

General recognition of any public service effort is highly desirable; and, if fund raising is involved, it is essential. Achieving that objective is, however, no simple matter.

The United Negro College Fund (UNCF), NYC, which was founded in 1944 to support a group of 27 predominantly black, private colleges (they now total 41), conducted aggressive fund raising efforts. But, although it became well-known within the black community, it still -- after 25 years -- had made little impact on the general public.

In 1970, the incoming UNCF chairman Dr. Morris Abram, former President of Bran-deis U., and the then UNCF Executive Director Vernon E. Jordan Jr. (a black) realized that more extensive public support was essential for meeting the financial needs of the colleges it assists. Development of an improved communications program appeared to be the best approach and, to that end, Joseph A. Mehan, NBC veteran (and a white), was retained as Director of Communications. Wesley Streater (a black) is Assistant Director of Communications.

First step was to analyze the potential effectiveness of the available channels of communication for UNCF's purposes; this led to the conclusion that major emphasis should be placed on radio/TV.

Since funds were limited, the Advertising Council, NYC, the well-known advertising industry public service organization, was asked for assistance. It gave UNCF a "minor campaign rating." In that status, UNCF itself produced the four radio and one TV public service announcements which were distributed.

The Jordan and Mehan team then, at the urging of Edward Ney, President of the Young & Rubicam (Y&R) ad agency, presented their story to the Council's major campaign screening committee. Jordan described the needs and objectives of UNCF, pointed out its role in graduating 50,000 black students of modest means, described the nation's stake in supporting it, and emphasized the bene-

fits to all of society when well-educated Negroes join the work force. Mehan concluded with a talk on the mass media approach envisioned for the program. The committee was persuaded and UNCF was classified in 1971 as a major campaign client, a status maintained ever since. This means that the services and skills of a leading advertising agency are devoted each year, free, to the UNCF campaign. (UNCF pays certain costs up to \$100,000 a year.)

Y&R was the agency assigned to prepare a full-scale program. It created the now-familiar theme -- "A Mind Is A terrible Thing To Waste" -- and a series of radio/TV spots embodying it was developed, produced, and distributed to 7,000 radio outlets and over 800 TV stations. (President Ford starred in a 20-second radio and a 60-second TV spot.)

Posters were created for billboards, subways, and buses; print ads were produced for newspapers and magazines.

Mehan prepared scripts for a series of 20-minute films. Among the most successful are "The Difference We Make," narrated by Derek Bok, President of Harvard U. (It has been shown on TV more than 250 times and was awarded a Bronze Medal at the 1976 New York International TV and Film Festival.)

Other films (all in use) include "A Young Man Named Harvard," which depicts the progress of an Alabama farm boy through Talladega College to Harvard Medical School, and "Black Colleges: An Unfinished Story," which features NBC's Edwin Newman, UNCF Board Member Cyrus Vance (now U.S. Secretary of State), and Maynard Jackson, Mayor of Atlanta, GA. The latest, introduced in 1976, involves a TV spot starring Hank Aaron, holder of pro baseball's home run record.

All of the 22 UNCF regional offices receive one or two prints of every UNCF film. They arrange showings by TV stations in their areas and on such other occasions as regional UNCF meetings.

UNCF's previous radio approach was to-

tally overhauled. The 18-year-old format of recorded school choir medleys was replaced by taped telephone-interview shows which describe educational activities at UNCF schools. Each show now uses clips from UNCF films and features a live guest. UNCF Executive Director Christopher F. Edley acts as co-host with an ABC network commentator. Soon after startup of the new show, titled, "Passport to the Future," the station pickup jumped from 11 to over 110.

Mehan has arranged for appearances on the national NBC "Today" show by: Edley; Vance; a former UNCF President, Dr. Herman Long; and Dr. Rembert Stokes, President of Wilberforce U.

UNCF's bulletin was revised and expanded and is now distributed bi-monthly to hundreds of newspapers and radio-TV outlets (black and white), 1,500 corporations, contributors, and UNCF staff members. Making use of action photos, it reports campaign activities, contributions, black graduates' achievements, and UNCF awards. Average run is 6,000.

The Annual Report was "vastly upgraded." The latest, for example, picks up the U.S.A. Bicentennial theme. A 16-page, 7x9-inch brochure on good-quality (but not slick) paper, it: reviews the year 1975; gives financial statements; and lists major donors, their gifts, and the disbursements to individual schools. It also describes "some of the contributions on the part of the black colleges to our nation's history." In this context, it traces the development of their work from its beginning (at Atlanta U. -- in a boxcar abandoned during the Civil War) to their current ability to accommodate 50,000 of the country's 500,000 black students and noted that more than one third of the U.S.A.'s black college graduates had attended UNCF-supported colleges.

New brochures are regularly produced for distribution to corporations, foundations, and potential individual contributors. They explain the needs of UNCF schools and the benefits to the nation to be derived from donations. Individual titles include "Help Us Get More Students Through the Door"; "What You Should Know about the United Negro College Fund"; "New Dimensions in Recruiting"; and "Turning Out Quality Citizens."

UNCF news releases announce grants, essay contests, "radiothon" fund raisings, new films, and other events and are sent to media outlets throughout the country.

There is an Advisory Council of which a majority of the fourteen members are PR executives. They have, for example, conducted a three-day workshop for PR directors of the UNCF beneficiary colleges.

Each year the Fund stages a National Media Appreciation Awards luncheon and presents plaques to three media outlets which have done an outstanding job of assisting UNCF.

The last six years have seen remarkable progress. . . Funds raised have doubled to \$12,057,960 in 1975 (total UNCF expenses were \$2,720,206) and the number of contributors, to 105,000. . . UNCF is believed to be now the largest single black fund-raising organization in the country. . . The Advertising Council's reports on electronic media exposure and audience pull have given UNCF consistently high marks. . . An annual postcard poll of media, conducted by the Council, has rated the quality of UNCF ads as "Good" to "Excellent". . . On the basis of a survey by Public Service TV, UNCF's 1976 spots were found to be among the top six "best known in America."

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Proud to Serve PR,

Denny Griswold

Editor