



Supplemental Essays

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Interrogating the African-American Identity: How and Where Do New African Diasporans Fit in the State of Arizona? A Call for Further Study

Lisa Aubrey, Arizona State University

Abdullahi Gallab, Arizona State University

Aribidesi Usman, Arizona State University

The following is a descriptive essay which attempts to point out salient issues that must be addressed when interrogating the complexity of the “African-American” identity. Defining just who is “African-American” in the 21st century must be problematized not only against the backdrop of the growing and deepening diversity of the national United States and state-wide Arizona populations, but also against the increasing numbers of groups and individuals that may be considered “Black.”

As a broad racial category, “Black” serves as an umbrella classification in the US to a multiplicity of groups, without serious regard of how these groups identify and define themselves. In lay terms, Black is also used synonymously with African-American. “African-American” likewise often serves as a hodgepodge label, assuming cultural and ethnic linkages to Africa, and citizenship linkages to the United States. US census categories, for instance, often read “Black or African-American” as one all-encompassing category which includes reported identities as variable as “Black, African-American, Negro, Afro-American, Haitian and Nigerian.”¹

With record levels of Black immigration flows (even though still comparatively low to White immigrations flows) into the US however, and naturalization processes of non-US born persons becoming Americans, along with racial intermingling, and the spread of Black American youth global popular cultural influence, it is increasingly difficult to tell by cursory observation, such as sight and speech, without systematic research, who is “African-American,” conventionally defined, and who is not. The consensus rather seems to be that there is general unclarity about this very important matter of identity. Hence, programs formulated to serve the “African-American” population often face a

very rudimentary methodological and implementation problem of knowing exactly who they are serving. As a result, some Blacks who are indeed African-American do not benefit from these programs, and some Blacks who are not African-American reap the rewards. This does not suggest that the latter are not deserving.

This essay represents the genesis of a larger project that seeks to unravel some complexities of the African-American identity. We will overtime collect data by subsets which acknowledge and honor the differences among Blacks as a broad racial group, and among African-Americans. Noting these distinctions is important, for not all African-American groups in the US in the 21st century came to the US at the same time, for the same reasons, or directly from the same place. While some African-American groups have been in the US for generations, others are new first generation Americans, and, there are those in between these two extremes. African-Americans from all of these categories reside in Arizona. Our essay attempts to provide some brief descriptions of one broad stratum of these populations, to be later disaggregated in further research.

On August 9, 2007, *The Arizona Republic*, the state's largest

newspaper, reported that Arizona is experiencing exponential growth in terms of increasing immigration, adding to the state's racial and ethnic diversity.² This influx of immigrants more than likely contributes to Gilbert being not only one of the fastest growing US small cities, but also a bustling suburb of ever-expanding Phoenix, similarly one the fastest growing US metropolitan areas. In more specific terms directly related to deepening racial and ethnic diversity in Arizona amidst this population boom, Maricopa County (an amalgam of 27 cities with an estimated population of approximately 4 million), in a period of one year between July 1, 2005 and July 1, 2006, underwent the largest percentage growth vis-à-vis other counties, and markedly increased Arizona's ethnic and racial diversity. Respectively, the Hispanic population increased by 55% during this time period, the Anglo population by 27%, and the African-American population by 7%.³ In accordance with these growth and diversity trends and in specific recognition of the expansion of the Black population, the Governor of Arizona Janet Napolitano has created a "Commission on African-American Affairs." This Commission acknowledges African-Americans as "a growing

segment of Arizona's diverse population," and likewise significant contributors to the rich cultural landscape of Arizona, as well as to the state's gross domestic product and tax base.⁴ The Commission further pledges to provide opportunities for African-Americans to confront and overcome specific group challenges with the aim of uplifting African-Americans' social, cultural, and economic status in the state.⁵

The question at this juncture, becomes "Who exactly are these African-Americans to which this Commission refers?" for the sum-total of Blacks as a racial group, despite intra-group differences, contributes to the cultural landscape of Arizona, as well as to the state's economy as productive laborers in a wide variety of occupations and as taxpayers. Are these African-Americans those Black persons whose families have lived in the US for generations? Does African-American refer to the new African-Americans who more recently came from the continent as well? These questions are often received with sensitivity and concern by those who formulate race-based and need-based programs and projects, but their responses are ambiguous, understandably, as "African-American" remains an ever widening category and an

identity category in flux. Hence, "Who exactly are these African-Americans?" is a critical question that must be posed and is one that is ripe for further study.

For conceptual clarity, it is important to note that there are at least two significant groups of Blacks, in Arizona, as well as in the larger United States, that may have constituents who are African-American.⁶ These two groups have been identified by pundits⁷ in very broad strokes as 1) the Old African Diaspora, also called the slavery Diaspora, whose forebears were enslaved in Africa and forcibly brought to the US (and other parts of the "New World") between the 15th and 19th centuries during the Trans Atlantic slave trade. They are not immigrants; they did not come by choice; and represent the "conventionally defined" African-Americans—descendants of enslaved Africans who were the first to be labeled "Black" in the US;⁸ and 2) the New African Diaspora, variously called the colonization Diaspora, decolonization Diaspora, structural adjustment Diaspora, and conflict Diaspora.⁹ These New Diasporans came to the US after the abolition of the Trans Atlantic slave trade in the 19th century, and the reasons for their immigration vary across space and time; and their scope may not be captured by the vari-

ous afore-listed names given to this New Diaspora. Newly emerging arguments suggest that an additional label of “educated” or “professional” Diaspora should be added to this list.¹⁰ Adding significantly to the US racial, ethnic, and also cultural diversity, this New Diaspora continues to expand in the 21st century as African immigration into the US continues.

Old Diasporans and their descendants gained US American citizenship

by the passage of Amendment XV to the US constitution on March 30, 1870 after the abolition of slavery in 1865. This does not suggest that the exercise of citizenship became unproblematic for African-Americans from this time. History has proven quite the opposite. Some from the New Diaspora are also African-American by naturalization, birth, or adoption, hence they become African-American either by choice, circumstance, or default. Their citizenship as Americans is protected by Amendment XIV of the US constitution and by the Child Citizenship Act of 2000.

Herein lies the methodological puzzle for data collection: One on side of the coin, it is not unthinkable that New Diasporans are counted in numbers that attempt to reflect growth and diversifica-

tion of the United States and Arizona, especially as there have been significant increases in the numbers of African peoples migrating beyond the boundaries of the continent in the last half of the 20th century.¹¹ Migration data reported at the dawn of the 21st century, for instance, tells us that almost 75% of all Africans migrants had come to the US since 1980.¹² It is important to interrogate how “African migrant” is being defined, states in the US in which these migrants settle when they immigrate, and ways in which they enhance population diversification and economies of the states in which they settle. It is also important to note if their migration is counted in data collection as part of international migration or domestic migration (if and when they move from state-to-state within the US), and especially if they are included in numbers of “African-Americans” immigrating. Data reported often do not make these critical distinctions, especially if their categories are as broad as the US census categories. How many African migrants become naturalized as American citizens is also vital data to be collected, as well as whether or not they consider themselves “African-American.”

On the flip side of the coin, and contrary to the afore-stated, it is also plausible that New Diasporans are not considered when data is being collected on “African-Americans” or when programs and projects are being designed for “African-Americans.” One of the main reasons that New Diasporans may not be counted is that there remains an element of foreign-ness of New Diasporans as perceived by mainstream Americans and “conventional” African-Americans of the Old Diaspora. This is especially so when New Diasporans appear different in dress, sound different in speech, behave differently due to cultural, religious, or gender norms, and are perceived as competitors for difficult-to-find jobs in the US economy. Many times, this perception of “foreign-ness” keeps separate New Diasporans from Old Diasporans, and may even engender an environment where there is a lack of communication and cooperation, and perhaps in the extreme where there is conflict. This is yet another area that is ripe for research. Essentially, who is counted as African-American and who is not, presents layers of challenges not only for data collection, but also for data validity and reliability, as well as for public policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation.

What is also problematic, alongside challenges with data, is the rough and unrefined categorizations of Old Diaspora and New Diaspora. Just as peoples of the Old Diaspora were diverse in terms of variables including area of origin, gender, age, occupation, languages, religion, year and circumstances of capture, etc., peoples of the New Diaspora are diverse as well in term of some of the same variables, as well as in terms of a multiplicity of newer push and pull factors toward migration that are as wide-ranging as victimization, labor opportunities, educational pursuits, economic ventures, human rights violations, joining family, adventures, winning the US visa lottery, and more. As such, the New Diaspora includes refugees seeking asylum, such as the Lost Boys of Sudan, as well as immigrants including some of the most highly educated, professionally skilled, and accomplished Africans from the continent. Among the New Diasporans are unskilled laborers, some lacking formal education, as well as prominent scientists, renown authors, world class athletes, and university professors. New Diasporans nationally are, in fact, touted to be the most highly educated immigrant group in US society today.¹³

Though imprecise but yet an entrée to understanding the New Diaspora, data collected, with the assistance of students from an “Introduction to African and African-American Studies 200” course at Arizona State University,¹⁴ indicates that there is a growing number of New African Diasporas in Arizona with increasing visibility. New Diasporans hail from at least 39 African countries—4 North African, 8 Southern African, 9 East African, 12 West African, and 6 Central African. The most visible in the state respectively, especially in the Phoenix metropolitan area, are from Somalia (East Africa), Sudan (East Africa), Ethiopia (East Africa), Liberia (West Africa), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Central Africa), and Sierra Leone (West Africa). Some of these New Diasporans may have first gone to other countries as refugees before immigrating to the US. As such, the US may be their country of second asylum, especially if English is not one of the languages they speak at home in Africa. This may be especially the case for immigrants from French-speaking (Francophone) and Portuguese-speaking (Lusophone) African countries.

Historical record and observation further illustrate that the influx of New Diasporans into

Arizona peaked during the last two decades of the twentieth century, from the late 1980s, due to increasing conflicts, civil wars, famine and food insecurity, structural adjustment, and general worsening economic conditions on the continent of Africa. Two-hundred twenty-one (221) Lost Boys from Sudan are a case in point as they fled to Arizona around 2000–2001, specifically Paradise Valley, Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tucson, for refuge and resettlement from civil war, persecution, and genocide in their home country. It is important to note that these new flows of immigration took place simultaneously with the already much smaller, less publicized, but well established flows of African immigration for reasons such as higher education, commerce, career and economic opportunities, and overall greener pastures.

New Diasporans in Arizona who constitute an approaching 3% of the state’s population are a composite of men in larger numbers, women, and children, spanning a wide range of ages. The median age is reported to be 28, and almost 70% of the population is 18 years or above. A few hundred New Diasporans are also over 65 years.

There is a significant youth population attending all levels of schooling, including university. Slightly fewer than half of the New Diasporans have attained high school diplomas or higher level diplomas/degrees. Less than one-quarter have a first degree or higher level degrees from a university. It is reported that this year, 2007, eleven (11) New Diasporans who came to Arizona as Lost Boys graduated from Arizona colleges and universities. Two (2) of the 11 graduated from Arizona State University.¹⁵

New Diasporans practice a variety of religions including: Christianity, Islam, and Traditional African Religions. Some organizations that collect this type of data indicate that more precise information about religion is confidential and can not be released. Some New Diasporans have reportedly been pressured to convert, especially from Traditional African Religions to Christianity since their arrival in the US. This has caused misunderstandings and conflicts with host communities and families.

New Diasporans work in a variety of occupations in diverse industries including service, tourism, and security. Some observers have noted the prevalence of New Diasporans working at Sky Harbor Airport, especially Somalis and

Sudanese. Some New Diasporans are university professors, students, engineers, computer and research scientists, nurses and nurses’ assistants, pharmaceutical technicians, real estate agents, hairdressers, and taxi drivers. Some work as manual laborers as janitors, maids, security guards, construction workers, and day laborers. Some New Diasporans open their own businesses including restaurants, shops—selling a variety of goods including foodstuff and phone cards, shipping companies, and money transfer operations. New Diasporan restaurants, in particular, face major challenges of sustainability. Many close their doors due to financial losses. Those that have sustained themselves in the Phoenix area for some time are 2 Ethiopian restaurants, and 1 Tunisian restaurant.

Most New Diasporans speak multiple languages, at least two. Some New Diasporans have a better handle on English than others, depending on whether they come from English-speaking African (Anglophone) countries or not. Spanish is not very popular among new Diasporans. They learn to speak it mostly when it fulfills a foreign language requirement in an academic program. Many New Diasporans hold on to their own indigenous and/or national language. There

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is however a tendency for the younger Diasporans (especially the ones in public schools K–12, and even more-so the ones who were born in the US) to lose their home language, especially if they come from smaller ethnic or smaller national groups that do not have regularly scheduled cultural activities where they get together with others who speak the same language and have the same or similar cultural practices. Even though Diasporan parents speak their home language at home in the US, parents and community leaders report facing challenges when they desire to retain their home language and culture. As a possible remedy, some New Diasporan Muslim communities—from various countries who come together because of their common religion of Islam—have established a school, somewhat like a charter school, but what they call “more like an Arabic school,” to teach the Arizona academic curriculum, in tandem with the Arabic language to their children. Their goal is to help the youth maintain culture and religious identity.

The reported trend among New Diasporans is to become US naturalized citizens once they meet the US criteria for naturalization *and* if their home country, like Ghana and Nigeria, allows their citizens to

take dual citizenship. Some New Diasporans who become naturalized US citizens may *not* keep the citizenship of their country of birth if the constitution of their home country does not allow dual citizenship, as is the case of Tanzania. Tanzania is currently debating whether or not to pass laws to allow dual citizenship. Public opinion in Tanzania is split: those in favor argue for the economic benefits, such as the possibility of investments and economic growth that dual citizenship could engender; those against center their arguments around the vulnerability of national security posed by dual citizenship and possibly divided loyalty.¹⁶ Many New Diasporans face challenges in deciding whether or not to naturalize as US citizens.

It is believed that most New Diasporans are documented and hold the proper immigration papers for staying in the US. Of the ones who may be undocumented is it believed that they did not sneak into the US illegally; instead they allowed their immigration papers to expire. Despite most being documented and in the US legally, even after they become naturalized citizens, New Diasporans feel that they are on the receiving end of aggression and racism, including subtle racism. After 9/11 especially, they report being made

to feel more foreign, especially if they are Muslim.

Some of the major challenges New Diasporans state that they face is understanding the US system, and figuring out how to make it in the US. They compare the US to Canada and Britain and query why the US does not provide basic needs, such as housing and job assistance, upon their arrival and for their transition. Many find it difficult to understand and accept the US culture because of its focus on individualism, and because of the way it defines freedom, as well as the types of freedom it highlights as the rights of citizens, especially the ones New Diasporans perceive to denigrate family life. For example, the age of 18 is considered by some New Diasporans as *not* the age to leave the family home or to begin to make individual choices. New Diasporans say that some of their main challenges are culture shock, and confronting the US culture which they find to be aggressive and not-at-all friendly. They acknowledge that not all New Diasporans are able to assimilate in the same way or at the same pace. Some state that the US is not a county for Black people, as a whole, to assimilate into. They feel that the US is ontologically opposed to the Black race. They further state

that merely having an accent that is different from Whites breeds discrimination, ferociousness, stereo-typing, and profiling.

New Diasporans feel that overall there is no working relationship between the New Diaspora and the Old Diaspora. They further indicate that there is no strategic alliance, no closeness, and no intimacy between the two groups. Instead, they believe that the Diasporas are suspicious of each other. They also state that there is tension and suspicion within the New Diaspora as well—among national groups, and among ethnic groups from the same country. One of the ways that this suspicion manifests is in the mobilization of ethnic and national gang-like groups (including the Old Diaspora) with each group believing that they must guard their turf. Elders and wiser persons of multiple groups reportedly have intervened to try to negotiate common ground and understanding among Diasporans.

New Diasporans blame the media for conditioning them to see Old Diasporans in a very negative light. Many of them indicate coming to the US with perceptions of African-Americans from the Old Diaspora that are not true. Because of the negative perceptions and perpetuations of lies about

Old Diasporans, New Diasporans state they come to the US wanting to separate themselves from that which is Black, as a way to say “We are not a bad as them.” As such, they admit that they fall prey immediately to a “divide and conquer” mentality; and, this creates a wedge between the Old Diaspora and New Diaspora. Likewise, New Diasporans state that many Old Diasporans see continental Africans and New Diasporans as responsible for Old Diasporans’ enslavement. They also state that Old Diasporans correlate Africa, hence New Diasporans, with poverty, and feel ashamed.

New Diasporans maintain links to home in Africa, which they state are easier now with advanced communication technology and fast track globalization in trade and transport. They state that having conversations with people at home in Africa is easier and cheaper. Further, they can find food, films, music, clothes, and newspapers in African shops, and some of the aforementioned on the internet. These things keep them connected, albeit being away. They also maintain links by sending money home, receiving cultural goods, foods, religious rituals needs, and by traveling home. They credit transnational

air traffic for making much of this possible.

New Diasporans identify the mosque and the church as two main spaces of socialization for New Diasporans. These institutions, they state, provide services that are geared toward their basic needs, physical and spiritual, in everyday life. These institutions are also alternative institutions for getting assistance when the state is not forthcoming. For New Diasporans, the mosque and church are places of refuge. As an example of this, they cite the Idd-ul-fitr celebration, which is highpoint for Muslims all over the world during which time believers from various countries gather with friends to celebrate after 30 days of self-restraint and dawn-to-dusk fasting called Ramadan. They credit the mosque and church as places of cultural reinforcements through ceremonies such as marriages, weddings, baptisms, funerals, and burials.

New Diasporans also indicate that fellow New Diasporans ease their transition to the US, by offering understanding, emotional support, and material support through things like food banks which make food available free-of-charge to everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. One food bank in particular that is

mentioned is run by an elderly Sudanese Muslim woman.

Many new Diasporans see relations with Old Diaspora in higher status jobs and upper echelon positions in the US as “not bad.” These Old Diasporans, who might be considered among the middle class, elite, or the DuBoisian Talented Tenth, are the New Diasporans’ hope for improving the relationship between the Old and the New. “But,” New Diasporans argue, “there needs to be an exchange of ideas, experiences, mutual systems of support, and a coming together on political and professional issues.” One New Diasporan, for instance, would like to see New Diasporan Muslims meet Old Diasporan Muslims at an Old Diasporan established mosque in Phoenix.

This may be the beginning to settling methodological and relational challenges among Blacks, African-Americans, and African Diasporans in the state of Arizona. ■

¹See US Census 2000 data and definitions

²See *The Arizona Republic*, Yvonne Wingett and Ryan Konig, “Census Tally for Valley: A Portrait of Diversity,” August 9, 2007, pp. A1 and A8.

³Ibid.

⁴State of Arizona, Executive Order, 2007-19: Establishing the Arizona Commission on African-American Affairs, July 27, 2007.

⁵Ibid.

⁶There may other groups as well. Among Afro-Caribbean immigrants, for instance, there are likely some naturalized as African-Americans in the US as well. This, however, is beyond the scope of this brief essay.

⁷See the works of Michael Gomez and Paul Zeleza, among others.

⁸See the works of Michael Gomez and Elliot Skinner for the genesis of the label “Black.”

⁹Paul Zeleza’s work is useful in understanding Diasporas in this regard.

¹⁰A Diaspora Forum held in Columbus, Ohio in June 2007 organized by the Mayor’s Office in which Lisa Aubrey was a panelist brought this issue to the fore for consideration

¹¹Lisa Aubrey, Manuscript in progress.

¹²Ibid; From work of Paul Zeleza. See his various writings on this topic.

¹³See *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 26 (Winter 1999-2000): pp.60-61.

¹⁴Student from Lisa Aubrey’s “Introduction to African and African-American Studies 200” course, Fall 2007 are collecting data on New Diasporans in Arizona in attempts to begin to build a data base.

¹⁵Please see <http://www.azlostboyscenter.org/> for more details.

¹⁶For a synopsis of this debate, see <http://www.ipmedia.com/ipp/observer/2006/06/11/68158> See also the various works of Elliot Skinner on ethnicity and divided loyalty.

An Overview of Health Issues Concerning African-Americans in Arizona

**Based on the Health Disparities In Arizona's Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations Living and Dying in Arizona
Arizona Public Health Association
(November 2005)**

**African-American Legislative Health Committee
Wanda M. Thompson, Chair**

Acknowledgements

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her continued efforts to address the health of African-Americans in the state and for creating the vision of the annual African-American Legislative Days event at the State Capitol with the purpose of bringing together legislators and community members to address the salient concerns of African-American communities throughout the state. Particular thanks to Arizona State Representative Clovis Campbell for his continued wisdom and support of our efforts. In addition, we thank the many legislators who have and will support the efforts elucidated in this document.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not say thank you to the organizations that have allowed

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Purpose

The African-American Legislative Health Committee (AALHC) presents this report as an attempt to identify programs, projects, and initiatives in the state designed to address health disparities in Arizona's African-American populations. Initially, with a grant from the Federal Office of Minority Health, AzPHA collected information from AzPHA members, local health departments, community based organizations, tribal and state public health government agencies, community health centers, and the schools of public health. The African-American Health Committee then gathered additional data to support this information.

The purpose of this document is to situate the role of culture in the discussion of reducing and eliminating health disparities in the state of Arizona in general, and

for African-Americans, specifically. This document provides initial conversation to address such questions as: What are health disparities? What are the health needs of African-American communities? How are African-Americans in the state of Arizona affected by a lack of health knowledge, limited access to health care, poverty, discrimination, a paucity of research, and a need for visionary efforts to redefine the possibilities of health care?

This document serves as a guide to emphasize health statistics for African-Americans in the State of Arizona. The information herein provides evidence of a complex set of historical, structural, environmental and cultural factors affecting outcomes. This document further offers a template for establishing a plan of action and for creating policy that addresses health disparities.

First, the document provides an overview of the health status of ethnic communities in Arizona. Second, projects and organizations which target health disparities of African-Americans are presented. Next, a brief overview of selected health challenges is offered, followed by current and future research activities on health disparities. Finally, we provide the implications of this report,

offer recommendations for future directions, and, with community participation, suggest how best to reduce and eliminate African-American health disparities in the State of Arizona.

Wanda M. Thompson, Chair

African-American Legislative Health Committee

Introduction

Health disparities in the United States have affected the health and welfare of minority communities from the past century to the present. The 1985 landmark Secretary's Task Force Report on Black and Minority Health, published by the then U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Margaret Heckler during the Reagan administration, spurred a concerted effort to address disparities impacting racial and ethnic minority populations at the federal level. That report identified specific racial and ethnic populations in the United States that were not experiencing the same level of health improvements as the nation. These were African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and American Indians/Alaska Natives.

As an outcome of the findings, HHS created a federal response

that included the establishment of the Office of Minority Health (OMH). For 20 years OMH has served as the nation's focal point for addressing those health disparities that exist among the nation's racial and ethnic populations.

Since then, most state health departments have examined their vital statistics data by race/ethnicity to determine the extent of health disparities that may exist in their states. Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) produces a Health Status Report which overviews five years of trends, while their Perinatal Periods of Risk Assessment series targets prevention and intervention methods in the Maternal Child Health arena. Most recently MCDPH along with Arizona State University conducted a Prenatal Care Satisfaction and Resilience Factors research project. One of the many outcomes of that project is the report: *African-American Women Speak out on Health Care* which is a result of a series of focus groups centered on African-American Women and "their" perception of health care in the South Phoenix Community. All of the mentioned reports can be found at http://www.maricopa.gov/public_health/epi/mch.asp.

The Arizona Department of Health Services has produced a

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report every two years since 1997 called “Differences in the Health Status Among Ethnic Groups”. Using 70 indicators, the reports rank Arizona’s racial and ethnic population’s health status using a scoring system—the higher the score, the worse the health status. Each year, the rankings remain the same. Asian/Pacific Islanders rank the most favorable, followed by White (Non Hispanic), Hispanics, American Indians/Alaska Natives, African-Americans. Of all the racial and ethnic populations in the state, the disparity in health status is consistently worse for African-Americans. This is indicated by the high rank, and the high sum of ranks. Unfortunately, African-Americans have the worst ranking for: HIV Disease, Breast Cancer, Alzheimer’s, Lung Cancer, Cardiovascular and Heart Disease (see Table 2 for illustration).

Mortality

Table 1: Mortality by age group and race/ethnicity, Arizona 2005

Mortality By Age: Group in 2005	All Groups	White non-Hispanic	Other Than White non-Hispanic*				
			Total	Hispanic or Latino	Black or African-American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asia or Pacific Islander
<25 years	1,775	726	1,049	731	94	190	28
Percent	3.90%	2.00%	12.30%	13.70%	8.00%	11.50%	8.30%
25-64 years	11,154	7,833	3,321	1,902	508	773	100
Percent	24.70%	21.40%	38.80%	35.70%	43.30%	46.80%	89.60%
65+ years	32,186	27,999	4,187	2,690	571	688	210
Percent	71.30%	76.60%	48.90%	50.50%	48.70%	41.70%	62.10%
Total, all ages**	45,115	36,558	8,557	5,323	1,173	1,651	338
Percent	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

In 2005, the absolute majority of deaths of American Indian (58.3%) and Black (51.3%) residents of Arizona occurred before the age of 65 years, compared to 23.4% among White non-Hispanics.

* Includes other groups than Hispanic, Black, American-Indian and Asian.

** Includes unknown age.

Source: The 2005 death certificate file for Arizona residents

Table 2: Differences in the health status among ethnic groups, Arizona, rankings and scores based on health status indicators, 1997–2005, Arizona Department of Health Services, Vital Statistics

Figure No.	Indicator	White non-Hispanic	Hispanic or Latino	Black or African-American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Pacific Islander
5-1	Cardiovascular diseases	2.0	4.0	5.0	1.0	3.0
5-2	Diseases of the heart	3.0	4.0	5.0	2.0	1.0
5-3	Coronary heart disease	4.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	1.0
5-4	Cerebrovascular disease	2.0	3.0	4.0	1.0	5.0
5-5	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	5.0	3.0	4.0	1.0	2.0
5-6	Malignant neoplasms (cancer)	3.0	4.0	5.0	2.0	1.0
5-7	Lung cancer	4.0	3.0	5.0	1.0	2.0
5-8	Breast cancer	4.0	3.0	5.0	1.0	2.0
5-9	Cervical cancer	2.0	4.0	1.0	3.0	5.0
5-10	Colorectal cancer	3.0	4.0	5.0	1.0	2.0
5-11	Prostate cancer	4.0	5.0	2.0	3.0	1.0
5-12	Influenza and pneumonia	2.0	4.0	3.0	5.0	1.0
5-13	Diabetes	1.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	2.0
5-14	Chronic Liver disease and cirrhosis	2.0	4.0	3.0	5.0	1.0
5-15	HIV disease	2.0	3.0	5.0	4.0	1.0
5-16	Septicemia	2.0	3.0	4.5	4.5	1.0
5-17	Alzheimer’s disease	4.0	3.0	5.0	1.0	2.0
5-18	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis (kidney disease)	1.0	4.0	3.0	5.0	2.0
5-19	Essential (primary) hypertension	1.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	2.0
5-20	Total mortality from all causes	2.0	3.0	5.0	4.0	1.0
	Sum of Ranks	53.0	70.0	82.5	56.5	38.0
	Average Rank	2.7	3.5	4.1	2.8	1.9

Causes of Health Disparities

The causes of health disparities in health status are varied and complex. As our committee examined all of the various definitions of health disparities, we developed a simple framework to show the personal and societal influences that impact health status, of which race and ethnicity acts as only one variable, but is a proxy for all the other personal and societal conditions that can cause certain groups to have more disparity in health status than others.

The African-American Health Committee focuses on four areas in this report:

1. Successful Community Projects
 - a. Infant Mortality
 - b. Cardiovascular and Lung Disease
 - c. Tobacco Prevention
 - d. Community Partners
2. Health Challenges
 - a. Domestic Violence
 - b. Diabetes
 - c. Alzheimer's
 - d. HIV/AIDS Responsible Sexual Behavior
3. Health Disparities Research Activities
4. Recommendations

This report highlights data along with the empirical information that supports future programs, projects, and initiatives that have

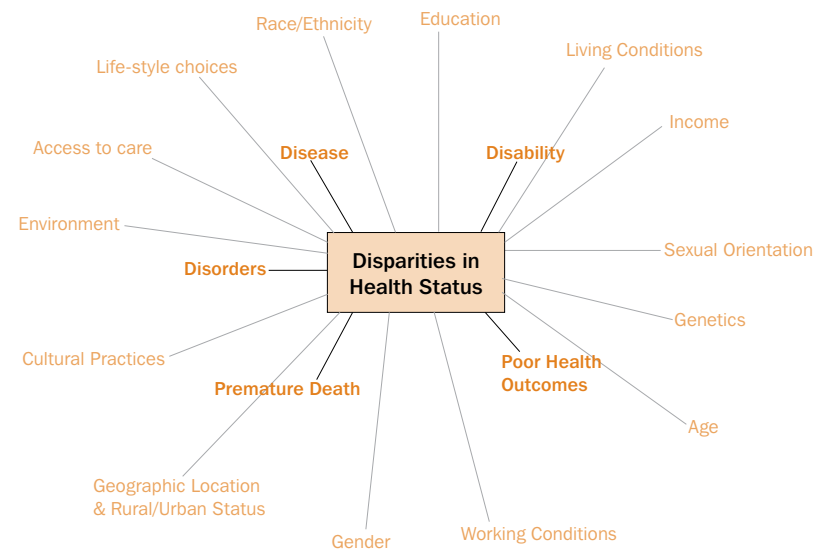
the strongest likelihood of incorporating use of best practice either in terms of approaches used, such as social marketing, or effectiveness in implementation and results based on established methodology such as needs assessments, data collection and analysis, and replication of models using strengths of culture and community to reach their target populations.

Successful Projects Targeting African-Americans

Infant Mortality

The Phoenix Birthing Project, Inc. is an example of a nonprofit organization that exists to address a key health disparity for the African-American community. It is the only African-American maternal and child health agency in the state of Arizona, and was created in 1991 to specifically tackle the disparity in infant mortality among African-Americans. The model that the Phoenix Birthing Project (PBP) has used is derived from the "extended family model" where community members participate as extended family to support pregnant teens and women through their pregnancy and up until the baby's first birthday. It is AALHC's belief that this model be considered when implementing projects in the

Disparities in Health Status: Personal and Societal Influences



African-American Community.

Using the results of the Perinatal Periods of Risk (PPOR) analysis conducted by Maricopa County Public Health Department (MCDPH) in the communities of Maryvale (West Central Phoenix) and South Mountain (South Phoenix), the Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition launched the "It's A Baby's Life" campaign in Maryvale to address disparities in infant mortality through outreach, education, and service coordination. This project has gained 501(c)3 status, and operates under the directorship of Arizona State Representative Martha

Garcia. Also utilizing PPOR principles, The South Phoenix Healthy Start is the only federal Healthy Start Project in Arizona. It uses a combination of community health workers, case management, outreach, and the linkages within their Healthy Start Consortium to provide the federal Healthy Start Initiative model.

Cardiovascular and Lung Disease

The Cardiovascular and Lung Initiative, a collaborative effort known as "Heart and Soul", between Tanner Community Development Corporation, the African-

American Faith Partnership, and the Black Nurses Association is an initiative designed to help close the gap in health disparities in heart disease among African-Americans.

The American Heart Association has also launched its “Cultural Health Initiatives” to address heart disease prevention from a cultural perspective, focusing on improving the health of diverse populations by collaborating with individuals, community groups, and health care systems to reduce health disparities. The CHI committee represents a variety of corporate, governmental, healthcare, and community organizations. Two programs of CHI specifically target the African-American and the Hispanic/Latino populations.

The CHI's include Search Your Heart, a comprehensive heart disease and stroke prevention program, and Check for Life: Barber/Beauty Shop Blood Pressure Screening Program. CHI also collaborated with its partners to offer healthcare professional education on topics such as cultural competency, disparities, healthcare literacy, language barriers, and other issues specific to minority communities. Most of these programs have been in collaboration with Cardiologist and community supporter/ educator Paul L. Underwood, MD, FACC.

Tobacco Prevention

One significant effort to de-normalize tobacco use among African-Americans is the social marketing campaign called “Ashes To Ashes.” This is a collaborative partnership between the Tanner Community Development Corporation, the Arizona Department of Health Services, and Southwest Dimensions, Inc., This innovative partnership is designed to confront the negative impact tobacco has on African-Americans, their health status, and implications for increased risks for conditions such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), asthma and ear infections among children. These health conditions are compromised because of being exposed to secondhand smoke. Ashes To Ashes uses bold reality to encourage change. Blending government, faith-based and grassroots organizations efforts, Ashes To Ashes provides community-level awareness, education, and cessation services in approximately nine communities across Arizona.

Community linked health partners

There are important efforts going on throughout Arizona to address health disparities in the African-American community which are reaching out to African-Americans

in other parts of the state as well. Leading examples of several non-profit organizations working on reaching African-Americans include Tucson's Coalition For African-American Health And Wellness, and Phoenix's Tanner Community Development Corporation, the Black Nurses Association, the Alliance for Innovations in Health Care (MCDPH), Ebony House, Sistas of AZ, and State wide fraternities and sororities such as Delta Sigma Theta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and Zi Beta Kappa., and in Sierra Vista, the Greater Huachuca Area Branch NAACP, in Colorado, The Center for African-American Health.

Each group listed is dedicated to addressing various health issues, as they pertain specifically to African-Americans.

Health Challenges Domestic Violence/ Violence Prevention

National Cost of Domestic Violence

- The health-related costs of rape, physical assault, stalking, and homicide by intimate partners exceed \$5.8 Billion each year.
- Of this total, nearly \$4.1 billion is for victims requiring direct medical and mental health care services.

- Lost productivity and earnings due to intimate partner violence accounts for almost \$1.8 billion each year.
- Intimate partner violence victims lose nearly 8.0 million days of paid work each year-the equivalent of more than 32,000 full time jobs and nearly 5.6 million days of household productivity.

Fact Sheet on Intimate Partner Violence in the African-American Community:

Statistics

- In a nationally representative survey, 29% of African-American women and 12% of African-American men report at least one instance of violence from an intimate partner.
- African-Americans account for 1/3 of the intimate partner homicides in this country and have an intimate partner homicide rate four time that of whites.
- Black women comprise 8% of the U.S. population but account for 20% of the intimate partner homicide victims.

According to Arizona's Department of Health Services and the Department of Economic Security the first quarter of 2006/2007

shows 16.9% of those persons seeking domestic violence shelters and services were African-American. Anecdotal information suggests that services provided to women of color lack the culturally appropriate environments necessary to make them feel safe. These barriers may cause the victim to return to her/his abuser. Therefore it is important that culturally specific staff, services and training are part of every shelter's mission.

A number of Arizona organizations focus on domestic violence: Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), Governor's Commission, SACT, Pinal County, and Pima Prevention. Mainstream organizations have not yet identified that issues with cultural barriers exist. According to the Women of Color committee, the state plan must include recommendations for addressing violence in Black communities.

Dynamics of Abuse

Women do better in abusive relationships when they have the support of friends and family. Battered black women who reported they could rely on others for emotional and practical support were less likely to be re-abused, showed less psychological distress, and were less likely to attempt suicide.

Domestic Violence Risk Factors

The poorer and less educated African-American women are, the more severe the abuse they suffer.

Alcohol problems (drinking, binge drinking, and dependency) are more frequently related to intimate partner violence for African-Americans than for whites or Hispanics.

Among African-American women killed by their partner, the lethal violence was more likely to occur if there had been incidents in which the partner had used or threatened to use a weapon on her and/or the partner has tried to choke or strangle her.

Among African-American women killed by their partner, almost half were killed while in the process of leaving the relationship, highlighting the need to take extra precautions at this time.

Among African-American women who killed their partner, almost 80% had a history of abuse.

Culturally competent Domestic Violence Services

The establishment and provision of culturally competent domestic violence services is a critical component to addressing domestic violence among African-American (Bent-Goodley, 2001; Williams, 1998, 1994). Culturally competent service providers and inter-

ventions are needed across levels of intervention: individual, family, community, and societal domestic violence services.

In addition to enhancing the competency of domestic violence service providers and extending the availability of such interventions, there should be a more deliberate commitment to evaluate and document the effectiveness of domestic violence services that target African-American. Furthermore, funding of domestic violence programs should be linked to the provision of culturally competent services and the cultural competency training of staff. Finally local and state funding should be earmarked for the creation and maintenance of community-based, culturally competent domestic violence programs.

DIABETES

Diabetes in the African-American Population in Arizona, 2000–2005

Diabetes Type II (formerly adult onset diabetes, also known as Non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus or NIDDM) is among numerous preventable chronic illnesses that disproportionately affects African-Americans both nationally and within Arizona.

African-Americans continue to have the second highest death rate (mortality) from diabetes (the underlying cause of death) in Arizona; the first group remains Native Americans. Numerous co-morbid conditions and diseases are associated with Diabetes Type II, specifically: heart attacks, strokes, blindness, and kidney failure and gum disease.

Some of the early warning signs are:

- Unusual fatigue
- Frequent urination
- Occasional blurry vision
- Cuts or sores that won't heal
- Extreme/frequent thirst or hunger
- Numb or tingling hands or feet
- Unexplained weight loss

African-Americans represented approximately 3.1% of Arizona's population in 2005 equating to 187,507 persons. This number is not exact but an estimate based on population projects calculated by Arizona Vital Statistics and based on Arizona Department of Economic Security population estimates.

Mortality

The average mortality rate with an underlying cause of death reported as diabetes, for all groups in Arizona in 2005 was 20.1 per 100,000 persons.

- The rate of death per 100,000 African-American persons in Arizona increased from 46 to 55 from 2000 to 2005, respectively.
- This represents a 20 percent increase in five years, the highest increase of any race/ethnic group in Arizona.

Hospitalizations

- In 2005, 23 out of every on 1,000 African-Americans in the state were hospitalized with a primary or secondary diagnosis code for Diabetes Type II.
- In 2005, 26,267 African-American inpatients were discharged from Arizona hospitals, 4,336 had a principle and/or secondary diagnosis of Type II diabetes, and this represents 16.5 percent of all African-American inpatients or 165 per 1000 African-American inpatients.
- In 2006, 28,510 African-American inpatients were discharged from Arizona hospitals, 4,547 with a principle or secondary diagnosis of Type II diabetes, representing 16 percent of all African-American inpatients or 159 per 1000 African-American inpatients.

(More information and reports about Diabetes in Arizona can be found at the Diabetes Program website http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oncdps/diabetes/annual_report.htm).

This seems to correlate with national trends.

In the year 2005, the age-adjusted prevalence of diabetes was 17.9 percent among American Indians and Alaska Natives, 14.8 percent among non-Hispanic blacks, 13.7 percent among Hispanic/Latino Americans, and 8 percent among non-Hispanic whites.

Alzheimer’s Disease

African-Americans, according to the 2000 Census represent 13% of the U.S. population. And yet Alzheimer’s Disease disproportionately affects African-Americans at higher rates. It is estimated that African-Americans are afflicted with Alzheimer’s 100% more than whites. Part of the reason for this mis-representation is African-Americans tend to mistrust the healthcare system and its providers. This results in delayed diagnosis and therefore findings of more severe symptoms. In addition, African-Americans tend to be diagnosed at a later stage of the disease thereby limiting the effectiveness of treatment that

depend on early intervention. When medical care is received, it is often of inferior quality Listed below are specific factors that are believed to increase the possibilities of acquiring Alzheimer’s.

Risk Factors

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol Levels
- Kidney Disease
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Vascular Dementia
- Heart Disease
- Environment
- Education
- Poverty
- Gender

AIDS and the African-American Community

In 1982, African-Americans comprised 29% of those dying from HIV/AIDS, then know as Gay-Related Immune Disorder (GRID). Now, 25 years later, this disease has spread into all communities, but it is increasing most rapidly amongst African-Americans. Arizona’s Black population faces disparities in many areas that include economy, education, and the justice system.

Race/Ethnicity Disparities:

Rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence and emergence differ sharply between African-Americans and other race/ethnicity groups.

African-Americans are the only race/ethnicity group in Arizona that experiences such a severe disparity of HIV impact. Currently the emergent HIV/AIDS rate among African-Americans in Arizona is more than 4 times that of White Non-Hispanics. This disparity is presented in the table on the following page.

Social determinants

The reasons for the over representation of HIV in Black communities nationally and locally is still under much discussion, but certain indicators being strongly researched, discussed for national and local strategic planning include:

1. Denial
2. Stigma
3. Poverty
4. Lack of education regarding the virus
5. Overrepresentation of Blacks in the Prison Systems
6. Violence
7. Lack of access to care
8. Distrust of health and governmental systems
9. Systemic Racism
10. Historical underpinnings

Health Disparities Research Activities in Arizona

From October 20–November 2, 2004, an organization called

Research America conducted a public opinion survey to obtain Arizona residents' opinion on public health research. One of the survey questions asked "How important do you feel it is to conduct medical or health research to understand and eliminate differences in health among people with lower incomes and among minorities?" Nearly all Arizona residents (94%) believe that it is very or somewhat important to conduct this kind of research. There are several places in Arizona that are currently focusing on health disparities research activities.

Most efforts at the federal, state, and local levels to eliminate health disparities have focused on changing the health behaviors of individuals, communities, and the health care systems that serve them. However, those disparities that may be related to genetics have largely been ignored, until now. One of the most exciting opportunities to be on the front lines of advanced technologies that could work to eliminate certain disparities in disease for everyone is at the Translational Genomic Research Institute (TGen), located in Phoenix, Arizona.

Created in 2002, TGen is a non-profit biomedical research institute whose mission is to make and translate genomic discoveries

into advances in human health. Its priority is to discover the differences and changes within the genome that translates into disease then move the research findings quickly into the clinical setting so that patients can immediately benefit. The Institute is initially working to find ways to treat melanoma, prostate cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease.

The significance of having TGen in Arizona cannot be understated, particularly as it relates to its potential role in eliminating disparities in disease treatments for racial/ethnic populations. The head of TGen's Genetic Basis of Human Disease Division is John Carpten, Ph.D. Carpten's research team helped spearhead the development of the African-American Hereditary Prostate Cancer Study Network.

The consequences of this research are enormous for the nation's health, and for making a difference in eliminating disease disparities for all populations.

www.tgen.org

Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC)

Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) at <http://sirc.asu.edu> at Arizona State University was established in 2002 through

a NIH/NIDA infrastructure grant. In 2004, SIRC became a Research Center funded by the Arizona Board of Regents. SIRC is culturally grounded with an emphasis on health disparities research encompassing substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, and mental health. The mission of SIRC is to carry out interdisciplinary research in health disparities with populations of the Southwest and conduct research on the way that drug use, HIV/AIDS, and mental health are connected to ethnic, gender, developmental, geographic, acculturation and other social identity variables.

SIRC is analyzing several aspects of health disparities in the African-American community. For example, Through a National Institute of Health (NIH) grant proposal, SIRC proposes the establishment of a National Minority Health Disparities Research Center of Excellence to advance knowledge about health disparities among the racial and ethnic minorities of the Southwest.

The center will expand and enhance the existing biomedical, behavioral, clinical, social, and community-based participatory action research on health disparities conducted by the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) at Arizona State University.

The overall center and its research projects/pilots and core areas aim at reducing, eliminating and preventing health disparities within the following Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) special emphasis areas: HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. Current research "under review" conducted in the African-American community includes *CHOICES* and *The Black Church: Communicating Healthy Living in the African-American Community*. Author: Dr. Olga I. Davis, (SIRC). This article explores the role of the Black church as a change agent for the African-American community, raising consciousness regarding cardiovascular disease, stroke, heart attack, and diabetes. *Barbershop Cuisine: A Critical Performance of Care as Health Intervention in the Black Barbershop*. Author: Dr. Olga I. Davis, (SIRC). This article explores the role of the Black barbershop in the African-American community. Specifically, barbers are redefining their role in African-American communities by crafting the barbershop as a critical space for performing health care intervention among Black men.

Summary and Recommendations

This report provides a sample of programs, projects, and initiatives in Arizona that are designed to address health disparities affecting the African-American community. There are many more programs that were not listed, mostly due to incomplete information. The Arizona Public Health Association and the African-American Health Committee continues to see a role for its members in leading the effort to engage the public and policy makers in finding solutions to closing the gap in health status so that all Arizonans enjoy the same quality of life.

It is encouraging to know that efforts such as those described in this report are occurring. It shows there is a movement to make a difference. Awareness is key.

Each area covered in this all too brief document makes recommendations regarding policy, community mobilization, capacity building and programming. Please take the time to read these recommendations as you begin consider the best solutions for communities of color. There are many more health related issues facing African-Americans, but we hope this document starts the ball rolling towards creative thinking and effective activities regarding African-

Americans and issues impacting the quality of life they face.

Infant Mortality, Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, and, HIV prevalence in the Black Community only reflects the greater disparities African-American face. The Centers for Disease Control, the National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors and others agree that focus on the following areas must take place before the African-American community will see positive outcomes:

1. Activities that address social structural changes, such as:
 - a. Federal Cultural Competency recommendations/expectations are monitored by ADHS for compliance on a regular basis
 - b. Mandatory HIV/STD/hepatitis C testing within prison/jail systems
 - c. Increased HIV/STD/hepatitis C testing for people of color in clinical and non-clinical settings
 - d. Standardized sexual health education practices in all educational venues affecting adults, children and youth of color
2. Community Mobilization
 - a. Support of, or develop-

ment and implementation of coalitions/agencies that address alzheimer's, domestic violence, infant mortality, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, sexual health and other health needs of African-American community

- b. Increased participation of African-American-owned and operated non-traditional organizations, businesses and social entities to participate in educational mobilization outreach programs, and health improvement/maintenance programs
3. Capacity Building
 - a. Standardized domestic violence, diabetes, caregiving, maternal child health, sexual health, and other vital areas of education and outreach in venues affecting African-Americans
 - b. Regularly scheduled awareness and education activities statewide in the Black communities
 - c. Increased number of agencies/organizations

willing and able to offer technical assistance, communication services, to include cultural competency training, caregiving, and prevention and treatment services/support

4. Increased Public Health and Legislative attention, support, intervention and monitoring.
 - a. Increase in national and local research projects centered on African-Americans, risky behavior, social indicators, stigma, culture, etc.
 - b. The development of any Black-centered research projects targeting African-American residents of Arizona
 - c. Support for standardized testing for people of color in clinical & non-clinical settings

It is the plan of the AALHC to create, develop and implement a series of traveling (mobile) health-related Town Halls. These town halls will travel throughout Arizona's communities & secure specific information about African-Americans. Community citizens will then collectively create suggestions and recommendations on how together they can improve their own statistics & health status. While epidemiologist will

work with committee members to create a sensible tool to work towards that end.

Policy Recommendations

- Mandatory HIV/STD/hepatitis C testing within prison/ jail systems;
- Mandatory standardized sexual health education in all educational venues affecting children and youth of color;
- Mandatory testing of pregnant women for possible diseases immediately prior to delivery;
- Development of a comprehensive perinatal and infant mortality review process. ■

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Program Contact Information

Arizona Association of Community Health Centers
320 E. McDowell Road
Phoenix, AZ 85004
Joseph S. Coatsworth, CEO
(602) 253-0090

Black Nurses Association,
Greater Phoenix Area
P.O. Box 20425
Phoenix, AZ 85036
(602) 306-5283

Center for African-American Health
3601 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Denver, CO 80205
(303) 355-3423

Coalition For African-American Health And Wellness
P.O. Box 85424
Tucson AZ 85754
Attn: Mary
(520) 882-2051

Cultural Health Initiatives
American Heart Association
Pacific/Mountain Affiliate
2929 S. 48th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85282
(602) 414-5344

Ebony House
39 East Jackson
Phoenix, AZ 85004
William Freeman,
Executive Director
(602) 254-6180

It's A Baby's Life
PO Box 46197
Phoenix AZ 85063
Martha Garcia,
Executive Director

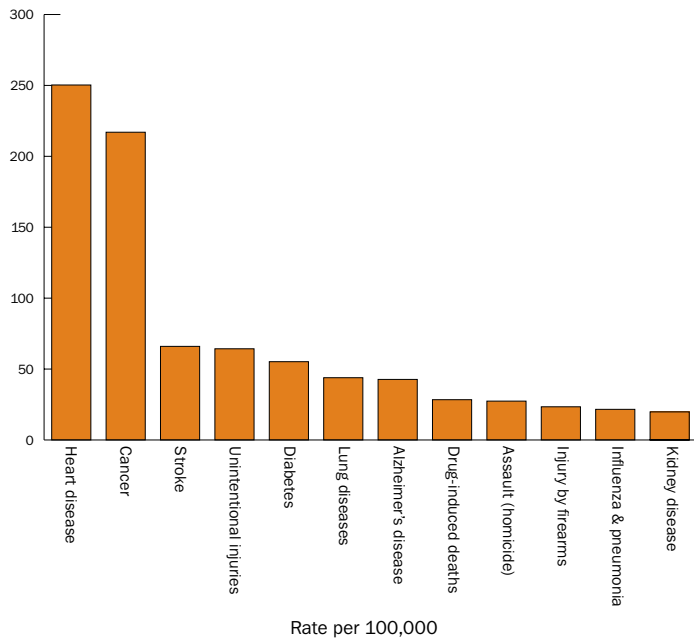
Phoenix Birthing Project, Inc.
301 W. Roosevelt Street
Phoenix, AZ 85003
Barbara Freeman-Maney,
Executive Director
(602) 258-6990

Southwest Center for Community Health Promotion
Mel and Enid Zukerman Arizona College of Public Health
1145 N. Campbell
P.O. Box 210228
Tucson, AZ 85721-0228
(520) 318-7270

Tanner Community Development Corporation
700 E. Jefferson St., Suite 300
Phoenix, AZ 85034
Rev. Arnold Jackson,
Executive Director and CEO
(602) 253-6904

Translational Genomics Research Institute
445 N. Fifth Street
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(602) 343-8400

Figure 2.3: Leading causes of death for African-Americans — Arizona



Source: Arizona Dept. of Health

Figure 2.5: Arizona top 5 diseases causing death in 2005

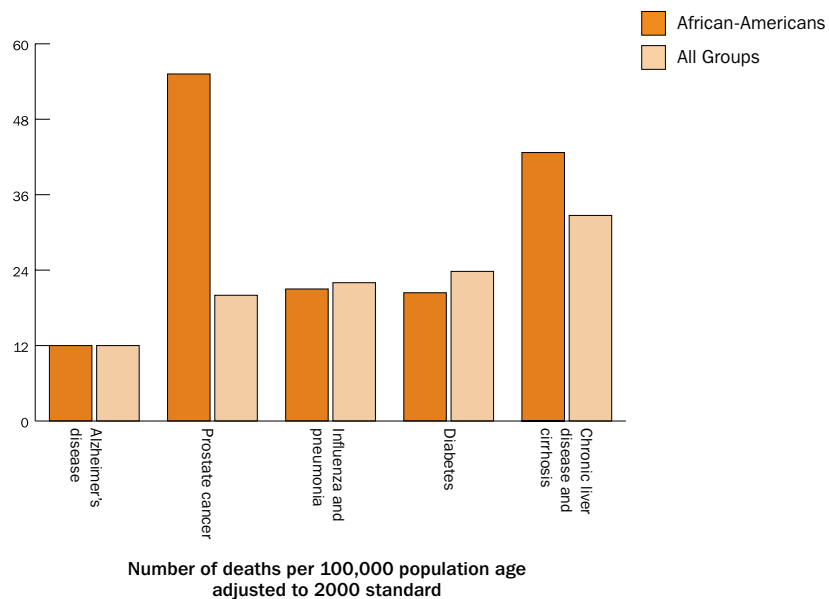
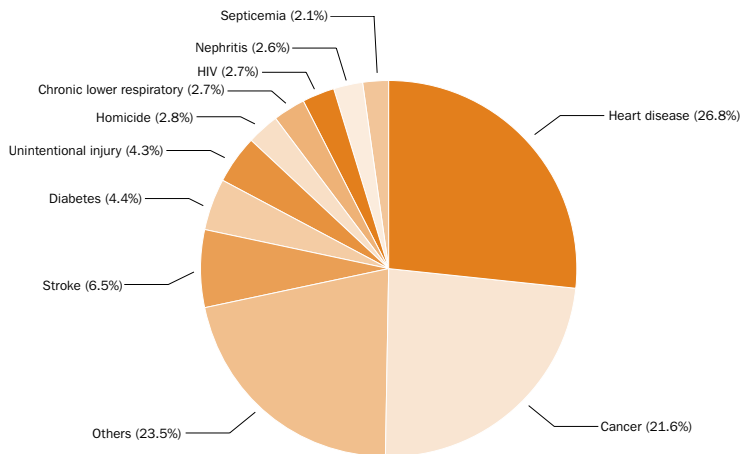


Fig 2.5 gives a comparison of the deaths caused due to diseases among African-Americans and all the other groups. An alarming difference can be observed in the case of diabetes with Alzheimer's disease also causing a lot more death among African-Americans.
Source: Arizona Dept. of Health

Figure 2.4: Ten leading causes of death among African-Americans



Source: Office of Minority Health

Figure 2.6: Pregnancies among African-American females in Arizona, 19 or younger

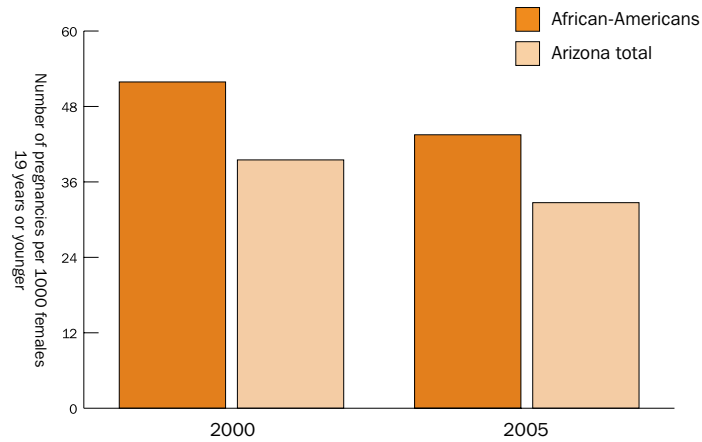
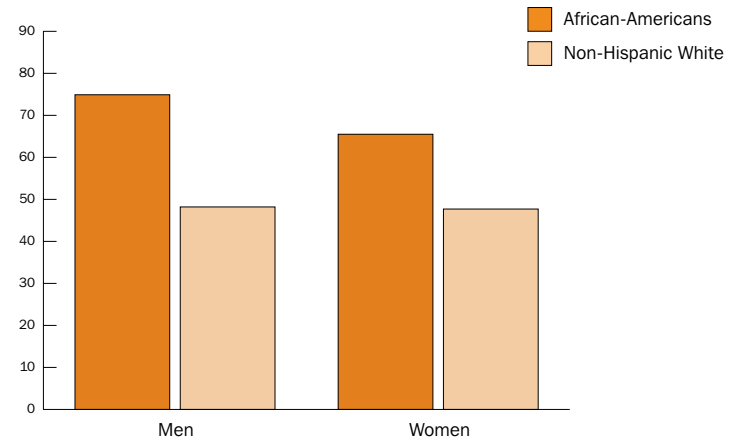


Figure 2.6 provides information on pregnancies among women under 19 years. The number of pregnancies among every 1000 women has reduced by almost 10 in a period of 5 years among African-Americans in Arizona.

Source: Arizona Dept. of Health

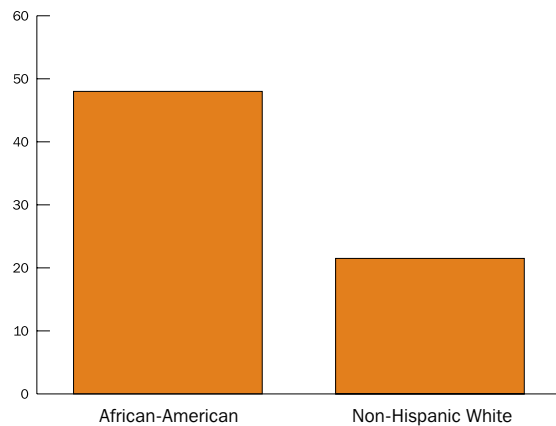
Figure 2.7: Age adjusted stroke death rates in 2004



African-American adults are 50% more likely to have a stroke than their White adult counterparts. Further, men are 60% more likely to die from a stroke than their White adult counterparts.

Source: Office of Minority Health

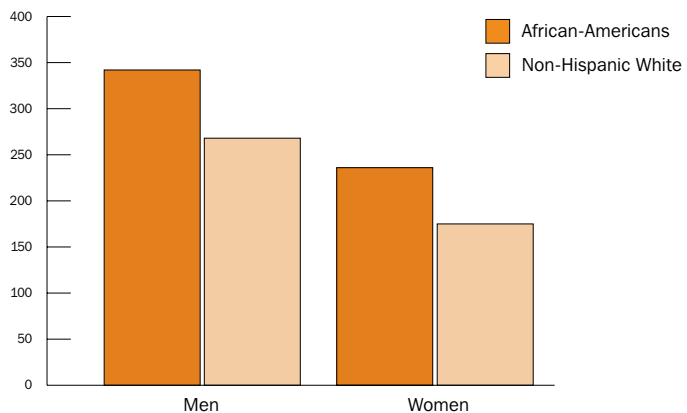
Figure 2.8: Age adjusted diabetes death rates in 2004



African-Americans are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with diabetes as non-Hispanic whites. In addition, they are more likely to suffer complications from diabetes, such as end-stage renal disease and lower extremity amputations. Although African-Americans have the same or lower rate of high cholesterol as their non-Hispanic white counterparts, they are more likely to have high blood pressure. In 2004, African-Americans were 2.2 times as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to die from diabetes.

Source: Office of Minority Health

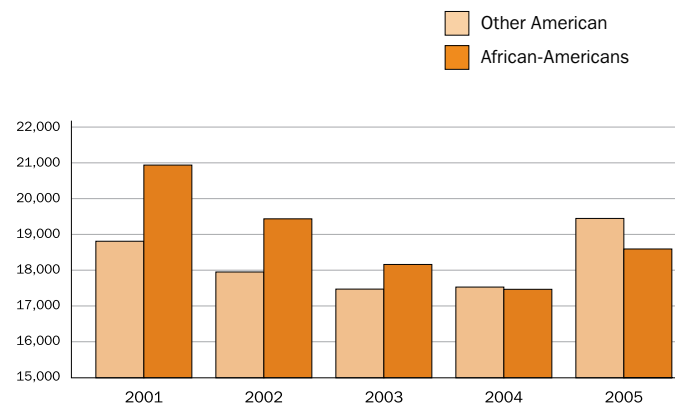
Figure 2.9: Age adjusted heart disease death rates in 2004



African-American adults are less likely to be diagnosed with coronary heart disease, however they are more likely to die from heart disease. Although African-American adults are 50% more likely to have high blood pressure, they are 10% less likely than their non-Hispanic White counterparts to have their blood pressure under control. In 2004, African-American men were 30% more likely to die from heart disease, as compared to non-Hispanic white men.

Source: Office of Minority Health

Figure 2.10: Estimated number of cases of HIV/AIDS by race/ethnicity



Although African-Americans are only 13% of the U.S. population, they account for 47% of HIV/AIDS cases in 2005. African-American males had almost 8 times the AIDS rate as non-Hispanic white males. African-American females had over 23 times the AIDS rate as non-Hispanic white females. African-American men were over 9 times as likely to die from HIV/AIDS as non-Hispanic white men. African-American women were over 21 times as likely to die from HIV/AIDS as non-Hispanic white women.

Source: Office of Minority Health

The Caribbean Community in Arizona: A Preliminary Profile

By David Hinds

This short essay is a preliminary assessment of the Caribbean Community in Arizona. There are a few points that should be noted. First, data on this community is almost non-existent. To the extent that I present any data, it should not be consider as reliable as it is based on projections from an incomplete database compiled from attendees of two Caribbean Cultural festivals held in Phoenix in 2003 and 2004. Second, I consider only those Caribbean immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean and Haiti. Third, I only consider the community in the Phoenix area; there is a much smaller community in Tucson.

Fourth, although I interviewed 20 people for this paper, that sample did not represent a very wide cross-section of the Caribbean community, nor was it large enough of a sample. Given the above, one may conclude that the assessment is an approximation, but my judgment is that while it is not an entirely accurate assessment of the Caribbean community it is a fair representation.

Before I start the assessment proper, I want to make the following observation: Caribbean communities regardless of their size are almost entirely located in cities peopled by African-Americans. This is a crucial phenomenon as it highlights not only to the racial boundaries in the USA but the

transformation of the Black communities into African Diaspora centers. In many cases in addition to Caribbean immigrants and African-Americans, the Black communities include immigrants from Africa and other parts of the African Diaspora. Based on my observation Phoenix is a truly representative center of the African Diaspora.

One uncontested finding regarding migration patterns is that people tend to migrate to places where others of the same nationality or ethnic group already reside. This is why Arizona is not a natural destination for immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean. Most Caribbean migrants generally head for East Coast cities such as

the Miami, Washington, DC, and New York metro areas or for California. These and other East Coast locations have had large Caribbean communities for decades; in the case of New York, the Caribbean community is an integral part of the socio-cultural texture of the city. There has been a second wave of migration among Caribbean immigrants. Many have moved from the “high populated” communities referred to above to other locations such as Boston, Hartford, Cleveland, Chicago and most recently, Atlanta. Thus making these cities home to what I call, “medium populated” Caribbean communities. However, some immigrants have moved to communities where there is a much smaller or negligible Caribbean presence. That latter pattern unlike the moves to the high and medium populated communities is driven almost solely by employment considerations.

The Caribbean Community in Arizona falls into the latter category. Most of the estimated 2000–3000 Caribbeans in the state have migrated mainly from East Coast cities. Although there is not any reliable data, a perusal of a database compiled between 2003 and 2005 shows that approximately 85 percent migrated from New York. The community,

concentrated in the Phoenix area, consists of mostly of immigrants from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, St. Vincent, Haiti, the US Virgin Islands, Grenada and Barbados. While there is not majority group, there seems to be more Trinidadians and Jamaicans. Most people migrated to the state for the most part through job transfers or in because of job opportunities and to join family members. Some have subsequently encouraged other family members and friends to move to the area. As a result, most of the community consists of skilled workers employed in the high tech, medical, service and educational sectors as nurses, engineers, technicians, teachers and hotel workers. Although there is no data in this regard, it is estimated that the average income in the community is over \$50,000.

As is the ease with Caribbean communities in other parts of the country, the Caribbean presence is manifested through its culture. Since 2003 there has been three Caribbean Cultural Festivals that have showcased Caribbean music, dance, spoken word and food. These festivals attracted an average of approximately two thousand Caribbean nationals and other residents of the area. In addition to these festivals an

average of six reggae singers and groups, mainly from Jamaica, make appearances in the Phoenix area each year. Caribbean music is also played at two area nightclubs and on one radio station. In the area of businesses, there are four Caribbean-owned restaurants that feature mainly Caribbean food and two grocery stores that carry Caribbean products.

There is also a Caribbean presence that the area universities. Approximately twenty five Caribbean students attend ASU and another forty attend the Maricopa Colleges some of there students are very active in the Black students organizations on the various campuses.

As can be gleaned from the account above, the Caribbean community in Arizona is not well-organized. While there have been attempts at creating organizations, these have been short-lived mainly due to infighting among the organizers. The most notable of these organizations has been the Caribbean Association of Arizona (CAAZ) which functioned from 2003–2005 and organized the three Cultural Festivals mentioned above. This lack of organizations is unusual, since there is usually a plethora of organizations in Caribbean communities given the fact that nationals tend to form

their separate national associations in addition to the Caribbean wide organizations. Arizona is also unique is that it is one of the very few areas where Caribbean nationals reside in significant numbers that does not have a carnival. The reason for the above seems to be that residents are spread far and wide across the area and generally do not know of or come into regular contact with other nationals. Everyone I interviewed stressed the need for a truly Caribbean organization and Community Center.

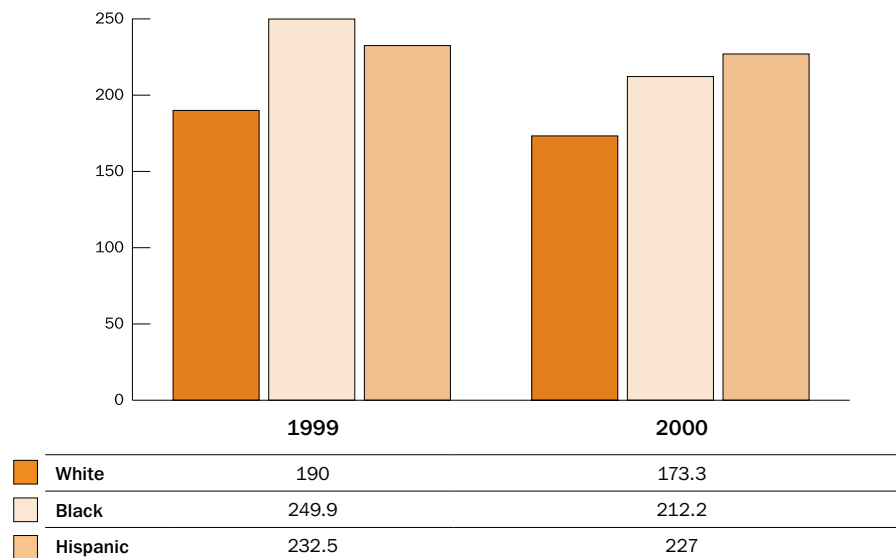
Among those I interviewed, 75 percent voted at the last presidential election, but only one voted in local and congressional elections. All of them voted for the Democratic candidate and plan to do so at the next election regardless of the candidate. As regard the primaries, Barak Obama, gets the support of 90 percent of those intended to vote and Hilary Clinton the remaining 10 percent. As regards the war in Iraq, everyone (100 percent) felt that the troops should come home and 90% felt it was an ill-conceived project. Among the issues that concern the respondents, immigration tops the list followed by Health Care, Education and poverty respectively. These responses are consistent with the political attitudes of the African-American community, even if they are slightly less diverse.

All of the respondents still pay attention to politics in their home-country and read Caribbean newspapers on the internet at least three times per week. In addition all but one respondent (95%) send money back to Caribbean at least once every six weeks. Among those with children, 95% said that they raise their children the “Caribbean way” by encouraging them, among other things, to listen to Caribbean music and eat Caribbean food.

Most of the respondents (85%) reveal a feeling of “not being sufficiently integrated” into the larger Arizona community. Many still make regular trips to New York to shop and socialize. Respondents also cite the lack of a “meeting place” outside of the nightclubs and the social events as impediments to organization and more visibility. While there seems to have been some contact with the African and African-American communities, both at the individual, family and organizational levels, this is the exception rather than the rule.

Despite the lack of organization, the Caribbean community in the Phoenix area, from all appearances, is here to stay. While some people have moved back to the East Coast the overwhelming majority seems to have made

the area there permanent home. Almost all the respondents have cited the “rural feel” of the state and the relatively low cost of living as the major reasons for staying. The growth of the community is steady rather than fast compared with other cities, but it adds to the reputation of the area as one of the truly authentic representation of the African Diaspora. ■

Figure 5.2: Victims of Property Crime (per 1000 households)—1999 and 2000

In 2000, property crime victimization rates were higher for Hispanics (227 per 1,000) and African-Americans (212.2 per 1,000 households) than for whites (173.3 per 1,000). Households maintained by other non-whites were victims of an estimated 171.3 property crimes per 1,000 households. African-Americans experienced significantly higher rates of burglary and motor vehicle theft in 2001 (42.8 and 16.1 per 1,000 persons, respectively) than whites (26.6 and 8.2).

Source : Joint Center Data Bank Briefs.

Crafting a New Village

by Pamela Williams

It has been more than 50 years since the landmark U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. For many African-Americans, the twin goals first set out by *Brown*—of racial integration and a better education for all—are little more than a diminished dream. “With all deliberate speed” is the phrase that symbolizes the frustration with the progress of equal opportunity, particularly in education.

While our nation was changed forever because of *Brown*, we have not changed fast enough to provide a better education for all of our children.

It is unfortunate that the structural inequities that color our public education system still exist in 2008 and that African-Americans have yet to overcome the “tyranny of low expectations” and negative racial and ethnic stereotypes. As I write this perspective regarding the State of Black Arizona, I consider the multitude of African-American, female, single parents who have experienced the formidable difficulty of navigating the public education system.

Shortly after I moved to Arizona in November 1983, I enrolled my

two children in the public school system with the confidence that they would achieve academic success along with my support. I soon came to realize that I was ill-prepared to deal with the educational assumptions of educators’ low expectations and indifference that my children faced. Long before attention deficit disorder became a household word, it was suggested that my daughter be placed on Ritalin. I was shocked at the recommendation of putting a five-year old child on drugs for educational purposes. After enrolling my children in a different school, I never had to deal with that issue again. By changing schools, I only traded one issue for another more challenging one.

One evening after school, my daughter put a towel on her head and was singing to herself in the mirror about her long, pretty, blonde hair. When I asked her about the song, she told me that she just wanted her teacher to like her as much as the girls she was imitating in the mirror. I was deeply disturbed by that situation. None of my childhood experiences had prepared me to deal with this type of injustice at this stage of my child's life. I grew up during the 1960s down South in a segregated community. The mantra in our community was that "it takes a village to raise a child." The village included a myriad of extended family, friends, neighbors, and church members. I went to an all-black school where the teachers genuinely cared about you as a person and instilled a strong sense of cultural pride, self-awareness and confidence in all students.

Fast forward to the 1980s, where my children grew up in an integrated community in the wild, wild West. This splintered village consisted of a limited number of extended family, friends and church members who were scattered between Phoenix and Tucson. My frustrations forced me to quickly learn how to work outside the system to produce outcomes for my children in spite of what the schools were doing. I was determined that my children would be proud of their heritage and excel in school at the same time. I worked

hard to make sure that they were exposed to a variety of people, opportunities and venues that comprised the African-American experience. While I can proudly say that both of my children graduated from high school with their self-awareness intact, I am modestly concerned about their abilities to turn obstacles into opportunities and find their place in society as productive African-American citizens.

As a parent, I am concerned that in some ways desegregation has been detrimental to the psyche of many African-American children, mine included. I am concerned that there are currently more African-Americans going from high school to prison than to college. I am concerned that academic failure, incarceration and unemployment are outcomes of the public schooling for African-American boys. I am concerned that countless studies indicate that the children of poverty have a decreased capacity for learning and contend that there are inherited, genetic differences among individuals, and that these are strongly correlated to race.

A recent study by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center ranks Arizona 49th in preparing students for economic success and 43rd nationally for elementary and secondary school performance. As a grandparent of five (four boys and one girl), I am greatly concerned that another generation of African-American

children will suffer even greater disparity in academic achievement unless alternative options are considered for closing the gap between African-American and white students. It is my recommendation that the disparities of African-American students receive the same attention as those of other disenfranchised groups towards closing the achievement gap.

It is my recommendation that the efforts to improve early childhood education include a model for culturally appropriate pedagogy that combines classroom instruction, cultural enrichment and an instructional accountability infrastructure. It is my recommendation that the powers that be consider Janice Hale's book, *Learning While Black: Creating Educational Excellence for African-American Children*, which includes educational strategies that complement African-American culture and embraces the work of Alfie Kohn in considering ways of developing intrinsic motivation in the learners.

The model that Hale proposes is multifaceted, encompassing teaching strategies, curriculum development, reading, math and science programs, infusion of African-American culture into the curriculum, mentoring, enrichment activities and leadership, among other aspects. According to the Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins, founder of the National Council on Educating Black Children, "Black children are the proxy for what ails

American education in general. And so as we fashion solutions which help Black children we fashion solutions which help all children."

While statistics indicate that Arizona students are not prepared for the global economy, I am optimistic that Governor Napolitano's vision for the future of education in Arizona will make a difference for all students. As the P20 Council initiative begins to take shape, it is encouraging to see multiple communities coming together to collaborate on short- and long-term strategies for addressing Arizona's educational issues. Crafting a new village to incorporate educational, public, private, non-profit, government, philanthropic, economic, business, religious, ethnic and minority communities as a comprehensive educational support system is the type of commitment needed for the global sustainability of all students, particularly African-Americans. ■

Fly in the Bowl of Milk: The Illusion of Inclusion

**By The Honorable Penny L. Willrich (Retired)
Associate Professor, Phoenix School of Law**

When I came to Arizona in 1987 there were approximately 25 African-American attorneys admitted to the State Bar.¹ Today there are an estimated 161 African-American attorneys admitted out of 19, 420. African-American attorneys practicing law in Arizona make up less than one per cent of the entire Bar Association membership. However, one has to look at the membership numbers in perspective to the Black population of Arizona and the African-Americans graduating from college.

In the last United States Census Bureau report, the African-American population was slightly over 180,000 for the entire state.² At least 130,000 African-Americans reside in Maricopa County.³ Despite the low numbers, the same type of social, educational, political, health and economic inequality that exists in the rest of America also exists in Arizona. Black student college graduation is at 43% of those entering college compared to 63% of White students entering college.⁴

Had I been concerned with just how “white” Arizona was in 1987, I may have had second thoughts about moving and raising my daughter here. However, Arizona chose me to be a pioneer just as

much as I chose it to set sail in the practice of law with a goal of making a difference in the lives of others. In the early years of establishing my home in Arizona, I can recall telling my mother on many occasions that the only time that I really saw any number of Black people was when I attended church. Having grown up in Texas and after attending law school in Washington, D.C., I was accustomed to more diverse and multi-cultural environments. It was somewhat of a culture shock to go weeks on end and not see another African-American attorney litigating a case in the Superior Court. Twenty years ago there were no African-American attorneys in 13 of the 15 counties in Arizona. I

recall with much humor a crowded courtroom in Yuma and upon inquiry learned that the crowd had come to see me the “Black attorney from Phoenix.” I quickly learned that I was just a fly in a bowl of milk.

Shortly after I arrived in Arizona, the struggle for approval of a statewide holiday that honored an American icon, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. began. I watched and participated as people of all races and walks of life joined together to tackle the attitudinal disparity that had caused the holiday to be revoked by the Governor’s executive order. Then and today, contemporary discussions on the historical legacy of race relations in this state are generally unwelcome in most setting, non-Black. It almost seems as if White Arizonians want to turn a blind eye because “it’s not like that anymore.” Yet, the reality is that in the political, economic, social, educational, health, and justice systems of Arizona equality is not reflected nor equal opportunity provided. In Arizona, most Black professionals are a part of mainstream systems. Though some are in positions of leadership and power, they are often prevented from using the leadership and power to make these systems face the causes and consequences of the economic, social

and legal disparity that exists for Black Arizonians. Others simple choose not to rock the boat. To adopt a mainstream agenda is in essence turning a blind eye to a Black agenda and to ignore the vast gulf that exist between Blacks and Whites in Arizona.

We live in a country and in a state where Black people are under-represented in political, business, and professional positions yet over-represented among juvenile delinquents, high-school dropouts, teen pregnancies, foster-care, and the criminal justice system. The most recent statistic is that 6 out of every 10 African-American males in this state will have been involved in the juvenile or criminal justice systems either through arrests or conviction of a crime once in their life.⁵ We also know that 4 out of 10 children who grow up in and age out of foster care are African-American.⁶ In 1993, Governor Fife Symington asked me whether children in our foster care system were safe.⁷ Having just lost two Black foster children, who died at the hands of their state sanctioned foster parents, I could offer no assurances to him. In a statewide study to determine the safety of children in foster care, it was discovered that a great disparity existed of services provided to White fami-

lies and families of color. Though the goal is always family reunification, more often than not, Black children were not reunited with their parents nor placed with their extended families. The family Diaspora caused by the system of slavery is no different from the family Diaspora caused by Arizona’s foster care system. The Director of the Department of Economic Security said, after reading the Child Safety Report, “this says that Arizona foster care system discriminates.”⁸ But it is not the system that discriminates; it is the people that operate within the system. It is the people that are making decisions. It is the judges, lawyers, social workers, and others who often are White middle class individuals applying White middle class values to fashion a resolution to an issue that needs cultural competence. In the late 80’s I represented an elderly black man who had been denied a residence in a federally subsidized housing complex because (as the manager wrote on his application) he was “very very black.” Though ultimately the victor, my client was emotionally distraught to know that his skin color could have potentially kept him from having decent and affordable housing.

In 1953, Superior Court Judge Frederick Struckmeyer declared

that “[t]here are no second class citizens in Arizona” when desegregating Arizona’s public schools.⁹ If those words were really true we would not have over 800,000 people living at or below the national poverty level in Arizona.¹⁰ If those words were true, we would have a more representative government. If those words were true, we would have a greater appreciation for a diverse and multi-cultural society. Recognition that all citizens are equal is not just dependent on changes in the law or desegregation of public schools; it is dependent on the attitudes and hearts of the people who must make the system work. Though the laws may change to make equality a legal reality, it does not really occur until there is a self-conscious and individual commitment to understand the need to shift the power of the relationship of race in our society. In the late 1980s a young white attorney came to me in tears when a judge equated domestic violence against an African-American woman and her children as “something that black people are accustomed to,” meaning that it is a natural phenomenon for black people to be whipped.¹¹ Perhaps the phenomenon of the physical whip is gone but the mental and psychological whip of racism is still alive.

I often feel that Black people are invisible in Arizona and that those of us in professional positions are often marginalized. This invisibility gives rise to an illusion of inclusion. It is an illusion that Black people are a part of the power structure, but in reality, it is mere tokenism. Having a seat at the table of power has to mean more than just identifying with the mainstream but taking a stand against an educational system that turns out fewer African-American graduates than prior to the infamous words of Judge Struckmeyer. In the early 1990s the African-American Lawyers Association took a strong position for the removal of a White Superior Court judge who frequently referred to Black defendants as “niggers” in open court.¹² Having a seat at the table of power must mean having the courage to stand up for what is right. African-American attorneys directly and indirectly represent the interests that give young people a choice to end the cycle that racism and poverty often places them in.

There is a huge political vacuum in the African-American community of Arizona. For the last twenty years there have only been two or three African-American legislative officials each session. There have been few executive branch

departmental directors who were African-Americans. There are so many positions of leadership in Arizona that have never been filled by an African-American—Governor, Supreme Court Justice, Attorney General, Corporation Commissioner, Secretary of State, County Court Clerks, Chief Probation Officers, County Attorneys, Public Defenders, University Presidents, United States Attorneys, Federal District Judges, and the list goes on. To fill this vacuum in leadership, the illusion of inclusion must be replaced with a value for the contributions that African-American leaders and citizens make to this great State.

Recently in teaching family law, I was explaining the concept of miscegenation and the ability of the government to exercise control over who could marry whom. Many of the law students expressed dismay that our county and our state leaders could believe that such a law made any logical sense. This discussion led to the discussion of how most laws had to be enacted to provide the rights to Blacks that most Whites took for granted. Many Arizonans, of all races, do not understand the impact of the atrocities that have resulted from the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow racism. Many do not understand why Senator Biden’s

compliment that Senator Barak Obama was “articulate” is not a compliment for a Harvard Law graduate. Many do not understand why Don Imus’ comments that the Rutgers’ women’s basketball team were a “bunch of nappy headed ho’s” is not only not acceptable, totally ignorant, but even more so a demonstration of the rampant attitudes formed against Black people. The symbolism of racism has created a schism of fear. During jury selection in a trial where I was presiding, a potential juror said, “if I see a group of Black or Hispanic kids walking toward me in the mall, I will try to avoid them.” What makes a White juror afraid of Black or Hispanic children? The symbols of racism and the lack of understanding of its consequences permeate to the core. My daughter accompanied me to court on one occasion because she wanted to see me in trial, in getting on the elevator with a Phoenix City Prosecutor; the attorney looked at my daughter and said, “Wow, the defendants are getting younger and younger.” The audacity to even utter those words to my child and in my presence is indicative of the marginalization or the need to malign that is so often a part of the white philosophy of inferiority. Black people are constantly having to fight the negative views that are

overtly spouted and that conjure images of inherent criminality that date back to the 17th century. One of my favorite authors, Joe Feagin states, “[t]he systemic character of contemporary racism constantly reveals itself in ...everyday accounts of life...”¹³

In Arizona, Black history is not considered a major component of public school education and as a result of the lack understanding of the vast contributions that Blacks have made in this country.¹⁴ Instead, the term Black has come to symbolize a threat to the safety of middle class whites. In a restaurant recently, a white waitress who had just moved to Phoenix from California asked whether it would be safe for her to go to LoLo’s Chicken and Waffles, a restaurant in South Phoenix. When I asked her why she asked, she said that she had been told that going to South Phoenix would be like going to Compton, California. I assured her that there was no place in Phoenix or Arizona that could be compared to the blight and neglect of neighborhoods of color or the level of crime in Compton and that it would be perfectly safe for her to eat at LoLo’s.

In 2000 I co-wrote a thesis on the issues of diversity in Gilbert, Arizona after the town’s encounter with the Devil Dog White Supremacist gang. In the research

we found that confronting the racism meant confronting feelings of guilt, embarrassment, anger, and despair.¹⁵ However, the mayor (Cynthia Dunham) and the task-force she appointed took the issue on head on. The end result was the discovery of the affect that racism and racist sentiment can have on a community; the demonstration that a community could pull together to say that it was not acceptable within its borders; and the creation of a human relations commission to assist the town council in meeting the needs of a diverse community.

In order to dismantle the illusion of inclusion one has to be aware of the moral and ethical duty to let go of attitudes that cause one to malign and marginalize others who may not be mainstream. We have to prefer right over wrong and right is not always white. This essay is a call for our leaders of all races to step up to establish concrete goals for inclusion and representation. When I became a lawyer, I took a personal and professional commitment to be a part of the solution and not the problem. Being part of the solution is sometimes a lonely place, where you may find that you are a fly in the bowl of milk, and it also may mean generating enough interest to attract more flies. ■

¹The statistical records maintained by the African-American Bar Association have tracked bar admittance of African-American attorneys.

²United States Census, 2000.

³United States Census, 2000 (Arizona).

⁴Journal of Blacks in Higher Education. (2007). *Black student college graduation rates inch higher but a large racial gap persists.*

⁵1990 Commission on the Arizona Courts Report and Arizona Department of Corrections Statistics 2007.

⁶1993–94 Statewide Case Review of Children in Out of Home Placements in Arizona—Department of Economic Security—“Are Children Safe In Our Care?”

⁷Personal conversation with Governor Fife Symington in 1993 after the death of China Marie Davis Tawanna Davison, who were both African-American children and wards of the Juvenile Court and Department of Economic Security.

⁸Personal conversation with Arizona Department of Economic Security Director Linda Blessing (1994).

⁹*Phillips v. Phoenix Union School District*, Maricopa County Superior Court (1952).

¹⁰Presentation by Lillian O. Johnson, Executive Director of Community Legal Services (Phoenix, Arizona), 2007.

¹¹Personal conversation with Attorney Ruth Swenson of Community Legal Services, 1991.

¹²Personal Archives, Arizona African-American Bar Association.

¹³Feagin, J. (2006). *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. (NY: Routledge).

¹⁴As a parent of a student in the Gilbert Public Schools, I often supplied my daughter’s teachers with information regarding Black achievements in the United States, because what was portrayed in the classroom always seemed to be negative or from a White perspective.

¹⁵Smith, P.M. and Willrich, P.L. (2001). *Diversity Issues in Gilbert, Arizona: Effectiveness of Human Relations Commission for Resolving Human Rights Violations*. (Unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Masters in Human Services—Community Psychology).

Parent Involvement: The Fruits of Your Labor Will Not Be in Vain

African-American Legislative Days Education Committee

Setting the Stage

This primer offers a particular perspective on what's going on in the schools of America and how the future has a peculiar way of repeating itself, particularly in this era of "educational reform."

In 1968, Charles V. Hamilton of Roosevelt University, published an article entitled, "Race and Education: A Search for Legitimacy," which appeared in the *Harvard Educational Review*. In this article, Hamilton grasped the fundamental nature of our problem 40 years later. He showed that Africans/blacks were searching for a liberating, meaningful, quality education, and that they were then as we are now, still questioning the capacity of the schools, all schools ability to deliver such education.

When African-Americans today review a school's current curriculum, they see no cultural benefit for themselves. The benefit which is to be expected is two fold: (1) academic excellence and (2)

a positive self image. It is this second factor which traditional experts failed to address then, as they fail to address now in 2007. In all the so called school reform, quality school initiatives, No Child Left Behind Acts and curriculum and content changes; the one continuous change which is yet to be made is a change to incorporate an accurate and positive reflection of Africans/blacks in all courses of study.

Current Status

Culturally Competent Instructional Delivery: A Primer for Educators (CCID) is an honest, constructive approach toward shifting the paradigm in Arizona public schools towards a multicultural/multiethnic

goal of educational service delivery. It is how to most effectively and competently provide services cross-culturally. It presents ideas of a clear understanding of how a complex variety of social and psychological factors can be shifted to shape the teachers, administrators and the staff's ability to work with students who are culturally different.

Prior to receiving school teacher/administrator certification, we propose CCID training. All new teachers should be required and properly equipped to understand what culturally competent teaching is and how to ensure that those who provide it have the necessary knowledge base. CCID training is the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than their own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, learning specific bodies of cultural knowledge and mastering a set of skills that taken together underlie effective cross-cultural teaching. Our overall objective is to initiate a process of learning, which will ultimately lead you towards greater cultural competence as teachers and administrators.

Initial Philosophy of Programs and Services

The following are general suggestions, which can be used to fill the gaps in educational service delivery to help bring about a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, followed by a brief sample outline of proposed CCID trainings:

1. Students should have opportunities to explore their own culture as well as the cultures of others.
2. Classroom assignments should provide for both individual and cooperative efforts.
3. Classroom experiences as well as extra curricular activities should reinforce the pluralistic society in which we live.
4. Members of minority groups and women should be shown as meaningful participants in all phases of local, state, national, and international life.
5. Satisfactory implementation of culturally competent education will lead to the graduation of students who are aware of all cultural similarities and differences and are capable of:

- Living in harmony with people of different ethnic groups and cultures.
- Working productively along with people from different ethnic groups and cultures.
- Solving local, national and international problems by reviewing and analyzing.

Culturally Competent Instructional Delivery (CCID)

CCID is an educational training technique that increases the teacher's capacity to effectively prepare his/her students to live, learn and work in a pluralistic world by fostering appreciation to and for their contributions to the advancements of modern society, and respect, and tolerance for people of other ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

Implementation of CCID trainings in Arizona public schools for teacher certifications, counselors, administrators, and other Arizona Public schools staff.

Education that is culturally competent is education which provides three critical components:

1. A specific content which provides a balance of culturally competent information about African history,

culture, and accurate historic contributions in five identified areas:

- African and African-American traditions to mathematics
 - African and African-American traditions to language arts
 - African and African-American contributions to science and technology
 - African and African-American traditions to the social sciences
 - African and African-American arts traditions and developments
2. A structured process designed to cultivate understanding, acceptance and constructive relationships among educators of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds; and
 3. A perspective (a philosophy and educational attitude) that guides one in the selection and infusion of information and challenges one to deliver education that is culturally competent or other school-related services in a manner that promotes equality in educational instruction and delivery.

Effective implementation of CCID training will establish for the learners that:

1. Individuals from all cultural groups have made significant contributions to the advancements of global development.
2. People are interdependent and need one another for our human growth and development.

Infusion of CCID training into all state public school curricula areas should:

1. Build an awareness of one's own cultural and ethnic heritage
2. Eliminate personal and national ethnocentrism so that one understands that a specific culture is not intrinsically superior or inferior to another.

Mentorship

A heart felt response is our children need mentors. We took a group of youths from our center to the Diamondbacks game and discovered the majority of the youths didn't understand baseball. They did know what a single, double, or home run. I found this sad as my sons knew this from an early age. As I began explaining the rules the youths became really interested. The next day they were trying to show me how much they knew.

These are the youths who have been suspended or put in alternative schools. Instead of trying to figure out how others can educate our youths, we need to start with ourselves. Have more mentoring programs. One of the main things missing out of our schools is prayer. We sat back as they took prayer out of school. The only time it comes flooding in is when incidents such as at Virginia Tech happen. Are we really concerned? If so it needs to start with us.

The more one learns about another's culture the better you are equipped to deal with their reactions and know the way they learn. Example: when I was a missionary on the Navajo Nation I was irritated because they were never on time. After learning they are task-oriented and not time it became easier to schedule events. This may be a little extreme but if those who are in charge of our youth could take the time to understand their home life, the difference in ethnicity and how to successfully bring about positive changes our youths will have a chance.

The biggest part in teaching is to know the students' learning style. Some would say we can not afford to do this in public school but I believe we can not afford not to do it. If the school system

keeps going at its current rate we will lose a whole generation. Instead of teaching in the middle of the road teach specific.

We need a better definition of zero tolerance. The definition needs to be formed by more than the school district but with the assistance of individuals such as ourselves. At our center all discipline is based on rewards and consequences. We have gone back to basics where the first discipline is writing out a phrase 25, 50, 100 times or taking words from their homework and having them look up the meaning in a dictionary and writing it out 10, 15 times.

If it is a group everyone reads a book and does a book report. This has a two-fold affect. They are being disciplined but are also learning. We are steady rewarding any type of good behavior based on the individual. We have a young lady who had Ds and Fs. Every time she turned one of those grades into something better she was praised. The praise is not always material. It is getting excited jumping up and down. Saying: "I knew you could do it." We should try to give our youths what they need, positive human attention.

Each accomplishment is over exaggerated and each wrong is under exaggerated. Our youths

are use to the opposite treatment. We try to treat them the same way we want to be treated. One of the questions we ask our youths is how you would feel if what you did was done to you. We need to go back to the basics of respect, training and love.

Suspension

Children may act out in school if they come from abusive homes, physically or sexually. It is likely that a child's behavior will be perceived as insubordinate, disruptive or unruly. In these cases, "zero tolerance" disciplinary standards are frequently applied. A disturbing outgrowth of the zero tolerance approach is that schools are becoming the point of entry into the juvenile system as children are increasingly arrested on school grounds for loosely defined behaviors such as "disorderly conduct" and "malicious mischief".

Special Education

It is not uncommon for teachers to have low expectations for children from marginalized families because administrators lack the cultural competence to relate to their problems. As a result a child may be penalized for having poor English skills or may be labeled as "dumb" or retarded because he has a common learning disability like dyslexia.

Sadly, we are seeing more cases where children with mental disorders from families with money get psychiatric intervention, while poor children end up with the prison psychologist.

Promotion/Retention

How are children getting promoted but still unable to read, write, and do basic math. What is social promotion?

Parents' Rights (Advocacy)

Parents must get the help they need to become the best parents they can. We must all take responsibility to advocate on behalf of children and become change agents in our communities. We must secure our future by investing in families to enable them to nurture children who will grow up strong, self-sufficient adults who are good parents and assets to their communities.

Conclusion

Excerpts taken from the November/December 2006 issue of *The Crisis*

Far too many children begin their educations at ill-equipped schools. This is a nation-wide problem. These schools are even less prepared to identify or address the developmental delays of some of the children. The number

of African-American and Latino teachers in public schools is significantly lower than the number of white teachers and the population of teachers is female. Poor minority children attend schools where there are few teachers and counselors who look like them and even less male role models in the classroom.

Recommendations

- The use of black psychologists, increased parental involvement, and extensive cultural testing practices is a beginning for decreasing the number of African-American students in special education programs.
- Parents must get the help they need to become the best parents they can.
- We must all take responsibility to advocate on behalf of children and become change agents in our communities.
- We must secure our future by investing in families to enable them to nurture children who will grow up strong, self-sufficient adults who are good parents and assets to their communities. ■

Golf and Spa Syndrome

By Amy Freeman

A number of us in Arizona are originally from other places in search of something different, different than what we were accustomed to. I, for one, did just that. I relocated to Los Angeles, after having been born, raised and educated in North Carolina. Being the country girl I am, I could only tolerate Los Angeles for two years. After understanding I could no longer live in Los Angeles, I knew it was time to move on. That move took me to Phoenix, Arizona, where I decided it was time to embrace my entrepreneurial spirit. Arizona has allowed me to pursue my purpose.

In a place where African-Americans can envision, create and develop any business and be a success, you have to love it. Arizona allows great opportunity for everyone, particularly African-Americans. The state embraces diversity, and there are so few African-Americans as compared to other races that when one decides to develop a business, with hard work, determination and focus, success can follow. However, one of the reasons we can succeed on an individual level hurts us collectively as African-Americans in Arizona.

Because we are few in numbers, often times we are isolated in our lives, both personally and professionally. Sometimes this

isolation means separation from our own community, whether intentional or not. You can easily develop what I like to call the “golf and spa” mentality, forgetting the issues that the African-American community faces. Sometimes, it’s not until something happens to us first-hand, that we remember there can be issues associated with being born Black, namely equality and social justice.

There are a number of non-profit organizations, churches, and religious institutions in the state of Arizona dedicated to the betterment of African-Americans. Just to name a few, organizations such as NAACP, Greater Phoenix Urban League, Sistas of Arizona, ACORN, and the Black Chamber

of Commerce all work to benefit Arizona African-Americans, whether their constituency is exclusively the African-American population or not. These organizations are doing great work in the community, providing advocacy, service and knowledge to Black businesses and individuals. The issue with Black Arizona leadership and activism is not in the quality, but the quantity. The issue is and continues to remain the number of active members in many of these organizations. Even many organizations that boast a high membership could still benefit from more members actively participating in the activities of the organization. We have to do better. We deserve better. We as a community owe it to our ancestors, children, and legacy for Black Arizona to walk on firmer footing in activism, social justice, and leadership. There are a number of issues that plague our communities, from the fight to retain affirmative action to the blatant racism some experience in the streets. Arizona boasts a wealth of African-American talent, leadership and genius. It is up to us to define our destiny more clearly. By summoning our collective intelligence, we promise a brighter Black Arizona. If we begin to have a keen appreciation for our community, then perhaps we

will in larger numbers continue the fight for social justice in Arizona. We can have an even larger presence. Giving of time, service, and funds can change the current reality. Through faith, determination, collective spirit, service, and knowledge our children will fully understand and appreciate what it means to be Black in Arizona. Because we are so spread out throughout the state we have to make an effort to reach out to our community, and sometimes it can be difficult, but we must make a concerted effort to increase our visibility. I challenge each of us as African-Americans in Arizona to play an active role in a church or religious institution and/or non-profit organization, so we can begin the process of increasing our presence. ■

Growing Up African-American in Arizona

Cartia Jackson

McClintock High School

Senior

Growing up as an African-American in Arizona has been a huge challenge. I have lived in Arizona for almost four years. Over time I have experience many levels of prejudice. Some worst than others. Most of the things that I have experienced have taken place in public places such as, stores, parks, or on the streets. Others have taken place in my schools involving my peers and administration. Regardless of where it took place, it happened.

I grew up in Richmond, California and Salt Lake City, Utah. In Richmond most of the people in my neighborhood and school the majority of the people were African-American. When I moved to Salt Lake, the majority of the people there were Caucasian but I only lived there for a short amount of time and I as so young that I never really realized the prejudice. But, when I moved to Arizona in the 2004 I was a lot older and my eyes were completely open to what was going on around me. In September of 2004 I started my sophomore year of high school at Gilbert High. There we not many African-Americans there and the ones that were, did not see things the way that I did. Within my first

three weeks of school, I saw that many times I was judged because of the color of my skin. It seemed to me that one of my teachers were always putting me down and not taking as much time with me as she did with the students that were not African-American. Yet and still, I dealt with it, I thought maybe it was just me, but things never changed. After about four months in Gilbert my family moved to Tempe, but for the first two weeks after we had moved I continued attending Gilbert. In February of 2005 I transferred to McClintock High, I had explained to my mother that I felt uncomfortable in Gilbert so I changed schools. The prejudice in school finally died down.

The prejudice in school had ended and I was happy that I had dealt with it for so long. Though it was over at the school level, I began observing my environment outside of school and home. Once at McClintock, I began to go out to parties and get-togethers where in the end, the police or someone's parents would be involved. I began to see that many people looked at me as an easy target. I would go out with both African-Americans and Caucasians but if there were more of them than me I would be the first one questioned or mistreated. In the beginning, I felt that the police were just doing their job but then I kept having encounters with the same officers and even though they knew I had nothing to do with why they were at a location I was still singled out. After a time I began to feel as though the only way to stay out of trouble or not be judged is to stay inside and do nothing. But I can't live life that way so I had to deal with it.

I thought that I would truly be able to deal with everything that went on in my life, until I got a job. My first job was at Subway and that's where I saw the true face of prejudice. Customers were constantly requesting to have someone else make their food as though I would not make it right.

Or they would say extremely rude remarks or give me attitude for no reason. I dealt with it just because I realized I had no control over anything they were going through. I worked there for almost seven months and almost every week it was the same thing. Through it all I continued working until I got ready to switch jobs. When I left Subway I started working at Anchor Blue in Arizona Mills. I never really had any problems there but I think it's because the mall is such a place of diversity. While working at Anchor Blue my family and I moved to Mesa so I had to quit that job because it was too far from my house. Once I got acquainted with the area I started working at Susie's \$5 Deals. I was the only African-American that worked there everyone else was Hispanic. It was hard for me due to the fact that all of them spoke Spanish so at the end of the evening when we were closing they all talked amongst each other, which made me feel out of place. I felt that they singled me out because anytime something happened I was automatically blamed for it. Even on days when I was not working. The prejudice was getting worst so eventually I quit working there. I felt I could only take so much from people, especially a whole business.

Living in an area where most of the people are a different race than what you are used to being around you have to face many trying things. Prejudice is the biggest of them all. Regardless of what is said or done I have learned that you must deal with it. I already knew that there were some completely ignorant people when it comes to diversity. But not everyone is the same and there are some people, like myself, who are trying to change things. If not in someone else's life, at least in their own. Whether living in Arizona or New York prejudice will always live. It is a well-known fact. And I know that many people have gone through things similar to mine if not worst. I love that I moved here so that I could experience everything that I have so that if I chose to raise my children here or anywhere else, I can teach them how to react or not become part of the statistic.

I did not really grow up in Arizona but I have "grown up" out here. In the years I have been out here, I have seen prejudice and have had many own experience with it. I have dealt with it in school, in the work place, on the streets everywhere. But that's one thing I love about being and African-American, I go through things so that I can become stronger. It's a challenge

especially when you come from a predominantly African-American area. Yet and still, I continue to do what I have to do. I continue to deal with it because I know that change takes time. It's a part of life. Unfortunately I have to deal with it a little more often than others. I still enjoy my life in Arizona and through everything, I would not change it for the world. ■

Strive

Whitney Parker

Sunrise Mountain High School

“When I was young,” this is a statement that much of my generation today is faced with growing under the influence of parents, mentors, and black political leaders. I am faced with walking in the shoes of giants that yesterday’s generation left behind. Great African-Americans who struggled but, triumphed over oppression and despair that appeared to them, both in dream and reality. I also have a dream, mimicking the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that one day I will be the very best that I can be, uplifting and uprising over the oppression that may prophesied over my present and future.

Growing up in Arizona as a young black woman has had a positive impact on my confidence and self-esteem. As a young girl I went to predominantly Caucasian schools. There I was accepted with open arms, allowing me to grow creatively and intellectually. I attended private school for elementary and part of middle school. During my eighth grade year I was enrolled into a public school and that was a huge culture shock. They claimed this would be good for me in developing more balanced social and academic skills. Although the school was public, the percentage of African-Americans was not up to par with the percentage of Caucasian children, and again this sheltered me from the race

that had called me its own for seventeen years. As I matured I began to notice the difference and started to wonder about the role I played in it. I didn’t really see myself as a young African-American girl, but as I moved on to high school, I began to identify myself with my race. I became proud of who I was, because I understood who I was, where I came from, and what I needed to accomplish as a young black woman. My eyes have been open to the challenges and triumphs that we as a people have endured over the years, and now taking the plunge into the things that will make me successful so that I may be an example to future generations.

Being a young black woman in Arizona has shown me grace through out the years. I have not faced serious oppression, disregarding some day today racial slurs that pass me by, like my forefathers did. I have gently been blinded by the blanket of security that keeps my dreams alive and my hope strong for another day. The need to step out of my comfort zone has become extremely urgent, like taking care of an irritated wound. How am I going to do that, what will people believe of me, and why should I step to the plate when everyone else is sitting in the dugout fulfill my thought and feelings, hindering me to take that last breath before the plunge into what the world calls reality. I must step up to the plate day by day, not in order to seek refuge from others, but to seek deliverance from them.

I am driven by the images of black soldiers running across the battlefield, giving their lives so that equality could squeeze in through the cracks of immorality . They gave their lives to the very Civil War that degraded and sometimes tormented them. I believe that those very lives would frown on the generation that we have become today. Hip Hop, sex and drugs continue to fill our minds with thoughts that no sooner give

us death than life. Run, running is an escape route to a better tomorrow, getting you away from the stereotypical black teen in societies eyes. I try to focus on the goals and opportunities that throw themselves at my feet.

Like Rosa Parks I keep my dreams intact, not allowing them to be moved by the jealousy or ignorance that others may poses and use towards them. As an African-American youth, I have always been told to reach for the stars, even if your target was only the moon. This particular statement has urged and pushed me to strive to the very top of the pyramid. In my everyday routine, I try not to allow the mistakes and punctures that have seeped into my life get too comfortable in staying there. Everyone is bound to the train tracks of their mistakes sooner or later. Whatever frees you from those mistakes, are the most important things in your life. Even in Arizona, I do not allow my mistakes to blow cold air onto my dreams and goals.

Instead of the possible, I like to surround my thoughts and ideas on the impossible and the improbable. Many times I will express my feelings and beliefs with others that I feel will appreciate them as much as I do, and often I encounter gazes of disbelief. This is because of my wanting to reach the

starts instead of the moon. I feel as though the moon has already been reached, why not reach for something that hasn't been. This is a very important aspect for a young black teen growing up in what we call a stagnant society. I allow my self to look at the world through rose colored glasses, exploring the world in another's perspective.

In order to survive in Arizona, or any where for that matter, I cling to my imagination, pride, and strength to keep me a float. Though I have only experienced the world for a small amount of time, I have learned to use and live each day as if it were my last. If you learn to use each day to the fullest, your actions will save you from stagnation and stereotypes. It is our generations duty, to learn by example for current, younger, and future generations living in Arizona, the United Stats, and beyond. The only barrier that separates me from just another face in the crowd is the ability to step forward, get out of my seat, and run after life as a starving predator seeks and charges after its prey. I do my best to use my skills and talents that God has given me to make everyday as a young black person in Arizona and in the United States an extraordinary one. ■

Cultivating Young Black Leadership in Arizona

By Tracee K. Hall

Leadership in African-American communities has exerted itself in multiple forms. Seasoned leaders have historically emerged in black churches, black organizations and as elected officials. Arizona's history of black leaders has been no different. As an Arizona native, I grew up knowing and watching many leaders such as Georgie and Councilman Calvin Goode, Dr. Warren Stewart, Judge Jean Williams and George Dean. They led the fight for social and racial justice in our community for decades. But, in order to continue the combat of social ills, it is necessary for young black leaders to emerge in Arizona as well as the rest of the country. So, the question becomes, "How do you cultivate young, black leadership in Arizona?"

Before answering how to cultivate young, black leadership, it is important to define the term and assess how one becomes a leader. Common ideas in leadership include exerting influence, motivating and inspiring, helping others realize their potential, leading by example, selflessness, leading as a servant, and making a difference.

Leaders have to possess tangible and intangible "it" factors that inspire people to trust and a willingness to follow someone. Those characteristics often include: being well-educated, good articulation, people-oriented, a trustworthy character, overall charisma, experience, and subject-area knowledge.

People are often recognized as leaders when they obtain a position of power. Examples of such positions in the African-American community include: elected of-

ficials, pastors, doctors, attorneys, CEOs, and community organization directors. Usually, the individuals selected or elected for these positions exhibited leadership characteristics prior to their appointment.

There are also individuals who self-appoint themselves as leaders. These are people who proclaim to be spokespersons for the black community and attempt to exert themselves as advocates or experts in given, typically public, situations. Often, they are not speaking on behalf of the consensus of the community, nor does the majority of the community endorse their tactics. Nonetheless, these individuals are acknowledged as leaders if/when the mainstream media endorses them by soliciting their input in given situations.

Whatever fashion one becomes a leader, mentoring is one of the best tools to becoming effec-

tive and successful. Established leaders can assist in the growth of young professionals. Given the small percentage of African-Americans in Arizona, mentoring is especially critical. Leadership mentoring can take place through informal relationships or structured organizational programs.

In fact, you can find a number of programs in the Valley geared at mentoring children and a few programs that mentor college students. These programs are definitely needed to plant early seeds of success in developing the minds of youth. However, it is equally important that the success potential and leadership skills of individuals new in the workforce are mentored by those who have been in similar positions. Professional organizations are one of the best ways to develop leadership skills. Local chapters of organizations such as the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA), BLACK MBAs, National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Hayzel B. Daniels (bar association), Arizona Black Law Enforcement Employees (ABLE), and the JW Robinson Society (black firefighters association), provide tools for success in given career areas. The Black Board of Directors helps local astute African-Americans in getting involved with local boards and commissions. And, organizations such as the Greater Phoenix Urban League, the Greater Phoenix Black Chamber of Commerce, 100 Black

Men, The Links and Black Greek Fraternities and Sororities allow individuals to network, mentor and be mentored and volunteer with community leaders and business executives.

It is also imperative that young professionals are cultivated into leaders through one-on-one mentoring relationships. This is where an aspiring leader can learn from a reputable authority figure about the issues facing the community, political sensitivities, work-life-community service balance, as well as other issues. However, one of the problems observed in the African-American community is the lack of those willing to mentor young leaders or the lack of those willing to learn from established leaders. Young leaders may be told, "Don't be too ambitious!" "You need to talk to 'Joe leader' before you do anything." "You're not ready for that. Don't try to advance too quickly!" Many young leaders feel that established leaders will not always encourage their development and progression because they want to "hold on" to their leadership status without creating competition. Conversely, the young individual who may gain by learning something from the established leader chooses not to listen because, "I already know what to do." "Their suggestions are not relative any more." I am not going to do things in the same manner that they did. I don't have to pay the same dues they did." Seasoned leaders often feel

that the younger generation does not have enough respect for the accomplishments of their elders. Both scenarios have truths and misconceptions. Unfortunately, this is where egos and generational gaps can play damaging roles in the cycle of leadership development. Luckily, there are a number of seasoned African-American leaders in the Arizona who are willing to extend their hand as well as experience to up and coming individuals willing to learn.

In seeking mentors, it is important to look for those who have similar backgrounds and ideals. However, aspiring African-Americans leaders should also remember that mentors may not always come in the form or fashion they predicted. Some professional and leadership advisors may have different careers. They may be of a different gender or ethnicity or come from a different income/social classification. Undoubtedly, African-American organizations provide a special niche that is relative to developing young black leaders, but skills also can be obtained in local non-African-American service oriented organizations such as Valley Leadership and Junior League.

In general, leadership can be defined as enabling a group to engage together in the process of developing, sharing and moving ideas, theories and practices into visions, and then living them out. Individuals must have a connectedness to the community and

organizations they are willing to serve. People have to trust and believe in those who choose to serve as leaders or there will be dissent. As John Maxwell states in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leaders*, "He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk."

In order to continue the development of new, African-American leaders in Arizona, young individuals have to be open to receiving mentoring from a multitude of vehicles, seasoned leaders must be willing to share their experiences and guidance, and black professional and community organizations must thrive. And as the young leaders become seasoned leaders, they must be willing to share their information with those who come after them. ■

First Black to Serve on the Town Council in Florence, Arizona

by Vallarie Woolridge

Being the first black person to be appointed (in 2004) and then elected (in 2006) to the Town Council of Florence has been a rewarding experience. Rewarding in the fact that my name will be forever etched in the history of the Town of Florence, Arizona, as being the first. It is also a little sad that until 2004, there was no official representation from the black community. There has been past involvement on committees and boards from generations that have long since passed on. The lapse between now and then has been far too long.

We currently have three black females who serve on the town's library advisory board, which is a good starting point. It is my hope and dream that more of us will become more involved with issues and goings on in the communities in which we live. It is vital that we take an active role in making decisions that will shape the present, as well as the future of our communities.

Being black in Arizona can sometimes be a challenge. A challenge in that in certain areas of Arizona you can go days without seeing someone who looks like you. It can also be challenging when you do see a reflection of yourself, there is a lack of acknowledgement. I was born and raised in the Midwest (Kansas City, Kansas), where it was just automatic that we acknowledged one another. In a state where there are so few of us, we need to employ a cohesive spirit. Having that type of attitude will allow us to prosper in all endeavors. It is so important that those of us that have taken on the challenge to be involved, politically and socially, continue to encourage others to take an active role in community affairs.

It continues to be interesting to be involved in the decisions that will shape the future of Florence.

Florence is no longer the small little family town of years past, however we are trying to maintain the same comfortable, safe feeling and atmosphere in spite of the growth. We find ourselves on the cusp of tremendous growth in our town and Pinal County as a whole. We are trying to smartly manage the growth by learning from other towns and cities those things that didn't work, as well as what they wish they had done differently. Networking and sharing of knowledge is essential. We need representation from every population group to be involved in decisions concerning the community. It is my hope that we can encourage and solicit more Black people to get involved in the process. The time for being intimidated by the system is long past. We must stand up and be counted. ■

Figure 1.3: Educational attainment by race/ethnicity in 2006—Arizona

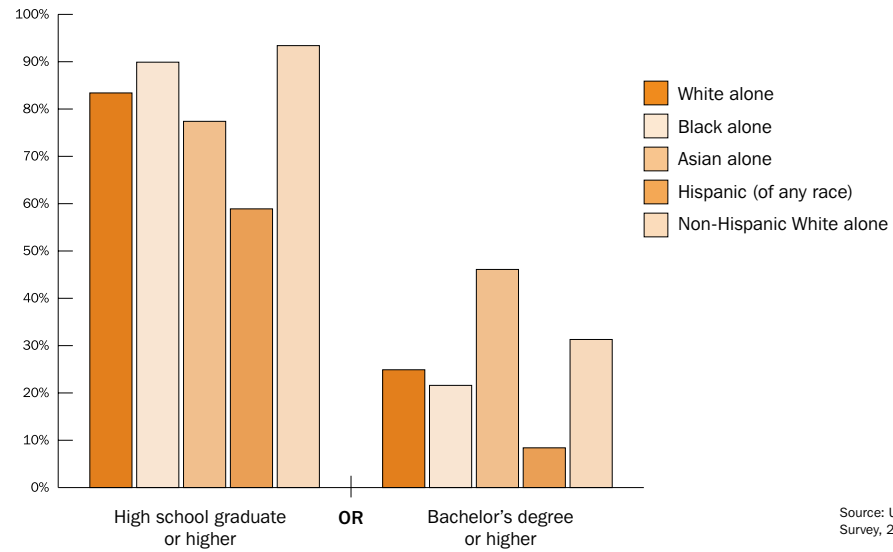
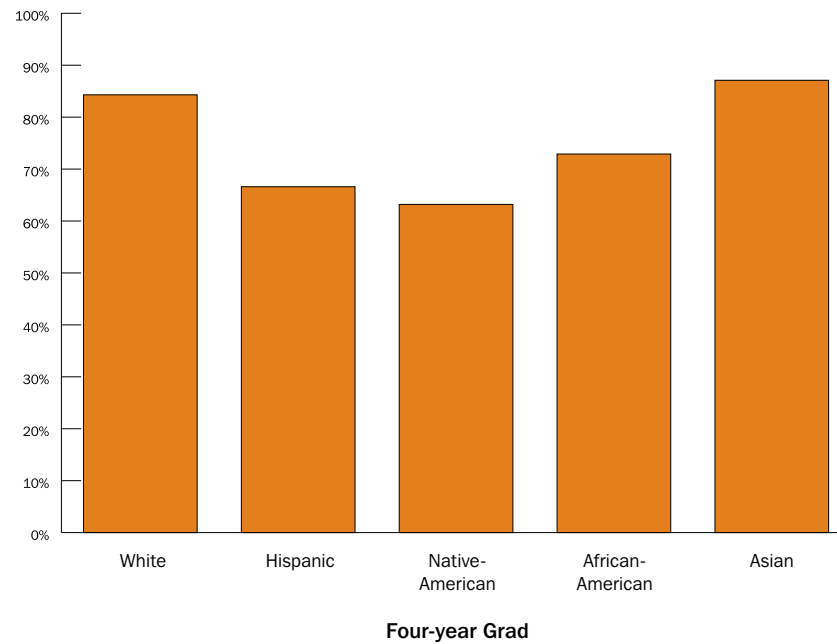


Figure 1.5: Four-year graduation rates of the Cohort Class of 2004 by race/ethnicity—Arizona



From Foster Care to Adulthood: A Look at Young African-Americans Reconnecting to the Village

By Josalyn Caruthers

African-American children are more likely to be removed from their families by local child welfare agencies than all other racial groups in the United States, even though studies indicate that African-American families are not abusing or neglecting their children any more than other families (The Center for the Study of Social Policy 2004).

When looking data presented by the U.S. Census 2000 and Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, African-American children account for 37% of the total number of children placed in foster care in America in 2000. African-American children only comprised 15% of the total U.S. child population under 18 in 2000 (The Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2004). Over forty states have disproportionate representations of African-American children in their child welfare systems, Arizona being one of them (The Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2004).

It is important for individuals to know who they are and where they come from. The same is true

of the African-American young people placed in the foster care system. Often times these young people are placed in homes outside of their communities. They are forced to attend new schools, make new friends and accept new homes. As these young people age out of the foster care system, they are often sent into the world with a very limited amount of resources and supports. These young people are a part of the community in which they were removed from and the community must be ready to embrace them when they return.

What can Arizona's black community do to support these young people? The community can support and assist through providing

mentorship opportunities. These young adults need influential individuals whom they can look up and relate to. There are mentoring components in different programs available in the Valley such as 100 Black Men of Phoenix and the local African-American sorority and fraternity organizations. Community members could also volunteer with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in order to provide guidance as this population enters adulthood. Being a mentor does not have to be something formal. Mentoring can just be as simple as spending time with a young person and providing guidance and support as they travel along their journey into adulthood. Mentoring could also assist with possible employment opportunities as well.

Another way to assist is through post secondary education/training opportunities. Some of these youth desire the chance to further their education but need assistance in doing so. Some have even been discouraged from venturing into post secondary efforts. What can we do to ensure that these young people of color know about the available resources? The community needs to be well informed of the available resources in order to assist these young adults. These youth

need to know of the federal dollars that are set aside for those who were touched by the child welfare system. They need to know about the Education and Training Voucher available for former foster youth. They need to know how to fill out the Free Application for Federal State Aid (FAFSA) and by filling out this document practically guarantees grant money for these young people. They need to know of the TRIO Services that are on the various college and university campuses.

The young adults could also be assisted through community connections. Linking them up with the cultural resources that are available in the community could benefit them tremendously. Whether it's introducing them to programming at the Greater Phoenix Urban League or getting them to participate in a Rite of Passage program, the community can be prepared to welcome home these young people who wish to be reconnecting to their village. ■

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48 **Phoenix is My Home**

by Dana Dicks

You know back when Baseline Road was paralleled with orange groves and citrus farms Phoenix, Arizona was different. When the price of Miss B's hamburgers on Delaware street was twenty five cents, and the grease slid off the burger over the bun and between your fingers, Chandler was a lot smaller and close knit. Back when we could pick cotton and alfalfa sprouts on the west side: Peoria, LaVeen, and lower Buckeye was a little more country and down-home. We had a community that was more like a large family, long standing friends, and kids that grew up together and aged like wine or the money in a 401K retirement plan.

Our retirement plan was to stay together, to watch out for each other; so that when we got older all of our love, sympathy, and emotional hard work paid off. And it did, it still does.

Our people came from Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas to make a better way for their kids and their grand kids. Just as many blacks in the 1940s and 1950s moved from Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas up north to New York or Chicago, our black families moved too. Instead we chose a different direction. We headed west and landed in Arizona while the rest of our brothers and sisters continued on to California. My parents were from Texas. They packed all nine kids

and belongings in a car and headed to Arizona. Perhaps the neighborhoods were stronger, safer and felt more like family because most of the black families left their real relatives behind in other states. That way Mrs. Richards, who lived three doors down in the white and blue trimmed house, isn't Mrs. Richards. She changes to Big Mama, able to give you a scolding when your parents weren't around and able to make you sweep the street in front of her house.

To this day I still know my neighborhood. I know how everyone is doing, where their children went to school, whose children successfully moved onward and upward to college, who had grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who was

locked up and for how long, who is making moves and who isn't moving at all. Back then we all had big families but smaller homes and smaller checks but socially richer communities. They were not filled with just gossip and heartache. Our neighborhood was dynamic and multicultural; we were not just among ourselves, no... Whoever lived in your neighborhood, Mexicans, blacks and whites well, we all understood each other back then. In my neighborhood Miss Hernandez would make her sweet rice spider drinks, boiled rice water with cinnamon and sugar, and sale candy to us when I was a child. We were all living peacefully together.

We had problems with crime and drugs just as this generation has now. At one point reefer and crack first trickled in and slowly made a rift in our community like black ice does to asphalt, but unlike asphalt it took longer for us to repair the cracks. I remember when crime on the south side was a common event, regularly creeping into neighborhood gossip. There were shootings, robberies, drug sales and cop dodging that became normal actions for a short time. There were the Cripts and New Homes around Corner Pocket and Seventh Avenue, Mathew Henderson Projects,

a colorful area on Thirteenth Avenue between Pima and Coco Pie. But there was also numerous black-owned business and creative nightlife to serve as entertainment but this later lead to chaos and disorder. Keno Hall, a black-owned casino was one such place. You could buy a mean tasting pork sandwich at Pork chop's on Thirteenth Avenue, Tang's Pool Hall and Lincoln Liquor were common hangouts back in the day. Tops, Dickson, and Walker's were the nightclubs to smooth back our hair, tighten our clothes and put on our best air of attitude. Not to forget Billy Joe Blare would keep his doors open after-hours so we could taste the best BBQ without being in Texas. Billy Joe Blare was, of course, another black-owned business. But as time moved on things got out of hand around Thirteenth Avenue and the nightclubs that we enjoyed, was ridden with bullet shells. The nightclubs have since closed down. There was peace, for a second. Yes, I remember the peace and tranquility of black Arizona that came after closing the clubs on Thirteenth Avenue...

Perhaps history will repeat and replenish. I see the new Phoenix today. Greater Phoenix communities, whether in Peoria, Scottsdale, or Gilbert, these communi-

ties are becoming similar to the suburbs of LA, Chicago or Philadelphia. They have all grown to an enormous size. Miss Walters does not live five doors down and you can't hear ol' man Wilson making wooden tables and chairs out of his Spanish style adobe house. As a matter of fact I don't know the person that lives five doors down. There are no more block parties, fish fries, and neighborhood gossip. I'm sure if I ask the owner of the home at 123 E. Harkins where they went to high school, they would give me an out-of-state high school with a proud boast that they relocated from a fast and temperamental environment to quiet, comfortable Phoenix. And when I draw them further in conversation about Arizona they will absently talk about the great weather, mountains, and job opportunities. Little do they know about our churches, schools and need for communication that extends beyond block, across the street and around the corner, because this is an intricate part of black Arizona.

As for the crime, the crime is a repeat of what I have seen before. The drugs, shootings and prisons are all the same, but the corruption to our neighborhoods is doing great damage. Now there are bigger young adults that aim to prove

themselves on the streets, taking examples from other crime-ridden cities. We are not New York or Chicago; we are the mythological Phoenix, which is rebirth from its own ash. Its name will let Phoenix stay the calm city that was. In time Phoenix will replenish and recycle just as its name suggests. I have seen this cycle in Phoenix before, this is nothing new. Or we can look towards nature; where water can be scarce in Arizona. The lack of it will crack the ground and lend indigenous animals to a period of hard times. We live like this also, but we only have to tap the deep streams of aquifers hidden out of sight, our unyielding strength. And as humans follow nature, human nature will lead to love and unity once again. I love Arizona because Phoenix is my home. ■

Figure 4.1: Characteristics of African-American families in USA year 2004

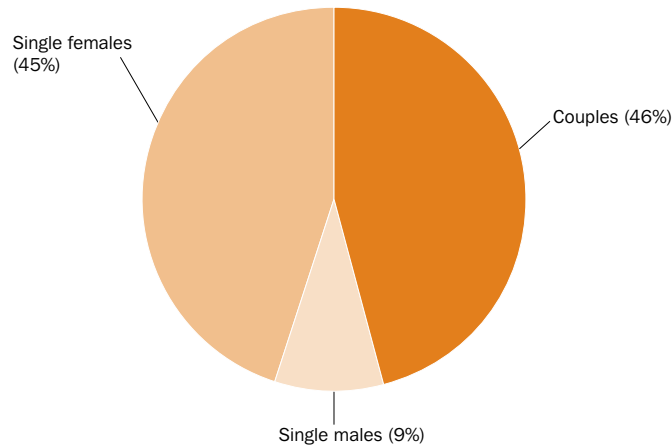


Figure 4.1 gives the percentage composition of African-American families of 2 or more people in a house in the United States. For example as the chart shows, 9% of the male population is single; this 9% constitutes the male head of the household with children and no spouse present.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education

Figure 4.4: African-American families with own children under 18

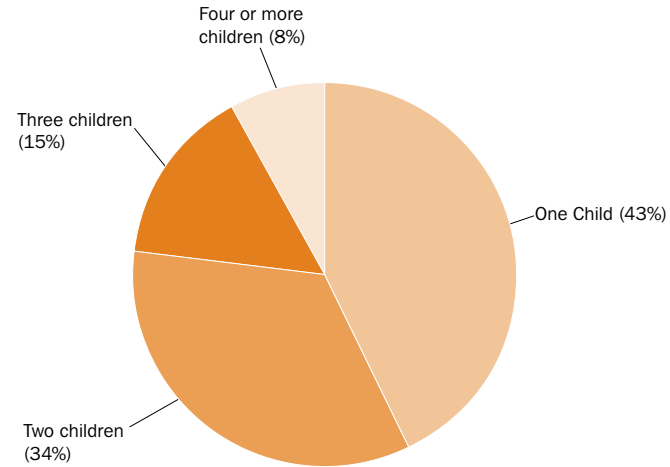
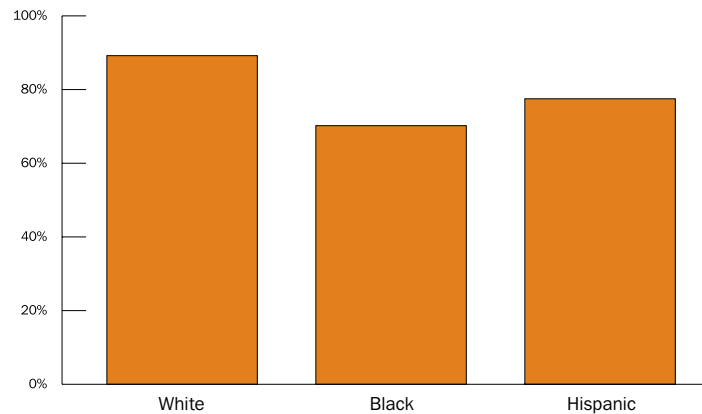


Figure 4.4 portrays the distribution of African-American families based on the number of children under 18 yrs of age. Around 80% of African-American families have either one child or two children.

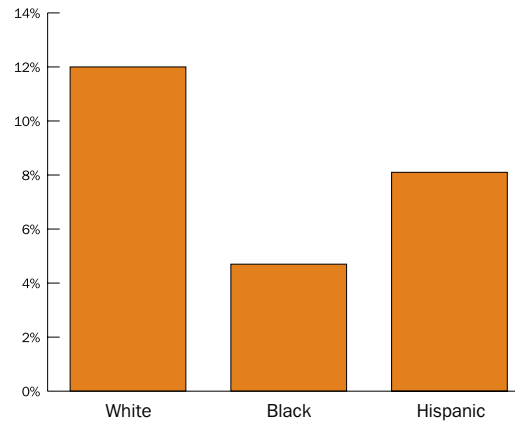
Source: U.S. Dept. of Education

Figure 4.5-1: Percent of households owning motor vehicles by race and ethnicity, 2000 (U.S.)



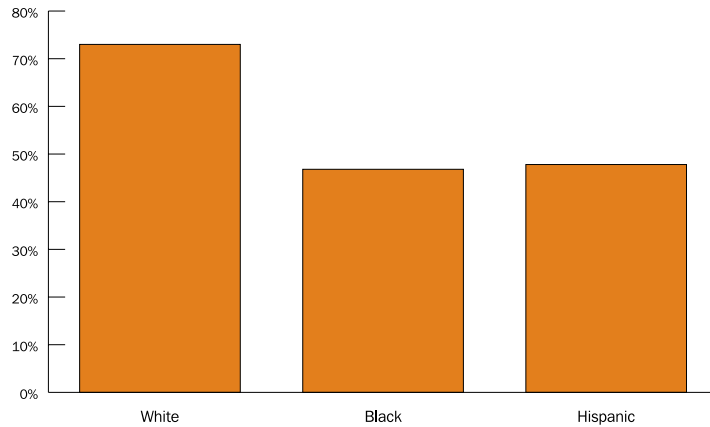
Source: www.jointcenter.org

Figure 4.5-2: Percent of households owning own business by race and ethnicity, 2000 (U.S.)



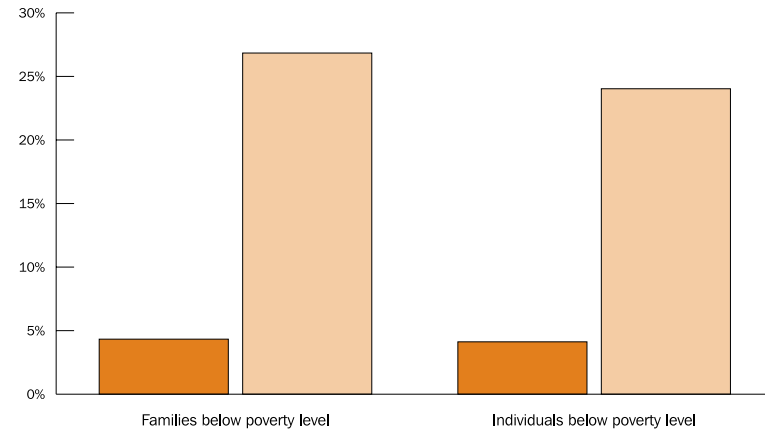
From Figure 4.5 it can be observed on a relative scale that African-Americans the Hispanics are comparable in terms of owning vehicles and homes. However the percentage of Hispanics with their own business firms is almost twice as much as that of the African-Americans.

Figure 4.7: Percent of households owning own home by race and ethnicity, 2000 (U.S.)



Source: www.jointcenter.org

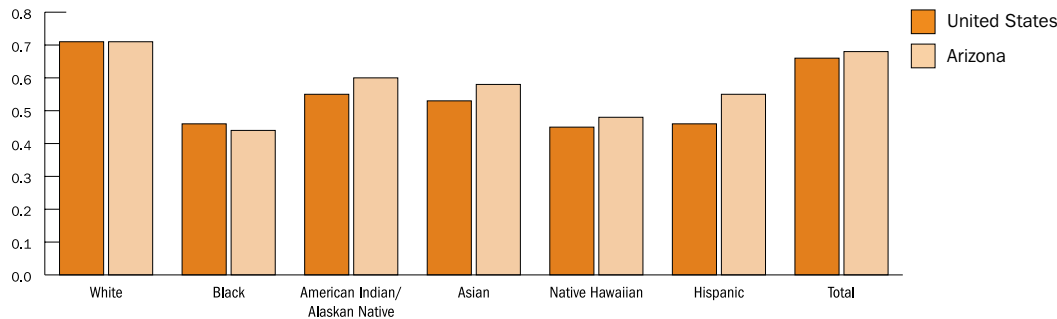
Figure 4.9: African-American poverty statistics (2000)



In Figure 4.9, the percentage values represent the fraction of the population for that particular characteristic. For example : 3.07% of Arizona Civilian veterans are African-American.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

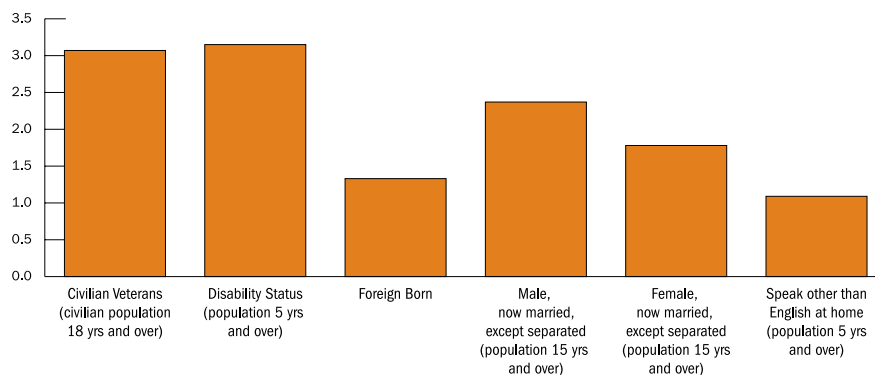
Figure 4.8: Home ownership rates in 2000 by race



In Census 2000, homeownership among White householders was 71 percent, higher than the national rate of 66 percent. In contrast, householders who were Black (46 percent) and those who were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (45 percent) had homeownership rates less than the national rate (see graph). Hispanic householders (of any race) also had a 46 percent homeownership rate, compared with 72 percent for non-Hispanic White. Those householders with rates higher than 50 percent but less than the national rate were American Indians and Alaska Natives (56 percent) and Asians (53 percent). Homeownership rates among other race groups were: Some other race (41 percent) and Two or more races (46 percent).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division

Figure 4.10: Social Characteristics of African-American families in 2000—Arizona



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Report

Fig 4.8 shows the poverty characteristics in Arizona and in the United States. It can be inferred from the graph that 4.33% of the families below poverty level in Arizona are African-American by race. Similar interpretations can be made for the African-American families in the United States and the African-American individuals in Arizona and the United States.

These numbers look very different when one takes a closer look at Arizona where 20% of the African-American families are in poverty, despite the fact that black families only constitute 4% of all impoverished families in Arizona.

Speech Given for African-American Legislative Days

By Representative Cloves Campbell

Mr. Speaker, Honorable Senators and Representatives, honored guests and my fellow Arizonans:

It is an honor to stand here today and speak with you during African-American Legislative Days. As you know, my father served as a senator here. Now I am very proud to have this public service opportunity to represent District 16.

The quality of education in Arizona is hugely important to me. By improving K–12 education, we can help more people attend a higher education institution, find a high-paying job and buy a home instead of renting one. The Arizona Department of Education's 2005–06 State Report Card provides some interesting details that I would like to share with you.

In 2004, 73 percent of African-American students graduated in four years. In 2005, that figure decreased slightly to 72 percent. When you look at the overall student population in 2004, 77 percent graduated in four years while 75 percent graduated in four years in 2005.

However, I am pleased to report that the average daily attendance rate for African-American students was 94.6 percent in 2006, slightly higher than the rate for all students which was 94.5 percent that same year.

When we look at the number of schools that met adequate yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind Act, I think we all will agree that we have some work to do to make sure Arizona schools are the best they can be. In 2005, 1,544 schools met adequately yearly progress but that number decreased in 2006 to 1,249 schools. I know we can do better.

The Arizona Department of Health Services has some good news to report. According to

a 2005 report entitled Differences in the Health Status Among Race/Ethnic Groups, the inequity among groups as measured by a scored value narrowed from 2001 to 2005. In addition, the average score for African-Americans improved from 2001 to 2005. While I still believe we can improve access to affordable quality healthcare, I am pleased with the improvements.

Justice and equality are very important issues to me. In December, 13.2 percent of the 35,794 inmates in the Arizona Department of Corrections were African-American. (source: Inmate Ethnic Distribution By Unit, Dec. 2006).

The percentage of African-American inmates increased from 2005 as did the overall inmate population. In December 2005, 12.9 percent of the 33,535 inmates in the Arizona Department of Corrections were African-American.

I would like to see the state improve services for the homeless. An estimated 30,277 people in Arizona are homeless on any given day, according to 2001 figures from the Arizona Department of Economic Security's Homeless Coordination Office. An average 2,266 children are homeless in a shelter on any given day, according to the DES figures. Arizona has

3,220 emergency shelter beds available and 5,220 transitional beds available, according to the 2001 DES figures. If the state directed more money toward this important issue, we could assist more of the homeless.

I would also like to see the state make gains in economic development and economic opportunities. In 2002, Arizona had 381,180 firms, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Of that, only 1.7 percent were owned by African-Americans, according to the Census. Nationally, African-Americans owned 5.2 percent of the 22.9 million firms in the country in the same year, the Census reports. I know we can increase the number of Arizona businesses owned by African-Americans especially since our figure is much lower than the national percentage of businesses owned by African-Americans.

This session I am the prime sponsor of House Bill 2634 to establish the Arizona Commission of African-American Affairs. I am proud that 18 other representatives and senators, including Sen. Leah Landrum Taylor, have signed on to this bill. As you may recall, Sen. Landrum Taylor has urged the creation of this commission for years.

The commission will advise the governor on policies and legislation and act as a liaison to federal, state and local agencies. The commission also will assist local African-American community groups in developing strategies and programs that will expand and enhance the social, cultural and economic status of the African-American community. As you can tell, House Bill 2634 would be very beneficial to Arizona and I appreciate your support on it.

I know Arizona and this Legislature is up to the challenge of making gains that I will be pleased to report during next year's African-American Legislative Days. When we all work together, we can improve the quality of life for Arizonans.

I invite you to participate in all of the events during the 5th Annual African-American Legislative Days. More than 250 leaders, elected officials and citizens will participate in the two days of discussion focusing on education, health care, economic development and other topics that impact local minority communities.

Thank you. ■

A New Year—A New Beginning

by Dr. Ann A. Hart

**I would like to welcome you to A New Year—
A New beginning...
...A new year of Faith, Hope and Promise.
...a new beginning for our African-American
Caucus members—Representative Cloves
C. Campbell, Jr., and Senator Leah Landrum
Taylor—Democrats who represent District 16.**

Our two African-American Legislators, whom have many challenges ahead, will need your undying support, participation and leadership to assist in moving the political engine down the tracks, in order to embrace an agenda which will provide every African-American a solid voice in this state! You will have a platform to promote collaboration and build consensus with issues that impact you, and your community!

As you know there are so many important issues that cloud our sometimes peaceful lives that often leave us wondering why? Those of us who live in District 16 are very proud and inspired by the benevolent leadership of Representative Campbell and Senator Taylor. Thus, I would

like to encourage everyone here tonight to ignite your spirit—get involved and get in touch with your state representatives and senators which represent your perspective districts.

A New Year—A New Beginning—
At times, our lives become a spiral of ups and downs, celebrations, revelations, good deeds gone bad, racial intolerance, justice delayed, rhetorical promises and ruthless intentions. We moan over our mistakes, grieve the past, passionately promote our principles and re-live our good moments while searching for equity and equality for our children, serenity and security for seniors, that support our purpose driven lives.

“Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—will shed light on where we need to go. May peace be unto all, as we try to find solutions in our chaotic public and charter schools for protection against abuse, ridicule, and neglect, we need child safety seats for our children. Our schools need an extreme makeover to get rid of the inappropriate and non-productive mindsets of teachers and administrators, an astringent to wash away negative thinking, a concealer to highlight characters that count and apply a MAC foundation, emphasizing that we must look past our differences in order to make a difference, thus modeling true diversity in our school environments.

We need too pick the pimples from the faces of students gone wild on Black Planet, My Space and Face Book Dot Com! and we need to stop cheating students with the use of contemporary textbooks, and the lack of a social studies curriculum that serve one purpose—to introduce students to blacks in this country as slaves from Africa with no prior language, culture or heritage, thus giving us an inferior status.

We need life insurance to ensure parity in education with caring and nurturing teachers, who have a passion for and love children, teachers who will not

only help to restore faith and confidence in children, but who truly believe that OUR children CAN learn! After all, “Life Insurance isn’t for the people who die. It’s for the people who live.” But “who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

We need to strengthen the enforcement of anti-discriminatory hiring, retention, and promotion by eliminating systemic discrimination, that fosters an unpleasant climate of intimidation, harassment and exclusion in workplace environments...and recommend psychotherapy with Dr. Phil, with a year’s subscription of the Magazine *O*, by Oprah for workplace bullies!

“Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

People, we must stop alienating ourselves from one another, reducing opportunities for economic and social growth, because we believe that it is easier to stay away, keep away or look away from what may have the potential of being a tremendous asset to your personal growth.

It’s called, LNRB “Leave No Resource Behind!”...your ratin’ of “hatin’, can be someone’s makin’ just for the takin’...so people...

Instead, we may want to re-think and re-stimulate our desire to reach out and help one another, especially during the times when we feel like we have been “sucker punched,” not quite knowing by whom and for what!

...but feeling grateful that we were able to land on our feet!

“Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

As a life-saving device, we must develop what I call the “Pool-room Principle”—learning how to successfully get your ball into the hole, move to the front of the crowd secure a voice, a vote step up to the plate—represent at the table, the House or the Senate floor, city or town hall, board meetings and/or the Governor’s chambers, village and commission planning meetings. Join The NAACP, O.I.C., and/or The Greater Phoenix Urban League, as well as a host of other avenues that embark upon a proactive commitment to progress and change.

...If we dare to rest on the “legacy of complacency,” then whose name will become the shame of the blame, when the welfare of our community, environmental, health, and education issues become sacrificial lambs for outsourced commodities and services?

So I ask, “Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—We begin to play the hand that we are dealt!

Oh my! What happens too often when well educated African-American males and females enter the work place, full of anticipation and aspiration, equipped with top-notch qualifications, an exceptional mastery of the skill set, exemplifying professionalism - complete with resumes fueled by outstanding evaluations of demonstrated expertise in the workplace, and suddenly you are replaced by an inexperienced recent graduate or retiree who has now become your new supervisor, that you have to train, with no increase in pay... No one cares that you have performed the duties of this job for years. What? You are now being told that your performance is unsatisfactory thus relegated to perform additional job duties, with increased responsibilities, and less pay... Or after you were hired, you were told that you were the “first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy or gal” ... again I ask, “Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

...Some things do matter... #1—We need African-American representation in Arizona state government—agency wide ...

in prominent positions! We are in need of associate superintendents, deputy directors, and agency directors and department heads.

Out of 148 state agencies, we have three super-stars—African-Americans who hold state agency director positions; one appointed as early as January. Eight African-Americans hold positions as directors, board presidents and/or chairs of boards and commissions in this state.

...Today we have 11 African-Americans in state government, holding down the fort for all of us...so we think? Possibly?...so who really knows for sure?

So I ask; “Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

A medical diagnosis is over due. We need to find the prescription for that nagging pain, so that we may become advocates for our senior citizens- to negotiate for health cost reductions for medicine and prescriptions, affordable health insurance and financial aid for grandparents whom are raising kids; or we may need Pepto-Bismol for that nauseating feeling that occurs when we experience employment and housing discrimination. As sometimes, we are outright denied opportunities because of the color of our skin, or we may

have that Ibuprophen throbbing headache, brought on by crimes of hate—vacant and occupied properties, homes and vehicles destroyed, set on fire by the ‘brazing’, who discriminately prowl the valley, leaving behind expletives, defacing the morals and integrity, reminiscent of the up close and personal indignities of past and present acts of crime, fueled by pure hatred!

Or we may medicate to eliminate that excruciating pain and soreness throughout the body that comes about as a result of African-American students who are suspended or expelled from school in numbers proportionately much greater than those of any other group for minor infractions, such as:

- “talking on cell phones” (in the restroom)
- “intending to fight”
- displaying a “stance of defiance”
- having a “threatening look”

Public school children are no more dangerous or destructive than they were 20 years ago. But the sanctions they face are much more severe, more likely to be imposed on students of color and more likely to severely damage their educations.

...One particularly sad commentary. Just before the Christ-

mas holidays last December, I received a tearful telephone call from the mother of a fourth grade student, (a boy, whom, I’ll call Roger). Now Roger did not actually receive an in-school or out-of-school suspension, but suffered psychologically when his teacher gave each student a cupcake for a treat, but denied Roger, whom was the only black kid in the room, a cupcake. Roger, observing that each child in the classroom had little blue and pink napkins, holding cupcakes with icing on top. Roger gets up from his seat, and walks to the teacher’s desk, and asks his teacher why he didn’t receive a cupcake just like his classmates. Roger’s teacher told him to go sit down!! Roger, humiliated, sat down, burying his head in hands for the remainder of the class.

“Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

We can no longer ignore the signs, the “blinking yellow lights” that signify that all that glitters is not gold! The lack of empathy and apathy diminishes hope and dampens the spirits of a child’s self-esteem, derailing their pathways to enriched learning opportunities.

Of course, we can not over look the many exemplary teachers and

administrators in the field that do all that they can to educate our children.

And for those of you that do not know—Phoenix is home to 325 public and charter and private schools. We have 1,043,298 students enrolled in Arizona schools-five percent represent African-American students.

We have AYP, NCLB, Terra Nova, A.I.M.S., and the list continues.

But, despite our attempts to defibrillate our schools’ performance, Arizona’s dropout rate is the worst in the nation (shared with Louisiana), holding a State designation ranking of 50th.

I ask,” who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

“A medical checkup from the neck up” are the first steps toward a remedy for “inclusion”...mobilizing in an effort to create a platform to monitor and address;

- Adoption and foster care
- Health disparities affecting African-Americans
- Diabetes—the sixth leading cause of death
- Heart disease—the number one leading cause of death for ALL racial and ethnic groups
- Cancer- the second leading cause of death
- Infant mortality

- HIV/AIDS
 - Strokes—the third leading cause of death
 - Homicides—the eighth leading cause of death
 - Women’s health issues
 - Substance abuse and respiratory diseases (one that we tend to overlook)
 - Mental health and family care giving
 - Suicide—the third leading cause in death
- ...but “who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—
...when the time comes to solicit Arizona voters, we need to consider supporting the restoration of voting rights to people with felony convictions...putting an end to the era of Jim Crow, by joining the majority of other states in the country.

We must establish a platform to allow people who have paid their debt to society to have a voice in it!

But “Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—

The spoken words peppered through my message to you this evening emphasizes a real need for all of us to be the vigilant with our message and to roll up our sleeves, step outside of our “comfort zones,” pull out our “to-do list” and place a checkmark next

to Mission and Goals, and next ask yourself: “who do I talk to, or where can I seek assistance?” You will undoubtedly, begin to wonder...“Who will listen?”

A New Year—A New Beginning—brings us to the fifth year celebrating African-American Legislative Days, with “A New Year, A New Beginning” to be filled with hope and promise. We would like the baton to be passed from our western neighbor New Mexico to Arizona, igniting the torch of time...the spark necessary in order to bring forth an African-American Affairs Commission to Arizona!

In short, this Commission will:

- Serve as a resource for community groups on African-American issues, programs,
- Assist in developing strategies and programs that will expand and enhance the social, cultural and economic status of African-Americans, in addition to;
- Advise the governor on policies, procedures, legislation, and regulations that affect the African-American community, and that will enable the state of Arizona to be responsive to the needs of the African-American community.

“Who will listen?”

People, we are standing on the rock...standing firm with faith... redemption in sight...yielding to none other than the principles of togetherness...stepping’ with stability...confirming confidence... ignoring the impossible...enabling the courageous...preparing and planning our purpose—to the establishment of Arizona’s first African-American Advisory Commission, under the conscientious and meticulous leadership of Senator Leah Landrum Taylor!

WHO WILL LISTEN? “THE COMMISSION WILL LISTEN!” ■

*A New Year—A New Beginning—
African-American Legislative Days
February 8, 2007*

State of the Arizona African-American Community

Speech Given by Senator Leah Landrum Taylor for African-American Legislative Days

Mr. Speaker, Honorable Senators and Representatives, honored guests and my fellow Arizonans:

It is my great privilege and honor to be speaking to you today. Today we kick off the 5th Annual African-American Legislative Days. I can't tell you how excited I am that this event continues to grow stronger with each year. I thank you all for your past support, and would like to take this opportunity to ask that you continue doing so in the years to come.

Why do we need your continued diligence in promoting the awareness of the cultural and historical needs of our African-American communities? Because we aren't there yet. Our work to empower our African-American communities and educate our State on the needs, history and culture of our communities is far from finished. Today, in times where mass media and worldwide communication should have eradicated the thoughtless and uncaring, there is still a large percentage of our great state's population who believes there is no such thing as a hate crime.

Arizona still has citizens who believe that it's okay to punish a child by denying them a quality ed-

ucation and access to healthcare because their parents are "too lazy" to afford it themselves. And they also automatically believe that nine times out of 10, those parents are people of color.

What lies ahead? I don't know. But what I hope is that we begin teaching the next generation of children from the start that we are all created equal. That God loves each of us, for our differences and in spite of our differences. And that parents and community groups stop infusing hate and intolerance in children from the moment of birth.

Until that happens, we will continue to need leaders such as the ones I see here today to show that there is a path to peace and

prosperity for all. That there are unique issues associated with understanding the social, cultural and economic needs of our African-American communities. And how do we do that? We're all here today to help answer that question. And I'm hoping that we spend the next 24 hours coming up with solutions to the problems facing our community today.

I truly believe in my heart that the quickest way to achieving our common goal of self and outside awareness of African-American issues is through the creation of an African-American Commission. Through the creation of this Commission we can:

1. Teach the political, economic and spiritual leaders of this state to be aware of the needs of our African-American communities. And we need to do this because we all know that the first step to being responsive to those needs is awareness.
2. Improve the relationships between African-Americans and non-African-Americans.
3. Empower African-American communities across our great state by showing them how to participate in the political and social processes so they promote the unique needs of their own friends and families.

4. And show Arizona how the rich African-American culture and history has helped shape our country.

Now, this is the second year in a row that I have sponsored legislation to create just such a Commission here in Arizona. Currently, there are seven states that have something similar to what I am promoting. I am hoping with your support, and the bi-partisan support of my legislative colleagues, we can make Arizona the eighth state on that list.

Because a Commission alone can't get far without the support or knowledge of those who live with these issues every day, while we are together today and tomorrow I'm hoping that we can pool our knowledge and resources to brainstorm ways to promote the ideals associated with this Commission. Be they education, healthcare, youth-related or economic development issues, before this Commission is created we need to start identifying areas important to meeting our goal of raising the status of our African-American communities.

While we've made strides in improving the quality of education for our African-American students, we are still falling behind children in other ethnic groups. Be it drop-

out rates, AIMS test scores or the number of our students pursuing a college degree upon graduation, we have a very long way to go before we are on par with the other communities across our state.

Access to quality and affordable healthcare is also a major concern for African-Americans. Because a large number of our family and friends do not have access to every-day, preventative care, our mortality rates are among the highest in the state. Our children are going without routine immunizations. Our parents are going without life-saving medical procedures and medications.

This has got to end. There is no quality of life if you're sick and can't afford to see a doctor. And in an age where medical advances are making it possible to live a longer, healthier life, it is an absolute outrage that those benefits are not trickling down to our African-American communities.

There are also many issues affecting our African-American youth that need to be dealt with if we are to stop the cycle of violence and poverty that have plagued our communities for far too long. Our children need to learn the value and importance of not only staying in school, but that they need to excel academically if they want to ensure a successful future for

themselves and their families.

Our children need to learn that breaking the law can only lead to one thing ... jail time. We need to find ways to keep these kids off the streets and in school, in meaningful after-school programs, in community organizations that teach self-awareness and community pride. We need to make them understand that turning to a life of crime is not the quick answer to life's problems. Instead, changing one's life circumstances through hard work and dedication is the only sure-fire way to achieve the goals we set for ourselves at a very young age.

After all, if you ask a five-year old what they want to be when they grow up, I doubt you'd get the answer "Prisoner number 7-8-4-3." Instead, they dream of being a teacher, a doctor, a policeman or an astronaut. And if you ask me, we need to make sure our children have the foundations they need to help them open whatever door to success they want.

And these doorways to success can only be open to our children if we do what is necessary to bring economic development to our African-American communities. We need to bring the businesses in so our friends and families have access to meaningful jobs that

pay real wages, wages that you can raise a family on. Without this, all the education and health-care advancements won't mean anything if we can't find jobs in our communities to support ourselves in a meaningful way.

This is why I am fighting, for the second year in a row, for the creation of the African-American Commission. While it won't be the panacea to all of life's problems, it is a fundamentally necessary first step in bringing our issues to the forefront of state politics and culture.

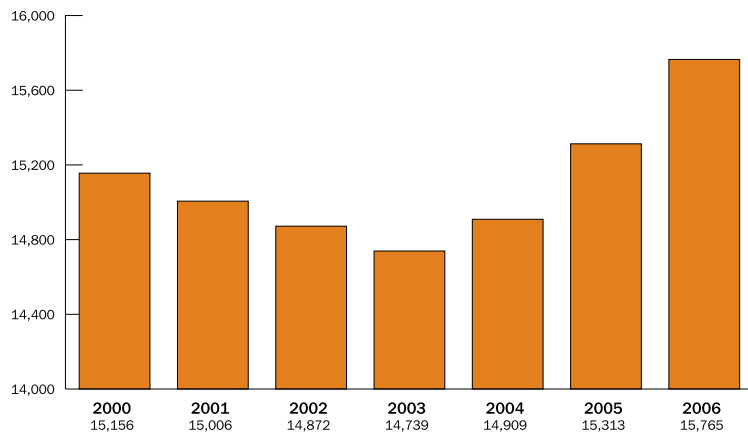
It is the first step in ensuring that our political, community, social and spiritual leaders have a forum to bring their ideas to help the advancement of African-American cultural and economic issues. It is the first step to making other communities and leaders aware of the unique qualities we bring to this state, and the unique needs we have to making sure that we are not left behind other ethnic groups when it comes to educational, healthcare and economic advancements.

In closing, I again would like to thank each and every one of you who are here today with the same goal in mind. Together we can make it happen not only for ourselves, but for future generations

as well because we owe it to our children to make sure that they have a more obstacle-free path to success than we did.

Thank you all, and I hope you enjoy the 5th Annual African-American Legislative Conference. ■

Figure 3.5: Employment level of African-Americans in the U.S.



From figure 3.5 to figure 3.8 , the rate of unemployment seems to be highest in 2003 and correspondingly the employment rate for the same year is least among the 7 years.

Figure 3.6: Employment population ratio of African-Americans in the U.S.

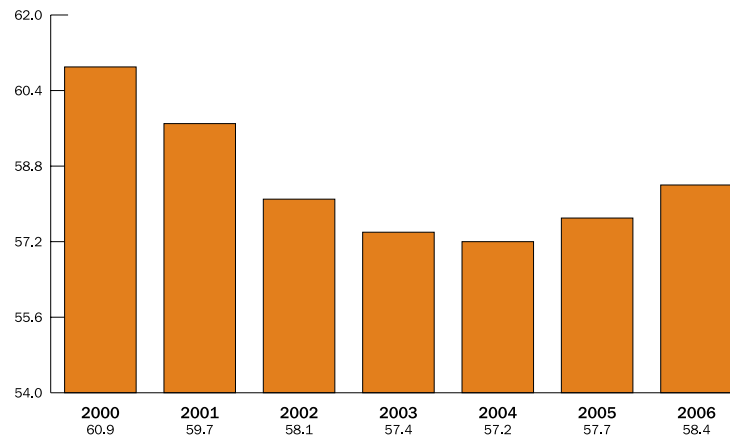


Figure 3.6 depicts the ratio between the number of African-Americans employed to the African-American population from 2000 to 2006. It is interesting to observe that even though the number employed in 2006 is more than the number in 2000 by 600 the ratio has dropped from about 61 in 2000 to 58 in 2006.

Figure 3.7: Unemployment level of African-Americans in the U.S.

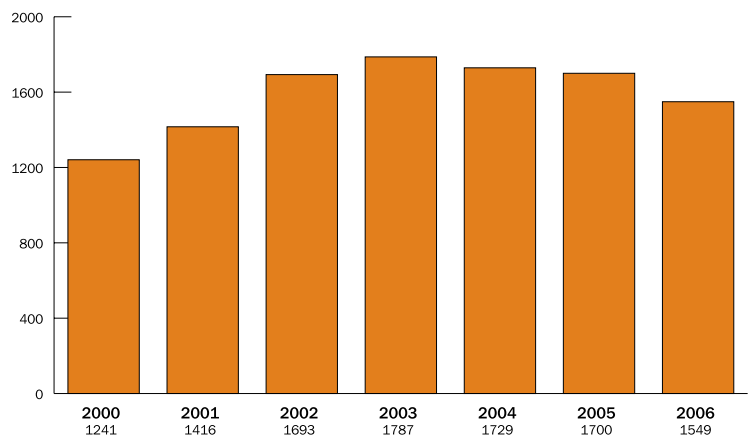


Figure 3.8: Unemployment rate of African-Americans in the U.S.

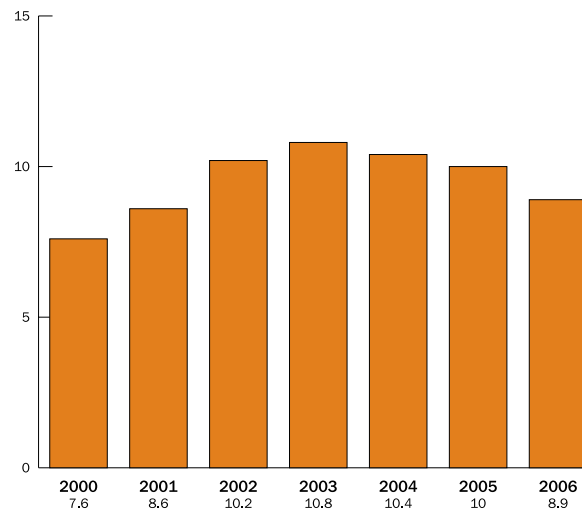


Figure 3.8 depicts the ratio of the number of African-Americans unemployed to the African-American population recorded the same year from 2000 to 2006.

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Printing: Arizona Public Service

Editor: Wilma Mathews, director,
ASU Office of Public Affairs

Project Facilitators:

- Channetta Curtis, ASU for Arizona intern, B.A. candidate, political science
- Kenja Hassan, assistant director, ASU for Arizona, Office of Public Affairs

Project Associates:

- Savannah Carroll, B.A. candidate, political science, African and African-American studies
- Shepsut Wilson, B.A. candidate, marketing, Northern Arizona University

Data Research:

- Amit Bothra, M.S. candidate, industrial engineering
- Catherine McNamara, Ph.D. candidate, social and behavioral sciences
- Sudarshan Ragunathan, M.S. candidate, electrical engineering

Technical Support: Sudheer Sangala, M.S. candidate, microelectronics technology

Book Design: Christopher De Herrera, ASU graphic designer

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- Lauren Ledbetter, ASU graphic designer
- Christopher De Herrera, ASU graphic designer

Photography: Tom Story, ASU photographer

Support for Youth Essay Contest: The Leadership Consortium

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- Lasana Hotep, student success coordinator, multicultural student services, ASU
- Stanlie James, director and professor, African and African-American studies, ASU
- Alonzo Jones, director, multicultural student services, ASU
- Michael Johnson, Phoenix city councilman, District 8
- Michael Kelly, president and chair, The Leadership Consortium
- The Honorable Leah Landrum Taylor, Arizona State Senate, District 16
- Madia Logan, director of membership and communication, Arizona Grant Makers Forum

- William "Teddy" McDaniel, vice president and executive vice provost, GE Capital, Young Professionals
- Albert McHenry, vice president and executive vice provost, ASU Polytechnic
- Bruce Relf, CEO, Fresh Start Community Services
- Angelita Reyes, professor, African and African-American studies, ASU
- Alyssa Robillard, assistant professor, African and African-American studies, ASU
- The Honorable Cody Williams, Justice of the Peace South Mountain Court
- Keva Womble, vice president, Chase Community Partnerships

Editorial Committee:

- Channetta Curtis, ASU for Arizona intern, B.A. candidate, political science
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- Rodrick Miller, director, Greater Phoenix Economic Council

Contributing Writers:

- Nicholas Alozie, professor, social and behavioral sciences, ASU
- Lisa Aubrey, professor, African and African-American studies, ASU
- The Honorable Cloves Campbell, Jr., Arizona State Representative, District 16
- Josalyn Caruthers, case manager, Casey Family Programs
- Mychael Clark, senior, McClintock High School
- Dr. Olga Idriss Davis, editor, African-American Legislative Committee Health Document
- Dana Dicks, teacher, Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center

- Amy Freeman, chief consultant, Enlighten Leadership and Empowerment, and Partner, Truth is Power, LLC,
- Abdullahi Gallab, assistant professor, African and African-American studies, ASU
- Tracee Hall, senior analyst to the Mayor, City of Phoenix
- Dr. Ann Hart, deputy associate superintendent, discipline initiatives, Arizona Department of Education
- David Hinds, assistant professor, African and African-American studies, ASU
- Lasana Hotep, student success coordinator, Multicultural Student Services, ASU
- Michael Kelly, president and chair, The Leadership Consortium
- The Honorable Leah Landrum Taylor, Arizona State Senator, District 16
- Rodrick Miller, director, Greater Phoenix Economic Council
- Alyssa Robillard, assistant professor, African and African-American Studies, ASU
- RJ Shannon, editor, African-American Legislative Committee Health Document
- Nancy Thomann, editor, African-American Legislative Committee Health Document
- Aribidesi Usman, assistant professor, African and African-American studies, ASU
- Matthew C. Whitaker, associate professor, history, ASU
- Pamela Williams, coordinator, technology training, Maricopa County Community College District
- The Honorable Penny L. Willrich, Arizona Superior Court Judge
- The Honorable Vallarie Woolridge, council member, Town of Florence, Arizona