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Newspaper; 1988-06-17; Carl Bland

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J. Carl Bland Speaks
To State Judicial Panel

A special state Judicial Commission on Minorities was formed to study the treatment of minorities in the state's court system. There were many hearings held across the state.

Judge Bruce Wright in New York State should be present, speaking in Arthur's behalf. He stated that he noticed only one black juror perhaps will be serving on a jury of a court case, but that it is a criminal case involving a black defendant. Jobs are sometimes not widely advertised and are most often filled under the ruse of "passing" or "failing" some test that has no relevance to the job to be performed but has been an excuse for hiring an almost all white staff.

Mr. Bland stated that the unbelievable ousting of Buffalo's highly respected first black woman Judge, Barbara M. Sims for no reason was horrifying. "She turned to the court, but I doubt that there is an unbiased, fair unprejudiced court to which she can turn where a white judge will do justice," Mr. Bland said.

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Common Council President, George K. Arthur branded the local court system as racist. Blacks and Hispanics make up 35% of the Buffalo population, but few have court-related jobs. Donald Lee, a key aide to George Arthur, who could not be present, speaking in Arthur's behalf said that out of 12 Buffalo City Court judges, only 3 are black and one is Hispanic. And that in Western New York only out of 9 appellate judges is black. There are no black state trial court judges; there are only 6 minority lawyers on the Erie County district attorney's 85 lawyer staff and only one of the 13 City Court stenographers is black and none are Hispanic, Lee said. Every trial shown on television is a black trial or involves minorities.

J. Carl Bland, Chairman of the Buffalo NAACP Life Membership Committee, and a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church, spoke on the issue. He stated that he noticed only one black juror perhaps will be serving on a jury of a court case, but seldom if it is a criminal case involving a black defendant. Jobs are sometimes not widely advertised and are most often filled under the ruse of "passing" or "failing" some test that has no relevance to the job to be performed, but has been an excuse for hiring an almost all white staff.

Mr. Bland stated that the unbelievable ousting of Buffalo's highly respected first and only black woman Judge, Barbra M. Sims for no reason was horrifying. "She turned to the court, but I doubt that there is an unbiased, fair unprejudiced court to which she can turn where a white judge will do justice," Mr. Bland said. "I have seen the harrassment of Judge Bruce Wright in New York City who has not been reappointed to the Criminal Court. Other black women such as Police Captain, Marian Bass harrassed in their jobs without any fair court for them to turn to."

"That New York State should have to resort to a special prosecutor only points out the deteriorating racial climate which I believe is fostered by the racist court system, wherein whites have come to believe that we, as African Americans, have no rights which they must respect," stated Mr. Bland. "Two cases come to mind where two of the so called 'Ladies of the Evening,' were picked up and one policeman testified that the other policeman took one of the ladies in to the back of the station where no male policeman was to carry any female without the presence of a female police officer, where the lady testified that she was forced to have sex with the officer. The court ruled insufficient evidence. The other case a white male robs a bank and is allowed to repay for said bank robbery. A white female secretary embezzeled money...

The speaker for the evening was Dr. William Pickard, Chairman of Regal Plastics of Detroit, Michigan. He stated that blacks are 7th place in income and that our purchasing power in 1987 was over $200,000,000,000. That we have power but do not use it. We have over 5000 elected black officials in the country. Blacks make up 12% of the population. But in 1986, shoes that cost $125 a pair were bought by us - 60% of shoes bought were bought by blacks. We are the profit margin for most Corporations.

He also stated that we as a people are hung up on CAN'T DO and SHOULD DO. We need to build our self worth. We cannot be independent with dependent thinking. We must not keep asking people to do for us, they'll do it TO us. We do not produce much of anything, but buy everything. We must be together to recycle our monies in our neighborhoods.

He left an impact on all as he stated, "We have come from the cottonfield to the football field; from the outhouse to the white house; as you run this race, you may stumble, you may fall, but don't stop — don't give up.

We all stood and sang a song full of the faith that the dark has taught us; a song full of the hope that the present has brought us -- facing the rising sun of our new day begun. We will march on 'till victory is won.