Newsfile

Editorial Staff
Howard University has embarked on a rare multi-million dollar project overseas, funded through the U.S. Agency for International Development, AID.

The five-year project carries an initial price tag of $6.5 million and represents the largest cooperative program the agency has ever entered into with a historically Black institution of higher education. It is targeted at the improvement of health-care services and related training programs in the African nation of Malawi.

"This endeavor is completely consonant with the university's mission" of sharing its expertise and knowledge to improve the quality of life, noted Howard's President James E. Cheek on the day the agreement was signed, July 31.

The university, for example, will assist Malawi in the training and improvement of its health-care services by sending to the southeast African nation nurse-midwife-educators, community health nurse-educators and specialists in public health, academic evaluation, curriculum development and health education.

Jay F. Morris, AID deputy administrator, described the agreement as "another historical step forward."

"Over the years," he elaborated, "men and women from Howard University have played an important role in helping AID carry out its humanitarian and economic assistance programs in developing countries. They have effectively worked on health, agriculture, rural development and many other programs in Africa."

Professor Richard P. Thornell, who joined the faculty of the School of Law in 1976 after having served with the New York-based national law firm of Rosenman, Colin, Freund, Lewis and Cohen, has moved up to the position of general counsel at the university.

With the Office of General Counsel now relocated to the main campus, he promises to infuse new blood in it and reshape the legal department to make it among the best in the country.

For starters, he said he will forge a healthy alliance with the School of Law, whereby the expertise and advice of key members of the law faculty will be utilized as the need arises. To further enhance the work of the office, and to assist in the legal training of future lawyers, selected third-year law students will work as legal interns in the Office of the General Counsel beginning with the current academic year.

Thornell, who at one time headed the Peace Corps' Africa Regional Office, is a magna cum laude Phi Beta Kappa honors graduate from Fisk University. He holds a law degree from Yale Law School and a Master of Public Affairs degree from Princeton University.

The first of what is likely to become an annual conference on the continuing crisis in the Horn of Africa took place on Howard University's campus on Saturday, August 25, under the sponsorship of the African Studies and Research Program.

The one-day event attracted about 300 participants, most of them representing the area's diverse groups — the Amharas, the Eritreans, the Tigrans, the Oromos and the Somalis. They listened, asked questions and gave approval or disapproval to the mix of messages coming from the podium.

As has been the case during past conferences focusing on this crisis-ridden part of East Africa, at times the exchange between members of the audience and some panelists bordered on emotionalism, with a sprinkling of arrogance.

But as one panelist observed during a late afternoon session, it was now time for all parties who are truly interested in peace for the region to move from nationalistic rhetoric, chart a new course, and deal with the crisis in the Horn of Africa on human terms. In other words: judicious political solution instead of devastating military adventures that to date have resulted in enormous bloodshed and millions of uprooted refugees.

The plight of African refugees was among the concerns addressed at the session. Other topics included the historical roots of the crisis, the various resistance movements, and the current state of affairs.

The following paragraphs prepared by the organizers of the conference give a brief assessment of the state of the malignant crisis...
that continues to consume the Horn of Africa:

"For some 23 years now, an armed conflict has been raging in this sub-region, with tragic consequences to lives and devastation of property. The largest number of refugees in Africa are from the Horn. The internationalization of the conflict, with more and deeper foreign intervention, has aggravated the situation, as the international community (including the UN and the OAU) watch helplessly. With military solutions imposed to solve political problems, the crisis has been intensified, increasing the level of violence tenfold since 1977.

The aim of this conference was to define and explain the main elements of the continuing conflict, in terms of the various issues of contention and the forces aligned behind the issues with a historical perspective, current ramifications and future implications in view. The conference designed to elicit dialogue among concerned individuals and groups, with a view to helping turn peoples' minds towards just and peaceful solutions. It should be clear to everyone that military solutions are no answer to political problems, particularly when, as in the Horn of Africa, people are prepared to pay the ultimate sacrifice for their cause.

"It is time that the options for political solutions are explored. But such a creative effort at lasting solutions requires, as a precondition, an openness of mind, a readiness to talk and listen, and above all, an appreciation of what is (or are) at stake from all sides."

Panelists came from such institutions as Rutgers University, Boston University, George Mason University, Hobart and Smith College, and from as far away as Cambridge and Oxford Universities in England.

"By all accounts, the conference was a success," noted Professor Bereket Habte Sellassie of the African Studies Program, one of the key organizers of the day's event.

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There were warm embraces, joyous greetings and intense recollections of shared legal battles on behalf of the poor as some 60 former fellows of the Reginald Heber Smith Community Lawyer Fellowship Program held their first reunion, August 24 and 25, at the Howard University School of Law.

Administered by the law school and funded by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), the program enables recent law school graduates to spend one or two years delivering legal services to the poor in LSC-funded neighborhood law offices throughout the U.S., as well as in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Micronesia. The program — named for a pioneering advocate of legal services for the poor — was originated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1967 and transferred to Howard two years later.

Specifically, the reunion consisted of an opening night reception and a day-long program featuring a panel on the past, present and future of the Reggie program, and small group sessions aimed at developing strategies for ensuring the program's continuing support. All this was capped by a dinner with a keynote address by Jean Camper Cahn, the former co-dean of the Antioch School of Law, who was founder and first director of the Office of Economic Opportunity's (OEO's) National Legal Service Program and whose own example inspired many talented young law graduates to focus their training on the means to achieve three major goals, he observed. Those goals were: "to be a catalytic agent bringing aggressive attorneys into communities to push for legal reform; to recruit 'the best and the brightest' young lawyers to go into legal services work; and to create a network of substantive advocates for the legal rights of the poor."

Glenn Carr, one of the first Regents in the nation and the first director of the program after it was moved to Howard, recalled how that shift in headquarters came to be. He spoke of young activist minority lawyers who formed a "Black and Brown Caucus" to pressure the OEO to transfer the Reggie Program to a Black institution. Given Howard’s long tradition of training lawyers to represent the disadvantaged and its national reputation as the think tank of the civil rights movement, the university seemed the natural first choice. The caucus used a variety of tactics — from lobbying to sit-ins — to effectively make its voice heard.

The reunion mood turned somber when John W. Davis, the program's current executive director, spoke of the program's present status. "This year is critical," he said, citing cutbacks in funds and staff the previous year, a contract stalemate between Howard and the LSC, and what he sees as a general "hostility" toward what the program represents. "When the Reggie Program started, the people involved saw themselves as part of the civil rights movement," he remarked. "Now people can't even spell 'civil rights.' I think the question we need to address here is: Can a program like the Reggie Program survive in today's times?"

The testimony of Reggie alumni...
that day seemed best summed up by
Joy West, who is now an attorney
with a prestigious Washington law
firm: “We need to see the Reggie
Program survive and move on.”

Working in small groups, reunion
participants hammered out a plan
to formally establish and incorpo­
rate an alumni association to rally
support for the program, assist in
the recruitment of new Reggies and
serve as a national network of indi­
viduals committed—still—to
providing legal services for the
poor.

Drug abuse in nearly all age
groups, particularly in inner-city
communities, has become a health
problem of enormous proportion,
according to Dr. Alyce Gullattee,
director of Howard University’s Insti­
tute of Drug Abuse and Addiction.
She made the observation at the
second in a series of Newsmaker
Breakfasts, sponsored by the De­
partment of University Relations.

Adults as well as young children
have become captives of the drug
scene, with most of them cut off
from gainful employment, educa­
tion and a normal family life, noted
Dr. Gullattee. “Drug abuse,” she
pointed out, “is probably the num­
ber one public health problem be­
cause of the vast number of people
who are addicts and who may never
seek help.”

She accompanied her talk with
color slides which graphically de­
picted the ugly results of drug abuse,
including the deformed image of a
baby abandoned by an addict
mother.

According to Dr. Gullattee, a na­
tionally recognized authority on
drug abuse, a concerted effort needs
to be undertaken by national fund­
ing agencies and local politicians to
provide prompt treatment for those
already victimized by drug abuse,
and to prevent the spread of this
epidemic. Also, community leaders
as well as other concerned indi­
viduals need to get involved in edu­
cating the general public on the
dangers of drugs, she said.

“We as a people cannot survive as
long as substance abuse [at its
present level] continues,” she
emphasized.

The Newsmaker Breakfast series
is designed “to bring together major
news sources at Howard University
and members of the news media to
discuss topics of current impor­
tance,” according to Barbara R. Tol­
erston, Community Relations and
Special Events coordinator.

In June, Dr. Harriette McAdoo,
acting dean of the School of Social
Work, spoke at the first conference.
Her topic was single parenting and
teenage pregnancies.

The Howard University School
of Education will soon send ex­
perts to Botswana, Haiti, Liber­
ia, Niger, Somalia and Yemen to assist
those countries in improving their
educational systems.

The university recently received a
$4,726,483 subcontract from
Florida State University to cover the
cost of the project, which is ex­
pected to run through June 1989.
The subcontract is part of a $30
million grant to a consortium of
American universities from the U. S.
Agency for International Develop­
ment. Besides Howard and Florida
State, the consortium includes the
State University of New York at Al­
bany, Syracuse University, Pennsy­
ylvania State University and the In­
stitute for International Research.

Dean Willie T. Howard of the uni­
versity’s School of Education serves
as coordinator and director of the
project at the university. Florida
State University is the prime con­
tractor with the funding agency.

According to Dean Howard, “the
purpose of [the] contract is to im­
prove the efficiency of education
and training systems in selected de­
volving countries, and to develop
the capacity in those countries for
education and human resource
planning, implementation, evalua­
tion and administration.”

He indicated that some faculty
members from Howard are sched­
uled “to go into Haiti, Yemen and
Botswana for project work during
[the] fall semester.”

A new untramodern facility for
the School of Business and Pub­
lic Administration was dedicated
at a formal ceremony on September
28, following the annual Opening
Convocation, which marked the be­
ginning of Howard University’s
117th year.

H. Naylor Fitzhugh, retired vice
president with PepsiCo, Inc., the
speaker at the dedication ceremony,
said:

“The school, its faculty and
graduates have a unique opportu­
nity to do good while doing well.” He
also noted that the university has
been providing commercial or busi­
ness or marketing education since
1870, and credited the business
school’s current dean for his vision
and leadership.

President James E. Cheek, who
accepted the new building on behalf
of Howard University, also paid
tribute to the dean and to all others
whose input provided substance for
a dream that now is a reality.

Last March when the cornerstone
was put in place, Dean Milton Wil­
son called that event “a significant
step in our move from a converted
warehouse” (on Sherman Avenue) to
the towering new addition to the
university’s main campus.

The five-story brick and concrete
building was constructed at a cost of
$13 million and is located directly
across from Cramton Auditorium at
the corner of Fairmont and Sixth
Streets, N.W. It has an overall work­
ing space of 130,869 square feet.