For the decade of the 1970's, the full-time minimum wage was close to or slightly exceeded the poverty level for a family of three, and during that period the child poverty rate averaged 15.7 percent. By contrast, in 1996, with a far lower minimum wage, the child poverty rate was 20.5 percent and more than three-quarters of poor children lived in a household with a working adult.

Further evidence that sustained economic growth alone is not adequate to end child poverty is seen in the declining anti-poverty effectiveness of economic growth periods. In the first six years of the booming 1960's, the child poverty rate was cut by a third. Even the mild recovery of the mid-1980's reduced the child poverty rate by 12.5 percent. But in the first six years of the 1990's, despite our economic growth, the child poverty rate dropped just one-tenth of one percent. Since recessions in the 1980's and 1990's have pushed many more children per year into poverty than those in the 1960's and 1970's, children are not better off after full economic cycles.

"Economic growth alone will neither assure children's health coverage nor their climb out of poverty," said Weinstein. "Congress and the President took a much-needed step this year to reduce the number of children with no health insurance by one-half over the next five years. Now they must work with states to attack child poverty just as aggressively."

## Have Yourself A Merry Mahogany Christmas...



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Kwanzaa. Consumers can locate their nearest Mahogany retailer by calling 1-800-650-4505.

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816/274-5768 12/97

## The National Black McDonald's Operators Association Honors Franchisee Herman Petty



McDonald's first African-American franchisee, Herman Petty of Chicago, Ill., (left) was honored at the 25th anniversary award ceremony of the National Black McDonald's Operators Association in Miami Beach, Fla. Reggie Webb, (right) president of the association and the Caribbean

## NAACP Grades Major Hotel Chains Again

By Tony Jones

NAACP president and chief executive officer Kweisi Mfume has announced the second phase of the civil rights organization's plan to study how the hospitality industry treats African Americans. African-American organizations are being urged to contact the NAACP to receive a survey form to gauge the industry's cooperation. Additionally, a hotline has been set-up to disseminate information to interested parties.

This is being made available to assist consumers and groups in making informed choices about where to spend their lodging industry dollars. Conventioners, meeting planners, fraternity and sorority travel planners are urged to call and to respond to the survey. To date, more than 42 national organizations are co-sponsors of the effort.

The first NAACP Economic Reciprocity Hotel Initiative Report Card, released in late spring, was the result of a year-long survey that reviewed the economic relationship between major hotel chains and the African-American community with the intention of establishing a business links for firms owned by African Americans.

The Economic Reciprocity Initiative was launched by the NAACP in February of this year. The hotel and lodging industry was the first target of the initiative and the top 15 chains were graded and ranked on their records in five key areas: Employment, equity and franchise ownership, vendor relationships/procurement, advertising and marketing and philanthropy.

The results of the second survey were recently revealed in a press conference in New York City. To date, only the Best Western chain has refused to cooperate. The historic Holiday Inn in Memphis, TN has received a "C" in the survey, an upgrade from its position of failure because it did not respond the first time the survey was taken. Memphis-based Promus Hotels (Embassy Suites, Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites) received a grade of "D."

Black consumers spend \$4 billion annually in the travel and lodging industry. Currently, the hotel industry is considered one of the top 10 industries for new job creation, growing twice as fast as other industries. Mfume feels that business opportunities are

enormous as franchising, construction and vendor programs largely ignore Black businesses.

"Survey results indicate that the hotel industry has given very little return on the African-American consumer's investment dollar," the organization's report card states. "Don't support hotels that don't support you."

"Protecting our economic future is extremely important in an environment where there is an aggressive assault on affirmative action and economic opportunity," NAACP president and CEO Kweisi Mfume said after the release of the first report. "Economic empowerment is the necessary extension of the civil rights movement. I have said all along that as consumers who add significantly to the bottom line of corporate America, we should leverage our clout to reward our friends and punish our enemies," Mfume continued.

For a copy of the NAACP Economic Reciprocity Hotel Initiative Report Card and the survey please call the NAACP national office at (410) 358-8900.

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## "Saturday Showcase"

"Saturday Showcase," a program of children's films, will feature "The Night Before Christmas," Morris's "Disappearing Bag," and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" on Saturday, December 20 at 3:00 p.m. in the Mahon Library Activity Room, 1306 9th Street. This program is open to children of all ages and no admission is charged. For more information, please call 775-2838



## Ruby Jay's Corner

The New Hope Baptist Church, 2002 Birch Avenue, is the "Church Where The People Really Care", and Rev. Billy R. Moton is the proud pastor. Persons who do not have a church home are invited to come and visit the membership of New Hope. "We are just happy to have you visit with us at anytime," says Pastor Moton.

Services began last Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. with Sunday School and the Youth were in charge as it was Youth Day at New Hope. Thirty minutes were set aside for instruction for all classes who learned more about the work of God. At 10:15 a.m. all classes reassembled singing one of their favorite songs, "Oh How I Love Jesus." Prayer was given by youth.

High points of the morning lesson were given by the Junior Class. It was very well done. Our young people are doing a splendid job for the church.

Secretary's Report: Youth Department -- the Senior Class lost their attendance Banner to the Junior Class. The Kindergarten Class won the Offering Banner as they reported \$41.00. Adult Department: the Adult Class No. 1 received the Attendance Banner while Class No. 4 received the Offering Banner.

Following the dismissal of Sunday School, the Youth Department were in charge of the morning devotional period. We're just proud of our young people as they are involved in the church. They really sung out of their hearts and souls. We would like to advise them to keep up the good work for the Lord.

The Youth Choir marched in the processional singing out of their hearts. Altar prayer was offered by Rev. Jeff Brown. Another selection was sung by the Youth

Choir. Prayer was given by Kendra Williams and Shondall Robinson read the scripture. Another selection was sung by the Youth Choir.

Responsive reading was done with the congregation standing and led by Bryson Williams. The morning hymn was "What A Fellowship." Pastoral observation were given by Pastor Moton. We brought greetings from the meeting in Nashville, Tennessee where a convention was held last week.

Another song, "Blessed Assurance", a song. The sermon hymn was "Near The Cross." Pastor Moton's subject was "Don't Take Your Joy Away." His scripture text was Psalms 51. Wonder if you could understand the meaning? Wonder if you considered what joy really is?

Invitation to discipleship was extended. One came forth for restoration.

Let us not forget our sick and shut in citizens. Among them is Sister G.H. Davis who had foot surgery last Monday. Your prayers were appreciated.

Choir rehearsals are being held for the various choirs in this year's Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration. This celebration will be held January 15 thru January 19, 1998 with a theme: "Til' Victory Is Won." The MLK Women Chorus will practice Saturday, December 20, 1997, at 1:00 p.m. at the New Hope Baptist Church; the Male Chorus will rehearse Saturday, December 20, 1997 at 12:00 noon at the Mt. Gilead Baptist Church. Other announcements of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir and Martin Luther King Youth Choir will be made known in the future. A 200 voice Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir is the goal this year. If you are interested, then give Sister Joan Y. Ervin, president, a call at 763-0853.

More on this effort in the future.



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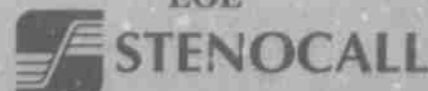
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## Reverse Bias Suit Settlement Debated

By Kendall Wilson

Affirmative action advocates and opponents are offering mixed reviews over the high-profile case settled by the Piscataway, N.J. school board with Sharon Taxman, a White teacher who claimed she was laid off in violation of her civil rights.

On Thursday, Nov. 20, 1997 the school board decided it would not appeal Taxman's case before the U.S. Supreme Court and voted 5-3 to settle the \$443,500 suit.

The move came after the Black Leadership Forum (BLF) an alliance of civil rights groups that includes the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), agreed to pay 70 percent of the settlement.

The board decided to take this action because they believed the nation's highest court has grown increasingly hostile to race-based policies in recent years, and that the court was expected to yield a major ruling on affirmative action in the process.

Taxman was laid off from her teaching position in the business department in 1989, while Debra Williams, a Black teacher, was retained. Both were hired the same day and were considered equally qualified by the school board. But while Taxman had more teaching experience, Williams held the superior academic credentials with a master's degree.

Taxman, 50, said she was "glad" the case was over, and called the settlement "kind of anti-climactic."

Williams, in tears after the confirmation of the settlement, still insisted she was far more qualified than Taxman and contended that having an advanced degree apparently means nothing "but a slap in the face."

Meanwhile, advocates and opponents of affirmative action read different messages into the settlement.

"The great debate on affirmative action will go on in Congress, the states and the lower courts because affirmative action is legal," said Kathy Rogers, executive director of the National Organization of Women's (NOW) Legal Defense and Educational Fund. "It works, it's necessary and it's fair."

"This settlement demonstrates the panic within the civil rights establishment," said Clint Bolick of the conservative Institute for Justice in Washington. "This could have been a knockout blow for racial preferences."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who helped to raise some of the money in the settlement, described the case as one "riddled with problems."

"The Black teacher has a master's degree and the White teacher didn't," said Jackson. "So, they are not equals academically. This case would have been distortion of the issue."

Taxman's attorney, Steven Klausner, said it was obvious to him that "they (civil rights groups) were afraid that affirmative action might be very damaged."

But NAACP President Kweisi agreed with Jackson about the damage that the "distortion" of the facts could have brought to the fight to maintain affirmative action.

"Distorted facts make for distorted laws," he said. "It was in the best interests of the nation that the future of affirmative action be based on a clearly articulated record and not on a case that the extreme right wing has distorted and defined as something else."

## RETIRED GENERAL, COLIN POWELL DELIVERED MAJOR CHILDREN'S ADDRESS DURING THE 48TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN, INC.

WASH. D.C.—Retired General Colin Powell will delivered a major children's address on Monday, December 8, 1987, at the Renaissance Hotel, in Washington, D.C., during the 48th National Convention of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. The theme of the Plenary Session IV was "Leave No Child Behind: The Importance of Mentoring."

As the chief convener of the Presidential Summit on Volunteering, in Philadelphia, earlier this year, General Powell worked to build a non-partisan coalition of organizations, individuals and corporations that committed to improving the lives of children by the year 2000. One of the commitments was mentoring. The National Council of Negro Women, Inc. has pledged to mentor 150,000 African American children by the turn of the century.

NCNW's Convention was held from December 6-10th. A special feature was a live nationwide teleconference entitled, "Coming To The Table," connecting African American Women in over 100 cities across America to focus the nation on Economic Empowerment through the Brown Box Tradition and Mrs. Bethune's Teacakes, Affirmative Action,

Black Women's Heath, Preparing our Youth for Leadership and Building Global Linkages.

The list of speakers for NCNW's 48th National Convention, included. Dr. John Hope Franklin, Chairman of the White House Commission on Race, Retired General Colin Powell, Dr. Robert Goodwin, President, Points of Light Foundation, Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater, Dr. Johnetta Cole, former president of Spelman University, Dr. Niara Sudarkasa, President, Lincoln University, Dr. Maya Angelou, Dr. Camille Cosby, economist Julianne Malveaux, Essence Editor Susan Taylor, Rev. Delores Carpenter and popular entertainer, Gladys Knight.

Founded by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune in 1935, The National Council of Negro Women, Inc. is a voluntary non-profit membership organization helping women to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families, and the community. Through its national affiliate organizations and 250 community-based sections, NCNW has an outreach to 4 million women, all contributing to the peaceful solutions of problems of human welfare and rights.

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**Editorials • Comments • Opinions**

**THIS N THAT**

**CHARTER SCHOOL LOOKED AT HERE! THIS N THAT** ...has learned since the creation of ... Charter Schools... in Texas by the Legislature several years ago...there is a possibility of the...Student Alternative Instruction Program (SAIP)...to seek a ... Charter School...According to Eliseo Solis...who is a former County Commissioner and is presently running a School Alternative Program...in Terry and Lamb counties...he has made it known...by organizing a coordinating committee...in order to submit to the...State Board of Education...a proposal to establish a Charter School in Lubbock County, Texas...Mr. Solis...explains to ...THIS N THAT...that the local school districts must be advised of his intent...and there will be a position to comment on this effort...If this should become a reality...it will be made known by ...March 6, 1998...According to Solis...they will present a proposal which will seek at least...One Hundred and Fifty Students...At least...Twenty-Five Percent...of these young people will be in the...At-Risk Category...Also...the name of this proposed program will be called...The South Plains Academy...With the effort...being sought locally...it could become a possibility...and the results should make a lot of sense to...Reach Those Young People...who don't attend school at the present time...and could do well in this type of setting...More on this in the near future...as...Mr. Eliseo Solis...is very excited about this opportunity to work with young people...If you would like to know more about the...Proposed Charter School...why not give Mr. Solis a call at... (806) 744-0330

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CELEBRATION SET JANUARY 15TH THRU 19TH!!! THIS N THAT**...has learned of the upcoming annual...Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration...It will take place...January 15th Thru January 19th with the theme... "Til' Victory is Won" ...There is a special singing opportunity for those who would like to do so this year...For more information...call Jean Y. Ervin...at 763-0853...for more information.

**SHIRLEY CANADY THE BARBER SAYS: "TO NAME SOMETHING...is to wait for it in the...PLACE...you think it will pass..."**

**HANGING IN THERE!! THIS N THAT**...has an opportunity of visiting with one of our hardworking citizens...Harold Melvin Chatman...who is very ill at this time at his residence...He appears to be doing very much better...and appreciates those who come by and visit with him...One thing about it...All Of Us...will travel that way in our lives...So if you get an opportunity...go by and visit with a man...who cared a lot about our community...It just pays to visit those who happen to be down in their lives...

**AN IMPORTANT ELECTION COMING IN JANUARY!! THIS N THAT**...will go on record now ...asking all of you...to...support...the upcoming...three/eighths sales tax election...which will give our community an opportunity to make ready for...JOBS...for our young people...This is very necessary so our young people will stay home...and make positive contributions to our city...If cities as...Amarillo...Abilene and Odessa...can make it a reality...surely we can do the same in Lubbock...This election will take place...January 17, 1998...THIS N THAT...would hope you... this is...if you are a qualified voter...will get involved and do something which will help the...Future of Lubbock...More on this important election...in the near future...as...Early Voting...will begin on...Wednesday...December 31, 1997...GET THE WORD OUT...and help...in this important election...

**DAVENPORT FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER!! THIS N THAT**...learned last week of the announcement of ...Mayor Pro Tem of...Odessa, Texas...Jo Ann Davenport...has filled for the position of ...County Commissioner, Precinct 4...THIS N THAT...wishes her the very best...as she has done well as a ...city council person.

**WE ARE MOVING BACKWARDS FAST!!!**



by E.P.R.

Some of our recent past actions and activities show one or three things. We either think we have it made and have arrived, or we are complacent and have given up, or we are totally uninformed or misquoted and diverted.

We must, we should be informed to make wise decisions in life. In general, that includes everyday life activities and situations as well as voting and every other phase of life. We must be an informed, well versed and well read citizens always. It makes better for all of us when we make informed decisions.

If we are to survive as a people in this nation, we must learn to play the game the American way. We need to organize, vote, and after we vote, we must participate in the precinct conventions after the elections. Make your voices heard there, because this is where it all begins, and if you are not there, you can forget the whole show which from the precinct conventions the precinct information goes to the county, state and national settings. But it all begins at the grass root level.

When we fail to participate from the grass root or community levels, it is far too late when it reaches the big picture.

We have a very important election coming up soon, as a matter of fact, January 17, 1998. This will be a 3/8 cents sales tax election for economic development. Remember economic development means jobs. Jobs are the key element for the stabilization and growth for any county, nation or even city.

Any organizations -- city or whatever -- does one of two things. It stays at the same growth or it does and grows. You have to grow in order to be competitive. Being competitive takes money. For Lubbock to compete with other cities for business and industry it has to have the cash to compete.

For the positive forces to win, we have to do a better selling job on the true facts. We have a handful of losers and people with personal axes to grind which keeps up a lot of noise. Anytime there is an issue pertaining to the growth of the City of Lubbock, there always seems to be a lot of negative noise with misinformation, half truths, and just plain old lies. Let's not fall for this in the upcoming election.

How many of you remember Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown during the hey day of the Civil Rights movement. Guess who made them -- yes, it was the general media. Guess who makes the local naysayers -- yes, the general media. They are not near as strong as some people think they are. But the media gives them so much play, and for the wrong reasons!

That's why it is so important for the positive forces to get involved in order to get the job done by telling the true story for jobs in Lubbock, Texas. A lot of this sales tax revenue will come from people who will live outside of Lubbock who shop, work and pass through Lubbock. This tax will be most from luxury items such as jewelry, appliances, and other items. It will not include food, shelter, and health care items.

More on this next week.

Oh, by the way, have a Merry Christmas!!

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

November 14, 1997

Dear Editor:

I am an African-American woman who has a family history of hypertension, heart disease, and cancer; the mother of a daughter with end stage renal disease, who has had two kidney transplants, and a son with asthma; the aunt of a nephew with AIDS and a niece who died of leukemia. My story is not all that unusual. Like many other women of color, my story typifies the "litany of sorrows" that is so often the health status of minority women:

- Heart disease, stroke and cancer are the leading causes of death for minority women.
- African-American and Latina women have higher mortality rates from heart disease than Caucasian women.
- African-American women have a significantly higher death rate from a stroke than Caucasian women.
- African-American women have a significantly high mortality rate for breast cancer, due most likely to later diagnosis.
- African-American and Latinas comprise most cases of HIV/AIDS among women.
- Hepatitis B is a significant problem for foreign-born Asian Pacific Islander women.

The rate of diabetes-related kidney failure is significantly higher in American Indian/Alaskan Native and Mexican American women.

The U.S. Public Health Service's Office of Women's Health, where I work, recently convened a National Women's Health Leadership Summit, drawing women's health representatives from 50 states and territories to Washington. Our agenda spanned a range of topics. Through a special workgroup on minority women's health, we discussed the health gaps between women of color and other women. From behavioral health to prevention and education outcomes to research, we talked about why women of color face more difficult health challenges and what could we do to address them in government and in our communities.

There are no easy answers, and we knew that going in. But what we did learn is that if we are going to meet the special health challenges of minority women, the focus must be on improving health information outreach to minority communities by taking information to where women are; expanding cultural training for health care providers who work with minority women; and improving quality assurance measures to help minority women get the best health care available. But most importantly, women must talk more to each other, and that's

really what the Women's Health Leadership Summit was about -- generating conversations that are both formal and informal, honest and open exchanges of -- information, ideas, even fears and hopes and dreams.

The Office of Women's Health hoped to use the Women's Health Leadership Summit as a foundation to establish linkages between what we do in this office and what women are doing in communities across the country. Ultimately, there must be an ongoing collaboration between the community and policymakers to address the tough health issues that confront all women. But to meet the health challenges facing all women, African-American women - and other women of color - must be part of that equation. That was an integral part of the message at the Leadership Summit, and a message that I believe we must all continue to relay to the rest of the world. But the best message to come from the Summit is that no matter how huge the health challenges faced by women of color, we have always survived and will continue to survive as major contributors to helping America be all that it can be.

Francess E. Page, R.N., M.P.H.  
U.S. Public Health Service/Office on Women's Health

**The Shifting Lanes of Fairness**

By George Wilson

Just when we thought that the issue was settled of how congressional boundary lines are drawn, yet another challenge is being raised. This time the battleground is Virginia and the target is Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA). Unfortunately, this has become an all-too familiar theme. An African American wins election in an area that previously lacked representation, then others claim that the boundary lines discriminate against them.

In Cong. Scott's case, someone doesn't like the way the district is shaped. "People have complained that my district is too long. I can drive from one end to the other in an hour and a half. The two adjoining districts from end to end - one is four and a half hours and the other is two and a half hours and they surround my district. They aren't too long, but of course, mine is," Scott observed.

The forces that challenge the constitutionality of districts that were drawn to assure minority representation will not rest until African-American congresspersons become as scarce as talking horses. What we are seeing is a multi-pronged attack from adversaries of justice and

equality. The first prong is the unprecedented attack on affirmative action. Its proponents say that America is color-blind and the playing field is level. The notion is easily debunked by people of color, women in general and those who have disabilities.

The second prong is so-called welfare reform. Those who happen to be on welfare are being told that in order to receive a government stipend that really isn't enough to live on, one must get a job or sign up for training.

Last, but not least, there are the challenges to the constitutionality of some congressional districts.

Congressman Scott agrees that challenges to districts and the redrawing of lines can only have a detrimental effect. "The original Voting Rights Act and the amendments in 1982 led everyone to believe that a special effort should be made to draw minority districts where you can. The court has put that in question and frankly it will make redistricting much more difficult in the year 2000 after the 2000 census. People will be confused as to what can and cannot be done," Scott somberly

observed.

There are truly some rather difficult days ahead for specific categories of American voters and Cong. Scott has some advice for others who will undoubtedly find themselves living in a district that is the object of challenge. "The important thing is to draw the districts according to the law and get expert advice as you draw the districts. Frankly I would expect not only the congressional districts to be challenged again after the 2000 census but also the state legislatures, State House, Senate and city councils."

I know that many thought that the battle for voting rights were over. However, recent events indicate that fighting about the value of votes looms in the near future. Perhaps, these fights over affirmative action, real employment and voting rights will lead to an inevitable conclusion. Ida B. Wells said it best in 1882 when she wrote, "let the Afro-American depend on no party, but on himself for salvation." Wells' statement, seems to be as applicable in 1997 as it was more than 100 Years ago.

**SOUTHWEST DIGEST**

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EDITORS/PUBLISHERS  
T.J. PATTERSON—EDDIE-P. RICHARDSON

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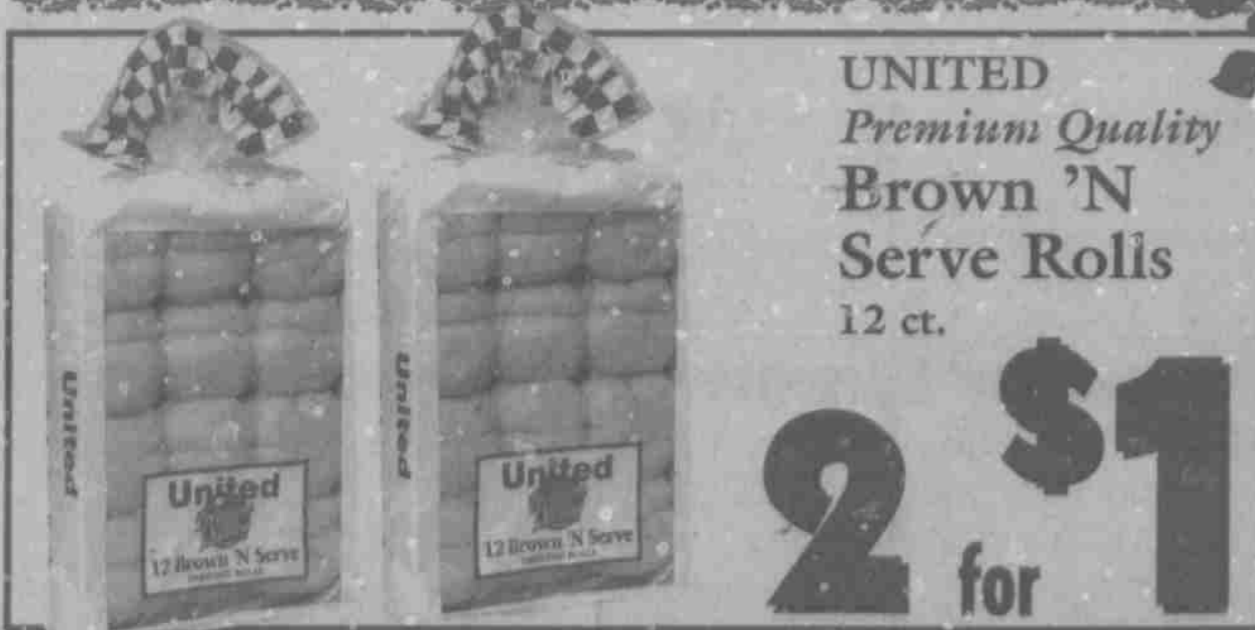
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