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THE PART, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF BLACK COLLEGES
IN FLORIDA

Address for
Florida Association of Colleges and Universities
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By

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Again, greetings to the officers, members and visitors of the conference of the Florida Association of Colleges and Universities, and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to you once more, mainly because this time it is a subject of which I have been a part of most of my life - Black Colleges and Universities -- Past, Present and Future. Most of the reference will be made to those colleges serving the state of Florida.

I hope to make clear three basic points. I will talk for _____ minutes.

The nature of the challenges and problems facing historically black colleges cannot be properly understood now, or will not be understood in the future unless the obscure background of the institutions is uncovered and examined. In order to understand the rationale for their future survival, an appreciation must be developed for the contributions they have made, and the services that they are rendering currently.

Originally there were 107 predominately Negro or Black institutions in the United States -- most of them located in the South.

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These institutions had to provide a variety of courses to meet the needs of students of a specific racial segment of the population, many of whom had minimum motivation, latent academic potential and underdeveloped socio-economic backgrounds. Admittedly, this one condition presented audious challenges and unparalled problems, for the administrations and faculties.

As we talk about the past aspects of black colleges, let us take a look at the colleges in Florida that have given this state a century of service.

EDWARD WATERS COLLEGE - The first institution of higher education for blacks in Florida --- established in 1866 in Jacksonville, under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It was first designed to provide an educated ministry. At present, this institution grants the bachelor's degree in eleven areas and also provides a teacher education program for each area. It has a faculty of 53, one third of whom holds an earned doctorate degree. In 1958, Edward Waters College became a 4-year liberal arts college and graduated the first class in 1960.

Recent trends point toward future innocations in programs and the preparation of students for other vocations such as government service, business, science, medical technology and social welfare. The student population is drawn from all areas of Florida, many points of the nation and foreign countries.

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An extensive expansion program is underway at this institution totaling 13.2 million dollars, with anticipations to accommodate a student body of 3,000.

BETHUNE-COOKMAN COLLEGE - Established in 1872 as Cookman Institute of Jacksonville, but later merged with the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute which was founded in 1905, under the leadership of a notable pioneer in higher education in Florida, Mary MeLeod Bethune. Dr. Bethune guided this merger in 1923, when the institution came under the auspices of the Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

As to purpose, the college is committed to provide the learning opportunities to students whether they are self-supporting or economically deprived, who wish to pursue a liberal education in an atmosphere which is both intellectual and Christain. The college holds full membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and is fully accredited.

FLORIDA MEMORIAL COLLEGE - Originated near the historical Suwannee River in Live Oak, this institution was established by the American Baptist College Missionary Society as the Florida Baptist Institute for Negroes. In 1892, the Florida Normal and Industrial Institute was founded in Jacksonville and later became known as the Florida Baptist Academy. The Florida Baptist Institute incorporated the Academy in 1917, and 1918, was moved to St. Augustine, at which time important amendments to the institution's charter were secured. These amendments include full college powers and a name change from Florida Baptist Academy to the Florida Normal and Industrial Institute.

The college graduated its first 4-year class in 1945. The name was changed again in 1950, to Florida Normal and Industrial Memorial College and in 1963 its charter was amended to name the college Florida Memorial College, and opened to students of all races. 'An important step was taken in September of 1968, Florida Memorial College moved to Miami.

The 4-year coeducational institution has remained Baptist-affiliated, and is fully accredited. It has adhered to the purpose of cultivating an appreciation of high values in young people and developing competence in facing critical issues of life. For the future, it is committed to the development of dynamic leadership by fostering the ideals of a society consistent with the principles of democracy.

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY.-- Established in Tallahassee by an act of the Florida Legislature in 1887, it was then known as a colored normal school. The name was changed in 1909 to the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College. The first degree was granted in 1910. By legislative enactment, the college was changed to a university in 1953. It operated under legal segregation of the races until 1954. Florida A&M University is presently organized into six colleges and schools with a graduate division of education: College of Arts and Sciences, School of Agricultural and Home Economics, School of Education, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy and School of Technology.

Florida A&M University is the only predominate black Land-Grant University in Florida and as such receives Federal support under the Morrill Act, the Nelson Amendment, and also under the Smith-Hughes Act for vocational education. Its principal income is from state

appropriations - (state assisted, not state supported).

It is now open to serve men and women of all races who are committed to the pursuit of excellence and self-improvement. Within the limits of its resources, FAMU seeks to preform its defined role by providing as educational environment in which students learn to live, function and develop in a society of rapid and dynamic changes. It graduates have been very successful in their professional endeavors, and the institution takes pride in the fact that Florida's 1970 Teacher of the Year was one of them.

Due to the nature of their early financial support, most of the institutions followed the pattern of predominantly white institutions in organization and structure. Because of the characteristics of the early students, much emphasis was devoted to remedial and compensatory programs and other curricula having a limited number of utilitarian and vocational ends. Simultaneously, every attempt was made, however, to dress the institutions in the same traditional academic garp as the supposedly white counterpart.

W. A. Low has listed seven (7) steps depicting the Americanization of the Negro, some of which are applicable to the development of the black man's formal education. First, the decision to provide Christian and non-religious instruction for slaves; second, the impending restraints upon education resulting grom such insurrection as that led by Nat Turner; third, the right to be educated as free men following the collapse of pro-slavery class in the South; fourth, the religious and humanitarian northern beneficiance during the reconstruction period; fifth, Booker T. Washington's program of Industrial Education popularized in the Atlanta Compromise; sixth, the flourishing of Negro education under the separate

but equal doctrine, and finally the legal protests of the new Negro resulting in the May, 1954, decision of the Supreme Court against segregation. Mr. Low does not mention the philosophy of W. E. B. DuBois that challenged the fundamental teachings and goals of Booker T. Washington. These ideological conflicts served as a basis of the shift from the training of the hand to that of the mind.

In his treatment, Mr. Low does not mention the effect the philosophy of W. E. B. DuBois had on the development of these colleges. This conflicting ideology with Booker T. Washington was responsible for some colleges shifting from vocational goals to strictly liberal arts objectives.

A statistical report from the Department of Labor and Commerce shows the improvement of the socio-economic status of blacks for 1969. Significant among the statistics is the fact that the number of Negro males in school has increased from 35% in 1960 to 45% in 1968. In 1960, only 36% of Negro males had completed high school and attended some college while in 1968, 60% were in this category. The black college enrollment increased 85% between 1964 -1968.

It is realistic to assume that when a substantial number of any minority race improves its socio-economic status, the total society benefits. Yet, black Americans still have great strides to make in their drive to reach parity with other citizens in such factors as income, education, health, family stability and professional recognition.

A report for the year 1963-64 listed 123 predominantly Black colleges -- all but four of these were located in the South. It is significant that these institutions served the high purposes of southern social, economic, political and industrial interest in the region with

almost complete ostracism from the remainder of the southern white academic community. These institutions survived with little financial support. Volunteer support came mostly from religious and philanthropic organizations, and later through organized efforts such as the United Negro College Fund. Those outside the black community felt that because black colleges were founded for blacks, the institutions were inferior. The black college was the invisible (stepchild) institution. Business, industry, and much of the private sector were slow to recognize its value and support the black college. Its graduates entered a society that limited their resources, preventing substantial support.

Despite the financial struggle for survival the increasing competition for students, and the varying degrees of criticism, most of the past and contemporary black leadership was produced by the black colleges.

Before congress, the Honorable _____ Clay _____
_____ made these statements: "The black colleges produced over 70% of the college graduates in the United States with the percentage being higher in Florida. The effectiveness of these institutions can best be judged by the quality of the graduates."

In career fields these graduates have served as researchers, managers of corporations, owners of small firms, teachers, principals, college presidents, deans, department chairmen, school board members, and numerous other professional categories. In other public services we find them in such positions as military officers, municipal, state and federal judges, legislators, doctors, lawyers, ministers and civic leaders. These colleges have supplied the nation with all type technicians in the construction industry. Aside from the employment opportunities

provided by the possession of technical skills, very often this was the only available source of skilled labor for building homes, businesses, churches, lodges, and schools for black people.

Since Florida A&M University is the state's only publicly assisted predominantly black college, it is important to bring to your attention at this point that public Negro colleges enroll 3/5 of all students enrolled in black colleges. All together public Negro colleges and universities award 10,300 bachelor degrees and 14,00 master degrees annually. The statistics are not intended to overlook the fact that for years the private black colleges were the only source of higher education for black people and provided quality leadership for decades. The black institution of higher education currently hangs balanced with the historical problems and the pains of inevitable transition. These colleges and universities must deal with a possible backlash of integrating our society and ending racial segregation in education.

Dedicated toward assisting the disadvantaged to reach parity and subsequent changes in technology, industrial demands, economic and social demands, prompted the predominantly black colleges to become more sensitive to the problems of the poor and the culturally underdeveloped. They have become more community oriented. They have developed centers of social consequence to serve as kinds of yardsticks in education. These institutions are in the position to give assurance that needs of students are being met, and that decisions and definitions of social costs and accountability are kept in focus with the masses of people who make up our society.

This expanded function of making decisions about, and providing definitions of social costs and accountability has motivated the

principality of the colleges to become more involved in community actions agencies, civil rights struggles and neighborhood problems of all descriptions. Concomitant with these involvements are the problems associated with the definition student unrest, student power, black power and power to the people.

Over the last (17 or 15) years, black colleges have been forced to revise their curricula and co-curricula activities to meet the changing values of society and to develop relevant approaches to the satisfaction of the needs of their students. This has resulted with the administration being challenged by activism, be it student, or community centered. Such activism in many instances has lessened the opportunities for adequate legislative appropriations, diminished grants from industry, corporations, foundations and many other special interests groups. This may be the price these colleges will have to pay for it appears that their involvement in helping the poor to solve their problems is here to stay.

The institutions described earlier are viable "constructs" in the Florida community and serve as valid examples for the category nationally. They are in the process of continuous evaluation and improvement. They have kept in good standing with the same state, regional and national accreditation agencies. They have kept visible and acceptable to philanthropic, industrial and governmental agencies. Yet these institutions are faced with the same problems as other institutions, and more so when it comes to obtaining and maintaining public support.

What about the future of Black colleges? Should they go out of existence since there are visible signs of desegregation? Cherished goals and the high purposes of living are worthy efforts to achieve, but

we must also live for ideals and goals that are bigger than ourselves. This was perhaps stated best by George Bernard Shaw when he said that "Life is no brief candle for me. It is sort of a splendid torch which I have got to hold for the moment and I want it to burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to younger generations."

I think that it was Henry Commager who suggested that free enterprise is just as important in the realm of ideas as in the realm of economics. It is in the American tradition that all men should have right to discuss their ideas and be prepared to accept the consequences. The suppression of ideas can very well lead to a violent revolution. The pragmatic spirit of such men as Locke, Jefferson, and John Stewart Mills lends support to the philosophic point of view concerning individual freedom.

The American colleges and universities, predominantly black or white, must play a functional role as guardians of free enterprise and free ideas.

The black colleges will continue and must continue to struggle for survival and identity in this multi-racial society - SREB quotes -

The best of the black colleges will survive -- the need is a need for them. These institutions must continue to upgrade their academic programs and become more sensitive to the needs of the community, providing action programs and services to meet these needs. Their image will be improved through statesman-like leaders and a commitment on the part of administrators, faculty and students. In some instances this may mean a little house cleaning. The very best people will continue to be recruited for staff assignments representing all the disciplines and especially representing the vast and various talents from the slum area. There will continue to be doors open to all students of all races, creeds, and colors.

In a sense the historically black college in the United States is the most efficient because it has done so much with so less. Look at its products.

Serious consideration should be given to the very recent report, (February, 1971) of the Carnegie Commission of Higher Education which stated that "Black Colleges have 4 unique roles: (1) assuming leadership in "outreach" programs of consultation and service to the black community, (2) assuming leadership in the development of techniques for overcoming handicaps of the educationally disadvantaged, (3) Stimulating the interest of black youth in higher education, and (4) serving as custodians of the archives of black Americans as centers for the systematic study of the black man's problems and achievements, and the interpretation of his aspirations and responses to life as represented in his literature and art.

In consideration of the wide range of problems related to institutions that are predominantly black, we must realize that the

student population comes from families whose incomes are less than \$4,000 annually. Therefore, the predominantly black colleges and universities must provide needy students the opportunity to get a higher education with a minimum amount of financial sacrifice. If the Negro and other ethnic minorities in this country are to development and maintain a respectful image of themselves, the cultural artifacts and heritage of these people must be preserved with social, philosophic and scientific articulation as related to other world cultures including Africa, the American Indian and the orient. The predominantly black colleges and Universities must out of necessity continue to be the vehicles through which this mission must be accomplished. To rephrase excerpts from a position paper prepared by a task force on "Role of Negro Colleges and Universities," there should be a rediscovery of "surrendered identity" of historic literature, folkways, models, and distinguished personalities re-presenting these various cultures.

Still another responsibility of the predominantly black colleges and universities is to prepare their students with the educational tools that will help them to adequately function and survive in a dynamic and rapidly changing society. They can also serve a discernible segment of our society regardless of race -- now overlooked by many prestigious universities in the country. They are better equipped to do so because of an expertise forced upon them in efforts to provide educational opportunities for students discouraged by society.

In summary, it was my attempt in these remarks to deal with the historical perspective of the problems, and the contribution of these institutions to society; and the black colleges and universities in transition, their struggles for survival and preservation as a local and

national investment.

In other words, three things:

One, the black college, was conceived illegitimately by a bigot mind and a racist society.

Two, Its indisputed success and invaluable service are legitimizing its bastard birth and appreciating its value.

Three, its essentialness in the future demands increased support as an investment; and investment to retain a reasonable identity of the historically black college, and investment to insure its maintenance as the conveying agent of a people's heritage, and to provide the educational expertise for an enlarging segment of our youth.

It is in this contest that I see the challenges which all of us must meet with great courage and a positive commitment.