



State educators rush to fight Supreme ruling

Howard Manly

Local reaction to last month's U.S. Supreme Court decision on public school desegregation was emphatic.

Kathy A. Reddick, president of the Cambridge branch of the NAACP, said she is still in shock that 53 years after the Supreme Court outlawed public segregation in the case of Brown v. Board of Education, it has now "declared that race does not matter and racial equality is a non-issue."

"We don't get smarter just because we sit next to white people in class, and we don't progress just because society is ready with handouts."

— Justice Clarence Thomas

"It is a very sad day for this country," Reddick continued, "but one that I pray will wake up this nation again to take up the fight and move to make right this injustice. We will not go back to the days of separate and unequal."

Jean M. McGuire, longtime executive director of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) was more pessimistic. In a published interview, McGuire de-

scribed the court's decision "as the worst decision that we've had in 50 years."

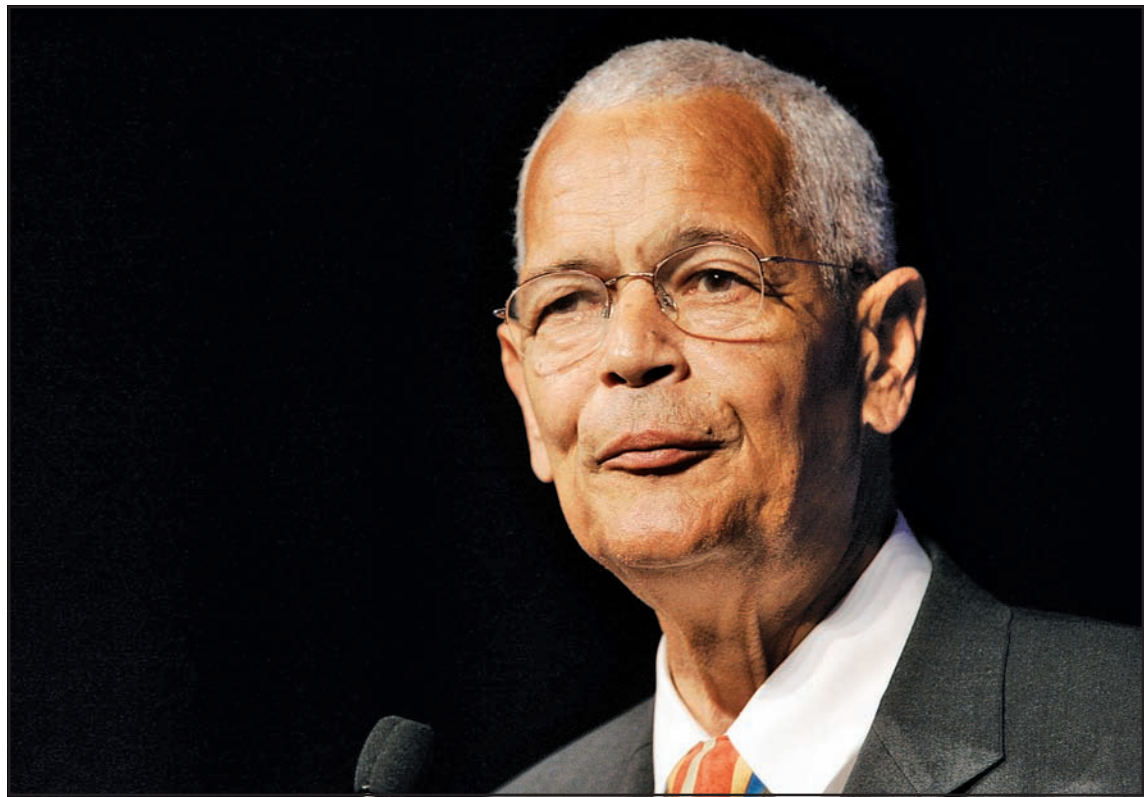
Worse, she explained: "Nobody knows anything. We know that it's bad. We know it's very bad."

To at least close the legal knowledge gap, civil rights activists and state school officials met at Wheelock College on Tuesday and held a strategy session to learn the possible impacts of the decision on about 20 different school districts throughout the state with voluntary desegregation programs that consider race.

The ruling is already under review by lawyers for the state Department of Education and attorney general's office.

But the strategy sessions may be too late, and the METCO program may be vulnerable.

Founded in 1966, METCO buses 3,289 minority students from Boston and Springfield to 38 suburban METCO, continued to page 13



NAACP Chairman Julian Bond addresses the civil rights organization's annual convention in Detroit on July 8. Despite a turbulent transition period for the group — marked by the resignation

of its former CEO and a restructuring that resulted in the firing of more than 70 employees — Bond says the NAACP is needed now more than ever. (AP photo/Paul Sancya)

NAACP leaders blast Bush policies, bury n-word

Corey Williams

DETROIT — The NAACP is needed now more than ever because the Bush administration has done little to support blacks, the civil rights organization's national chairman said Sunday at its 98th annual convention opened.

From the administration's slow response to Hurricane Katrina to the war in Iraq and immigration issues, Bush has seen his presidency questioned, Julian Bond, board chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, told an audience of about 3,000.

The number of Americans living in

poverty has increased by more than 5 million, to 37 million, during the Bush administration, Bond said.

"And the gap has grown between the haves and the have-nots," he said. "Almost a quarter of black Americans nationwide live below the poverty line, as compared with only 8.6 percent of whites."

Bond called present-day inequalities and racial disparities cumulative, the result of racial advantages compounded over time.

"Many Americans maintain ... that racial discrimination has become an ancient artifact," he said. "At the NAACP, we know none of this is true, and that's why we are dedicated to

an aggressive campaign of social justice, fighting racial discrimination."

He noted that the Supreme Court, which includes two justices nominated by Bush, upheld rulings saying school systems could not voluntarily use race in assigning students to schools.

"The Bush court removed black children from the law's protection," Bond said.

And the possibility that New Orleans' heavily black Lower Ninth Ward, ravaged by Hurricane Katrina, will never be rebuilt is comparable to a "lynching" because the work of NAACP, continued to page 14



Before Japanese sensation Daisuke Matsuzaka took the mound July 3 to defeat the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, 8-year-old Jimmy Fund Clinic patient Jordan Babbitt of Dorchester threw out the game's first pitch. An avid sports fan, Jordan was diagnosed with cancer in October, and is currently receiving treatment at The Jimmy Fund Clinic at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. (Photo courtesy of The Jimmy Fund)

Northeastern parcel plan raises Roxbury's ire

Yawu Miller

Roxbury activists say they are ready to shut down construction work on Northeastern University's 1,200-student dormitory at the corner of Ruggles Street and Columbus Avenue.

State Sen. Dianne Wilkerson held a meeting Monday evening at Roxbury Community College about Northeastern's development plans, during which community members circulated a sign-up sheet soliciting volunteers to picket the construction site.

The meeting followed actions taken Monday morning by members of the Lower Roxbury Residents

Leadership Group, who marched on Northeastern President Joseph Aoun's Columbus Avenue office demanding a meeting and calling on the university to stop buying land on the Roxbury side of Tremont Street.

"We believe that the two towers on Parcel 18 West, with their 1,200 dormitory beds, are a Trojan horse designed to enable Northeastern to continue its plan to take over our community," Roxbury resident Kerick Johnson said before leading the march on Aoun's office.

The planned dormitories, which will sit squarely across from the Whittier Street public housing development, represent the university's deepest incursion yet into Roxbury.

In the last 10 years, the university has acquired numerous properties on Tremont Street, Columbus Avenue and the streets in between.

Residents of that part of the neighborhood have been forced out as property owners, eager to rent two-bedroom apartments for as high as \$3,700 a month, have signed leases with the university.

The 1,200-bed dormitory in question is largely the result of an agreement the university reached with representatives of abutting communities and elected officials aimed at removing students from private housing.

"The one provision we gave them was that they build on their own land," said Wilkerson, who supported the university's dormitory project at a Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) meeting earlier this year.

For Wilkerson, it was Northeastern's plan to build a hotel at the same site that was the final straw.

"We're here tonight because we Parcel 18, continued to page 22

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