

AN African-American Perspective

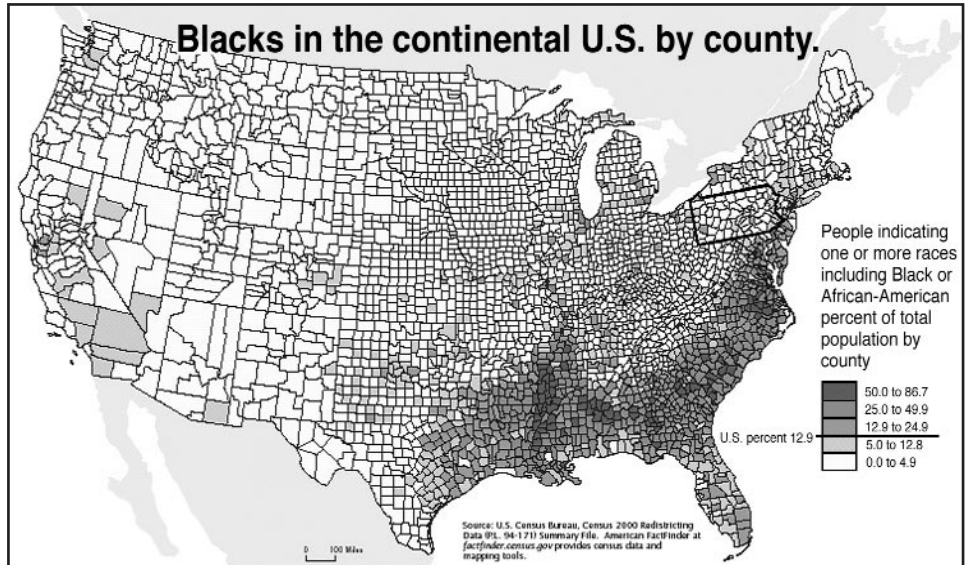
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The Fight for Black Farmland.

Back in the day (the 1970's), there was a thing called the Black Nationalist Movement. It was a hodge-podge of community activists, cultural separatists, neo-progressive Black politicians and Black militants. The Black Panthers, the NAACP, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and others were exploring various strategies to end racial oppression in the United States. Some sought to find equality in the political realm, others wanted to go back to Africa. A few groups wanted to establish self-sustaining Black communities within the United States. During those days, the rhetoric was inspirational, defiant and imaginative. Black Nationalists said that the reason that most African-Americans were powerless was that they did not own the means of capital production. It was said that the most fundamental form of production was land ownership.

The most fundamental use of land ownership is farming. It was reported recently that in the 1920's, about 14% of American farmland was owned by Blacks. Today that number is less than one percent! Ownership of valuable land is the basis of economic power. The United States Department of Agriculture offered low cost loans to help America's farmers during hard times. However, Black farmers were systematically denied access to the loans. As a result, many Black (and other minority) farmers lost their farms.

Last month the United States Department of Agriculture was in the news spotlight when it asked for Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Mrs. Sherrod was thrust onto the national scene when a video of her speaking at a NAACP meeting was posted on the Internet. In retaliation for the NAACP call for the Tea Party Movement to rid itself of its racist elements, blogger Andrew Breitbart accused the 100-year old civil rights organization of being racist. As proof, he posted a short edited video clip of Mrs. Sherrod's speech on his website.



Where the Blacks are; According to the 2000 Census map above, most Blacks still live in the Southeastern United States. NOTE: there are few concentrations of Blacks in Pennsylvania. Lycoming County ranks as 0.0 to 4.9 percent.

Fearing a right-wing media storm fueled by FOX news, the Obama Administration and the leadership of the NAACP demanded that Sherrod quit.

Ironically, the allegations of Sherrod being a racist by failing to help a white farmer was proven false and actually, the opposite was true. The website ColorofChange.com said in a email alert, "The story of Shirley Sherrod's alleged racism was a fabrication created by the right-wing media, led by Andrew Breitbart and FOX News. Breitbart and Fox were counting on Sherrod's silence to perpetrate their fraud. But thanks to Shirley's strength and the quick appearance of her full remarks, their attempt to spread their lies throughout the mainstream media failed, and they were exposed as con-artists trying to stoke racial fear and paranoia for political gain.

This is not the first time Breitbart and FOX have attempted something like this, and it certainly won't be the last.

Over the last year, Breitbart, FOX, and other members of the right wing media machine have repeatedly run distorted and fabricated stories claiming a wave of anti-White racism from the Black community, including President Obama. Their motive is simple: mobilize the far right and deflect attention from the deep-seated racism within key parts of their movement."

Subsequently, the Secretary of the USDA, Tom Vilsack publicly apologized and offered Mrs. Sherrod a new position within the USDA. The NAACP and President Obama apologized for their hasty condemnations. Even FOX News gave a half-hearted apology. (As of this writing, Breitbart has remained silent.)

The acquisition of Black-owned land is nothing new. Slavery was abolished in Pennsylvania in 1780 but it was a slow transition to freedom for the slaves. The last slaves reached their freedom age by 1848. Although there was only a handful

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The Fight for Black Farmland

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Blacks living in Lycoming County, it is unclear how many owned their own land. In 1850, only 61 of the 364 blacks in the county lived in Williamsport (16%). By 1880, 762 of the 897 blacks in the county lived in Williamsport (85%). [There were 300 blacks living outside the city in 1850, but 30 years later in 1880, that number was reduced to 135, a 55% reduction.]*



Mrs. Shirley Sherrod in a video clip from a NAACP Meeting.

In other words, by 1880 most African-Americans in Lycoming County were living within the Williamsport city limits. Did these Blacks own land outside the city or were they sharecroppers?

Why did they move to the city? Were they forced from their farms to live in the ghetto, near the factories and railroad yards in Williamsport?

The study of population migrations is tricky business. Sometimes Blacks moved to other areas because of natural disasters like the flood of 1889 that destroyed the riverside shantytown in Duboistown. In other cases, White rioters destroyed Black towns. But more often, Blacks were simply segregated by county statute and city ordinances. More study is needed in this area.

Ultimately, as Mrs. Sherrod correctly proposed in her speech, the issue is not a question about race, it is a class struggle – the rich against the poor. The rich gentry class maintain power and wealth by controlling the basic element of production, the land.

**A Picture of Lycoming County, Vol. 2 by Mark Peter Harer and Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck (1978). A Research Project Of the Greater Williamsport Community Arts Council in conjunction with The Williamsport Area School District. Funded through The Comprehensive Employee's Training Act. (CETA) Title VI 1977-1978 Lycoming County*

The Battle Almost Won: Black Farmers to Get Paid.

NAACP Legislative alert!

The NAACP urges the United States Senate to provide full funding in Pigford II discrimination lawsuit. The bill also contains repayment under the Cobell Settlement of lost royalty funds for mismanagement of natural resources of American Indian lands.

THE ISSUE:

As early as Monday, August 2, 2010, the United States Senate is expected to take up legislation to provide the \$1.25 billion necessary to fund the Pigford II settlement. This settlement, which was announced by the US Department of Agriculture and the US Department of Justice in February of

this year, would provide as many as 70,000 African American farmers, many of whom suffered blatant discrimination at the hands of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for decades, with cash damage awards and debt relief. These claims cannot even begin to be investigated, let alone settled, until after Congress has appropriated the funding. Funding for the Pigford settlement had been approved by the US House on July 1, 2010, but the money was stripped by the U.S. Senate on June 22, 2010.

The legislation to be considered also contains \$1.41 billion to provide for the Cobell settlement, which involves lost royalty funds flowing from the mismanagement of natural resources on Indi-

an land by the U.S. Department of the Interior for more than a century.

There is an urgency to pass this appropriation to settle the class action lawsuits of African-American farmers and Native Americans. Many of the farmers who would qualify for monies under the settlement have waited as long as 10 years to be compensated; some have already died or lost their farms. After years of discriminatory treatment by USDA credit and program agencies, these farm families have already waited almost a decade for compensation for these well-established claims. It is time to allow these farmers to focus on the future, and move forward unencumbered by the racial discrimination of the past.



HCZ: A Comprehensive Approach to Education

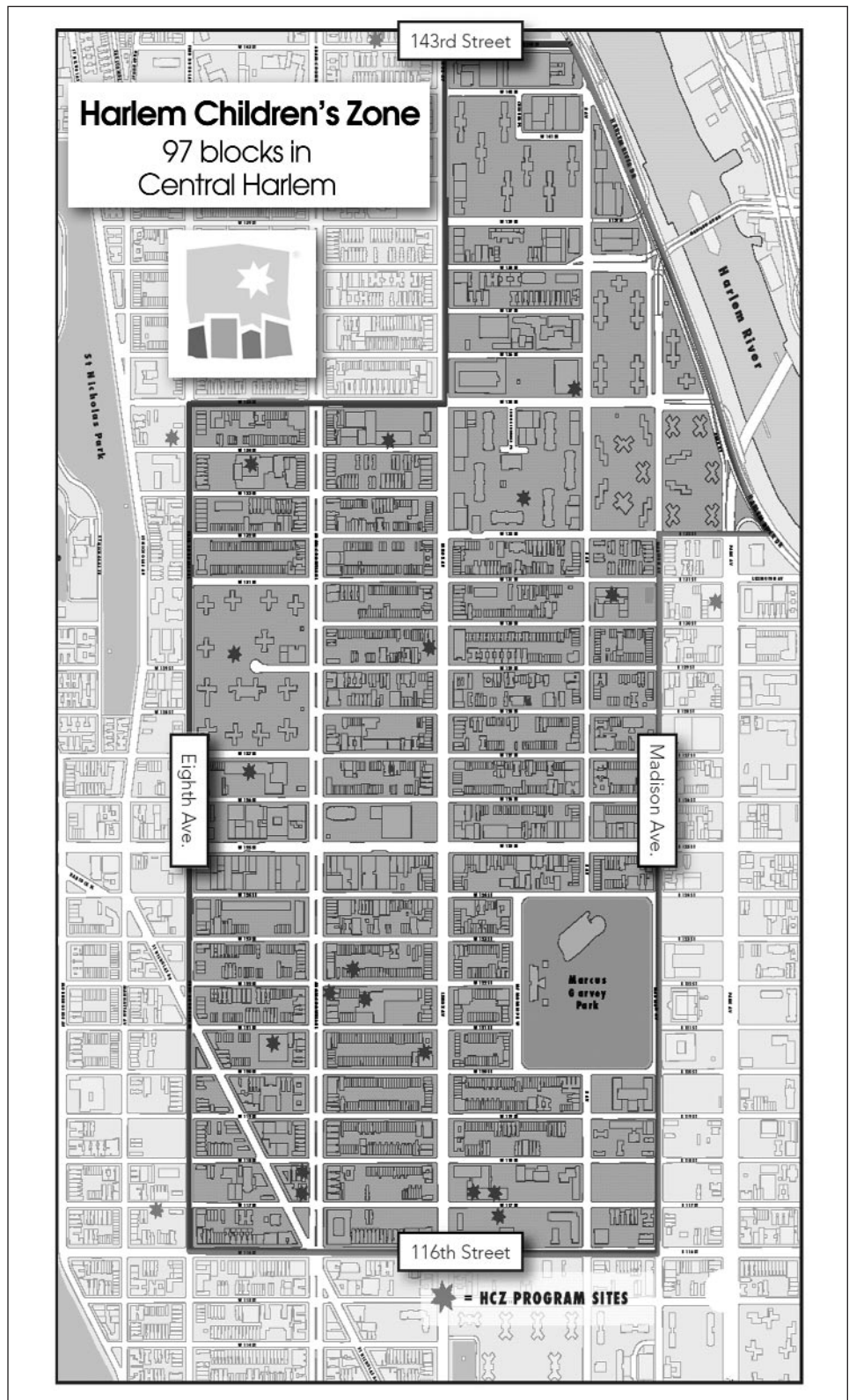
The Harlem Children's Zone® mission is rooted in the belief that the cycle of poverty can be broken by the coupling of a critical mass of engaged, effective families with the provision of readily accessible early and progressive intervention in children's development. This combination is absolutely essential to help youth achieve the educational and economic opportunities that would otherwise be denied to them. In the fall of 2000, under the leadership of Geoffrey Canada, HCZ launched the Harlem Children's Zone Project – a place-based initiative that has been called “one of the most ambitious social-policy experiments of our time” by the New York Times (Paul Tough, June 2004).

HCZ believes that the success of the HCZ Project is intrinsically linked to the establishment of and adherence to a core set of principles that are necessary to create change:

- Serve an entire neighborhood comprehensively and at scale.
- Create a pipeline of support.
- Build community among residents, institutions, and stakeholders, who help to create the environment necessary for children's healthy development.
- Evaluate program outcomes and create a feedback loop that cycles data back to management for use in improving and refining program offerings.
- Cultivate a culture of success rooted in passion, accountability, leadership, and teamwork.

In the United States today, more than 13 million children—nearly one in five—live in poverty. We know that that these children face a future in which they are far less likely than other children to get a good education or adequate health care and more likely to enter prison. Poverty now costs the U.S. about 4% of its gross domestic product annually in lost production, decreased economic output, and increased social expenditures.

Most traditional poverty-fighting approaches are narrowly focused. Hampered by a lack of resources, many are not able to provide high-quality programs, or if they can, it is only to a few hundred children. Others attend only to a single issue or single age group, failing to address all the developmental needs of children. And the great majority of approaches neglect the neighborhood environment that surrounds children and affects them profoundly.



Geoffrey Canada, the CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone said in a recent documentary of his life's work, "I was haunted by my friends, that the systems around them all said the best thing you could do is maybe drop out of school, try and get some kind of job and by 17, their lives were basically over. And I just mean over."

HCZ: A Comprehensive Approach to Education

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Academic excellence is a principal goal of the HCZ Pipeline, but high-quality schools are only one of the means we use to achieve it. Others include nurturing stable families, supporting youth development, improving health through fitness and nutrition, and cultivating engaged and involved adults and community stakeholders.

Children can enter the HCZ Pipeline at any age and they will be supported with high-quality programs. We have aggressive outreach efforts and multiple entrance points because we want families to easily access the HCZ Pipeline whenever they are able to do so. Once they have entered, we do not want them to leave. We promise parents that if their children regularly attend our programs, we will prepare them for college. We have made good on that promise, even when children first enter the HCZ Pipeline in their teens. Today, HCZ has approximately 500 students in college who participated only in our after-school programs, and not in our charter schools or early childhood programs. However, we have found that the earlier a child enters and the longer he or she remains in the HCZ Pipeline, the greater the cumulative impact.

Like most non-profit organizations, the Harlem Children's Zone® (HCZ®) has evolved over time. In the 1990s, HCZ (then known as Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families) operated a

hodgepodge of good, but disparate and disconnected programs. Typical of the non-profit sector, we reached only a small fraction of the children in the communities we served, and we worked with

“You just keep reinforcing to young people that Harlem is a community that expects great things from its kids. You say it, they see it. They just keep bumping into it.”

*- Geoffrey Canada, CEO, HCZ
CNN interview with Soledad o'Brien*

them for only a year or two of their lives. We lacked a strong system for tracking outcomes or for using data to improve our services. Our impact was limited to the particular families who participated in our programs. Because our efforts were directed at many different issues across many neighborhoods, we were unable to have a significant effect on one entire community.

Two main tenets of HCZ:

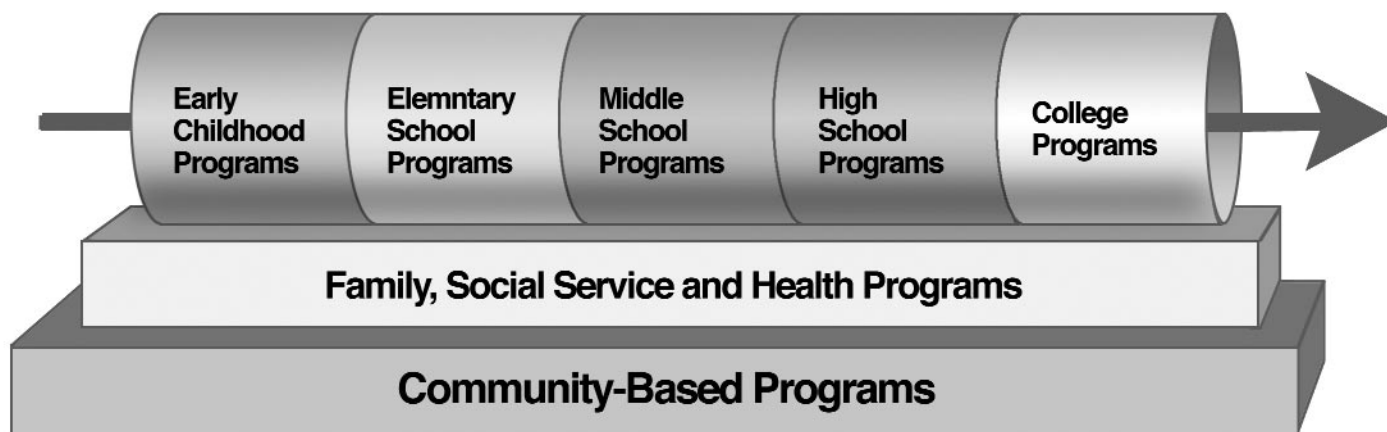
First, children from troubled communities are far more likely to grow to healthy, self-reliant adulthood (and then to help build a better community themselves) if a critical mass of the adults around them are well versed in the techniques of effective parenting and are engaged in local educational, social, and religious activities with their children. Second, the earlier a child is served by sound health care, appropriate intellectual and social stimulation, and consistent guidance from loving, attentive adults, the more likely that child will be to grow into a productive citizen.

These twin principles—a critical mass of engaged, effective families and early and progressive intervention in children's development—form the foundation of the HCZ Project. By concentrating services on children and residents in a specific geographic area, providing best-practice services, engaging adults in the project, and evaluating the results, we have changed the opportunities, expectations, and outcomes for families living in the HCZ Project area.

It takes more than \$64 million a year to run the Harlem Children's Zone. Canada gets a third from government funding and the rest -- about \$40 million -- comes from private donations.

www.HCZ.org

Harlem Children's Zone's Pipeline to Success Principle



HCZ by the numbers: 97 blocks in Central Harlem; 10,462 children served in 2009; 7,434 adults served in 2009; \$75 million annual budget (FY 2010); 1,500 staff, including 1,000 part time; 1,200 students at Promise Academy charter schools; 491 students attending college; \$7.3 million in tax funds returned through free tax-assistance program; 18 program sites and 2 K-12 charter schools. **HCZ Results for the seventh year in a row;** 100% of HCZ's Harlem Gems pre-kindergarteners were assessed to be "school ready"; 90% of HCZ's high school seniors have been accepted into college.

Reading is the First Step Out of Chronic Poverty.



In December 2007, I received an email correspondence from a group known as the Lycoming Partnership. I was not sure why I received the email but replied to the organization with some helpful tips to improve the conditions of low income households in Lycoming County Pennsylvania. Here's what I said:

Hello.

Somehow my name was included in the recent email notification from the Partnership Lycoming organization. Thank you for the update.

I have a few suggestions to help eliminate youth violence in our community. I would like to pass them on to you in the hope that some of my ideas might be implemented.

For the last 10 months I have produced a self-funded community newsletter entitled, "An African-American Perspective." As a concerned citizen, I felt it was my obligation to do something to stem the violence on Williamsport's streets. The core issue is "black-on-black" crime. (Although crime, generally, is a universal problem the particular phenomenon of young black males shooting each other in gang- or drug related altercations has created a heightened sense of fear and apprehension in our town.)

My newsletter was designed to get at the root cause of the problem and to present alternative solutions. I suggested, for example, that people read a wonderful book by Professor Elijah Anderson, "Code of the Street". I included a brief evaluation of his work in my October 2007 issue. Dr.

Betty McCall of Lycoming College has plans to establish reading clubs throughout Williamsport using the book as a guide. This initiative would be in preparation for Anderson's visit and lecture at the college in September 2008.

Unfortunately, my attempt at reaching the newsletter's target audience has been minimally successful. In today's image conscious world, people don't bother to read anymore. But reading is the key to achieving self-esteem and cultural pride. Yet, studies indicate decades of lackluster progress in reading skills have existed in our schools nationwide. The irony of a newsletter extolling the virtues of reading is inescapable. To get people to read a particular book, they must first read the book's recommendation in the newsletter!

The question becomes, "How do you get the public to start reading again?" Libraries and other institutions have been struggling with this problem for years. I suggest a massive campaign aimed at providing reading fundamentals to all age groups. I would focus the campaign's efforts on mothers. If mothers read, the entire family will read. Girls are better readers in school.

Dr. Ben Carson, the famous neuro-surgeon at John Hopkins University, said he turned away from a life of violence because his mother made him read. She turned off the TV!

Recently I was watching the film, "the Hurricane" (1999), starring Denzel Washington. The premise of the story is that Rubin "Hurricane" Carter; a note worthy prizefighter was

unjustly incarcerated for twenty years during the 1960's. The intervention of a young boy and his three friends eventually led to Carter's freedom. What I found interesting about the film was the understated message about the power of reading. Lesra Martin, a typical black kid from the ghetto of New York City, read Carter's autobiography, "the 16th Round" and became engaged in learning. He went on to become a lawyer.

This is the message that needs to be driven home to our youth. Reading is a revolutionary concept. It is social activism at its finest. It is self-empowerment. This message combined with the outstanding work of such organizations as CAPP and the James V. Brown Library can turn our children away from crime and violence.

We must entice young people with socially relevant media. Today's youth are indoctrinated with the popular media's negative images. I think we should fight fire with fire. We should use the media as a tool to lure youngsters to read again.

Let's tell the girls that the best type of boy friend is one who reads Shakespeare, Plato and James Baldwin. Let's tell the boys about athletes who are voracious readers. Our motto in hip-hop parlance could be, "Don't be no fool, stay in school. Feed the need to read, and you'll succeed!" Our children must recognize that reading, comprehensive analysis and critical thinking are cool things to do. Thank you again. I wish you much success in your efforts for 2008.

Richard C. James

Mr. SuperSoaker® Lonnie G. Johnson

Hey! Did you ever play with a SuperSoaker® squirt gun? Did you ever wonder who invented it? Well you can thank Lonnie Johnson, black scientist, former NASA engineer and entrepreneur.

According to recent news reports, Mr. Johnson isn't designing toys anymore. He's trying to create an alternative energy resource that could put the Oil and Gas industries out of business!

Mr. Johnson has used his money that he made from his toy water gun design to create three engineering firms. Here's his biography:

LONNIE G. JOHNSON

Born: Oct. 6, 1949, Mobile, Alabama
Residence: Ansley Park, Marietta, Georgia
Family: Wife, Linda Moore, and four children
Education: Tuskegee University, with degrees in mechanical engineering and nuclear engineering

Businesses: Johnson Research and Development, Johnson Electro-Mechanical Systems, Excellatron Solid State LLC

The SuperSoaker®

For years, Lonnie G. Johnson has been inventing thermodynamics systems for NASA and other organizations; but he has won his greatest fame for re-inventing the squirt gun.

Johnson capped a childhood of tinkering with appliances in his senior year of high school, when he won a national inventing competition for "Linex," a remote-control robot he had built out of junkyard scraps. He went on to more formal training at Tuskegee University, where he earned first a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering (1972) and then an M.S. in Nuclear Engineering (1974).

Soon thereafter, Johnson joined the U.S. Air Force, where he became an Advanced Space Systems Requirements Officer at the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command in Omaha, Nebraska. After directing many projects and earning several decorations, as well as a Nomination for Astronaut Training, Johnson moved on to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. Here he helped develop thermodynamic and controls systems for space projects, including award-winning work for the Galileo Jupiter probe and the Mars

Observer project; his crowning achievement at JPL was the Johnson Tube, a CFC-free refrigeration system with a hydraulic heat pump, which later earned Johnson his seventh patent (#4,724,683; 1988).

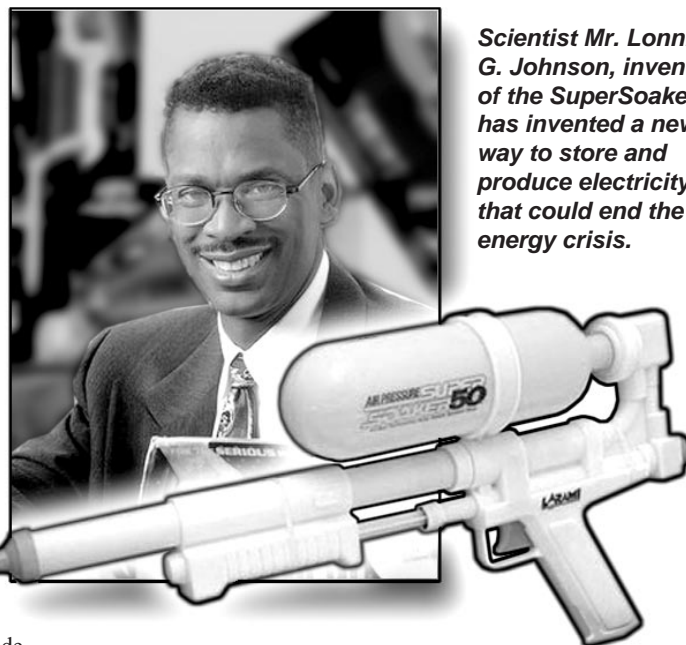
While with the USAF and JPL, Johnson continued to invent at home. In 1985, he founded his own company, later renamed Johnson Research and Development. Johnson had first conceived his most famous invention in 1982: when a homemade nozzle at his bathroom sink shot a spray of water across the room, Johnson resolved to invent the world's first high-performance, pressurized water gun.

The SuperSoaker® uses an air pump to pressurize its water supply, allowing for tremendous distance and accuracy in water-marksmanship. Those unfamiliar with this product cannot appreciate its popularity: since 1990, over 40 million SuperSoakers® have generated over \$200 million in sales; today, dozens of websites are devoted to them.

Meanwhile, Johnson has earned over 40 patents, and continues to invent in the realms of thermo- and fluid dynamics as well as toys. In addition to ongoing controls work for NASA, Johnson and his company are developing an improved home radon detector, a rechargeable battery, and a heat pump that uses water instead of freon, among other projects.

President and CEO of Excellatron A new kind of battery...

Throughout his career as a scientist and engineer, Lonnie Johnson has been driven by a desire to push the envelope of technology. Whenever told "it can't be done," his unflinching reply has been "Why not?" He has extensive experience in the high technology environment, and holds over 80



Scientist Mr. Lonnie G. Johnson, inventor of the SuperSoaker has invented a new way to store and produce electricity that could end the energy crisis.

issued patents (with an additional 20 pending) on a wide range of technologies. In his 19 years with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the Air Force, he served as a senior systems engineer on multiple space based programs including the Galileo Mission to Jupiter, the Cassini Mission to Saturn, the Mars Observer project, and the Air Force stealth bomber program. Dr. Johnson is also founder and president of Johnson Research and Development Co., Inc., where he has developed products for the consumer market. His success in this area is exemplified by his invention, the Super Soaker® water gun, which has generated almost \$1 billion in retail sales. Dr. Johnson holds a BS degree in Mechanical Engineering, an MS degree in Nuclear Engineering, and a PhD in Science from Tuskegee University.

Excellatron is a closely held private company. With significant support from the founder of the company it has been possible to advance the technology and the company without additional outside financial resources. The scope and capability of the company has been developed with some strategic focus in mind and a search for additional financial resources has taken place with the same strategic approach. The company remains interested in entertaining investment discussions with potential strategic investors.

<http://newsroom.blogs.cnn.com/category/anchors/tony-harris/>

INNER EXPRESSIONS

This page is dedicated to the inner spirit that dwells within us all. Life is art, Art is life. Express yourself! Share the Joy...



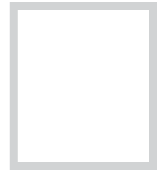
Ruby Green Singing (1928)
by James Chapin (1887-1975)
the Norton Museum, West Palm Beach, Florida

Lift every voice and sing.

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and Heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.
Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered;
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou Who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou Who hast by Thy might, led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee.
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee.
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand, True to our God,
true to our native land.

Lyrics by James Weldon Johnson. - 1900
Music by J. Rosamond Johnson (his brother)

To hear the song online go to:
<http://www.npr.org/programs/pt/features/bhm2003.html>



NAACP: Drug Law Reduced

NAACP-Supported Legislation to Reduce Racial Disparities. Crack Cocaine/Powder Sentencing Signed into Law. Crucial bill reducing sentencing disparity from 100:1 to 18:1 is historic first step toward eliminating racially discriminatory sentencing disparities

On Tuesday, August 3, 2010, President Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act into law. This important legislation will reduce the mandatory minimum sentence for a federal conviction of crack cocaine possession from 100 times that of people convicted of carrying the drug in powdered form to 18 times the sentence.

The NAACP supported this legislation as an important first step toward completely eliminating this racially discriminatory sentencing disparity.

The NAACP appreciates all of the hard work that has gone into this legislation, as well as the fact that it is the first time Congress has moved to reduce any mandatory minimum sentence. The NAACP also recognizes and appreciates that everyone involved in the negotiations seems to agree that the current 100:1 sentencing disparity has had a hugely unfair and racially discriminatory impact on racial and ethnic minority Americans. The NAACP will continue, however, to push for complete elimination of the disparities between crack and powder cocaine sentencing.

Everyone seems to agree that crack cocaine use is

higher among Caucasians than any other group: most authorities estimate that more than 66% of those who use crack cocaine are white. Yet in 2006, 82% of those convicted and sentenced under federal crack cocaine laws were African American.

When you add in Hispanics, the percentage climbs to above 96%. Since enactment of this law, over 23 years ago, the 100 to 1 ratio has had a devastating and disproportionate impact on the

African American and Hispanic communities. Because of the mandatory minimum jail sentence for those convicted of possession of 5 grams of crack cocaine or more, people of color are being put in prisons at much higher rates than their Caucasian counterparts, and

the judges have no discretion to mitigate the sentence for first-time or nonviolent offenders or special circumstances.

It is estimated that if passed as written, the legislation reducing the sentencing disparity from 100:1 to 18:1 will result in 4,000 fewer Americans being in jail in 10 years.

This is a huge victory for the NAACP; as an elimination of the sentencing disparity has been a priority for us for a long time. In addition to working independently and in coalition in favor of eliminating this particular mandatory minimum sentence, the NAACP has testified before Congress and the U.S. Sentencing Commission on this issue on many occasions.



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millionheirsmsg@hotmail.com
Larry McAfee - CEO
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