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Jackson Keeping Hope Alive

Jackson challenges walls of division

by Danielle M. Murphy
Editor in Chief

A renewed focus on moral tone is Rev. Jesse Jackson's call for America. To accomplish this, Americans must break down barriers and face the challenges of working together.

"We must tear down the walls that divide and build bridges that unite," said Jackson during a press conference yesterday at the Residence Inn in Erie. Jackson was in Erie to deliver his speech, "Keep Hope Alive," at Behrend's Erie Hall.

At the press conference, Jackson outlined steps for college students to "keep hope alive."

"First of all," said Jackson. "College students must avoid self destructive behavior."

Jackson said that self destructive behaviors such as drug use and unplanned pregnancies, which contribute to the country's high school drop out rate.

Secondly, Jackson advised that students study diligently.

"You're going to need to develop your mind potential more fully to compete," he said.

Jackson cited a growing need for students to break down racial and ethnic barriers in America's diverse society. He said that students must "learn how to live with other people in a multiracial, multicultural America."

Jackson also said that students must become more involved in society and its challenges, but many students fail to do so.

"Too many of our youth have focused more on entertainment than they have on challenges of emancipation and changing social policy," he said.

Today's problems in society, according to Jackson, include race polarization, class exploitation and violence. Jackson cited the growth trend in America's prisons as a symptom of these ills.

"The number one growth industry in our cities [is] jails," said Jackson. "Half of all public housing in the last 10 years

has been jails." Education is the key to remedying the growth in the nation's prisons. According to Jackson, 90 percent of

We must tear down the walls that divide and build bridges that unite.
--Rev. Jesse Jackson

inmates are high school dropouts and 92 percent are functionally illiterate.

Jackson also called for a "renewed focus on the expansion of trade and opportunity for the American people."

Given changes in the welfare system, employment opportunities in America must grow.

"In that welfare has ended as we know it, we must have jobs and trade as we ought to know it," said Jackson.

Given the rise of American manufacturing overseas, Jackson called for workers to unite and

"Workers in this country must come together and deal with the impact of the downsizing of corporations and outsourcing of contracts," said Jackson. "And put forth a real demand for a plan to reinvest in America."

Acknowledging changes in welfare, Jackson said that it must be done humanely. "The major transitions in welfare must be humane," he said. "Taking into account that two-thirds of those on welfare are children."

Preventative measures appear to be the best way in preparing for America's future. These measures would be less costly than financing a growing prison system and under class.

"It makes more sense to invest in prenatal care, Headstart and day care on the front side of life," said Jackson. "Rather than jail care and welfare on the back side."



Photo by Jennifer V. Colvin

In the limelight: Reverend Jesse Jackson addresses the Press at the Marriot-Residence Inn.

Student, faculty reaction to Jackson



Photo by Jennifer V. Colvin

In the camera's eye: Reverend Jackson gets interviewed by Tim Miller part of the local Erie television press.

by Bob Misulich
Collegian Staff

A wave of emotion swept over the audience last night in Erie Hall. Rev. Jesse Jackson delivered his lecture "Keep Hope Alive," challenging the audience to cross racial and class boundaries.

Jackson's delivery style injected his lecture with motivation and inspiration.

Provost and Dean John Lilley said, "He calls for demanding things, but says it in an inspirational way. He meets people where they are and insists on lifting them up."

Lilley said that he was particularly interested in Jackson's

Sean Lyons, Counselor for Quality of Life Learning Center, said he believes the movement is powerful and exactly what Erie needs.

"Erie needs more self-esteem, and Rev. Jackson's speech and presence gave it to us," said Lyons.

An anonymous student said he felt Jackson's speech was reflective of how bigotry runs through society and how far society has to come to overcome lines of bigotry to become a unified nation.

Erie resident Travis Duck, who has heard Jackson speak several times, said Jackson has "brought an enlightened message for the audience. He addressed many

He calls you to a higher standard that you may not be meeting.

- Dean John Lilley

political, social, and socio-economical problems, but most importantly offered solutions."

According to Jackson, everyone

deserves part of "the dream," and people of character will make it happen. Jackson said Americans must have faith in their leaders who "have dirty hands and a clean heart, rather than a dirty heart and clean hands."

Wayne Medlin, psychology major, said he believes that Jackson is a very instrumental and powerful leader who came forth with a direct message to people of all races, nationalities and creeds.

Another Behrend student, Roxanna Kelly, said, "Rev. Jackson's speech was very powerful and enlightening."

"There was truth in every word and emotion behind it all. It was a definite eye opener for all who can open their minds to understand," she said.

Penn State Behrend Alumni Sarah Melchiorre said, "I am really glad I came. As a communication major [graduate], I appreciate Rev. Jackson as a powerful speaker and motivator. He gives people the feeling that they can make a difference, not only as a group, but as an individual."

Lisa Borgia, biology/communication major, was

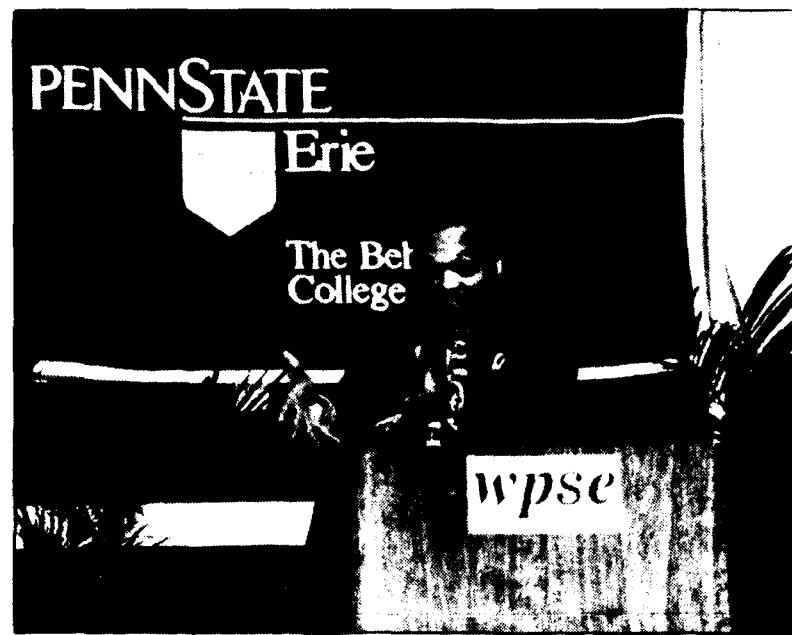


Photo by Eric R. Krouse

Reaching out... Reverend Jesse Jackson gestures as he delivered a speech last night at Erie Hall.

impressed with Jackson's concern about single white women.

"I was surprised with a non-white evangelist preaching for the working poor of America," she said.

Many policies and topics were brought forth last night by Jackson

that, according to most people, need addressed by society.

Interested faculty and students may join a Round Table discussion today in Reed 114 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. sponsored by the Diversity and Educational Equity Committee to discuss these issues.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH CALENDAR

Today - Rev. Jesse Jackson Roundtable Discussion, led by Greg Fowler, lecturer in English, and Ross Berrier, coordinator of residence life, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. in Reed 114. Sponsored by the Penn State-Behrend Diversity and Education Equity Committee.

Friday, February 14 - Kikilamba Dance Troupe, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. in Wintergreen Cafe. Sponsored by Association of Black Collegians.

Wednesday, February 19 - An Evening of African-American Poetry, 8:00 p.m. in Reed 113. Sponsored by Round Table. All participants are encouraged to read excerpts from their favorite African-American authors or poets. Coffee and desserts will be served.

Thursday, February 20 - Project Concern (Urban Youth Dance Group), 7:30 p.m. in Reed Union Commons. Sponsored by Office of Student Activities.

Saturday, February 22 - Kuumba Night (Creative Performances), 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. in Reed Union Commons. Sponsored by Office of Residence Life.

Friday, February 28 - Improving Cultural Awareness on Campus and in the Community (Forum), Discussion led by Brother Mike, an African-American retailer, 6:00 p.m. in Reed Lecture Hall. Sponsored by Society of Black Engineers. Refreshments will be served.