Grassroots in Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Vantile E. Whitfield, a 13-year resident of the Los Angeles area, returned to his native Washington, D.C. in April 1971 to head the Endowment's newly created Expansion Arts Program.

At the time of his appointment, Mr. Whitfield was artistic director of the community-oriented Performing Arts Society of Los Angeles (PASLA), which he founded seven years ago, and producer-director of network and local television programming.

The 1957 Theatre Arts graduate of Howard University saw his new government post as "a unique opportunity to help channel long-overdue public funds into 'people' arts."

First Step

He also observed that the Expansion Arts concept represents a significant first step toward official recognition and support of the growing grassroots movement for artistic self-expression among young people from the nation's diverse ethnic, cultural and regional communities.

Mr. Whitfield brings a broad spectrum of professional training and experience to the new Endowment program.

In 1958, after a year as an instructor of Stagecraft and Theatre Design at Howard, he entered the University of California at Los Angeles, where he later received a master's degree in film production.

Number of Paintings

During his post-graduate work and in intervening years, Vantile Whitfield's signature appeared on a considerable number of paintings which he exhibited and sold.

Subsequent positions in Los Angeles included: production manager and assistant art director, ad graphics of Hollywood, 1960-61; probation counselor, juvenile detention 1961-63; co-founder, with the late Frank Silvera, and general manager of the American Theatre of Being, 1963-64; instructor of play production, Los Angeles School District, 1965-66, and set designer, Universal City Studios, 1966-67.

Substantial Credits

Turning to the medium of television in 1968, Mr. Whitfield has accrued substantial credits.

He wrote, produced and directed a popular one-hour daily community new-interview show, "From the Inside Out," on the local Metromedia station.

"The Anatomy of Change," a one-hour special on Los Angeles' CBS affiliate for which he served as co-producer and director, was nominated locally for an Emmy Award.

Impressive Sampler

Mr. Whitfield's network directorial efforts include NBC's widely heralded third Bill Cosby Special and several half-hour weekly series productions.

An impressive sampler of stage, television and film work as an actor rounds out Vantile Whitfield's highly diversified career in the arts.

He holds membership in the Director's Guild of America, Screen Actor's Guild, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and other professional organizations.

But the Expansion Arts Director's greatest challenge lies ahead as he brings the wealth of his experience to guide the nation's first concentrated program of assistance to popular arts.

VANTILE WHITFIELD

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Moustache Case Won by Miss. Teachers

COLUMBUS, Miss. — A moustache, sideburns, bear or goatee does not affect a teacher's performance of his job, a federal court in Mississippi ruled in returning three black teachers to the school payroll.

In acting against the teachers, the Columbus school board had applied student personal appearance regulations. Ezra Baker and Frank A. Yates, whose contracts were not renewed, will be reinstated with back pay.

James Conrad, who was given a contract but was suspended, will also be reinstated with back pay. Two thousand dollars in attorney's fees were also awarded.

Vogue Of Adult

The DuShane Fund had provided support to the Mississippi teachers in the form of legal fees.

U.S. District Court Judge William C. Keady said, "We readily recognize that the vogue of an adult to wear a moustache, beard, goatee or sideburns in a particular style or length that he desires is a personal choice which determines one's own appearance; and the state sanction or regulation which prescribes generally the grooming habits of adults as a condition of public employment, unrelated to one's ability to perform his work, can only be viewed with judicial scrutiny."

Plainly Offend

Such regulations, he added, are "devoid of logic and rationality, and plainly offend" constitutional rights.

The student code, which the board applied to teachers, banned beards and goatees, said moustaches must not extend beyond the mouth nor sideburns below the earlobes and restricted tre length of "Afro" hair styles to three inches.

The teachers' moustaches reached about three-fourths of an inch beyond their mouths.

Felings Of Chagrin

The thres teachers, who had each taught in the Columbus school system six years, had worn their moustaches several years.

Each man, on the witness stand, "expressed feelings of chagrin, embarrassment and humiliation in making the required alteration to their appearance and therefore refused to conform to the specific restrictions placed on boy students by the code," the court noted.

The new restrictions had been explained at faculty meetings before the opening of the school term.

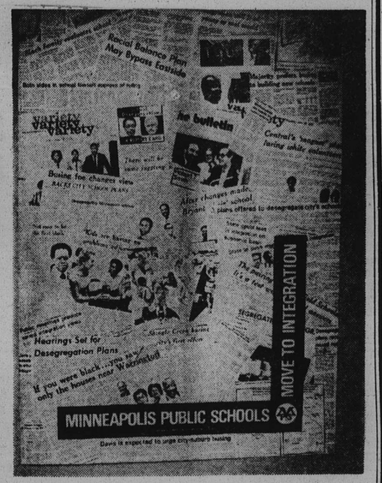
Friend Of Court

In ruling in this case, the district court recognized a principle cited by the Fifth Circuit Court, New Orleans La Lansdale vs. Tyler Junior College.

The circuit court struck down grooming regulations for college students, whom the court recognized as adults.

In the Columbus, Mississippi case, the district court reaffirmed the circuit court's declaration "that the adult's constitutional rights to wear his hair as he chooses supercedes the state's right to intrude."

NEA participated as "friend of the court" on behalf of the student plaintiffs in the Lansdale case with the Student NEA, the National Student Association, and the American Civil Liberties Union.



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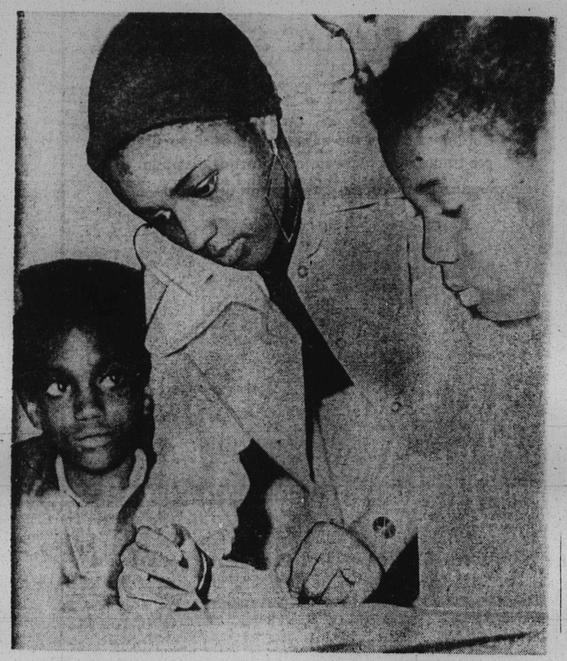

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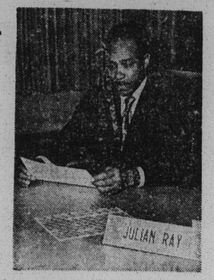

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