



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **Delegate Magazine 1981**

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[[23 images]]

Well it was a bad year for our side, since we last met. A new president, Ronald Reagan, was elected to replace Jimmy Carter, whom the record now shows did more for Blacks in Human Rights, Economics, Education and social reforms since Lyndon Baines Johnson. Crime and the Klu Klux Klan were on resurgence in the United States: Black leaders were attacked and Vernon Jordan was almost assassinated. Black men were wantonly killed on the streets of Buffalo, New York; 22 black children were murdered in Atlanta and their killers or killer was still not caught at this press time.

A black youth was lynched in Mobile, Alabama. The Klan murdered six dissenters in North Carolina; five black children disappeared in Newark, New Jersey; and even the new President of the United States and three of his cohorts were shot down by an assassin on the streets of Washington, D.C.

It was bad year for our side because Herbert Wright, the man who for three decades did more to bring young black into the corporate world and the man who wrote a primer for social responsibility for the Corporate world to follow - died.

Then we lost Earl Brown, the writer and City Councilman; Bessie Buchanan, first Black female elected to New York State Assembly; Victor Colmyer, the Deputy Fire Commissioner of New York; Joann Ransom, former Zeta Phi Beta President and a force in Pan hellenic New York High School Careers Day; Elston Howard, first black ball player with the New York Yankees and Brig. General Wilmer Lucas.

And it was a bad year because the new administration presented their plan to turn the country around via a budget which said - Cut Cut Cut. Interpreted, the budget simply meant turning back the clock on all gains won by Blacks and Hispanics during the last three decades [[decades]] in housing, work programs, education and social reforms.

And the Reagan administration began in chaos with a battle for power within their own ranks starting the day the new President was installed. It seems that "Blood and Guts" General Alexander Haig, the new Chief of the State Department wanted everyone to know what his powers were.

The battle for power became so intense that President Reagan had to create a crisis team within his cabinet and he named Vice President Bush in charge. But this was soon tested when the President got shot on the streets of Washington and Haig again said 'he was in charge'.

It was also a retributive year because the new administration which was also hell-bent on turning back the clock in Africa, tried to ride out a storm created on South Africa when our Ambassador at United Nations met with some Army Generals from South Africa. This is supposed to be a no-no. But when the story was told the administration defended Ambassador Kirkpatrick saying that she was not familiar with the law. Does anyone remember Andy Young? When he met with some Palestinians in those same U.N. halls, he was hounded out of office.

And since we are supposed to be able to sing and dance better than



everyone else—it was even a bad year in the recording industry for our side. Not one of use, neither Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Aretha Franklin or any of our soul candidate [[candidates]] won a Grammy award. Even in Church music where we are supposed to excel, a white Texan named Cross, wrote something called "Sailing" and he sailed away with all the Grammy awards.

It was a bad year for the greatest Muhammad Ali [[who]] got his lumps in his attempt to regain his heavy weight crown. It was good and bad for Sugar Ray Leonard, our welterweight champion; first he lost his title to Roberto Duran and then he regained it with a display of boxing agility which had the Panamanian bull quitting in the ring.

And in the lets tell it as it is department—there is growing concern by African delegates at the U.N. from the third world over what they believed to be changing attitude of the United States towards them which favors the folks in South Africa. Old "Blood and Guts" Haig and the administration talked much about recognizing South Africa and not enough about maintaining all the inroads Andy Young did for this country in Africa. Most delegates we talked to are damned mad about Mrs. Kirkpatrick's incident and did not buy the administration's explanation that our U.N. Ambassador did not know she was breaking the law when she met with those generals from South Africa.

Then the boys are also mad over all the help for Poland and Eastern Europeans and no help for Blacks starving in Somalia.

The folks in Harlem are still talking about the march to save the children in Atlanta which was organized by four ordinary mothers meeting in Sylvia's Soul Food restaurant and carried out without the help or propaganda from the so called elected officials. Talk was, who needed those headlines grabbing politicians anyway. More than eyebrows were raised when Mother Mathias revealed that she had not heard from Mayor Jackson for over a year on what was going on—even though the Mayor lived as near as two blocks away from the projects where most of the children came from.

The folks are also keeping a watchful eye on insensitive Mayor Koch who has been quietly gathering up a war chest among the city fat cats for his so called campaign for a second term.

The folks want to know who those fat cats are and what are their real reasons. The fact about the Mayor doing a good job does not wash among Blacks, Hispanics and the poor of this city. And the folks are confused over all the reasons being given for the so called breakdown of security around the president's incident. But the boys in a seventh avenue bar were shocked over what that eyewitness person said on how he and all the folks were ordered out when they brought the President in.

By the way who the hell is Tom Sowell? And what has he got against Blacks? And what has become of Dr. Gloria Toote, the lady who worked for the last six years for Ronald Reagan?

And on the reasons why folks will not build housing in Harlem is because certain Harlemites believe in scaring prospective builders away. Their point is "pay us" or there will be trouble. We learned of the latest ripoff

when a well known former city housing director, now in the rehab business, was told that he would experience trouble from the "street people" if a certain publicity firm was not used—now who is kidding whom—what street people—should we name names?

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