

We must challenge, Mr. Speaker, the media, political, labor, and other leaders to transform the national discussion and debate from mere racial justice for minorities to greater racial justice for minorities in the context of greater economic justice for all Americans.

Dr. King's dream was poetic and it was symbolic. Dr. King's substance was a nonviolent, activist, economic strategy to combat racism and bring about racial reconciliation. That is why he moved from just talking about racial justice to talking about racial reconciliation in the context of an economic justice movement.

In 1968 when he was killed, he was not fighting for civil rights. That bill was passed in 1964, and he was not sleeping for 4 years. What was he doing in 1968? He was leading a poor people's campaign that paralleled the national Presidential campaign because he wanted the Nation's priorities to reflect raising boats that were stuck at the bottom.

In a nation with the economic ability and the technological capability of providing every American with a decent life, it is an outrage and it is a scandal that there should be such social misery in our country.

What do we say to the American poor and to the victims of racism and sexism and classism in America? Do we tell them, Mr. Speaker, that you are better off than the Russian poor? You are better off than the Bosnian poor? You are better off than the Asian poor, the African poor, the Latin poor? This, Mr. Speaker, has got to be close to cruel and insensitive and immoral.

No, we must tell them that such injustice is intolerable. That no American should be institutionally and systematically maimed in body and in spirit when our country has the means of doing better. The standard is not a comparison of how much worse things could be, but how much better things should be if we had only the political leadership and the development of the political will to change.

We are a nation, Mr. Speaker, of enormous national wealth that is tragically suffering from an anemia of national will to do what we know is just. It is time to end race entertainment, and it is time to start down the sure path of economic and racial justice.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY) at 5 p.m.

COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank our chairwoman, Congressman MAXINE WATERS, the gentlewoman from California, for her leadership and tenacity in moving forthwith on critical issues of importance, not only to African-Americans, but to all Americans, and to our revered and preeminent leader, the gentleman from Ohio, Congressman LOUIS STOKES, for the guidance in advising those of us who have come recently to this House to do the people's business. My thanks to both of my colleagues for allowing me these moments to reflect.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud African American to acknowledge this month as African American History Month and to recognize the vast contributions made by distinguished citizens of this Nation who are of African descent.

As we hold our forbearers to high esteem for their courage, perseverance, morality and faith, we salute them for their relentless efforts in fighting to remove the legal and political disabilities that were imposed upon us.

While I represent California's 37th Congressional District with pride, my birth State is Alabama, and I am reminded of the first African American from Alabama who was elected to the 42d Congress and who advocated even then the importance of education, Benjamin Sterling Turner.

Education has been the cornerstone in the African American community. My father, Rev. Shelley Millender, Sr., knew the importance of education. He and my mother, Mrs. Evelena Deutsche Millender advocated a quality education and gave us a value system that is part and parcel of the true spirit of African American families. We recognize that a good education is the key to success and should open the door of opportunity.

I am further reminded of my father's teachings when he said, never subordinate to race-bashing; respect yourself and others, even though you have differences of opinion, but hold firm to your convictions.

Let us not forget one who had strong convictions in the name of Wiley Branton, now deceased, but who was a great American and a great leader in the early civil rights movements. He was born and reared in Pine Bluff, AR, became a lawyer, and began practicing law in his hometown. His earliest achievements, however, was of national interest, as he represented the Little Rock Nine in 1958. He later became the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, being appointed by the President, then Lyndon Johnson. He served as the dean of Howard University School of Law until his death. Convictions like that and convictions like

Branton is but one of the various teachings of commitment and dedication that the African American family instills in their children.

As I listened very closely to the President's State of the Union Address, as he spoke of education as a No. 1 priority, building strong families and communities, and humanitarian efforts in the assistance of the underprivileged through volunteerism, I stand tonight to lift up some of my constituents who are role models and great citizens that the President talked about. Their names will never be in lights nor on billboards, but they are the unsung heroes of my community. They helped in the education of our children, they built strong families and engaging communities, and they taught us to have a strong value system. Let me share with you these outstanding African American individuals.

Theresa LaVerne Harris who passed away in November 1996 was a dedicated educator. Throughout her life Theresa LaVerne touched all of us who had the pleasure of knowing her with her humor, her strength and, perhaps most importantly, her dignity. But she never forgot that education was the key, and therefore she became an educator and an administrator with the Los Angeles Unified School District. She spent her early youth in Louisiana and Mississippi until her family moved to California in 1943. She attended the Los Angeles unified schools and graduated from John Francis Polytechnic High School with honors. But it was during her college days at UCLA that she decided to become this educator.

Theresa LaVerne began a long distinguished life educating the young kids from the inner city. She excelled in her career as an educator. Though she raised three outstanding children, she was a loving and supportive wife, and in spite of all of this, she went on to earn a master's degree in personnel administration from Pepperdine University.

But both as an educator and an administrator within a public school system, Theresa LaVerne worked hard to ensure that students under her charge had the very best of education available to them. While she was deservedly proud of her mark as a personal and academic woman of achievements, she was more interested in using her talents and her strength to help children to become better educated and to ensure their mark in the future in mainstreaming them into the world of work.

Those of us who worked around her saw that she was a very strong disciplinarian in her efforts to make sure that education stayed the primary responsibility of those teachers and administrators who worked under her watch.

Mr. Speaker, I worked with Theresa LaVerne Harris and had the privilege of knowing her and her family for decades. She was a devoted wife, a wonderful and nurturing mother, a role model not only for our children, but for all of

us who had the opportunity to know her. She will be sorely missed, and as I said a moment ago, she was one who was a person who did extraordinary work in the field of education and educating our children.

The next person I will speak of is Carolyn Ann Richardson Cheney, a woman of immense talents. Carolyn passed away in December 1996, and she too was a devoted family and community leader. She had a generosity of spirit in giving all that she could to the community and to inspire those who worked around her. Those of us who knew her knew that she spent her early days as a youth in El Paso, TX, before moving to California. After graduating from high school she obtained a dental assistance credential and began working in Los Angeles. Her further thirst for education prompted her to go on to Compton College, where she earned her associate arts degree and on to California State University, Dominguez Hills where she finished her bachelor's degree with honors.

What do these two people have in common? In spite of being mothers and in spite of being wives, they obtained their education and went on to help others outside of their children. Carolyn's ambition, strength, and motivation found expressions in her entrepreneurial and managerial talents. For 13 years she worked in Sears & Roebuck during off times to help with the family finances.

In 1980, she opened her own insurance agency, and it became one of the top agencies in southern California, and despite all of this she found time to serve her community and her church, reaching out to teenage mothers, reaching out to the desolate, reaching out to those who were the homeless. She volunteered in the Los Angeles probation department in the chaplain's office. Carolyn received the Paul Harris Fellowship by the Rotary International in appreciation for her efforts and assistance in the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relationships among peoples throughout the world.

Though she was a loving and devoted mother of 4 children, through words and deeds, she instilled in them the principle of honesty, integrity, hard work, perseverance, and self-sacrifice. And these are the values that help to make our Nation great and our people strong. Her attributes are a testament to the unending strength of motherhood. Carolyn will be sorely missed by all of those and all of us who knew her for her nurturing, her leadership, and her strength. She indeed was an inspiration to all of us throughout the community.

I pay homage to Mr. Sam Littleton, who passed away January 31 of this year. Mr. Littleton went to work early as a mail carrier in the cities of Los Angeles and Compton until he was stricken with disability. But his disability did not dissuade him to go on in his middle age to college, having received an AA degree from Compton

College and a bachelor's degree from Los Angeles University of Los Angeles. But he was still motivated for higher education and he applied and was accepted to the graduate program of social work at UCLA.

When he became a social worker, he started work at the new then-Martin Luther King, Jr., Medical Center. He elected to not work as a social worker in the daytime, but he elected to work as a social worker at night so that those who worked during the day, parents, single parents, and those who could not get off at work could come and talk with him, and he counseled them. He was the only social worker in the State of California who took an evening shift. He was a positive and unique role model for the community. He served and assisted with the bereaved and grieving families; he assisted many homeless persons in finding shelter; he counseled many with abuse problems and substance abuse as well, and he even counseled women who were victims of rape. The elderly grew to know him as a person whom they could depend upon because he would make home visits to make sure that they felt safe in their homes and that their needs were met even though they could not come out from their homes.

Yes, his 18 years of service as an evening social worker endeared him to not only his family, but to employees and coworkers and the community around him. He will be sorely missed, but his legacy remains.

I salute Mr. Sam Littleton for an outstanding record of public and community service, a record that has touched so many lives throughout the community. He was truly an inspiration to all of us. His community commitment, his dedication to human services, his social services and service to the community through volunteerism were indeed the life and the high regard that was given to him at the time of his funeral on January 31.

Another person who is not deceased yet, of course, is Maxie Filer, who has given 45 years of public service to the community. Mr. Filer is in the Guinness Book of Records because he took the law exam 45 times before he passed. Perseverance. He was indeed a role model and is a role model to the community.

While he has 7 children, 3 of whom are attorneys and one is a judge, Mr. Filer knew the importance of public service. He was a resident of Compton for over 40-some years. He served in presidential campaigns; he was the president of the Compton Democratic Club in 1952. He was labor and industry community chairman. He was even with Martin King on the march on Washington in 1963, and he became the president of the Compton NAACP from 1964 to 1970. Mr. Filer served as a Compton city council member from 1976 through 1989.

His commitment, though, to the youth, the African-American males, is one indication of a man who knew out-

side of being a father to his 7 children, along with his wife, Glendell, that he had to help young African-American males to see the right way, to move into a mainstream of life and to divert from gangs and drugs.

He is still serving in the community as an attorney and does a lot of pro bono work for those in the community who are unable to pay for legal service. Maxie Filer is one who now recognizes volunteerism is an important component. He will serve as my chairperson for my volunteerism task force that I am convening.

□ 1715

Mr. Speaker, as new trailblazers emerge to chart new paths, and they commence agendas to promote African-Americans and invest in future generations, let us never forget the spirit of those who I have mentioned, and our forebears.

Let us also recognize the ones whose names do not ripple in neon lights, whose distinctiveness has yet to be embedded on printed pages. Because for all that we are and hope to be, it is because of them. For all of the songs that they sang over stovetops and beside washtubs that went unscored, for all the poems that they scribbled on matchboxes and matchbox covers and on dinner napkins that went unpublished and unnoticed, for the many discovered roles that they played in unrecorded and then forgotten movies, and for all that they did for us, we are all the better because of them.

We want them to know that they will not go unnoticed, because each time we sign our names, we know that it is for the thousand like them who cannot hold a pen, but instead, held us, and tucked us in gently, as they sang the many rhythms and rhymes of the old African spirituals.

Mr. Speaker, I have come tonight because I wanted to recognize not just those of us who perhaps in the eyes of others have succeeded, but for the many who perhaps will not ever work in this Chamber, will not ever have an opportunity to run campaigns, but they, too, have given so much to this Nation and to this world.

As we celebrate African-American History Month, let us not forget those who toiled in order that we would have a place in this House.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1806

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro