



PIPELINE

OCTOBER 1978

REVIVE US AGAIN!

BLACK WOMEN'S CAUCUS CALLS US TO REVIVAL

Get ready to roll up your sleeves and do some brass tacks brainstorming at the Caucus-sponsored First Annual Black Summit Conference For Black Citizens of the State of Washington, October 14 and 15 at the New Holiday Inn in Yakima. The Conference theme is "Reviving the Black Spirit For Survival".

About 200 sisters and brothers from all over the state are expected to attend this first-of-its-kind event. The Caucus envisions this historic occasion as an intensive, two-day work session covering nine areas of concern that affect the quality of life for Black people in Washington. Caucus State Coordinator Thelma Jackson will convene the Conference and Rossalind Y. Woodhouse will deliver the keynote address.

Although some very accomplished movers and shakers will be on hand to facilitate these work sessions, it won't be a case of community leaders giving lectures or doing training. They will be there to keep us on target and help synthesize our concerns into recommendations for definitive action. Each participant's contribution to the body of ideas is highly valuable to the whole. According to the Conference Planning Committee, the resulting Plan of Action will become a blueprint for activities in Black communities throughout this state.

But it won't be all work and no play. On Saturday night the host Area Caucus is sponsoring a soul food dinner and disco at the Southeast Community Center, located about 12 blocks from the hotel.

Then at 9:00 Sunday morning, we reconvene in General Session to consider and act upon the previous day's work.

Members of the Planning Committee are: Henry Beauchamp, Kay Jones-Williams and Wilma Beauchamp of Yakima; Princess Jackson Smith and Thelma Jackson, Olympia; Ester Huey, James Warren, Debra Stephens, Hattie Pearson, Jean Morton and Addie Dunlap, Seattle, and Virginia Taylor and Natalie Leath, Tacoma.

STATEWIDE CAUCUS MEETING SET NEXT MONTH IN SPOKANE

The Second Interim Meeting of the Black Women's Caucus will be held Saturday, November 11 in Spokane.

The Black Women's Caucus is halfway through its first program year. Where are we? Is our Plan of Action being accomplished? What organizational changes might we be considering for the Second Annual Meeting in April? How are we being received in the Black community? Are we fulfilling our purpose?

These questions and others will be considered at the November meeting. A more detailed agenda will be in the next newsletter. All members should plan to attend. The Caucus needs your input and participation.

THE BLACK WOMEN'S CAUCUS OF WASHINGTON STATE

The Black Women's Caucus is a non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Washington. This Caucus has been existence since the State Women's Conference in July 1977, in conjunction with International Women's Year, and is an outgrowth of numerous meetings of Black women throughout the state. The purpose of the Caucus is to define the barriers preventing Black women from fully participating in the mainstream of society, and to set forth a course of action directing their efforts, resources and talents toward the removal of these barriers.

The fate of Black Americans as a racial minority group and the development of Black women in the U. S. are intricately bound together. We have a long history of vital concern for civil liberties, and each generation of Black women has contributed mightily to the long struggle for the rights of women. The social, political, and cultural background of Black American women differs greatly from that of other women and, as a consequence, we view the world differently and have different priorities and experiences. It is doubtful that anyone else can or should speak for us and our communities. We assume the responsibility of our own interpretation of women's mission, believing that it is only on the basis of sound, historically correct analysis that we may organize effectively around our specific experiences as Black women and press not only for women's rights, but more importantly, for human rights.

On January 7, 1978, at a statewide meeting of Black women held in Seattle, the Caucus adopted a constitution governing its operation. The state organization is divided into four areas, basically regarded as the northeast, southeast, southwest and northwest quadrants.

State officers are elected during the Caucus' Annual Meeting and Area officers are elected shortly thereafter. The activities of the Caucus have centered around those issues identified by Black women as crucial for the survival of the Black community.

In April 1978, a formalized Plan of Work was adopted by the Caucus at its first Annual Meeting. The Plan of Work outlined the courses of action to be taken by the organization.

Over 100 Black women are presently active participants in the Caucus and the numbers are growing steadily.

With this active participation of Black women throughout Washington State, the Caucus can be a very powerful force in our communities, and can effect those changes from which we can all benefit.

STATE COORDINATOR FETED AT FAREWELL LUNCHEON

About 30 people from the Olympia-Tacoma area gathered for lunch at Olympia's Governor House on September 29 to honor Caucus State Coordinator Thelma Jackson upon her resignation as Director of Work Options For Women, a CETA-funded employment program sponsored through the Olympia YWCA.

The celebrants represented a wide range of professional and political entities, including the Governor's Office; the State Planning and Community Affairs Agency; The Evergreen State College; the Thurston County CETA Center; Tacoma Community College; the Urban League; the State Division of Vocational Education, the North Thurston School District and others.

Jackson resigned the position she held for almost four years, in order to have more time for home and family and her many community activities, including, fortunately, the Black Women's Caucus of Washington State.

The common thread running through the many testimonials showered upon her expressed her "incisiveness", "strong sense of inquiry", "ability to get things done", "strong sense of community" and "compassion".

Special Assistant to the Governor David Jenkins, gave a very witty testimonial, describing how he seemed to run into the name Thelma Jackson everywhere he turned -- from a scientific treatise she wrote from the Hanford Atomic Works, to the International Women's Year conclave at Houston, to the various commissions and task forces to which she lends her expertise. Jenkins said he is "very impressed" with Jackson, as he itemized the many facets of this dynamic community leader: scientist, administrator, diplomat, facilitator, wife and mother, and on top of it all a fantastic cook and incredible gardener.

Rindetta Jones, Affirmative Action Officer for The Evergreen State College, spoke of Jackson's ability to "ferret out the substance among the noise and conflict", concluding with "She really is a jewel".

Dr. John Gott, Superintendent of the North Thurston School District (where Jackson has been elected to a four-year term as board member) emphasized her "concern for people". Concluding his remarks he gleefully added that the Y's loss was his gain, because now Jackson would have more time to help him.

YWCA Executive Director Ethel Roesch, epitomized the happily sorrowful atmosphere. As Mistress of Ceremonies she had to keep reminding herself and the group that we were not losing Jackson; we were not there to say goodbye, only "farewell". Roesch gave a moving testimonial about the many things she thanks Jackson for leaving behind, such as "clear thinking, incisiveness, tolerance, compassion and, most of all, love." Roesch stated with enthusiasm that "We are here to celebrate three and a half years of great leadership".

Jackson's husband Nat was roundly ribbed with quips from the group, indicating that he need not plan to occupy all of her time simply because her work place would now be located at home.

Finally taking the floor herself, Jackson reassured her well-wishers that this was simply "a pause in the action". "I won't work less; I just won't get paid," she said.

Caucus members attending the luncheon included Virginia Taylor and Verna Halliburton of Tacoma and Lenore Hughes and Princess Jackson Smith of Olympia.

350 -- RACISM BY INITIATIVE

In November, Washington's voters will consider Initiative #350, known as the "anti-busing initiative". The measure provides that all students would have to attend the school nearest their homes. This means that local school boards would have little or no control over their districts and, since citizens are represented by the school board members they elect, this initiative would virtually eliminate local citizen access to policy decisions on assignment of students.

It is possible that many school districts would be forced to redraw their current school boundaries if 350 is passed; and the local school districts' ability to respond to changing educational needs of children would be severely limited.

When we look behind this issue, we find a group called C.I.V.I.C. headquartered in Seattle, which is strongly opposed to that city's voluntary desegregation plan and we find racist motivations hiding behind the so-called neighborhood school concept.

Aside from the philosophical and political aspects of Initiative 350, many students would be harmed, because passage would mean that students with special needs would not be allowed to go to a school outside their district for special education programs. These include gifted students, handicapped, vocational, and students interested in certain college preparatory disciplines such as languages and electronic communications.

Caucus State Coordinator Jackson called the Initiative "ludicrous". "It's just a racist, bigoted move, aimed at discrediting Seattle's voluntary desegregation program." She accused proponents of the Initiative of using a statewide ploy to get rid of a local problem.

Opponents of the Initiative have organized, calling themselves the Committee For Local Control. Among the Committee's members are Seattle Mayor Charles Royer and former mayor Wes Uhlman, Norwood Brooks, Dorothy Pounds, Fred T. Haley, Virginia Sparling, Mark Cooper and Barbara Beuschlein.

Jackson stated while some Black people cannot wholeheartedly endorse integration, "it's the best thing we have going and passage of Initiative 350 would be "absolutely backward." "It's not the answer to the problem," she said.

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