Black Press Heard Around Nation

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Millions Depend Upon Black Press

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.
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The Black Press in the 70's faces, along with all black people, a time of testing. That fruitful period of social reform and advancement of black citizens' rights we have called the Second Reconstruction seems ended, although it is as unfinished as the First Reconstruction of over a century ago.

In times such as these there can be no substitute for a dynamic, free press that exposes inequities and educates its readers.

It was the Black Press that led the fight against lynching, against police brutality, against employment discrimination and for desegregation of schools and universities long before these causes were even thought of by white publishers and editors.

The role of the Black Press in this new era of struggle continues to be crucial. It bears the major burdens of the effort to educate the black public to new issues. It will have to explain what revenue sharing is, what the local process in deciding expenditures of funds will be, where the local power-levers are and how they can be moved, and what the black community must do to get its fair share of the funds.

It is upon that basic institution of a free black press that the hopes of millions of our black brothers and sisters will rest in this crucial decade of the 70's.

The Black Press has its newspapers all over the country, stretching North, South, East and West.

One of the biggest is the New York Amsterdam News, now published by a group headed by Attorney Clarence B. Jones. The Amsterdam News was founded in 1909 by James H. Anderson, who sold it to Dr. C. B. Powell and Dr. Phillip Savory in 1936. Dr. Savory died in 1965, and Dr. Powell ran it until 1971 when it was purchased by the current publishers.

Forward Times

Mrs. Lenora Carter publishes the Houston Forward Times in Houston. She is the widow of the Forward Times' founder, Julius Carter, who died 11 years ago. Mrs. Carter took over at her husband's death and has continued the Forward Times on a path of growth and progress.

Also published in Houston is the Houston Informer and Texas Freeman, which was founded in 1893. The Informer was published by the late Carter Wesley from 1930 until his death, in 1960, and later by his widow until her death in September, 1973. The present publisher is Dr. James C. Watson.

St. Louis Argus

In St. Louis, the St. Louis Argus, founded in 1912 by J. E. Mitchell and William Mitchell, is one of the nation's most prominent members of the Black Press.

Eugene N. Mitchell, M.D., the present publisher of the Argus, sees the Black Press entering "a golden era." Dr. Mitchell says "The Black Press with the capacity and desire to lead and to grow" has a bright future as no other press "has fought for or given a true picture of the Black Experience."

Dr. Mitchell declares "White America has as much to gain from the fulfillment of the dream of Democracy and Brotherhood as does Black America. That message must be brought in all its truth to government, industry and the communications media, and bringing it will be the major thrust of The Black Press. We are still a protest media for there is much to be protested."

Founded In 1884

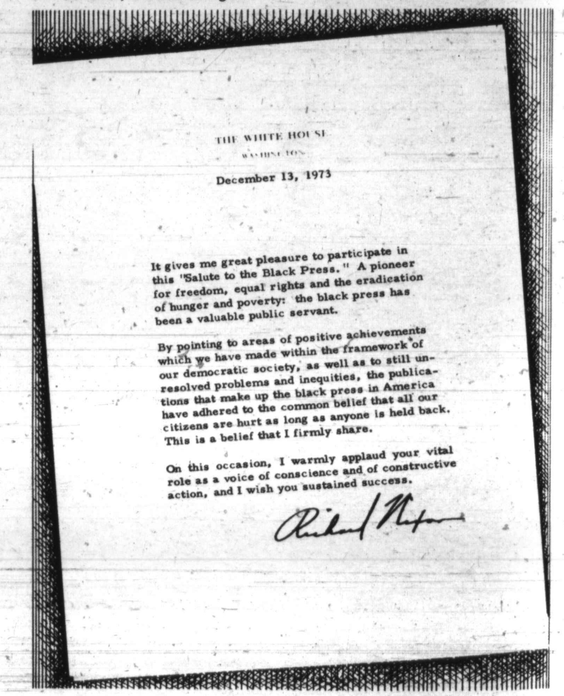
One of the nation's oldest black newspapers is the twice-a-week Philadelphia Tribune, founded in 1884 by Christopher J. Perry. Eustace Gay, managing editor of the Tribune for 40 years, now serves as chairman of the board. Mr. Gay is 81.

EUGENE N. MITCHELL, M.D.
Publisher, St. Louis Argus

Among others around the country which are making great strides in the growth and progress of the Black Press are The Dallas Weekly in Texas, The El Mundo Post on the West Coast, the Mobile Beacon in Alabama;

Denver Drum, Berkeley Poar, Oakland Post, Pasadena Post, Richmond Post, Seaside Post, San Francisco Post, in the West; Alexandria News Leader, Baton Rouge News Leader, Lafayette News Leader, Lake Charles News Leader, Monroe News Leader, Natchez News Leader, Shreveport Sun, in the Southwest;

Albany Times, Charlotte Post, West-Palm Beach Photo News, Atlanta Voice, Augusta News-Review, Jackson Advocate, in the South; E. St. Louis Monitor Indiana Herald, Freedom's Journal of Canton, Ohio, Saginaw Valley Star, in the Midwest, and Seattle Facts, in the Northwest.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 13, 1973

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this "Salute to the Black Press." A pioneer for freedom, equal rights and the eradication of hunger and poverty: the black press has been a valuable public servant.

By pointing to areas of positive achievements which we have made within the framework of our democratic society, as well as to still unresolved problems and inequities, the publications that make up the black press in America have adhered to the common belief that all our citizens are hurt as long as anyone is held back. This is a belief that I firmly share.

On this occasion, I warmly applaud your vital role as a voice of conscience and of constructive action, and I wish you sustained success.

Richard Nixon

DAWN Is Latest Spoke In AFRO's Wheel Of Progress

BALTIMORE — Tops among the numerous highlights of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper chain, now in its eighty-second year of publishing, has been the introduction of the full-color magazine supplement — DAWN — that has spawned unprecedented cooperation on a joint publishing venture by members of the Black Press.

The 13-edition AFRO chain was joined by 38 other black newspapers, representing a paid circulation of more than 600,000, to assure national advertisers of a readership of some 2 to 2½ million readers.

DAWN, "A New Day For Black Americans," is produced by the AFRO and distributed simultaneously by all the cooperating newspapers. Four editions were published in 1973, and 12 issues, one monthly beginning with this edition of DAWN, are scheduled for 1974.

New Era

The coming of DAWN begins a new era not only for the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper chain of Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, New Jersey, Philadelphia and National, but for the 38 other publishers who showed faith in this newspaper chain's integrity, and were willing to say to the world, "Yes, we work together."

Before even talking about how we began 82 years ago, the AFRO salutes these enterpreneurs who have helped this newspaper with the AFRO Credo which says:

"I measure a newspaper not in buildings, equipment and employees — these are trimmings.

"A newspaper succeeds because its management believes in itself, in God and in the present generation. It must always ask itself—

"Whether it has kept faith with the common people;

"Whether it has no other goal except to see that their liberties are preserved and their future assured;

"Whether it is fighting to get rid of slums, to provide jobs for everybody;

"Whether it stays out of politics except to expose corruption and condemn injustice, race prejudice and the cowardice of compromise.

"The AFRO-AMERICAN must become a bi-weekly, then a tri-weekly and eventually, when advertising warrants, a daily.

"It has always had a loyal constituency who believes it honest, decent and progressive. It is that kind of newspaper now and I hope it never changes."

JOHN H. MURPHY, SR.
December 25, 1920

How It Started

Now how did it all start:

Three men, with but a single hobby, are responsible for the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers which in 1974 celebrates its 82nd anniversary.

Two of them were clergymen and the other a Sunday School superintendent.

The late Rev. William M. Alexander, pastor of Sharon Baptist Church, Baltimore, organized a provision store and on August 13, 1892, printed a four-page sheet, which he called the AFRO-AMERICAN, to advertise his church and community enterprises.

John H. Murphy, Sr., a white-washer by trade and superintendent of St. John African Methodist Episcopal Sunday School, wanted, above all else to unite state Sunday schools into a convention on the order of the Epworth League and Christian Endeavor.

He purchased type fonts and a press, put them in his cellar and printed his small paper which he named the SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPER

The late Rev. Dr. George E. Bragg, long pastor of St. James Episcopal Church, printed a church and community organ which he titled, THE LEDGER.

The Rev. Mr. Alexander was a better pastor than a publisher so he sold the AFRO AMERICAN. Mr. Murphy

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MRS. FRANCES MURPHY II
Chairman, Board of Directors
AFRO-AMERICAN

13 EDITIONS PLUS DAWN — The AFRO-AMERICAN chain, now in its 82nd year, publishes 13 editions weekly in addition to its new monthly supplement → DAWN. The editions include The National AFRO-AMERICAN, 628 North Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md.; The Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN (Tuesday and Friday), same address; The Washington AFRO-AMERICAN (Tuesday and Friday), 1800 11th St., NW, Washington, D.C.; The Richmond AFRO-AMERICAN, 301 East Clay St., Richmond, Va.; The New Jersey AFRO-AMERICAN, 92 Clinton Ave., Newark, N.J.; The Philadelphia AFRO-AMERICAN, 215 South Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa.; The North Carolina, South Carolina, New England, Maryland and Virginia AFRO-AMERICANS and the DAWN Monthly supplement, with headquarters at 628 North Eutaw St., Baltimore. Md.