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REMARKS

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numbering more
than 35

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

26TH ANNUAL MEETING

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

JUNE 24, 1966

I am honored to be with you and to receive your
John B. Russwurm Award for 1966.

Eighteen years ago, in this city, I told my party's
national convention that the time had arrived for Americans
to "walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human
rights."

Today our march down that sunshine road has gone much further than we could have dreamed in 1948.

And, in the summer of 1966, it continues. In the halls of Congress where the Civil Rights Act of 1966 is being debated . . . on dusty highways in the South . . . in steaming ghettos in the North . . . in the minds and hearts and consciences of our American people.

The end of our march is not yet in sight. Yet, some of the marchers have already grown weary.

They ask: What else can we do, after all the laws we've passed?

Other marchers strike off from the main troop -- rejecting the unity and cooperation which have brought us this far.

Others simply doubt whether we can reach our destination.

∟ In these troubled and uncertain times, we must make clear that we intend to finish our journey.

∟ "Freedom Now" is not a catchword for a minority of Americans. It is a moral imperative for all Americans.

∟ We know that 20 million Americans will no longer be pacified by slogans or tokens. We are already generations behind schedule.

∟ We have postponed far too long such elementary human rights as equal housing opportunity . . . protection from personal injury . . . the guarantee of equal justice regardless of race or color.

∟ We are far behind schedule in securing parity for Negro Americans in the job market -- in reducing unemployment among Negroes which continues to run twice the rate for whites.

Yes, we are very late in fulfilling the promise of freedom and human dignity which lives at the heart and soul of our democratic system.

The first edition of John Russwurm's Freedom Journal, published in 1827, carried these words: "In spirit of candor and humility, we intend . . . to lay our case before the public, with a view to arrest the progress of prejudice . . ."

"The civil rights of a people being of the greatest value, it shall ever be our duty to vindicate our brethren, when oppressed, and to urge upon our brethren the expediency of using their elective franchise. . . "

As the first Negro college graduate in America, as an editor determined to give his people a courageous voice, and as an outspoken leader in the fight for the right to vote for Negroes, John Russwurm left no doubt which road he intended to travel.

Joined a few years later by Frederick Douglass'
North Star, the Freedom Journal jarred the conscience of
white America over the inhumanity of slavery and sustained
the spark of hope that freedom would be known by every
Negro in America.

John Russwurm defined the objectives of the Negro
press with the admonition "to lay our case before the
public."

In the late 1930's you realized that as editors and
publishers your leadership and power would be increased
substantially through greater cooperative effort. In
February, 1940, the National Newspaper Publishers
Association was born and your individual voices achieved
even greater force and significance in the struggle for
racial justice.

From the days of John Russwurm's Freedom Journal until now, the Negro press has been a vital factor in defining the issues and goals of the civil rights movement . . . in providing a sense of direction and perspective . . . in renewing courage and faith among those who had known only defeat and despair . . . and in carrying forward the job of "creative agitation."

Yes, it was the "creative agitation" of the Negro press which produced many significant victories -- such as abolishing the color ban in major league baseball.

I remember how your association met with Commissioner Landis and the club owners. Soon after that meeting, we thrilled to the exploits of Jackie Robinson.

It was "creative agitation" which brought you to visit President Franklin D. Roosevelt and members of his Cabinet.

↳ Your active concern for questions of racial justice, on the national level, helped remedy much of the discrimination which occurred during the war years.

↳ And your victories were America's victories.

↳ America's greatest victory to date has been the decision to tear down the barriers of segregation and exclusion which were so evident at the time of your Association's founding.

↳ But now you must continue to provide vital leadership as this nation struggles to move beyond equality in law to equality in fact -- as we seek to provide hard, visible evidence that performance is linked with promise and fulfillment is an element of faith.

↳ The recent White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights" stressed the need to involve all segments of society in expanding equality of opportunity and achievement for all peoples, especially as these goals are sought on the local level.

↳ The major battles of the next phase of the civil rights struggle will be waged in the state houses, city halls and local town meetings.

This fact places especially heavy burdens upon you and your newspapers.

↳ You now speak directly to those on the front lines of the civil rights movement . You are -- or should be -- the the voice of the new phase of/ civil rights struggle.

∠ There is no question of the federal government's
commitment to the cause of civil rights.

∠ It is your opportunity to help utilize federal programs at
the local level and to let millions of your readers know
how these programs can help them. o

In employment, there are expanding opportunities for local participation in the Manpower Development and Training Act programs . . . exciting ^{economic programs} ~~concepts~~ being implemented by the Economic Development Administration . . . new opportunities within the Office of Economic Opportunity . . . and the growing duties of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the office of Federal Contract Compliance, and Plans for Progress -- to name just a few.

7 In education, President Johnson has proposed and Congress has enacted a remarkable series of historic acts which can literally transform our system of education in deprived areas -- the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act, amendments to the Vocational Education Act, the Library Services Act, among others.

∟ In housing and urban restoration, the Congress is now debating President Johnson's Demonstration Cities legislation and has already created the rent supplements program to expand housing opportunities for lower income families. Many new concepts in public and low-rent housing are under development. And a struggle is being waged in both Houses to pass the President's proposal to guarantee equal housing opportunity regardless of race, color or religion.

In health and medical services, the Medicare program will be available to all eligible persons in just one more week. Other programs provide new resources to combat mental illness and retardation, immunize children against dread diseases, establish regional medical centers, and expand community health services.

Yes, the opportunities for effective community action are many and varied. And you have the task of knowing how your communities and neighborhoods can participate fully and effectively in these programs.

I am, therefore, suggesting that your Association consider establishing a special standing committee on governmental affairs.

This committee could represent all geographic areas. Its members could visit Washington periodically to be briefed on the use of federal programs. They could advise officials of the federal government on the effectiveness of their efforts. They could assume responsibility for transmitting this information to all members of the Association.

As your Vice President, I volunteer to work closely with this standing committee on governmental affairs, if it is established, in much the same manner as I serve as the President's liaison with mayors and city managers.

The Vice President's office could assist in scheduling meetings -- as well as following up on your suggestions and questions on federal programs and activities.

I believe such a committee would strengthen communication between Negro editors and publishers and the principal officers of your federal government. And this, in turn, would help mobilize the full support of all Americans in our efforts toward a society of justice and equality.

Will we be capable of recapturing the enthusiasm and courage of the freedom ride, sit-in, and picket line as we strive to bring excellence into our urban schools?

Will we be able to articulate our legislative concerns before the city council as effectively as we did before the United States Congress?

^{we} Will we be able to rebuild whole sections of our cities as successfully as we demolished the framework of law which supported segregation and racial prejudice?

We need the leadership of the Negro press as we struggle to answer "yes" to these questions.

We need your sense of "creative agitation" directed against the intractable problems of the ^{city} ghetto.

We need your voice to carry the exciting story of America striving to transform a great nation into a Great Society.

We need your advice and counsel on ways to improve our efforts to upgrade the quality of life for all Americans.

Above all, we need your courage . . . your faith . . .
and your proven ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable
odds.

Dante in his inferno wrote

↳ The hottest places in hell are ~~indeed~~ reserved for
those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis.

↳ For 140 years your voice has often been America's
conscience on the question of racial justice.

And today this issue confronts America with a moral
crisis no less real than existed in 1827.

↳ But with your help -- and your voice -- we can win
this victory so long sought. We can rescue not only those
still bound by the chains of prejudice but all men -- black
and white -- who dream of freedom and cherish the soul
of this nation.

In closing, may I repeat my final words to the Democratic National Convention in this city 18 years ago:

"I know that we can -- I know that we shall -- begin here the fuller and richer realization of that hope, that promise of a land where all men are free and equal, and each man uses his freedom wisely and well."

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DRAFT OF REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
AT 26th ANNUAL MEETING OF NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS
ASSOCIATION

I am indeed honored to participate in the 26th Annual Meeting of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and to receive your John B. Russwurm Award for 1966.

Today America stands at the crossroads in the struggle for civil rights and equal opportunity.

As a nation we can continue traveling down the road to freedom -- our path for the past 15 years -- a road studded with historic landmarks proclaiming America's determination to root out every vestige of prejudice, bigotry and second-class citizenship.

Or we can take another path -- one marked with barriers reading, "This far.... and no further" -- a path leading to a future of injustice, bitterness and dissension.

The American people must choose which course to follow -- and this decision is being made today: in the halls of Congress where the Civil Rights Act of 1966 is being debated, --on the highways of Mississippi, -- in the ghettos of our cities, -- and in the hearts and minds of all people, black and white.

Some of the marchers on the road to freedom grow weary. They ask the question: "What else can we do .. after all the laws we've passed?"

Other marchers strike off from the main troop of travellers -- rejecting the unity and cooperation which has ~~be~~ distinguished the civil rights forces.

And ~~other~~ ^{Some} persons simply doubt the capacity of the marchers to reach their destination -- to secure equality of opportunity in all areas of life -- housing as well as jobs, education as well as voting.

In these troubled and uncertain times, it is essential, then, that our determination to finish this historic journey be expressed with unmistakable clarity:

"Freedom Now" is not a catchword for a minority of Americans. It is a moral imperative for all Americans.

And we know that twenty million Americans will no longer be pacified by slogans or tokens. We know there is only one road to freedom -- and we are already generations behind schedule.

We have postponed far too long such elementary human rights as equal housing opportunity -- protection from personal injury -- the guarantee of equal justice regardless of race or color.

We are far behind schedule in security parity for Negro Americans in the job market -- in reducing unemployment among Negroes which continues to run twice the rate for whites.

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And your victories were America's victories.

~~And~~ America's greatest victory to date has been the decision to tear down the barriers of segregation and exclusion which were so evident at the time of your Association's founding.

But now you must continue to provide vital leadership as this nation struggles to move beyond equality in law to equality in fact -- as we seek to provide hard, visible evidence that performance is linked with promise and fulfillment is an element of faith.

The recent White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights" stressed the need to involve all segments of society in expanding equality of opportunity and achievement for all peoples, especially as these goals are sought on the local level.

The major battles of the next phase of the civil rights struggle will be waged in the state houses, city halls and local town meetings -- not in the halls of Congress or the federal courtroom.

This fact places especially heavy burdens upon you and your newspapers. ~~For~~ You ~~now~~ speak directly to those on the front lines of the civil rights movement. You are -- or should be -- the voice of the new phase of the civil rights struggle.

You will help generate the local involvement and support which is essential in building a total environment of freedom. You will also interpret to millions of your readers a wide spectrum of federal programs and opportunities now available to assist local communities win the struggle against deprivation, discrimination and despair.

In employment, there are expanding opportunities for local participation in the manpower development and training act programs -- exciting concepts being implemented by the Economic Development Administration -- new opportunities within the Office of Economic Opportunity -- and the growing duties of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the office of Federal Contract Compliance, and Plans for Progress -- to name just a few.

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As your Vice President, I volunteer to work closely with this standing committee on governmental affairs if it is established -- in much the same manner as I serve as liaison with mayors and city managers. The Vice President's office could assist in scheduling meetings ^{as well as} following up on your suggestions and questions on federal programs and activities.

I believe such a committee would strengthen ~~valuable~~ lines of communication between Negro editors and publishers and the principal officers of your federal government. And this, in turn, would assist significantly in mobilizing the full support of all Americans in our war against slumism.

Slumism is the enemy within -- the insidious virus consuming city after city and destroying the human beings in those cities.

Slumism is poverty -- illiteracy --- disease.
It is discrimination and frustration and bitterness.

Slumism is ungathered garbage and delapidated
buildings. It is a family of eight in an unheated
room.

Slumism is danger on the stair and violence in
the street.

Slumism is rent too high a desperate man is moved
to tears ... or crime.

Slumism is segregated, inferior schooling for those
who urgently need the best.

Slumism is inflicting upon our less fortunate
citizens the burden of dependency and despair rather
than stimulating their capacity for self-support and
self-respect.

Slumism is pent-up anger of people living on the
outside of affluence.

Slumism is the highly complex and self-sustaining
system which ruthlessly and systematically denies any
opportunity for meaningful choice in housing, education,
jobs, welfare and public services.

And we can defeat slumism only if local leadership
working in conjunction with federal and state officials,
reasserts itself in bold and creative fashion.

Are we, for example, capable of recapturing the enthusiasm and courage of the freedom ride, sit-in and picket line as we strive to inject the concept of excellence into our urban schools?

Can we articulate our legislative concerns before the city council as effectively as we did before the U. S. Congress?

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