

An Ahidiana Parent's Farewell to a Collegian

by Mtumishi St. Julien

Most of the ideas and values we have taught you began to take root in our college years. We were taught many of these views and values in our early youth but they took root when we were bombarded with new ideals and agendas in college. The forum of ideas on the college campus forced us to challenge and then reinforce or discard the beliefs with which we grew up. You too will find that your college years will be a most memorable time of self-discovery and self-affirmation. You will experience a ready forum to express, challenge and actualize the key ideals which will guide you for the rest of your life. You will experience the worse and the best of people. We hope and pray that your college years will do for you what they did for us. Those years taught us that above all else we must work to make a difference. We must strive as Maulana Karenga has taught us "to make the world better and more beautiful" in all we decide to do.

As we studied the issue of change, we learned that real power to make change and to control our own destiny comes from the building and maintaining independent African American institutions. Even though one determined person can make a difference (e.g. Mary McLeod Bethune & Rosa Parks), history has demonstrated that the most proven vehicle for making change in society and for institutional building has been the cadre. The cadre is a closely knit & disciplined group of persons who share similar views, values and commitment to make change. (Please note the many examples of cadres when you study the liberation and nation building organizations that freed our people during the European colonial period in Africa.) It is this realization that led us to organize Ahidiana.

At Ahidiana we tried to make a difference in our community by building and maintaining a school, Ahidiana Work/Study Center. We brought into the city many of our key nationally and internationally recognized African, Caribbean and African American thinkers and activists. We organized yearly Kwanzaa events, African Liberation Day celebrations, the Louisiana Black Assembly, Free Gary Tyler rallies, Media Watch and anti-police brutality protests. We picketed and demonstrated in support of the struggles of our people in Southern Africa. We organized Black women's conferences to promote equal opportunities for Black women. We used the media very effectively to educate the community about important issues concerning African American development. We opened a bookstore, printing and publishing business and supported each other through collective buying. All of this was done in the spirit of changing the minds and hearts of our people to make positive change in the lives of African

peoples here and abroad. It was the cadre that allowed us to do all these things in such a short period of time. We did more then than we have done before or since.

We do not necessarily expect or desire that you copy what we attempted to do. Nevertheless, we do expect and desire that you will always be willing to study/work diligently with others who share your views and values to improve your abilities, skills and analyses in order to make a difference wherever you go and whatever you decide to do.

Where you come from is an essential part of who you are and where you are at a given time. So as you are introduced to new ideas and challenges please refer back to the beliefs and values we have taught you. Most of these beliefs and values can be found throughout this Ahidiana archive website. Remember that Malcolm X taught, as we often told you, that 'History is the best teacher'. Dr. Maulana Karenga in interpreting the importance of Malcolm has taught that "History is a people's memory. If you lose your sense of history, you lose your mind."

Use what we have taught you as a foundation from which to build, from which to compare, from which to judge. Use it to reinforce the views and values we have passed on to you. Use it to inspire you to carry on the tradition of serving our people and through them the world. Build upon this legacy for the benefit of our grandchildren and their children to come.

Work For Our People,
Work For The Race,
Build For Our Future
Stay on the Case !!