

# Speakers discuss black male issues

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There is a crisis in America today. A crisis among the African-American males which threatens the future of the black male in America.

Penn State Harrisburg was the site of the third annual African-American Male Crisis Issues Day. Seminars held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Feb. 1, focused on four problem areas for black males: education, media messages about the black male,

athletic roles, and raising a black male child in a single-parent household.

According to Timothy McGilberry, chairman of the seminar, the African-American male has the highest death rate in America, the shortest life span and a school dropout rate that is exceptionally high. He is also more likely to die from a gunshot wound than anyone else.

"Our plan is to broaden peoples' horizons and expand their scope of the problems facing black males in America today," McGilberry said. "It basically is a

wake-up call, and we have to let people know that we have to face the issues. Our primary goal is education."

Other panel members agreed that education is important.

Panel member John Christopher said education is the most important factor in raising a black male child today.

"Education will help the black male child see through the 'gang theory'," Christopher said. "Many young black men are going from the fourth and fifth grades directly into gangs. By emphasizing education, we are showing them that there are avenues to pursue other than gangs."

Thelma E. Smith, mother of Buffalo Bills' linebacker Carlton Bailey, said, "Parents need to teach their children that education is the key to achieving any goal." Smith spoke about parenting a black male, saying parents need to be aware of what their children are doing.

"There are so many distractions out there for the child to get into," Smith said. "A parent must make the effort to know who the child is playing with, and where the child is at all times."

Smith said disciplining the black male child is important, and a mother must "put him in his place every now and then, to teach him respect and discipline."

An estimated 70 percent of African-American males will be raised in a household run by a single mother in the '90s. According to Smith, "It is up to the woman to be strong and teach the child to be responsible."

Many African-American males are lured into sports because they see sports as a way out of poverty.

Kirk Smallwood, a basketball coach in the Central Dauphin School District, said

sports are important, but education is more important.

"We need to refocus and put more emphasis on education," Smallwood said. "Sports can be used as an avenue for an education, (scholarships) but that is rare."

Smallwood said that scholarships don't always pave the way to the pros.

Carl Rachelson, former basketball coach for Harrisburg High School, agreed.

"Sports should not be more important than athletics," Rachelson said. "A sports career lasts only a few years--an education lasts a lifetime."

Generally, black males are portrayed as inarticulate, indecisive, violent or anything negative, said Derrick Wilkerson, a reporter for WHP-TV 21.

"White people are ignorant of the black community," Wilkerson said. "They think that all we can do is sing and dance and entertain."

Wilkerson discussed ways to find and get rid of these stereotypes.

"Until the white media decide they want to cover [the black] community fairly, the stereotypes will persist," Wilkerson said. "As a black reporter, it is up to me to find positive stories on blacks, so I can destroy those stereotypes."

Felicia Brown-Haywood, vice-chairman of the seminar, said she was pleased with the way things turned out.

"It was smaller in numbers than I hoped for, but larger in numbers than I anticipated," Haywood said.

"It's probably going to take people some time to realize that this issue is an integral part of our whole society," Haywood said. "Once they open their eyes to that, they'll know that these kinds of seminars are very important."



Photo by Mike Starkey

The Kate Rudolph Jazz Trio performs in the Gallery Lounge. The group was on campus Jan. 22 and featured Kate Rudolph on keyboards, with Bunny Cox on percussion and Keith Mohler on bass, and was part of Penn State Harrisburg's "Live in the Gallery Lounge" series.

# Satellite broadcast commemorates MLK Day

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Although they didn't have cake and candles, Penn State Harrisburg celebrated the birthday of Martin Luther King in a different way.

Classes were cancelled Jan. 20 from 4 to 5 p.m. while Chuck Stone, professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina, spoke to all of Penn State University via satellite from Eisenhower Auditorium at University Park.

"We need to celebrate King's life to be reminded of a journey not finished," Stone said. "If we dare not celebrate, we'll never reach a community where we can dwell together in unity."

The program, "Commemorating King: A Vision Redefined," was part of a celebration of the "life of a man who profoundly affected the lives of everyone living today," said Dr. Ruth Leventhal, provost, as she welcomed about 40 people to the program in the Black Cultural Arts Center.

Stone referred to King as "a drum major for peace, reform and justice...with a dangerous sense of unselfishness."

While the PSH audience nibbled at kiwi, pineapple and assorted cheeses, Stone reminisced about his friendship with King.

"He was a dreamer," Stone said. "He once said 'I dream of things that never were and say, why not?'"

"Remember him as a dreamer, not as a

revolutionary," Stone said.

Corey Boyer, a junior behavioral science major, said that the program "should help remind students how far we've moved."

Bill Stoner, a graduate student in community psychology, said that more should have been done to honor King.

"Since we have to be here anyway, we ought to have a day of activity dedicated to an open forum," Stoner said. "A discussion of King's life and where we are now, as a country."

Others agreed that the day should be more important.

"It's been a watered-down holiday," said one faculty member who declined to be identified. "He's not just a black leader. He's a leader for peace and civil rights."

Stone said that King's dream shouldn't be redefined, it should be reinvigorated through education.

"Make it possible for all children to get the best education," he said. "Mobilize your political resources to get rid of problems."

Grace Hampton, vice-provost at University Park, said everybody must realize that all is not well, but there is hope for the future.

"We must move forward," Hampton said. "Move forward with renewed hope."

Stone concluded by saying that people should remember everybody's differences.

"Remember them," Stone said. "Just don't let them make a difference."



Photo by Mike Starkey

An audience of 40 faculty, staff and students gathers in the Black Cultural Arts Center on Jan. 20 for the program "Commemorating King: A Vision Redefined." The tribute, a live satellite telecast from University Park, featured Chuck Stone, a journalism professor from the University of North Carolina.