



## 33rd Annual Conference and Training Institute

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

# NABCJ NOTES

## Message From The Vice President

### VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

Greetings Conference Participants and Friends:

Welcome to the 33rd Annual Conference and Training Institute. We have a very successful start which is a result of the dedicated work of our Conference Planner, Ms. Belinda Stewart. A special thanks is extended to Ms. Stewart, the Colorado Chapter, and all others who worked towards making this conference one of the most successful in the history of NABCJ. My supposition is based on the coordination and organization of the conference, dynamic opening session, excellent slate of professional training, and positive feedback from our conference attendees.

I am proud to be a part of many accomplishments made during President Lassiter's administration. As such, I will take a moment to digress some of the accomplishments outlined by President Lassiter during the opening session. She noted that we have strengthened our Board of Directors with training and leadership development; therefore, have a very strong Board of Directors. We are closing the regional divide by hosting the 2007 conference in Buffalo, NY. Additionally, three applications were processed for new chapters and sixteen for life memberships. Also, a sample of NABCJ chapters experienced an average of twenty-three new members. As well, our chapters are in the community and making a difference by providing school programs, mentoring, community-based programs for youth, and a host of other community service initiatives. In addition, we have continued to expand our website, which will become an informational highway to disseminate relevant information about the programs, stance, and activities NABCJ is involved in. We received a grant from our Affiliate, the National Alliance of Faith and Justice, therefore, adopted the "Pen or Pencil" in three states, and have plans to expand this program to other chapters. Finally, we published the first Resource Directory of Minority Criminal Justice Practitioners.

At this time, I will discuss a project that will also place NABCJ on the path to becoming "The Criminal Justice Solutions Organization." I am proposing that NABCJ takes the initiative and publish a book and CD series entitled "*Voices of Experiences!*" This collection of essays will document the life experiences of many of the criminal justice change agents with whom we admire and emulate their practices on a daily basis. The essays will highlight the challenges and adventures they encountered as a result of being persons of color, as well as the solutions they utilized to overcome the discrimination, oppression, and difficulties of their time. Finally, the essays will discuss the contributions they have made to area of criminal and social justice. As you read further and understand this concept, you will realize if NABCJ does not adopt this initiative, some other individual or organization will do so; as there are many unsung hero's whose voices have not been heard. Before I proceed, let me explain the process by which this concept was envisioned. First, most recently, I was thinking of the past and reflecting on a conversation in the Bravo Restaurant with President Fay Lassiter, Minister Fitzgerald Hinds and Commissioner John Rougier. During this conversation, we discussed the challenges we have encountered as persons of color in our personal and professional lives that have shaped us into becoming strong, wise, courageous, noble, and capable criminal justice professionals and community leaders.

Second, recently I conducted multiple interviews with Dr. Bennett Cooper in order to create an Oral History of his life and work. The Historical account is entitled "*Dr. Bennett Cooper: The Man, Vision and His Legacy.*" I was in awe that at the age of 87 years, Dr. Cooper vividly recalls his years of working in the field of corrections, which spanned from 1953 until his retirement in the mid 1980's. He

shared with me, the staffing challenges, issues in hiring females and minorities, employee and inmate integration problems, dishonesty among friends and colleagues, success stories, and other experiences that resulted in him being one of the most capable and experienced Director of Corrections. His stories and experiences made me smile, say Amen, also laugh, but some of the stories even made me sad and angry at the adversities he encountered. Even so, I walked away more inspired and motivated, by his determination and strong will to succeed. But what was really disheartening was that the wealth of information shared by Dr. Cooper was not documented. Likewise, realizing that more than 34 years later, some of those same stories are still occurring, almost as if a spirit is circulating from body to body.

Third, a few days ago, my friend I.A. Justaman, shared that someone sent an unsigned letter to his boss filled with innuendo and questioning his character, integrity, and morality regarding incidents that are not related to his employment or even him for that matter. Of course, his supervisor discarded the letter, realizing it was a statement of slander while at the same time questioning the credibility of the source, since the sender did not have the dignity, or courage to sign the correspondence. Being that my friend has developed a reputation of good integrity and character and established a solid career as a criminal justice professional, credence was not given to message. Even so, it was not a pleasant experience, which also supports the idea to have a body of literature that attests to our character and strength as well. Moreover, "*Voices of Experience*" can provide words of encouragement and inspiration during such challenging moments and insight as to how our unsung hero's handled such incidents. And finally, if the events mentioned above, did not result in any action from me, the profound and inspirational message provided by Minister Hinds during the opening session, woke me up. The statement made by Minister Hinds, that as Black people, we do not have the same emphasis of legacy as some other cultures, as such, his charged to leave a legacy for our future generations, especially for our youth who are prepared to live on the edge and do not have anything to lose, moved me. As such, my rationale for proposing "*Voices of Experience.*"

There are many criminal justice practitioners and social justice advocates, as with Dr. Cooper, who are unsung hero's, trendsetters, and have paved the way for the opportunities we have today. To name a few, there is Dr. Charles Owens, Jimmie Bell, Ted Logan, Coach Sessions, Theorious Hickman, Margaret Harding, Elaine Neal, Warren and Mary Louise Cuffee, Addie Richburg, Fay Lassiter, Robert Matthews, Carlyle Holder, Dr. Eugene Walker, Harold Clarke, Dr. Reginald Wilkerson, William Dudley, and the list goes on and on and on. I venture to guess, the names referenced are less than .05 percent of the individuals who leave us a strong legacy, but also deserve to be recognized in this lifetime. Their stories from the adversities and challenges they encountered will provide a very strong and rich legacy for our youth who are prepared to live on the edge and do not have anything to lose. The messages they have will give our youth a strong sense of history and pride, the tools to handle the many adversities we all encounter, and the confidence that like our unsung hero's, they to can be successful. So, please join us, board this train to "Legacy Ville," final destination "The Criminal Justice Solutions Organization," by leaving a rich heritage and legacy that will serve to strengthen our youth, families, friends, and community. I look forward to working on this venture with you.

Warmest Regards,

Jeffrey Carson, Vice President

## Did You Know That

Disproportionate Minority Contact [formerly confinement]- (DMC) is one of the national program initiatives adopted by President Lassiter. DMC refers to the overrepresentation of people of color at every stage of the criminal justice system, from arrest and detention to probation, incarceration, and parole. Overrepresentation exists when the percentage of persons of color present at various stages of the criminal justice system exceeds their proportion in the general population. For example, in excess of 2 million Americans are now behind bars, the highest number in the history of the U.S., as well as the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Of the 2 million Americans, approximately 587,000 are African American males. Hence, although incarceration affects our entire society, the impact is heaviest on people of color, specifically African American males. Moreover, while the 2000 census count indicated that 75.1 percent of the total U.S. population was White (which includes non-white Hispanics who represent about 12 percent of the population in 2000), and 12.3 percent were African-American, one out of every seven African-American males between the ages of 25 to 29 were in prisons or jails in 2001, compared to one in twenty-four Hispanic males, and one in fifty white males of the same ages. According to Pollock (2004) in the space of less than one hundred years, African Americans and Hispanic males went from being about 30 percent of the prison population to about 70 percent. Likewise, in virtually every state African-American males as well as other persons of color are over-represented in the criminal justice system, especially in secure institutional settings. The following national data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, illustrate this point:

### Jails

- At midyear 2004 nearly 6 in 10 persons in local jails were ethnic minorities.
- White males made up 44.4% of the jail population; African-American males 38.6%; Hispanics, 15.2%; and other races (Asians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders) males, 1.8%.
- African-American males were nearly 5 times more likely than White males, nearly 3 times more likely than Hispanic males, and over 8 times more likely than persons of other races to have been in jail.

### Probation

- At yearend 2003, 1 to 5 probationers were women; 1 in 3 were African-American
- At yearend 2003 more than half of all probationers were white; almost a third were African-American; and a eighth were of Hispanic origin

### Prisons

- There were more black males than White males among State and Federal inmates at yearend 2003.
- At yearend 2003, African-American inmates represented an estimated 44% of all inmates with sentences of more than 1 year, while white inmates accounted for 35% and Hispanic inmates, 19%.
- During the same time period, African-American males outnumbered white males and Hispanic males among inmates with sentences of more than 1 year, more than 44% of all sentenced male inmates were African-American.

### Parole

- About 41% of adults on parole in December 31, 2003 were African-American and 40% were White

Some scholars suggest that if current trends continue, more African-American children are likely to go to prison than to college when they grow up. As well, Marc Maurer predicts that if the current trends continue, one in four African American males will be under some form of correctional supervision. While it might appear that such mass incarceration reduces crime, quite the contrary, research by Rose and Clear suggest that high concentrations of incarceration may well have a negative impact on public safety by leaving communities less capable of sustaining the formal social control that under grids public safety. Moreover, they argue that incarceration destabilizes communities making them more vulnerable to crime. As such, Clear outlines three "crime-enhancing effects of prison" on poor communities and people of color. First, the rampant arrest and incarceration of inner-city youth for drug crimes creates an ironic "replacement effect" that "cancels out the crime-prevention benefits of incapacitation. Second, mass incarceration deepens the presence of negative "social factors" that contribute to "criminality" in communities of color such as: broken families, inequality, poverty, alienation, and social disorder. Third, mass incarceration ironically undercuts the deterrent power of prison.

## WORKSHOP CHANGES AND CANCELLATIONS

**Changed** – Mr. Dudley "Fundamentals of Leadership" workshop is now scheduled Tuesday, July 18, 10:45 am – 12:15 pm. **This workshop was originally scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup> from 10:15 am-12:30 pm**

## OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Conference Bag:** Inside your conference bag, you will find a copy of the most recent "The Commitment," State of NABCJ Report," and NABCJ On Track CD.

**Silent Auction:** The silent auction will remain open until 6 pm on today. Proceeds will benefit Rites of Passage Ridge View Academy - a private youth facility for boys.

**Session Evaluators:** Evaluators please remember to pick up your packets at the registration counter.

**Board of Directors Elections:** Elections for the Board of Directors in the South, Northeast, and Midwest Regions will continue from 7 am - 12 pm on today in the Plaza Exhibits. You can only vote for representatives in your region. Write-in nominations will be accepted as long as the nominee is in good standing with the organization.

**Colorado Sampler:** Experience downtown Colorado on Tuesday. Buses will transport you to four of the evening entertainment establishments for a small fee of \$10. The proceeds from this event will benefit the Excelsior Youth Center for Girls. So even if you do not want to attend...be sure and purchase a ticket to help this worthy cause!

**Race To Incarcerate:** Receive a free copy of "Race To Incarcerate" by Marc Mauer when you join the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ). NAFJ has a booth in the exhibit hall.

**Justice Forum:** The justice forum will be held from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. in Plaza Ballroom E and F. The panel members will discuss the causes and correlates of Disproportional Minority Confinement as well as issues challenges of DMC and offer recommendations to address DMC. This forum will address the concerns of DMC expressed during the Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, July 16.

**Pen or Pencil:** The National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) will host a Plenary Session from 8:00 am - 10:00 am on Wednesday, July 19, in Plaza Ballroom D and E to provide an overview of the "Pen or Pencil - "Freedom of Choice" Project. Afterwards, from 10:15 am - 12:30 pm in Governor's Square 14, NAFJ will provide a training session to provide the tools to interested chapters, community groups, and individuals interested in getting involved with one of NABCJ's most exciting initiatives. Both sessions will address concerns of Re-entry and DMC expressed during the Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, July 16.