Black Votes Matter

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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

LESSONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI: FROM RESOLVE TO RESULTS.

RESOLVE BREEDS COURAGE, COURAGE BREEDS UNITY, UNITY BREEDS ACTION AND ACTION BREEDS RESULTS.

There are many stories, many angles, many perspectives and many opinions as to the impact of the recent events at the University of Missouri (UM). While I find these reactions and opinions interesting my focus will continue to be our community. However, what lessons can we deride from UM and apply to our challenges right here in river city.

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The premise and attention of the column has been and will continue to focus on the need for our community to understand the need for us to use the power of our vote to improve our community. The focus does not ignore the other realities that can provide positive change. For example, relevant economic development, job creation measures, educational achievement initiatives and more, are on the list of other important realities. Voting is my focus. Voting allows all of us to easily participate for our own self-interest.

The UM boycott should be put into context. Surely you know that university students all over this country are experiencing and expressing dismay at racism, sexism and religious bigotry. Surely you know that the nation is continually becoming separated by hate, bigotry and a widening gap of the have and have nots. Allow me to draw a needed parallel between the important lessons from the UM boycott to our needs, our challenges and our need to vote.

LESSONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI:

Resolve: The problems at UM have been going on for years, as have complaints and protest there. The student body did not give up, did not become so discouraged that they stopped demanding change. They continued to organize, articulate, and protest the problems and to suggest remedies to the University. The UM students were resolved.

Courage: In a university setting the power is focused and the Chancellor's and President's level on one hand, with the Deans on the other. It takes courage to challenge these powerful forces. You protest, you face loss of your status, scholarship, grades and more. Parents who in many cases are paying all or part the bills, may not be on board with your activism. Athletes have the threat of getting kicked off the team or loss of their athletic scholarship. The UM Hunger strike, football players and coaches, protesters were big time courageous.

Unity: A protest is as powerful as the leverage of numbers. 10 are more powerful that one and 100 have more leverage than 10, etc. Always there are those who are in the protest for the wrong reasons and will be in only until the going gets tough. There are those who may be willing to reveal strategies and methods under pressure. There will be those within the protest "community" who are opposed to the strategy and methods. These elements, and more, can and will destroy a protest (boycott). Without the glue of unity no effective action and resulting positive results will occur. The UM students and sympathizers were unified

Action: The actions mostly will come from good strategy, contingency planning and detailed and preparation. Needless to say the UM boycotters took action.

Results: They have had victories but the victory of institutional change will remain to be seen. Victories cannot be a deterrent to keeping the focus on the overall battle. The UM students have issues that are beyond resignations

APPLICATION OF THE LESSONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI TO THE VOTING HABITS FOR NORTH OMAHA:

First, what is our problem, what is our "protest"? Beloved, our community is poverty stricken, we have vast joblessness, teenage pregnancy, educational achievement gaps, national levels of teenage unemployment and STD's, violence and minimal for profits successes. Few black owned professional and sizeable businesses.

The premise of this Column is that we can change this report. We can affect our community with the right solutions. Simply stated we must elect the right leadership from top to bottom. That should be easy, we just need to vote. If we vote with our community's best interest in mind we can start the change. Let me remind Black Votes Matter.

We can apply the lessons of UM. We need to be resolved and courageous to stand up to leadership white and Black. We need to hold elected and other leadership accountable in every way. We must challenge them, protest, demonstrate, and file legal remedies. We need to stand up and be courageous for the betterment of our community. We must fight back the community leadership that has become too comfortable, too intertwined, too beholden to the powerful and privileged. Sorry to say that's where we are. It will take courage to challenge our friends in high places, who are operating against the best interest of our community or who have become the agents for those not having our best interest in mind.

Our community is divided. Divided politically, divided within our leadership. We have created a small group of our black leadership, who feel they are privileged and don't respect the wider leadership pool. If we could unify be could have dramatic impact on our challenges. Our leverage is in unified actions and a strong voter bloc where our voice and vote will matter.

To review previous Black Votes Matter column articles visit ***Omahastar.com****. or prestonlovejr.com. Column began September 11, 2015*

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