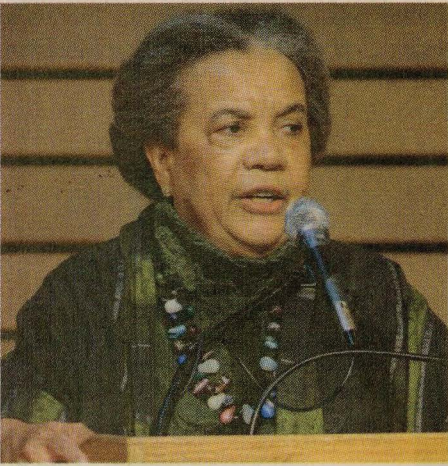


EDITORIALS • COMMENTS • OPINIONS

Child Watch It’s Hard To Be What You Can’t See



By Marian Wright Edelman
NNPA Columnist

As a new school year starts, many parents are making sure their children have the right supplies from their back-to-school lists and double-checking their courses and schedules. But are we thinking about what books our children are reading? Children of color are now a majority of all public school students and will soon be a majority of all children in America yet children’s books and the publishing industry have failed to keep up with the rainbow of our children’s faces and cultures and needs and

the wide variety of their daily experiences. As award-winning children’s book author and illustrator Christopher Myers says, this matters in order to give all children a deeper sense of connection to the books they’re reading and to each other and to prepare them to live in a rapidly globalizing, multicultural, multiracial, and multi-faith nation and world. I was grateful that Chris Myers joined other leading children’s book authors at a roundtable before 2,000 college-age students, public school teachers, and juvenile detention personnel preparing to teach in summer Children’s Defense Fund Freedom Schools® programs. Our reading curriculum has long been centered on excellent books reflecting a wide variety of cultures, races, and experiences. For some children it is the first time they have seen books with characters who look like them and share some of the struggles in their lives. Our goal is to help children fall in love with reading, and they respond. “I enjoyed learning about my history.” “That [book] really inspired me because he came from a rough neighborhood.” “Freedom Schools taught me when I learn, I can have fun with it. It made me a better reader because I can

understand things.” “I see myself and the books give me hope.” The “all-White world of children’s books” is nothing new. Rudine Sims Bishop, the moderator of the children’s book roundtable, noted that was the title of a landmark study 50 years ago “calling out the children’s book world not only for failing to include African Americans in children’s books, but also for feeding White children ‘gentle doses of racism through their books.’” The old books were guilty of sins of commission and omission, and of course Black children were not the only ones left out. Bishop said since 1994 the Cooperative Children’s Book Center at the University of Wisconsin has been counting the number of new children’s books featuring African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino Americans each year. But even as the number of Americans of color has continued to grow rapidly, the percentage of books reflecting them has not: the annual total has hovered around 10 percent. It’s hard to be what you can’t see. It’s only noise Ching chong I won’t let it in.

I won’t let it in. I promise myself I won’t let them Win. Wong said she was asked to read that poem during a visit to a school in Singapore by a teacher troubled by the racial hostility that existed there. Even when the context was completely different, a poem like this describes a common feeling of racism and discrimination that lets children finally see themselves, too. It also lets other children make their own connections with how this person is feeling, including those who have never been teased about their race or eyes and those who have done the teasing. All children need these kinds of experiences. Is your school providing books that celebrate and include every child? Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children’s Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org

To Be Equal Remembering Julian Bond, A Giant Among Giants



By Marc H. Morial
NNPA Columnist

“The country has lost one of its most passionate and eloquent voices for the cause of justice. He advocated not just for African Americans, but for every group, indeed every person subject to oppression and discrimination, because he recognized the common humanity in us all.” – Morris Dees, Southern Poverty Law Center Julian Bond was never one to shrink away from a worthy fight. He lived his life as a tireless champion of the oppressed and maligned, a battle-worn warrior for civil

rights, equality and social justice. Bond fought the good fight, and at the still-youthful age of 75, he completed his course. His longtime dedication to equal rights for African-Americans – and for all – will be celebrated in the days and months to come. But we must guard against fossilizing his life and legacy in tributes or textbooks. Bond lived a life of action, clear mission and steadfast service. There could be no worthier tribute to Bond than to pick up the baton he has passed and re-dedicate ourselves to the struggle to make the promises and opportunities of our democracy true for all its citizens. That struggle is an ongoing one that neither begins nor ends with one movement or personality. Individually and collectively, we must take up the baton to bring an end to the deadly scourge of police brutality, close persistent economic inequality gaps and address destructive disparities in our nation’s education system. We must do it, because as Bond once famously reminded us all: “Good things don’t come to those who wait. They come to those who agitate.” Bond was a student in a philosophy class taught by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Morehouse College in Atlanta. It was there, during the height of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, that Bond began to

agitate in earnest, co-founding the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee along with other students, including now-Congressman John Lewis. He served as the group’s communications director for five years. Bond was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1965, but was not allowed to take his seat because his White colleagues objected to his opposition to the Vietnam War. It took a year, a protest march led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and a Supreme Court order, but the legislature finally allowed him to take his rightful seat in 1966. He spent 20 years in the Georgia Legislature, serving in both the House and the Senate. In 1968, Bond became a national figure after delivering a fiery speech at the Chicago Democratic National Convention. His performance was so impressive; his name was placed into the nominating process for vice president – a position he could not qualify for because he was too young. Bond went on to serve as the first president of the Southern Poverty Law Center, remaining on its board for the rest of his life after his tenure came to an end in 1979. Later, he would also serve as chairman of the NAACP. No matter the capacity, Bond was first and foremost an activist for equal rights. In addition to his political career and his work

as a civil rights leader, Bond was an accomplished writer, he was a lecturer and a professor, a television show host and he narrated “Eyes on the Prize,” an iconic documentary on the Civil Rights Movement. Bond never stopped agitating because he fundamentally believed that, “the humanity of all Americans is diminished when any group is denied rights granted to others.” Bond never limited his philosophy to any community, region or nationality. Bond fought against segregation on our shores and apartheid in South Africa. He devoted himself to equal rights for all, including, most recently, the rights of the LGBT community. Bond left a lasting legacy for us to explore, celebrate and continue. Whether it’s challenges to voting rights or inequity in education funding, many of the challenges he faced yesterday continue to plague our nation today. His lifelong fight for equality and justice must become our lifelong fight for the same. We can all become a part of his vision to create a more perfect union in our nation. Our prayers and heartfelt sympathy are with his family, along with our promise to continue Julian’s fight. Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Planned Attacks On Planned Parenthood



By George E. Curry
NNPA Columnist

Conservatives are attacking Planned Parenthood so viciously that you would be forgiven if you thought that the organization was running for president as a Democrat. It is often said, “The first casualty when war comes is truth.” Actually, the first casualty of politics is truth. That’s particularly true when it comes to the orchestrated attacks on Planned Parenthood. The anti-choice Center for Medical Progress (CMP) has released seven videos that seek to discredit Planned Parenthood. Media Matters said, “The latest video again relies on footage already debunked as highly edited, features conversations with third-party providers who acted as the middlemen between researchers and clinics, and relies heavily on the account of a technician who did not work for Planned Parenthood...” Dr. Ben Carson, a retired neurosurgeon, has also launched a major attack against Planned Parenthood and he should know better.

In an interview with Fox News on Aug. 12, Carson said that Planned Parenthood erects most of its clinics in Black neighborhoods as a “way to control that population.” However, ABC’s Martha Raddatz reported, “Planned Parenthood estimates that fewer than five percent of its health centers are located in areas where more than one-third of the population is African-American.” In a detailed rebuttal, the Washington Post awarded Carson “Four Pinocchios,” indicating a “whopper” of a lie, the highest level of falsehoods. “A 2011 report by Life Dynamics, which opposes abortion, used Census data to determine the African-American and Hispanic population of each zipcode where Planned Parenthood has an office,” the newspaper recalled. “The report was intended to show that the abortion clinics are placed mostly in areas where black residents exceed the average black population of the state. “But when you look closely at the data, it turns out that there are only about 110 locations (out of about 800) where the black population exceeds 25 percent of the overall population. That certainly does not support the claim that “most” clinics are in ‘black neighborhoods.’ “Separately, in 2011, the Guttmacher Institute surveyed all abortion providers (about 1,700), including Planned Parenthood, and found that 60 percent are in majority-white neighborhoods — and that fewer than one in ten abortion providers are located in neighborhoods where more than half of the residents are

black. The statistics did not change when the numbers were adjusted for nearly 600 providers that conduct more than 400 abortions a year.” Referring to the founder of Planned Parenthood, Carson said: “I know who Margaret Sanger is and I know that she believed in eugenics and that she was not particularly enamored with Black people.” He is correct in saying that Margaret Sanger believed in eugenics, the idea that the human race can be improved by encouraging or discouraging reproduction based on genetic traits. Even so, Carson tells only half of the story – the half favorable to his point of view. “...I think people should go back and read about Margaret Sanger, who founded this place – a woman who Hillary Clinton by the way says she admires,” Carson said in the Fox interview. “Look and see what many people in Nazi Germany thought about her.” The Washington Post did just that. “Starting in 1916, Sanger’s clinics at first were aimed mainly at poor immigrant women. The first clinic was in a neighborhood ‘populated largely by Italians and Eastern European Jews,’ according to the 2010 book “Birth Control on Main Street,” by Cathy Moran Hajo. Sanger did not open a Harlem clinic until the 1930s, even though infant mortality rates there were similar. “Hajo found that in the 1916-1939 period, white activists were more likely to exclude African Americans from clinics, rather than include them. There were some half-hearted efforts to create African American clinics, but white activists

actually gave little or no assistance. ‘Whatever the activists’ personal beliefs about race may have been, there was no grand program to exterminate nonwhites or the poor,’ Hajo concluded.” The Post also noted, “Sanger in 1938 appeared to speak positively about the German program undertaken by the Nazis. ‘Reports in medical journals state that the indications laid down in the German law are being carefully observed. These are gongenital feeble-mindedness; schizophrenia, circular insanity; heredity epilepsy; hereditary chorea (Huntington’s); hereditary blindness or deafness; grave hereditary bodily deformity and chronic alcoholism,” she said. “The rights of the individual could be equally well safeguarded here, but in no case should the rights of society, or which he or she is a member, be disregarded.” “Yet in 1939, she wrote that before Hitler came to power, ‘I was one of the few Americans who joined the Anti-Nazi Committee and gave money, my name and any influence I had with writers and others, to combat Hitler’s rise to power in Germany.’ She added that ‘my three books were destroyed [burned] and have not been allowed to circulate in Germany.” It would be great if we could get these orchestrated lies about abortion out of circulation. George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA) and BlackPressUSA.com. He is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach.