



Members Speak to the Issue of Cultural Diversity

Statement on Cultural Diversity

Gwendolyn Newkirk
*Professor Emerita,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Our professional commitment has been to enhance individual and family well-being for all peoples. This becomes possible in the dynamic mode of today's American society and family structures when we recognize cultural differences currently pervasive in family life. Failure to be cognizant of the cultural heritage of families is to narrow the parameters within which we work and the standards to enable effective and positive social relations. Recognizing the diversity in cultural heritages is to become informed about the positive contributions of various groups to our society and to understand the negative effects of the debasement of different groups, i.e., the effects of unwarranted prejudice and discrimination.

Cultural differences can elicit overt or covert responses that fuel feelings into a combustible and destruc-

tive state of hot flame and intense heat toward those perceived to be different. Anna D. Smith, theatrical interpreter of issues relating to prejudice, writes about "Fires in the Mirror." Her visions reflect the tensions and feelings existing among peoples who are different, with these becoming evident in times of adverse circumstances, triggered with hatred and bigotry. For whatever the reason, the fires tend to be most intense along racial lines, perpetuating prejudices. On closer examination, however, more often than not people whose differences from one another may be race and ethnicity are more alike than different. Thus, a multicultural perspective can sensitize a person to commonalities as well as distinctions.

In a moment of hope one often asks: Is it possible to envision a world where prejudice and inequality do not exist? This is a very troubling thought! Past experiences in the United States have brought us as a people only a short way along the path leading to racial justice and tolerance. The reality may be that the utopian society free from prejudice in any form will never exist in this nor any other galaxy since prejudices prevail in many forms, some unrelated to race, ethnicity, or religious orientation. The diversity of racial, ethnic, and demographic origins might have made the promise an elusive dream

but not a dream that should be forsaken!

At the root of prejudice are fear, mistrust, and a lack of respect and understanding. It is imperative to find ways through which we can become comfortable with one another so as to share our identities. Seeking commonalities through a variety of experiences with those different from ourselves may be fundamental in working toward a shared relationship. America divides its people largely along socioeconomic lines. While the points of demarcation are not pure, it has been found that culturally diverse people within a designated socioeconomic strata are significantly similar in a number of important ways.

Multiculturalism and *cultural diversity* have been the *in* words during the latter part of the last decade and in this decade. More often than not the terms are used interchangeably without regard to any implied differences in connotations of the terms. Some even contend these two

(Continued on page 2)

In This Issue:

- ◆ *Members Speak to the Issue of Cultural Diversity*
- ◆ *Multicultural Heritage*
- ◆ *Conclave Notes*
- ◆ *Call for Papers*
- ◆ *Call for Editors*

"If there has been a failing in our educational system to effectively, accurately, and comprehensively provide knowledge and experiences in understanding diversity, it has been in the preparation of our educators to foster settings where cross-cultural learning is ensured."

(Continued from page 1)

terms should be considered synonymous. In our effort to confront human relations issues of our time, irrespective of interpretation, these terms have served a purpose. In focusing on cultural differences, though, we may forget how few traditions are any longer unique to a specific group of people. As those of varying heritages co-mingle, parts of an established culture may begin to diffuse. Illustrative of this is *Jazz*, which was long considered music unique to blacks. Not so today. Even blues and gospel music, again long identified with blacks, are in transition such that soon these, too, will belong to the American way of life. At the same time we must learn to respect those groups who seek tenaciously to retain a firm hold on their cultural heritage, e.g., the Roma, so as not to be affected by an invasion from other people. The point being to focus too heavily on cultural diversity or multiculturalism may be to avoid understanding people as people. Yet, to ignore these differences is

to lose sight of the complexity of our culture.

Two approaches can be considered in helping to bridge differences among people. One is to look to group efforts to accelerate and institute positive change in how we treat those different from ourselves. A second approach is to turn to the inner self striving to *be human*. A group focus can provide more massive programs for improving interrelationships while at the same time increasing appreciation for people simply as people. Group programs are positioned to play larger and more consistently responsible roles in eradicating our fears and misinformation about those we perceive to be unlike us. Two groups that appear to be most able to legitimate and implement ongoing programs for enhancing understanding of people are government and education.

Many consider the efforts of governmental representatives to enact legislation to protect and extend the right of difference to be maligned attempts. Nevertheless, there has been progress emanating from such efforts, even though those most affected often feel these have taken us one step forward and five steps backward in dealing with the complexity of diversity. There has been increased awareness of the existence of different groups and among some an increased understanding as to how differences in cultural heritage affect the behaviors of members of subgroups. Because of laws and programs to support the provisions of the legislation, there has been change in religious and

racial tolerance among some and a joy in coming to know there are people who want to foster a pluralistic democracy. Much of this may never have come to pass without government intervention.

Educational units are, in some ways, extensions of government programs. Educational curricula increasingly represent the many patterns of the lives of family and people. Opportunity arises also to study for an understanding of different group contributions to the American way of life. Even today many are surprised to learn that the first successful open heart surgery was performed by a black, or that it was a black who gave to the medical world the procedure for extracting blood plasma. If there has been a failing in our educational system to effectively, accurately, and comprehensively provide knowledge and experiences in understanding diversity, it has been in the



preparation of our educators to foster settings where cross-cultural learning is ensured. Delving into the so-called *mysteries* of differences through the group learning setting can be an enlightening and rewarding experience. It can also develop an awareness among learners to see similarities among people. The educational setting can

provide structured experiences where people explore aspects of the life and times of those considered different. We can listen to what has happened to others, but until we have *been there*, there is still a lack of reality and uncertainty of that which has been part of the lives of people. A popular song of several years ago is most appropriate for today as we are caught up in the swirl of cultural diversity. . . "Walk A Mile in My Shoes." A challenge to educational planners may be to remind us that those who have been excluded may have the potential to be everything!

The individual approach as earlier noted is to *be human*. To be human is to cease dwelling in darkness with our hatred and mistrust of those different from

us... or who in dominant ways are even the same as we are. The door of the inner dwelling may swing open more slowly for some than others. But with each door ajar, the light of understanding and trust can serve to eradicate the hatred that encases us in shackles we feel cannot be broken, even though some do not wish these broken.

Before emerging into the light from the dark corners of our dwellings, one must explore why we hold feelings of group prejudice. Why do we hate and mistrust? Are we justified in our views based on factual evidence involving many instances, or have we never taken time to substantiate our beliefs? The responses will be as different as the people examining these. Despite emotions of mistrust,

hostility, or animosity, there can be a foundation upon which each may place a building block of understanding and tolerance made fast with the mortar of respect and caring.


In this centennial year commemorating the death of one of America's greatest citizens recently described as "majestic in his wrath," and a freedom fighter perhaps unequaled to this day, the *Smithsonian* included in its February 1995 issue (pp. 115-127) an article by Richard Conniff on Frederick Douglass, who fought for the "blessings of liberty" for all. Douglass, a visionary, used his gifts of oratory and writing to draw attention to the plight of the racially oppressed in his country. Meshing

(continued on page 4)

Leadership for a Culturally Diverse Society

The Kappa Omicron Nu professional development module, *Leadership for a Culturally Diverse Society*, includes icebreakers and activities, a broad conceptual base for cultural diversity, and a theoretical background for facilitators.

The activities address four fundamental components of leadership in a culturally diverse society. Leaders need

- 
- a) a knowledge base which will increase sensitivity to and awareness of the cultural diversities in our society;
 - b) to identify resources which can help strengthen and improve the quality of life for minority individuals;
 - c) to communicate with others about cultural differences; and
 - d) to use strategies which will enable them to work effectively as change agents to maximize the benefits of a culturally diverse society.

The unique contributions of the *Leadership for a Culturally Diverse Society* module are that it contains a broad conceptual base for cultural diversity, theoretical background for facilitators, and an extensive bibliography in addition to specific activities and suggestions for meeting the needs of leadership for a culturally diverse society.



KAPPA OMICRON NU
HONOR SOCIETY

Kappa Omicron Nu Diversity Module Order Form

Remit form to: Kappa Omicron Nu
4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140
East Lansing, MI 48823-5031
Telephone: 517/351-8335 ♦ FAX: 517/351-8336

Please allow two weeks for delivery.

Chapter: _____ Date: _____

Deliver to: _____

(Building Name, University, and/or Street Address)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

_____ Diversity Modules @ \$35 = \$ _____ (Payable to Kappa Omicron Nu)
(# Modules)

Signed: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Retain a copy of this form for your files.

(Continued from page 3)

together three thoughts from him seems to best highlight what we must do as individuals to confront the misconceived results of being depicted as vastly different. Douglass said that

Right is of no sex, truth is of no color. [Combating] the problem of race [and cultural conflict] can be solved only when we conquer our prejudices... the rights of the humblest citizen are worthy of protection as are those of the highest, and... your Republic will stand and flourish.

Group efforts, individual introspection, and adaptations can alter the course in bringing about harmonious interactions among people who are diverse. Our profession should be in the forefront of leadership in bringing improved understanding of cultural differences to provide the settings in which people achieve positive identity formation and live together in partnership.

Q&A

with Kay Clayton
Texas A&M-Kingsville

Why is it important that we—as professionals—recognize our multicultural heritage?

The history of our nation tells us that people from diverse backgrounds and from many different countries comprised our early citizenry. From this multicultural heritage has come some of our greatest strengths—determination, creativity, entrepreneurship, and perseverance.

As professionals in family and consumer sciences, we serve people from many walks of life. In order to relate to these audiences, it is important that we understand and appreciate this

rich heritage of ethnic diversity. In recognizing differences, we also learn that we are alike in many respects. People from all cultures have similar hopes and dreams, and they typically want a better life for their children than they themselves have had.

What do you think accounts for the persistence of racism and prejudice in America?

Racism and prejudice persist in the shadows of ignorance and misunderstanding. A lack of ethics (especially in the media) seems to allow journalists to slant news and cover sensational events in a manner which tends to reinforce and perpetuate old stereotypes. The isolation of families within our communities also contributes to a lack of communication and understanding. How many of us never see, let alone speak to, our neighbors? This lack of contact and interac-

1995 KAPPA OMICRON NU ELECTION

Nominees for Board of Directors are needed for the offices of:

- ☆ President-Elect
- ☆ Vice President/Finance

Nominees for Committees are needed for:

- ☆ Editorial (three year term)
- ☆ Nominating (two year term)

Any KON member who would like to suggest a candidate is urged to contact the National Office for a nomination form.

Kappa Omicron Nu, 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031. Telephone: 517/351-8335, Fax: 517/351-8336.

The members of the Nominating Committee are: Julia Dinkins; Mary J. Beaubien; E. Marie Ashley Moore; Juanita Wallace Odom; Pamela Olson; Shirley Hymon-Parker.

tion is a major factor in the persistence of racism and prejudice.

From your experience, what is going to work best to help combat racism and prejudice?

Education plays an important role in combatting racism and prejudice. We are taught racism and prejudice through subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—messages, and intervention in the form of education will have the most impact. Education which includes opportunities for interaction and communication will foster greater respect for ethnic diversity. A stronger emphasis on ethics, including accurate and objective reporting of events, will also help to combat racism and prejudice. Emphasis should not be on “getting a scoop” but on “getting the story right.”

How can the American promise become a reality?

The promise of equal opportunity is becoming a reality—at least for those who refuse to see themselves as victims of racism and prejudice and who use their energies to take advantage of the educational and training opportunities that are available. The individuals who seek to better their lot in life can do so, but all of us must work together to ensure that equal opportunities for education and employment continue to exist.

Mentoring: The Human Touch



The Kappa Omicron Nu educational module, *Mentoring: The Human Touch* includes three sequential interactive instructional activities and five models for facilitating mentoring.



The specific goals of the instructional activities are to a) review the current focus on mentoring, b) identify mentoring experiences and desired changes, c) explore mentoring self-management, d) identify personal mentoring goals, and e) explore the self-mentoring action planning process.



The mentoring models include a) Narrative Mentoring Plan, b) Career Fair, c) Mentoring Field Experience, d) Peer Mentoring Program, and e) Mentoring Self-Management Program (formal program).



The unique contributions of *Mentoring: The Human Touch* are that it contains the conceptual framework of mentoring self-management and that it offers simple or more complex models for encouraging mentoring. Thus, this initiative of Kappa Omicron Nu facilitates intentional mentoring and promotes the development of human potential within our profession.



Kappa Omicron Nu Mentoring Module Order Form

Remit form to: Kappa Omicron Nu
4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140
East Lansing, MI 48823-5031
Telephone: 517/351-8335 ♦ FAX: 517/351-8336

Please allow two weeks for delivery.

Chapter: _____ Date: _____

Deliver to: _____

(Building Name, University, and/or Street Address)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

_____ Mentoring Modules @ \$35 = \$_____ (Payable to Kappa Omicron Nu)
(# Modules)

Signed: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Retain a copy of this form for your files.

NEW Call For PAPERS

TOPIC: *Building Community*—Dr. Yvonne S. Gentzler, Guest Editor

Objective—The goal of this theme is to explore the concept of community and how it can be fostered for the common good.

Overview—Human and social life is often segmented into arbitrary domains such as the homeless, differently abled, or victims of abuse. Whereas these groups require special intervention and attention, singling them out has a tendency to disconnect them from society at large. Often private life and public life tend to be separated, and even our approaches to diversity need to be studied so that connectedness is not endangered. The mission of family and consumer sciences calls for strategies that emphasize families and communities, and the content often emphasizes such concepts as independence, personal development, and parenting skills as well as abilities that encourage partnerships.

The theme of this issue deals with the pervasive social problem of disconnection. From this perspective, "building community" is about addressing issues of reconnection. Authors should distinguish alternative courses of action from more conventional notions of success and unbridled individualism. The purpose is to focus on the ideal of community—the cultural consciousness needed for civilized life. The issue is not intended to deal with more traditional community development themes such as researching needs, setting goals, planning for or implementing community plans.

Authors are invited to explore questions such as the following:

- What does community mean for individuals, family, neighborhood, city, country, world? What are factors that detract from connectedness? What are the core principles of community? How is the ideal of community achieved?
- What is the role of the profession in building community?

Philosophic and applied approaches to these questions are encouraged.

A new call for papers will be announced soon on the following topics:

- ♦ **Leadership**—While there is ample literature on different aspects of leadership, there is still confusion regarding the education of leaders for the 21st century. This topic will focus on the meaning of leadership for our profession.
- ♦ **Legacies for the Future**—This topic will cover stories of leaders who have responded to societal needs and intellectual challenges, helping to shape programs of study, research, and policy initiatives.

Information and Deadline—Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due July 30, 1995. For further information or to obtain a copy of "Guidelines for Authors," contact:

Dr. Dorothy I. Mitstifer, Editor
Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM
 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140
 East Lansing, MI 48823-5031
 Telephone: (517)351-8335 Facsimile: (517)351-8336

Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM, (formerly known as Home Economics FORUM), announces a Call for Guest Editors. The following ideas are meant to initiate thought about these topics, not to limit interpretation.

Technology - The Information Age launched by advances in technology promised both costs and benefits. Among the costs have been economic restructuring resulting in unemployment, increased disparity between haves and have nots, and threats to privacy. Technological values of efficiency and means/ends control can weaken the capacity for families to control their lives, and expectations for technological fixes tend to ignore social and human dimensions of problems. Despite problems and concerns, technology has benefited individuals and families: cost reductions for enhanced services; and positive innovations in education, research, and the way we work. The current thrust of technology promises more profound change. How are families faring in the midst of this revolution?

Service Learning - Service learning as a means of community service is not a new concept, but the recent thrust in high schools and colleges has increased visibility of the value of experiential learning. Although family and consumer sciences programs have long used internships and service projects, should academic programs expand the requirements for service learning? How can we assure that service learning is more than a fad?

For further information or to obtain a copy of the "Application for Guest Editor," contact Dr. Dorothy I. Mitstifer, (see address, above).

Call For GUEST EDITORS

1995 LEADERSHIP CONCLAVE

The Reflective Human Action Model and Module to be introduced for the first time at this Conclave is a state-of-the-art approach to leadership. As a comprehensive approach, it blends the work of current leadership theorists and new insights about the principles that guide the dynamic environment in which we live and work. Unique to the KON leadership module is the focus on theory and practice; a section of the module includes experiential activities to explain and practice the principles of Reflective Human Action

Join colleagues from across the nation to explore critical issues facing leaders by using principles of Reflective Human Action.

Leaders in a complex world must be able to work within often chaotic environments, appreciating and fostering creativity within themselves and others. Yet creativity alone is not enough to successfully lead in complex situations. Leadership from the view of the new sciences requires authenticity, ethical sensibility, and spirituality—authenticity from the perspective of genuineness and trustworthiness, ethical sensibility as the heart of action, spirituality as connectedness to meaning.

A centerpiece of the Reflective Human Action Model is the Action Wheel developed by Robert Terry to frame issues and identify interventions. Experiential activities will offer opportunities for understanding the theory and practice of the Action Wheel.

Conclave participants will learn that the Reflective Human Action model is applicable to all levels of issues relevant to their professional and personal lives.

Who should register?

Students will find application to campus, workplace, internship experiences, organizational work, and community service. *New professionals* will be able to apply principles to finding their own niche in the workplace and balancing work and home life. *Administrators* will have new tools to provide the kind of leadership they desire. *Seasoned professionals* will gain a new set of lenses and perspectives for dealing with change and challenges. *Those interested in volunteerism and social action* will find many applications for serving the common good.

In other words, the Reflective Human Action leadership model is a flexible blueprint for examining how we know leadership is present and how we exhibit leadership in all those places where leadership lives, moves, and expresses itself.

The 1995 Leadership Conclave is precedent setting for Kappa Omicron Nu. Plan now to be among the first to use the Reflective Human Action leadership model by registering for the 1995 Leadership Conclave. For more info call 517/351-8335.

ADVANCE REGISTRATION KAPPA OMICRON NU CONCLAVE

Bismarck Hotel, Chicago, Illinois—August 3-6, 1995

NAME _____
 SPECIALIZATION _____
 ADDRESS _____
 TELEPHONE (____) _____

FRIDAY AFTERNOON CHOICE:
 Professional Workshop Cultural Tour
 No. _____ Conclave Registration fees at \$175.00 Total \$ _____
 This fee includes Leadership Workshops, Get Acquainted Reception, Beverage Breaks, Three Breakfasts, Saturday Luncheon, and Saturday Banquet and Memento.

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO KAPPA OMICRON NU

CONCLAVE ROOM RESERVATION FORM

Please indicate the accommodations you wish to reserve. Room payments will be made to the hotel at departure. DO NOT MAKE ADVANCE ROOM PAYMENTS!

Quad: \$26.25/person/day+14.9% tax Double: \$52.50/person/day+14.9% tax
 Triple: \$35.00/person/day+14.9% tax Single: \$85.00/person/day+14.9% tax
 Date Arriving: _____ Hour: _____ am _____ pm
 Date Departing: _____ Hour: _____ am _____ pm
 Preference for roommate: _____

If no preference is listed, room assignments will be made without concern for race, color, creed, or national origin. Non-smoking, Smoking, No preference.

Deadline for room reservation is June 22, 1995 (confirmations after that date cannot be guaranteed in the headquarters hotel or at the advertised rate).

Send Registration/Room Reservation form and fees to:
 Kappa Omicron Nu National Office
 4990 Northway, Suite 14
 East Lansing, Michigan 48823-5031

Requests for full refund must be received by July 15, 1995.



Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society
4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140
East Lansing, MI 48823-5031

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Haslett, MI
Permit #8

President's Message

The Board of Directors of Kappa Omicron Nu welcomes each and every one of you to an important new year in the life of our organization. 1995 finds us at the midpoint of the last decade of the 20th century. In just



five more years the 21st century will be upon us. This gives the Board a sense of urgency about the many things still to be accomplished and a feeling of excitement about the possibilities before us.

We are especially excited about the 1995 Leadership Conclave scheduled for August 3-6 in the dynamic city of Chicago. Here, for the very first time, the conference will provide tracks for both professionals and students.

High profile speakers will provide opportunities for us to learn about the characteristics required

for leadership in the 21st century, help us frame leadership issues, and challenge us to examine ourselves and our relationships with other human beings. We will each devise our own personal plan for leadership development. Opportunities will also be provided to experience the cultural, professional, and entertainment milieu of an exuberant Midwestern city.

The theoretical base for the leadership model, developed for the conference by Frances Andrews and Dorothy Mitstifer, is based on Robert Terry's 1993 book, *Authentic Leadership: Courage in Action*. The model presents a framework for reflective human action that is nonpositional and intellectually and morally defensible. It links theory and action and recognizes the responsibility of all professionals for leadership. The Board feels these are important issues that support our mission of empowered leaders and can be used to guide our programming for the 1995-1997 biennium and beyond.

—Carol Avery

Kappa Omicron Nu Dialogue, Volume 5, No. 2 - Executive Director and Editor: Dorothy I. Mitstifer.
Assistant Editor: Lisa Wootton. Board of Directors: Carol E. Avery, Anne M. Weiner,
Carol B. Meeks, Julia M. Dinkins, Angela Higgins, Ayodele Jordan, Susan Poch.
Copyright by Kappa Omicron Nu, 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031.
Telephone: (517)351-8335. Facsimile: (517)351-8336.