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Link

*Black
History
Month
Issue*

*News for and about
Western Kentucky University's*

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND BROADCASTING

*It was a dream in the 1950s.
In 2000, What is reality?*

*Most journalists of color at U.S. dailies expect to leave
the newspaper business according to two national surveys.*

1996:

Better pay and development opportunities would encourage many journalists of color to stay in the media field according to a 1996 APME report.

One-fourth of African-American journalists and three in 10 Native American journalists expect to leave the media field altogether. Altogether, nearly half of African-Americans plan either to leave the field or move to a medium other than newspapers.

1999:

A 1999 survey of more than 450 journalists of color-commissioned by The Freedom Forum found that more than half (55%) of journalists of color at U.S. Dailies expect to leave the newspaper business.

Of those who said they might leave newspaper journalism, about four of 10 (41%) said they expected to

leave within the next five years.

Overall, this means that nearly one in four journalists of color (23%) may leave the newspaper business within the next five years.

Other Findings:

- Most blacks (56%) said they decided to go into newspaper journalism during high school or earlier while the majority of other journalists of color decided in college or later.
- Most Asian-American and Hispanic journalists gave their current newspapers good grades (either "A" or "B") for their commitment to diversity in the newsroom (69% and 57% respectively). Black journalists gave their papers lower marks (41% "A" or "B").

Read detailed findings from the surveys inside

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

spend less time than average in entry-level positions.

Equal treatment:

All groups of color — again, especially African-Americans — are much more likely to feel that everyday performance standards are higher for people of color than they are for whites. Whites tend to believe performance standards are lower for people of color.

Hiring criteria:

People of color — especially African-Americans — are much more likely to feel that newly hired journalists of color are more qualified than white journalists than they are to feel journalists of color are less qualified. Among white journalists, the results are the opposite.

Respect and appreciation:

Whites are much more likely than people of color to feel their accomplishments are appreciated. African-American women are especially negative on this assessment of their newsrooms.

Racism in the newsroom:

Six in 10 journalists of color have experienced racial tension or subtle prejudice from co-workers, and more than four in 10 say they have encountered overt racism.

The Associated Press Managing Editors survey, conducted among journalists in 1996, focuses on the newsroom experiences of journalists of color.

1996

Commitment to diversity:

Whites are divided on whether diversity has been overemphasized in recent years. Journalists of color feel strongly that diversity has not been overemphasized.

Coverage of topics related to race or ethnicity:

By a two-to-one margin, whites agree that their newspapers do a good job of covering communities of color. People of color strongly believe that their newspapers do not cover their communities well.

Components of job satisfaction:

Whites and people of color agree that the most important aspect of their job satisfaction is that "the work is satisfying and makes good use of your skills and talents." However, people of color are nearly twice as likely as whites to give their newspapers "poor" ratings on this dimension.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Likelihood of staying in newspaper journalism

About six of 10 black journalists at U.S. Daily newspapers (59%) said they might leave newspaper journalism.

Incentives to stay in the field. Of those who said things could be done to keep them in newspaper journalism, better pay or better hours was mentioned by 28% of black journalists (37% of Hispanic journalists, and 27% of Asian-American journalists).

Better pay was not the No. 1 response among black journalists, however. Slightly more black journalists (32%) said that "more opportunities for professional development and advancement" would help keep them in the field.

Prospects for advancement

Seventy percent of black journalists at U.S. dailies said that their prospects for advancement within newspaper journalism were "excellent" or "good." (The comparable figures for Asian-American journalists and Hispanic journalists were (87%) and were 82% respectively).

Job satisfaction

Of black newspaper journalists 57% said they like their current job "very much." (Two-thirds (65%) of Asian-American and Hispanic. Just 4% of journalists of color said they did not like their current job very much).

If they had it to do over

If they had it to do over again 76% of black journalists said they would choose newspaper journalism as a career (Asian-Americans, 87%; Hispanics, 83%).

Alternative career preferences

Among blacks that said they might leave newspaper journalism, fiction writing and teaching were the second and third most often mentioned alternatives to newspaper journalism, chosen by 15% and 16% respectively. The top choice for black journalists who might leave the field was a career in business outside the news media altogether (mentioned by 22%).

(For Hispanic and Asian-American newspaper journalists, fiction writing and teaching were mentioned most often as fields of work that they might go into if they left the newspaper business. Three in 10 (29%) Hispanic journalists who said they might leave the business expressed an interest in writing fiction, while two in 10 (18%) said they might enter the field of education. Among Asian-Americans, the figures were 20% for each of these options.

The burnout factor

Black (53%) journalists also mentioned burnout as a major factor if they decided to leave the newspaper business (Hispanic journalists (68%); and 63% Asian-American).

Extra effort required to get ahead

Black journalists in particular

These findings on this page were released as part of a survey conducted by the Freedom Forum of more than 450 journalists of color in the month preceding the Unity '99 convention.

1999

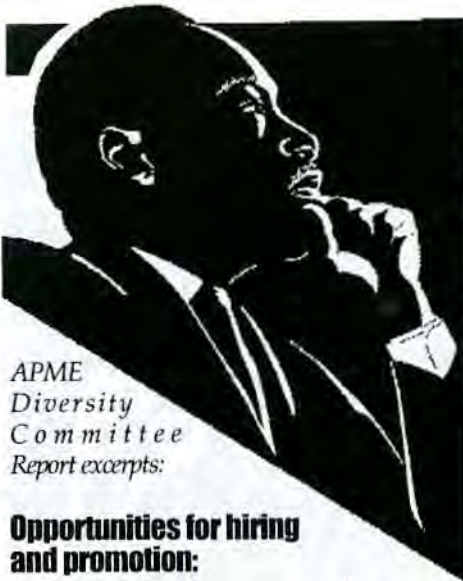
feel they have to work harder than their white counterparts to advance. Two-thirds (67%) "strongly agreed" with the statement, "As a journalist of color, I sometimes feel that I have to work harder than white journalists to get ahead." Another 23% said they "somewhat agreed" with this statement, meaning that nine out of 10 blacks in newspaper journalism feel this way to some degree.

Nearly half of Hispanic journalists (45%) and more than a third of Asian American journalists (36%) also "strongly agreed" that they sometimes feel they have to work harder than white journalists to get ahead. Overall, two-thirds of Hispanic and Asian-American journalists (67%) feel this way to some degree.

Related story on page 6

2000

Is it still a dream?



APME
Diversity
Committee
Report excerpts:

Opportunities for hiring and promotion:

People of color — especially African-Americans — tend to think they are less likely than average to be promoted. Whites think people of color — especially African-Americans — are more likely than average to be promoted.

Neither white journalists nor journalists of color felt that affirmative action has increased hiring or advancement in their newsrooms. Whites, by a 72% majority, felt that affirmative action has had no impact. Half of the people of color agreed. However, the remainder of people of color felt strongly that affirmative action has slowed, rather than increased, hiring and advancement.

Individual career success:

High proportions of people of color — especially African-Americans — believe that they spend more time than others in entry-level positions. White journalists tend to believe that journalists of color

Black History Month

A celebration

During the 1920's an African American named Carter

Woodson, created and promoted Negro History Week. This period in February was chosen because it included the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

In 1976 the month-long celebration was implemented, and for the first time many Americans reflected on both the history and teachings of African Americans.



MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE

She founded Bethune Cookman College on church and club donations, and even sold sweet potato pies to raise money.



ALTHEA GIBSON

She was a troubled youth, yet she was able to use her talent for tennis as a rite of passage.



WILMA RUDOLPH

She overcame the crippling effect of polio to become a world-renowned track star.



BENJAMIN BANNEKER

His accurate predictions of eclipses and weather patterns based upon the galaxy earned him the title, "Star Gazer."



MARION ANDERSON

She was known as the bearer for grace and elegance among black singers.



W.E.B. DUBOIS

He was a pioneer in black history and a sociologist attacking the racist theories of the early 20th century.



GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

This father of invention refused to patent any of his over 450 agriculture innovations.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

He was known as the spokesman for the free Negro and a fighter for human rights.



THURGOOD MARSHALL

Many of his NAACP court victories were landmarks in the Civil Rights struggle.



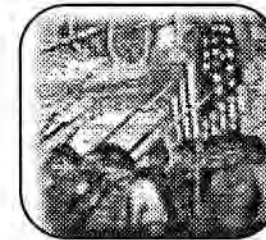
PAUL ROBESON

Known as a man for all seasons, he was a celebrated actor, athlete, scholar, and singer.



SOJOURNER TRUTH & HARRIET TUBMAN

These women were patriots in disguise and warriors of the anti-slavery movement.



MASSACHUSETTS 54TH INFANTRY

In May 1863, Boston buzzed with excitement as the first regiment of free black men marched to Civil War battle.



HARLEM RENAISSANCE

It was the era when the black middle class developed and prospered. The new Negro was in style.

Nikita Stewart

It's 1 a.m., Feb. 11. Yesterday, I kissed five men other than my husband. I was

called in to work early for a story that the editor himself requested. (The story was abandoned at the end of the day.) The mayor of New Jersey's largest city addressed me personally in his state of the city address.

I'm a 105-pound black woman with a Texas twang dripping with a bluegrass brogue. And I work as a reporter in a market that chews up and spits out journalists faster than a Russellville farmer can grind snuff into black dribble.

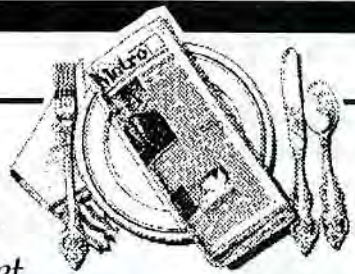
This is the East Coast rat race. Whatever you are learning at Western Kentucky University, remember it and then realize that you may, at times, have to throw it out. As a college student, I interned at the *Birmingham Post-Herald*, the *Lexington Herald-Leader* and the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, where I worked after college for three years.

Nothing prepared me for my toughest assignment - Newark City Hall reporter at *The Star-Ledger*. It's as fast-paced and hazardous as the New Jersey Turnpike.

The genteel ways I used to get stories in Kentucky and Alabama are getting me by. Actually, they are to my advantage. I give politicians a southern comfort that comes natu-

Print Journalism

Graduate talks about being female, black and southern-schooled in an urban market.



motherhood and the latest fashions, with the best sources ever - secretaries,

who are still mostly women.

I also go with the flow. Once they know you, East Coast folks love to kiss hello - a strange custom for an area of the country where a person can pass 100 people without even a wave. I'm sure professors at Western are not teaching you the art of moving your head so that a person gets cheek instead of lips.

I also don't know if this article will help anyone because I'm rambling and it's time to go to bed. Despite the difficulties of being a southern-schooled journalist in an urban market, the basics still apply.

Always be fair and accurate. Without those, you won't make it in any part of the country.

NOTE:

SPJ members, *Herald* staffers and others will be on the road again this semester, giving journalism seminars in Owensboro and Tennessee, and planning is already underway for the annual Western Minority Journalism Workshop and the annual SPJ Kentucky High School Journalism Mark of Excellence competition.

It's going to be a busy semester, but then there is no substitute for excellence.

rally. I've been dubbed by City Hall employees as the silent assassin, killing my subjects softly. Of course, it doesn't always work. I sometimes have trouble getting documents in a city, where the mayor's chief of staff, two council members and a police director have gone to jail in the last decade.

Inside the newsroom, I may be seen as weak by other reporters who like to huff and puff. Also, inside the newsroom, there are a lot of good writers. Shortly after I arrived at *The Star-Ledger* in April, I quickly learned that I was going to have to step up my writing. I found a mentor at the paper who has helped me tremendously. I also joined a writing group at the paper.

Outside the newsroom, black and female are often seen as strikes in getting stories. But black students, you can turn them around. Black politicians may feel more comfortable talking to you, but don't let them pull the race card. ("I can't believe you, as a black woman, would write something like that about your own race," some like to say. A councilwoman once accused me of racial profiling.)

As a female, you sometimes share the common interests, such as

This is a story of a little boy named Theo, who woke up one morning and asked God, "What if there were no Black people in the world?" Well God thought about that for a moment and then said, "Son Follow me around today and let's just see what it would be like if there were no Black people in the world. Get dressed and we will get started."

Theo ran to his room to put on his clothes and shoes. But there were no shoes, and his clothes were all wrinkled. He looked for the iron, but when he reached for the ironing board, it was no longer there. You see *Sarah Boone, a Black woman, invented the ironing board* and *Jan E. Matzlinger, a Black man invented the shoe lasting machine.*

"Oh well, God said, go and do your hair." Theo ran in his room to comb his hair, but the comb was not there. You see, *Walter Sammons, a Black man, invented the comb.* Theo decided to just brush his hair, but the brush was gone. You see *Lydia O. Newman, a Black female invented the brush.*

Well, he was a sight, no shoes, wrinkled clothes, hair a mess without the hair care inventions of *Madam C.J. Walker*, well, you get the picture.

God told Theo, "Let's do the chores around the house and then take a trip to the grocery store." Theo's job was to sweep the floor. He swept and swept and swept. When he reached for the dustpan, it was not there. You see, *Lloyd P. Ray, a Black man, invented the dustpan.* So he swept his pile of dirt over in the corner and left it there. He then decided to mop the floor, but the mop was gone. You see, *Thomas W. Stewart, a Black man, invented the mop.* Theo thought to himself, "I'm not having any luck."

"Well son," God said. "We should wash the clothes and prepare a list for the grocery store."?? When he was finished, Theo went to place the clothes in the dryer, but it was not there. You see, *George T. Samon, a Black man, invented the clothes dryer.* Theo got a pencil and some paper to prepare the list for the market, but noticed that the pencil lead was broken, as well, he was out of luck because *John Love, a black man, invented the pencil sharpener.* He reached for a pen, but it was not there because *William Purvis, a Black man, invented the fountain pen.*

As a matter of fact, *Lee Burridge invented the type writing machine*, and *WA. Lavelle, the printing press.* So they decided to head out to the market.

Well, when Theo opened the door, he noticed the grass was as high as he was tall. You see *the lawn mower was invented by John Burr, a Black man.*

They made their way over to the car and found that it just wouldn't go. You see, *Robert Spikes, a Black man, invented the automatic gear shift* and *Joseph Gammel invented the supercharge system for internal combustion engines.* They noticed that the few cars that were moving were running into each other and having wrecks because there were no traffic signals. You see, *Garrett A. Morgan, a Black man invented the traffic light.* Well, it was getting late, so they walked to the market, got their groceries and returned home.

Just when they were about to put away the milk, eggs and butter, they noticed the refrigerator was gone. You see, *John Standard, a Black man, invented the refrigerator.* So they put the food on the counter. By this time, they noticed it was getting mighty cold. Theo went to turn up

the heat and what do you know, *Alvie Parker, a Black female, invented the heating furnace.* Even in the summer time they would have been out of luck because *Frederick Jones, a Black man, invented the air conditioner.*

It was almost time for Theo's father to arrive home. He usually took the bus, but there was no bus because its precursor was *the electric trolley, invented by another Black man, Elbert T. Robinson.*

He usually took the elevator from his office on the 20th floor, but there was no elevator because *Alexander Miles, a Black man, invented the elevator.*

He usually dropped off the office mail at a nearby mailbox, but it was no longer there because *Phillip Downing, a Black man, invented the letter drop mailbox* and *William Barry invented the postmarking and canceling machine.*

Theo sat at the kitchen table with his head in his hands. When his father arrived he asked, "Why are you sitting in the dark?"

Why?? Because *Lewis Howard Latimer, a Black man, invented the filament within the light bulb.* Theo quickly learned what it would be like if there were no Black people in the world. Not to mention if he were ever sick and needed blood. *Charles Drew, a Black scientist, found a way to preserve and store blood which led to his starting the world's first blood bank.*

And what if a family member had to have surgery. This would not have been possible without *Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, a Black doctor, who performed the first open heart surgery.*

So if you ever wonder, like Theo, where we would be without Blacks?

Well, it's pretty plain to see, we could very well still be in the dark!

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• **February 28, 2000**

Greg Joyce, copy editor
Elizabeth Buckberry Joyce,
copy editor/page design-
er

lution director

• **March 27, 2000**

Tommie A. McLeod, circu-

• **April 2000**

Richard Reeves, advertis-
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Sonya Doctorian, an assis-
tant managing
editor/photography.

Oops! We inadvertently omitted Steve White's name from his article in our last issue.

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