Ace Bowen Named Cyclone MVP

AMES, Iowa – Two-time all-Big 12 linebacker Alvin “Ace” Bowen (top), was presented with the Pete Taylor MVP Award as the 2007 Iowa State football team’s most valuable player at the Cyclone Football Awards Ceremony.

Bowen led Cyclones in tackles for the second straight season with 99 stops. The senior was also the team leader in tackles for loss (12.5) and forced fumbles (5). The East Orange, N.J. native, who led the nation in tackles in 2006 also earned the Al and Dean Knudson award as the team’s outstanding defensive player for the second straight season, sharing the award with senior nose guard Abyha Rubin of Pensacola, Fla., who made 42 tackles in 2007. Bowen was recognized as a team captain and received the Ralph Aulmann award for captains with quarterback Brett Meyer (bottom) and wide receiver Todd Blythe.

Meyer of Atlantic was given the Ennis Haywood Award as a major contributor on the field who was also the best possible ambassador for Iowa State off the field. Meyer finished his career with Iowa State school records of 10,422 yards in total offense and 9,499 passing yards. He ranks third on the all-time Big 12 Conference chart in both categories.

Blythe received the Ray Scott Award as the team’s best offensive player. The senior from Indianola ended his career with school records of 176 catches for a record 3,096 yards and record 31 touchdowns. Meyer and Blythe combined for a school record of 28 touchdown passes over the last four years, the second-best scoring tandem in Big 12 history.

The Durwood “Dury” Moss Award for the outstanding newcomer went to offensive lineman Doug Dedrick. Dedrick, a sophomore, started every game this season.

Senior tight end Ben Barkema was given the Rueben J. Miller Award as the Cyclone player whose conduct on and off the field has brought honor and distinction to the university. Hailing from Muscatine, Barkema finished his career with 52 catches for 366 yards and four touchdowns.

Kelechi Osemele, a freshman offensive lineman was named the offensive scout team player of the year. Fellow Houston, Texas, native and lineman Jerod Black was recognized as the team’s defensive scout team player of the year. Senior placekicker Brett Culbertson of Des Moines, who finished his career ranking tied for fifth in Iowa State history in scoring, earned the Jim Doran Award as the team’s best special teams player.

The Bill Dailey Award, given annually to the player who has made a great contribution to the team with little public recognition went to senior Bryce Braaksma of Sheldon.

Braaksma played a big part in Iowa State’s improved performance against the rush and finished his career with 47 tackles and five sacks. Braaksma also received the Arthur Floyd Scott Award as the Cyclone football player whose work ethic, commitment, and leadership by example demonstrate the characteristics and qualities of the ISU football strength and conditioning program.

Con. Dave Loebsack endorses Sen. Obama

The Obama campaign announced that Congressman Dave Loebsack (D-IA) is endorsing Senator Barack Obama for President. A former political science teacher at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Congressman Loebsack was an upset winner last year in Iowa’s Second Congressional District which encompasses much of Southeastern Iowa.

“In a field of strong candidates, Barack is the strongest,” said Congressman Dave Loebsack. “What impresses me about Barack is his commitment to changing the way business is done in Washington. He understands that to pass universal health care, make energy independence a reality, and meet the other challenges we face, we need leadership that can bring all Americans together around a shared purpose.”

“Obama is energizing, organizing, and mobilizing ordinary Americans to get involved in their democracy in a way I haven’t seen in a long time,” said Loebsack. “And he’s building the kind of grassroots movement that will not just make him the most electable Democrat in a general election, but will help him enter the White House with a mandate for change that Washington can’t ignore.”

Loebsack is currently serving his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives. He serves on The House Education and Labor Committee and The House Armed Services Committee.

“I’m honored to have Congressman Loebsack’s endorsement,” said Senator Barack Obama. “Dave has been fighting tirelessly to change the same old partisan, divisive politics in Washington that’s blocked progress for the people of the Second District. And by working at the grassroots level, he’s helped build a real movement for change in Iowa.”


DSM School Board meeting rescheduled

Because of inclement winter weather, the December 11th meeting of the Des Moines School Board scheduled for 6:00 p.m. will be held on Tuesday, December 18th in the Board Room at 1800 Grand Avenue beginning at 6:00 p.m. The public forum will be held at 5:45 p.m.

For more information contact Phillip J. Roeder, Director of Community Relations/Legislative Liaison at 515-242-7603.
Making our voice relevant again:

It may seem to many that the collective voice of the African American community in Iowa has become irrelevant. In politics the Democratic party has taken the African American vote as a done deal and the Republican party has all but said we don’t really care about the needs of the inner city urban areas.

Now this problem could be from our leadership having made bad compromises, or because they have become complacent, or it could be a number other reasons. The fact remains that decisions are being made, and we as a people are not having our voices heard in those decisions.

Now from this point forward our voice must cease to be irrelevant and become strong and relevant. This is paramount for the success and growth of our statewide African American communities.

How we do this is to continue to build new leadership and support those who have new and fresh ideas for our communities. Existing leadership can start to build confidence in emerging leaders and recruit others to take the lead on projects that our community needs. Our elected officials should start to recommend people for service on boards and committees. We should make sure that elected officials come to our communities and attend activities throughout the year, not just during election time.

We need these officials in our communities on a regular basis hearing our needs and the expectations we have of them. So as a people when we have functions, activities, or events we need to invite our elected officials, and political candidates. This will help to assure we have a relevant voice.

These are just some suggestions that may make a difference in our voice making the journey back to relevancy.

Moving toward change JB……..

Being responsible sometimes means pissing people off.

- Gen. Colin Powell, former Secretary of State -
“I am not telling you what to think. I'm here to ask you to think.”

- Oprah Winfrey, Des Moines 2007

What’s Going On?

By Robert V. Morris

The great lady has arrived! Drawing nearly 20,000 people to Hy-Vee Hall in downtown Des Moines, television icon Oprah Winfrey dazzled supporters of black presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama with a spirited call to action. She later drew 30,000 in South Carolina offering the same message.

I was glad to see Oprah step-up to the plate and campaign for Obama who I feel is the only candidate willing or capable of bringing positive change for the black masses. Candidate Hillary Clinton and the other democrats are all “politics as usual” options that have landed us in the dismal position we are in today.

Although I have never met Oprah, I know her longtime boyfriend Stedman Graham who I worked with in DC and Chicago in the 1990s with his Graham-Williams Group public relations firm. I can vouch for his sincerity toward our community and Stedman told me of numerous great things Oprah has done behind the scenes to help our people. I agree with Oprah and admire her action for Obama at a time when the white media has appeared to embrace Hillary with their self-serving polls.

Unfortunately, the polls, which are always highly suspect, claim that black female democrats are supporting Hillary and concerned more with their gender than race. Everyone knows someone who roots for the winning sports team every season and the other democrats are all “politics as usual” and none of the others set foot in the black community prior to beginning their campaign.

As I have stated before, if the Republicans could produce a vibrant young moderate candidate, they could change their image and draw independent and moderate democratic voters who are dissatisfied with Democratic far-left politics. Unfortunately, the Republican far-right won’t let that happen. No matter who you vote for in the caucuses, primary or general elections, the important thing is that you get out and vote. On the local front, the City Council and Polk County Supervisors need black representation and it is up to our community to produce candidates who can win.

Community members open archives of forgotten slave town

LITHONIA, Ga. (AP) - One of the nation’s oldest black communities where slaves and their descendants have lived for two centuries is writing its own history books.

The long forgotten community of Flat Rock - which was removed from state maps 150 years ago - has opened an archives center in a 100-year-old frame house in south DeKalb County. The contents of the center are almost entirely church and family records gathered by two community activists who have worked for three decades to chronicle Flat Rock’s history.

The community was never incorporated but appeared in various locations on state maps around the time of the Civil War. After the war, the community continued but was wiped from the state’s official record - it doesn’t even appear in the official history of DeKalb County published in 1997.

The Flat Rock archives are linked to a nearby slave graveyard with about 250 graves, the ancestors of many blacks who still live nearby. The cemetery includes the plot of Eliza Waits - the great-great-great grandmother of archives founder Hoover State Office Building Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515-281-5064
Fax: 515-242-6450
Email: nancy.berggren@iowa.gov

The State of Iowa is an AA/EEO Employer

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, IOWA LOTTERY AUTHORITY

The Governor of the State of Iowa is seeking candidates for the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Iowa Lottery Authority. This position is responsible for directing and supervising all administrative and technical activities of the Lottery and carrying out all policies established by the Lottery Board of Directors. The position is located in Des Moines, Iowa and requires significant travel.

The CEO is appointed by the Governor to serve a four-year term subject to confirmation by the Iowa State Senate. A background in long-term strategic thinking, data driven decision-making, organizational leadership, integration of technology in the delivery of services, forming strategic alliances, finance, and solid communications skills are necessary.

Preferred Qualifications: Advanced degree in marketing, finance, public administration or other relevant field with ten years of increasingly responsible lottery experience that includes at least five years of management responsibility.

Salary Range: $159,909.40 to $260,977.60 annually.

Email, Fax or mail a cover letter and resume by December 21, 2007 to:

Lottery Screening Committee
Iowa Department of Administrative Services
Attention: Nancy Berggren

Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: 515-281-5064
Fax: 515-242-6450
Email: nancy.berggren@iowa.gov

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Clinton, Gore among speakers expected at Baptist meeting

“Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it and, above all, accurately so they will be guided by it’s light.”

~ Joseph Pulitzer

Rep. Julia Carson, Indianapolis’ first black congresswoman, dead at 69

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) - Rep. Julia Carson, who rose from a childhood of poverty and segregation to become the first black and first woman to represent Indianapolis in Congress, died Saturday. She was 69.

Carson died of lung cancer at her home, where she had spent the past several weeks, family spokeswoman Vanessa Summers said.

Carson had persevered through major heart surgery and years of health problems before revealing her lung cancer last month, saying she would not seek election in 2008 to a seventh term.

Carson had been away from Washington since late September, when she was hospitalized with a leg infection.

Carson, a Democrat, was first elected to Congress in 1996. She championed children’s issues, women’s rights and efforts to reduce homelessness, and was a staunch opponent of the war in Iraq.

“Julia Carson overcame much and accomplished much, and devoted her life to helping other people do the same,” Sen. Evan Bayh, an Indiana Democrat, said in a statement. “She was elected to important public offices, but never forgot who she was, where she came from or who she was there to serve.

Carson opposed the war in Iraq and told hundreds of people at a rally in downtown Indianapolis just weeks before the 2003 invasion that it was an act of aggression only to protect U.S. oil interests.

“Truly, it is all in the name of greed and truly in the name of war,” she said. “We should have learned by the Vietnam War, but we did not.”

Carson was born to a single mother who worked as a housekeeper. She graduated in 1955 from the same segregated high school as basketball star Oscar Robertson.

She began her political career in the 1960s when then-Rep. Andy Jacobs Jr. hired her to work in his office. Jacobs encouraged Carson to run for the Indiana Legislature in 1972 - the first of more than two dozen victories in local, legislative and congressional elections. She ran for Congress in 1996 after Jacobs retired.

“Throughout her decade of service in the U.S. House of Representatives and her nearly 20 years in the Indiana General Assembly, Representative Carson served her constituents in Indianapolis with passion and commitment,” President Bush said in a statement.

During her years in Congress, Carson’s highest-profile action came in 1999, when she pushed for the legislation granting the Congressional Gold Medal to Rosa Parks, the black woman who refused to give up her seat on a segregated city bus in Montgomery, Ala., and was arrested for her defiance.

“It was a fitting cause for her, as Julia Carson and Rosa Parks shared a quiet determination, a fierce sense of purpose and a total commitment to the ideal equality,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

Carson had suffered in recent years from high blood pressure, asthma and diabetes. She missed dozens of House votes in 2004 because of illness and spent the weekend before the 2004 election in the hospital for what she said was a flu shot reaction - but still won re-election by 10 percentage points.

Gov. Mitch Daniels will have to call a special election to choose a replacement for the last year of Carson’s term.

Arrangements were being made to have Carson’s body lie at the rotunda in the Indiana Statehouse, the governor’s office said.
Reverend Sharpton blasts feds over finance probe, says it’s retaliatory

NEW YORK (AP) - Less than a month after the Rev. Al Sharpton led a Washington march to demand federal action in the Jena Six case, several of his associates and employees found federal agents at their doors with subpoenas for records related to his finances, he said.

To him, the timing was no coincidence. With a grand jury gearing up to consider possible tax fraud charges against him, Sharpton is accusing federal authorities of harassing him in retaliation for his fiery brand of racial activism.

“Every major civil rights leader I can think of, from Martin Luther King to Adam Clayton Powell, has had to face this kind of harassment,” Sharpton said at a news conference Thursday at the Harlem headquarters of his National Action Network. “I am certainly not in their league, but I certainly expect that will become my lot.”

A Brooklyn grand jury is scheduled to begin hearing evidence in an FBI and Internal Revenue Service probe at the end of the month, a person familiar with the investigation confirmed on Thursday.

The person, who was not authorized to discuss the case publicly but spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said Sharpton, his nonprofit civil rights organization and various businesses he runs face possible tax evasion and campaign finance charges stemming from his 2004 presidential bid.

The Federal Election Commission had determined that he spent more of his own money in the year before, though he denied wrongdoing. Sharpton agreed in 2005 to repay the government $100,000, plus interest, for taxpayer money he received during his failed effort to win the Democratic presidential nomination the year before, though he denied wrongdoing.

“I am a single mother,” Noerdlinger said, “and to have my door banged on at 6 in the morning was alarming to my son and me, and it was an apparent scare tactic that will only backfire.”

Sharpton said at a news conference Thursday that he was on the verge of taking a more visible role in the campaign and hinted that he may endorse a candidate on a scheduled visit to South Carolina next week.

Sharpton also suggested that the probe may be intended to dilute his influence in the 2008 presidential campaign. He said he was on the verge of making a formal announcement of his intentions to run and had recruited Rachel Noerdlinger, his communications director.

The person familiar with the investigation confirmed Thursday that he was not subpoenaed, they added.

Sharpton, who lives in Manhattan, called the timing of the investigation suspicious. He noted that it came just weeks after he led marchers to the Department of Justice headquarters to call for federal intervention in the Jena Six case and better enforcement of hate crimes.

Charges against six black students accused of attacking a white student in Jena, La., have led to demonstrations around the nation, including the one Sharpton organized in Washington on Nov. 16. Activists have alleged that local authorities in Louisiana were persecuting blacks more harshly than whites.

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He criticized the way federal investigators served the subpoenas, apparently delivering them at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday. Among those served was Rachel Noerdlinger, his communications director.

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Sharpton agreed in 2005 to repay the government $100,000, plus interest, for taxpayer money he received during his failed effort to win the Democratic presidential nomination the year before, though he denied wrongdoing.

The Federal Election Commission had determined that he spent more of his own money on the campaign than the qualifications for federal matching funds allow.

In 1993, Sharpton pleaded guilty to not filing a state income tax return several years before.
A man truly for the people: Sen. Joe Biden

Submitted by Rep. Fletcher Smith
State Representative, South Carolina

Recently, I had the privilege of traveling to Iowa to convey to caucus-goers in the Hawkeye State why I am enthusiastically supporting Sen. Joe Biden to become our 44th President and Commander-in-Chief. It was exciting to see the growing support for Joe Biden as I attended Democratic political dinners where he appeared with several other candidates. I appreciate this opportunity to tell you why I hope you will pay close attention to Sen. Biden and consider standing up for him on caucus night in January.

There was a lot of publicity about my endorsing Joe Biden after initially agreeing to serve as Co-Chairman for Bill Richardson’s presidential campaign in South Carolina. As the campaign progressed and Gov. Richardson seemed to change his policy toward the Iraq war, it became clear that I could no longer support his candidacy.

Gov. Richardson said he would get all of our troops out of Iraq in six months. That sounds good, except that virtually every military expert says it cannot be done without endangering the troops we’re pulling out, leaving our equipment behind in Iraq while also placing our civilian personnel in harm’s way by leaving them unprotected at the same time that we evacuate in a Vietnam-style way.

On the other hand, Sen. Biden has consistently said the first thing we have to do in Iraq is tell the truth. The truth is it will take at least a year to get our troops out once an order is given. And the truth is that while leaving Iraq is necessary, so is having a plan for what we leave behind so we don’t trade a dictator for chaos that endangers our interests for years. Sen. Biden has persuasively put forth a comprehensive plan for a federalized Iraq — which is called for in the Iraqi Constitution — by separating the parties, establishing a weak central government to dampen down the civil war and protecting our vital interests in the region while keeping our commitment to the Iraqis. It is the only plan that now makes sense and, thanks to Sen. Biden’s leadership, has been endorsed by 75 Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Senate.

While the Iraq war is the primary issue facing the country, I also believe that Joe Biden is the bet person to lead our nation on domestic issues. In many respects, he reminds me of the courage displayed by President John F. Kennedy and his brother, Sen. Bobby Kennedy, more than 40 years ago. They were called upon to promote our civil rights and protect our civil liberties, just as Joe Biden has been doing in the U.S. Senate for nearly 35 years. They were also willing to challenge the existing political establishment to seek new solutions to old problems, just as Joe Biden is doing today.

Joe Biden was for civil rights when being for civil rights wasn’t cool in this country. In fact, I wouldn’t be a black state representative if he hadn’t voted for the extension of the Voting Rights Act to make sure that we had diverse leadership in our society. As an Irish Catholic who was raised in a middle class community, Joe Biden also experienced prejudice and discrimination in some of the same ways people in our community have known.

It is because of Joe Biden’s leadership that the Violence Against Women’s Act was passed — a historic effort that has resulted in reduced domestic violence in our society. He was also the author of the bill signed by President Clinton that put 100,000 new cops on the streets, which dramatically reduced the crime rate throughout our country. And Sen. Biden has recently proposed a revolutionary education program that would increase the years of schooling from 12 to 16 years — two years of pre-school and two years of junior college. This will have the effect of taking many of our children off the streets and putting them in the classroom so they can prepare themselves to support their families.

I also like Joe Biden’s plans regarding health care and his commitment to bring universal health care to our nation’s citizens — especially those who are most vulnerable like our young people and our senior citizens. Again and again, Joe Biden has shown that he understands the problems that affect real people and has put forth ideas to solve them. He is a humble man — who grew up humbly — and he understands that we must live people up and not tear people down.

At this crucial time in our nation’s history, it is more important than ever that we need as President the person with the greatest experience, determination and courage to lead our country into the 21st century. We can’t afford on-the-job training. Joe Biden has put forth sound and sensible policies. His leadership and diplomatic skills will make it possible for him to lead from Day One in the Oval Office and enact them into laws that will change our country for the better.

We can all be proud of the fact that we have an American like Joe Biden running for the Presidency. Please join me in making it happen here in Iowa on caucus night.

Marshall abuzz with Denzel Washington in town for historic movie screening

On the red carpet leading to Marshall Cinema on Thursday night, Washington wore a purple Wiley baseball hat and smiled and waved at fans. At least 100 people gathered outside the theater in this town of about 24,000 people located 140 miles east of Dallas.

“This is where it started,” Washington said. “You can feel it. These are real people. It’s a small-town story. I’ve done a few screenings of this movie, but this is the best one.”

Washington directed the film, which was nominated Thursday for Golden Globe Award for best drama. He also stars as educator and poet Melvin Tolson, who helped shape a group of Wiley students into an elite debate team.

“We’re here to celebrate the accomplishment of your town,” Washington told an audience at the screening. “We’re really proud of it. We’re excited about bringing the film back home where it belongs.”

Earlier in the day, stars of the film Nate Parker, Jurnee Smollett and Denzel Whitaker held a news conference on the 900-student Wiley campus.

“We hope people see the film and get touched by it,” Smollett said. “So far, people are getting so much joy from it. That’s food for our soul.”

The debate team at Wiley has been defunct for years. Washington said he’d like to see the team resurrected.

“We’ll try to help the school and get the debate team back on its feet,” he said. “It seems like the right thing to do. It’s time for another winning streak.”

MARSHALL, Texas (AP) - Residents of this northeast Texas town reveled in showbiz excitement with Denzel Washington on hand to screen “The Great Debaters,” the story of Wiley College’s 1930s debate team.

“This is something to see in this little town here,” said the Rev. Charles Jereniga, who gathered with a crowd outside a movie reception at the Marshall Hotel. “Denzel is pretty popular in a little town like Marshall. It’s pretty exciting.”
A Tea and Fellowship Luncheon

A Lady’s Tea and Fellowship Luncheon was held at Burns United Methodist Church on December 9th. In attendance were Donna Burkett, Rev Henry Bevel and Gertrude Johnson, Gaynelle Narcisse, Ann Bevel (the master of ceremony), Pastor Curtis DeVance (Burn UMC Pastor) and Corliss Williams, a long with a number of others.

7 Principles of Kwanzaa

Des Moines Community Celebration
Activities for all ages
Wednesday December 26, 2007 – Tuesday January 1, 2008

UMOJA (Unity)
Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa
1740 E. Garfield
Wednesday 12/26/07
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Host: Kwanzaa Committee

KUJICHAGULIA
(Self-Determination)
Mickel Center
1620 Pleasant Street
Thursday 12/27/07
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Host: NAACP
I’ll Make Me A World In Iowa

UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility)
Willkie House
900-17th Street
Friday 12/28/07
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Host: Kwanzaa Committee

UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics)
Eddie Davis Community Center
1312 Maple Street
West Des Moines
Saturday 12/29/07
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Host: Alliance of Black Telecommunications Professionals, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, ISED

NIA (Purpose)
John R. Grubb YMCA
1611-11th Street
Sunday 12/30/07
3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Host: John R. Grubb YMCA

KUUMBA (Creativity)
KARAMU-FEAST
Creative Visions
1343-13th Street
Monday 12/31/07
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Host: Concerned Citizens For Justice, Creative Visions, Martin Foundation

IMANI (Faith)
King of Kings Missionary Baptist Church
619 SE 15th Street
Tuesday 1/1/08
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Host: African American Leadership Coalition (AALC)
Community Fellowship * Singing * Dance * Games * Lighting of Candles * Refreshments
Bring fruit to share
For more information contact JoAnn Hughes Co-Chairperson, Concerned Citizens For Justice at 515-208-2526.

“I Am Listening” hosted by Des Moines School Board Member Jon Narcisse will air, at 10:30 p.m. every Thursday and 8:00 a.m. every Saturday on Mediacom Channel 15. For more information call 515-770-1218 or goto: jonnarcisse.com.
United Kingdom study shows social mobility has stalled in Great Britain

LONDON (AP) - Class-obsessed Britons have seized on a newly published study on income mobility as the latest proof that British society remains a hostage to wealth and privilege.

The study, funded by the education group Sutton Trust, said there had been no change in the ability of children to improve on their parents’ income between 1970 and 2000.

That led the Daily Mail newspaper to call the study “devastating,” saying it showed that “class divisions in Britain have deepened and are now among the most entrenched in the world.” The Independent warned that poor children were “doomed,” while The Spectator said it was shocking that Britain’s social mobility had “remained static for 30 years.”

But the study’s co-author, University of Surrey economist Jo Blanden, said the findings were not so clear-cut and that, in any case, Britons are still better able to improve their lot than their U.S. counterparts.

Blanden said the study measured income and education, not social standing or class.

“As economists we’re not wild about the issue of class because we don’t know what it really means,” she said in a telephone interview.

“In some ways, this is just (an) innocuous piece of research, but it drives everybody mad.”

Britons are stereotypically class conscious - and unlike the United States, which abolished titles of nobility in its constitution - Britain’s aristocracy still plays an important role in the nation’s public and political life.

But the country’s fabled “old boys’ network,” based on family connections or childhood friendships forged at elite public schools, exercises a subtler influence.

Progressive educators, backed by Britain’s left-leaning Labour government, have made a determined effort to get rid of it. U.S.-style affirmative action programs are illegal in Britain, but ministers have made public policy out of giving underprivileged children the same opportunities as their privileged peers.

The government has repeatedly pressured Oxford and Cambridge, the country’s top universities, to accept more applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds. Only last month, Universities Secretary John Denham complained of the “social bias” at Britain’s top universities.

Blanden’s research, conducted with London School of Economics professor Steve Machin, suggested the social bias may occur earlier.

It showed that poor but bright British children saw their test scores erode as they got older, falling from the 88th percentile at the age of 3 to the 65th by the age of 5. Less bright children from the richest backgrounds, however, saw their scores improve from the 15th percentile at age 3 to the 45th by age 5.

“If this trend were to continue, the children from affluent backgrounds who are doing poorly at age 3 would be likely to overtake the poorer but initially bright children in test scores by age seven,” the study said.

Although dramatic, Blanden said similar gaps in test scores were present in the United States as well. Evidence showed that Britain was roughly on par with France in terms of economic mobility, and slightly ahead of the United States.

Michael Hout, a sociologist at the University of California, Berkeley agreed France, Britain and the U.S. had low levels of mobility compared with Canada or Scandinavia.

“If you take the average of all the studies floating around ... France has the least mobility, and the U.S. and Britain are just behind it,” he said. “In some studies the U.S. is closer to France than Britain.”

If the country does better than France and the U.S., then why do the British spend so much time worrying over how easy it is to climb the social ladder?

“I think that there is a certain obsession with these issues in the British psyche,” Blanden said. “Not very scientifically, but just as a British person - I think there is an element of that.”
Partnership unveils 2008 legislative priorities

The Greater Des Moines Partnership unveiled its 2008 state legislative agenda today at a luncheon event at the Hotel Fort Des Moines downtown. The agenda was developed by the Partnership in conjunction with its 21 regional Affiliate organizations and Chambers of Commerce from Dallas, Polk and Warren Counties. It advocates for statewide economic development policies that enhance business competitiveness, nurture entrepreneurs, improve quality of life, help communities attract and retain employees and employees, and create new jobs.

“The Partnership supports statewide policies that stimulate regional economic growth,” said Brice Oakley, Chair of the Partnership’s Government Policy Council (GPC). “Together, we must do more to advocate with one united voice on behalf of our businesses and communities.”

The agenda highlights five featured priorities in 2008:

**Property Tax Equity for Businesses** - Recognizing that Iowa’s current property tax system places an increasingly undue burden on commercial and industrial properties, the Partnership supports the development of a simplified property tax system that is equitable to all classes of property and more competitive with neighboring states. The system should be based on actual value and usage of the property, provide adequate safeguards to prohibit spikes in rates and assessments, prevent burden shifting among classes of property over time, and not create an undue burden on local governments. The Partnership will continue to work to achieve these goals in working with the bipartisan Legislative Property Tax Study Committee that is charged to submit a comprehensive property tax reform proposal to the General Assembly by January 1, 2009. In the interim, the Partnership supports putting a floor on the rollback to prevent further shifting of the property tax burden to commercial and industrial properties, the continuation of local franchise fees, and other measures to provide commercial and industrial property tax relief.

**Wellness Incentives and Health Insurance Tax Credits for Small Business** – The Partnership supports incentives for businesses to implement wellness and prevention programs for its employees. Wellness and prevention programs can decrease the financial burdens of health care and make employees healthier. The incentives may include tax credits for preventative and maintenance health care and wellness services, such as smoking cessation treatments, lifestyle changes, regular doctor visits, disease management, screenings, and health and fitness facilities. The Partnership also supports passage of focused tax credits, especially for small businesses, to increase the affordability of private health insurance and decrease the number of uninsured Iowans.

**Brownfields and Greyfields Redevelopment** – Communities seeking to clean-up and redevelop brownfield sites are in need of readily accessible funding for environmental site investigation and remediation costs. The Partnership supports increasing funding to the Iowa Brownfield Program and the creation of new brownfields tax incentives to work in conjunction with the federal brownfields program. The Partnership also supports the creation of additional state incentives for greyfields rehabilitation and redevelopment to revitalize economically obsolete and energy-inefficient structures and commercially blighted areas.

**Insurance Industry New Jobs Tax Credit** – Iowa companies that participate under the Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Act and expand their workforce by at least 10 percent are granted corporate income tax credits. Unlike other industries, those income tax incentives for new job growth currently are not available to Iowa based insurance companies. The Partnership supports expanding the new jobs tax training credits to Iowa insurance industry employment growth to be applied against insurance company premium taxes.

**Financial Services Literacy** - The Partnership supports public policy initiatives that encourage educational institutions and adult education programs to improve the financial literacy of all Iowans. Financial education will encourage greater personal savings, is essential to help consumers avoid financially-destructive transactions and fraud and to exercise their consumer protection rights, and helps individuals create household budgets, initiate savings plans, manage debt, and make strategic investment decisions to plan for retirement, health care and education.

For more information about the 2008 agenda, contact Susan Ramsey, Senior Vice President of Communications and Marketing, at sramsey@desmoinesmetro.com. The full agenda is available in electronic form at www.desmoinesmetro.com.
KBBG keeps Black Iowa informed!
Tune into “Black Iowa Today,” “Black Iowa Imparative” and “KBBG’s Legislative Wrap.” “Black Iowa Today” airs the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 2:00 p.m., “Black Iowa Imperative” airs the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, and “KBBG’s Legislative Wrap” airs every Sunday at 5:00 p.m. on radio station KBBG 88.1 FM, Waterloo, Iowa or on the world wide web at www.kbbgfm.org.

The programs are hosted by Jonathan Narcisse, president of the State of Black Iowa Initiative.

Cornerstone Family Church
3114 SW 61st Street
Des Moines, IA 50321
Phone: 515-243-2852

Business Office
Monday – Friday, 8:30-4:40
Church Office 515-243-2852 ext 75

Our Purpose
Helping ALL people find and live their lives for Christ, bridging ethnic, cultural and denominational lines.

Sundays
Worship at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Youth Elevate 9:30 a.m.
Real Life – Ministry for Singles 18-29
Each Sunday at 9:30 a.m.
Transportation to Sunday worship services at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Wednesdays
Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.
SpiritLife 7:00 p.m.
One Youth 7:00 p.m.

Saturdays
Worship at 5:00 p.m.
Merge – Ministry for Singles over 30
2nd Saturday of each month 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Radio Ministry
Fri. 11:30 a.m. & Sun. 7:30 a.m. on Praise 940 AM
Website: www.cornerstonefamilychurch.org

Christmas Candlelight Service
Give thanks and worship as a family at this special Candlelight Communion service! Saturday, December 22nd at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 23rd at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

School of Prayer – January 2008
A new semester of School of Prayer begins Sunday, January 6th and runs through March 30th. Classes are upstairs in Uno’s every Sunday from 5:00-6:30 p.m. Our text will be “Intercessory Prayer” by Dutch Sheets.

CFC Family Skate Nite - January 5th
Have a rolling good time at CFC’s Family Skate at SK8 North located at 5621 Meredith Drive. Saturday, January 5th, 6:30-9:30 p.m. $5.00 cost includes skate rental.
Send your church news to: iowabystanderarticles@yahoo.com
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