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Pompey

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Teaching children to follow rules and respect adults is one of the most important jobs a parent has, Pompey said.

"When a child faces authority, that child doesn't know how to handle it because they haven't been taught at home," Pompey said.

But the problem doesn't belong only to children and their parents. Teachers, too, seem to have less interest in reaching children and making sure they learn, Pompey said.

"A teacher's responsibility is to be accountable for what and how students learn," she said. "You have to use various strategies to find what fits each child. You can't just use the same strategy for every child. But many times you have a teacher who doesn't know what problem a child has or that teacher doesn't have the strategies to help. I've heard many teachers say there are some children they just can not reach, but I don't agree."

Unfortunately, she noted, colleges can't teach everything a person needs to be effective in the classroom.



RUBYE POMPEY

While she doesn't claim to have all the answers, she believes the Bible and the Golden Rule are good places to start.

"I often think about how we can get people to live together," Pompey said. "And it seems to me that we need to go back to the Bible — back to a love for God. Once you have that, then you have love for mankind. It's something that each person has to want to do, but if we can just base life on

teacher offers prescription for education woes

By MARTHA H. SHAD
Times Staff Writer

VALDOSTA — Despite her recent retirement from teaching, Rubye Pompey still is keenly interested in students, parents, teachers and the world around her.

"In the back of my mind, I keep thinking what can we do to get education back to where it should be," Pompey said. "What can we do to get children and teachers interested and motivated again? What can we do to get all parents involved again? I want to see every child get the best education."

During her 31 1/2 years of teaching (more than 26 with the Valdosta City School system), Pompey witnessed significant changes in children, parents and teachers.

Pompey feels teaching remains a worthwhile endeavor and to

that end, she supervises early childhood education majors at Valdosta State University. Working part-time, Pompey encourages student teachers and helps them discover alternative teaching methods.

Today's children, she notes, are more aggressive and seem to have less respect for authority.

"They seem to feel a freedom to take over the classroom and be disruptive," Pompey said. "I don't know precisely why children are behaving the way they are. Maybe it's because authority figures are not taking their authority with

children as they should. Nor, are today's children as motivated as they once were."

At the same time, parents seem to have less interest in their children's progress in school, she said.

"A lot of parents are not taking the responsibility of seeing their children are well educated," Pompey said. "They need to be more active in their child's school and if they do not feel comfortable going to the school, they need to have someone they can rely on to keep them informed about their child's progress."

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Women of the '90s

Veteran local teacher offers prescription for education woes

By MARTHA H. SHAD
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Whether they like it or not, race does matter

I will retch if I hear one more white person, especially a Republican, or another black conservative spout the lie that the significance of race has declined in some real way in the United States in recent years.

Each camp is lying through its teeth — and knows it.

White Republicans, because of their historical complicity in the nation's race problem, are the most contemptible of these pretenders. You can see these windbags strutting around Washington and every state-house, denying the god-awful reality of their racist pasts and private lives.

I think immediately of the whole Southern crowd — these bulbous, drawling Alabamians, Georgians, Mississippians, Arkansans, North and South Carolinians and others who rose to power on the shoulders of Jim Crow, who “nigger-baited” and “nigger-knocked” their way into the Congressional Record.

Some are the same bigots who collaborated on the script of Richard Nixon's “Southern Strategy,” the race-coded effort using appeals to “law and order” that snared enough white Democrats to deliver the White House to the GOP.

OPINION



**BILL
MAXWELL**

These politicians, along with a new generation of young, rich Republicans who grew up in neighborhoods and attended schools off-limits to blacks, are portraying themselves as enlightened, colorblind beings of a new era.

Bosh. The truth is that their love of quoting Martin Luther King Jr. and of pretending to judge a person by the content of his character and not by the color of his skin should be made a capital crime. These are the same hypocrites who keep ever-ready Willie Horton placards in their garages. These are the Jesse Helmses who, without remorse, trot out racist campaign ads to gain a few points in a poll.

Listen, did these latter-day converts to racial understanding not know the permanent harm they would do to future generations of African-American children in refusing to hire the parents and grandparents of these children? Did they not know that when an adult cannot make a living wage, because of institutionalized bigotry, the children suffer — often for a lifetime?

Did they not know that when a child sees his or her father humiliated by agents of racism — a cop, a judge, a banker — that the child loses respect for the father?

Did these people not understand the residual effects of endorsing and writing laws that established two judiciaries, two school districts, two sides of the tracks? What did they think would happen to the offspring of the victims of such duality?

Well, let me tell you this much: The evil of generations of racism cannot be wiped out by some dissembling Republican or addle-brained Democrat announcing that race no longer matters, that affirmative action is reverse discrimination and has outlived its usefulness.

They are wrong. Dead wrong. White people had better 'fess up to the enduring horror and shame of their racist past and recognize the futility of their current denials and rationalizations so that they can engage in sincere dialogue on race.

And while whites need to 'fess up, black conservatives, such as Reps. Gary Franks of Connecticut and J.C. Watts of Oklahoma, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and Ward Connerly, the member of the board of regents who played a pivotal role in a California measure ending affirmative action, need to quit pretending that they succeeded on merit alone, that race did not matter.

Connerly became a millionaire largely because white officials, needing to meet their minority quotas, awarded his company lucrative contracts. Franks, Watts and Thomas, especially Thomas, had generous white benefactors every step of their careers. The irony, of course, is that while they deny the significance of race, these men continue to gain from it.

One black, talk show host Armstrong Williams, whose complexion is as dark as mine, claims that he has never had an encounter with racism. Williams needs to be taken to the woodshed for this

lie.

Anyone who has read my column over the years knows that I do not whine about race. But my readers need to know also that I do not deny its significance. Yes, race does matter. But it need not control a person's existence. In fact, blacks should look for ways to diminish the significance of race in their personal lives, to find ways to avoid being the victim.

Denial, however, is self-delusional.

Nothing ever gets solved when we delude ourselves. And from everything I see, including the results of the first meeting of President Clinton's recently appointed Race Advisory Board, much of the nation is deluding itself about the terrible toll that race continues to take in every area of American life.

What brought us to this impasse?

On one side, the overwhelming majority of whites refuse to take responsibility for the evil they have created. On the other, untold numbers of blacks — imprisoned in the physical reality of their skin color and tormented by the psychological and emotional trauma of being the perpetual outsider — are driven by vengeance.

Bill Maxwell is an editorial writer and columnist for the St. Petersburg Times. He can be reached on internet at maxwell@sptimes.com. Distributed by Scripps Howard News Service.

Evans — dedicated to helping people

By **SHELBY G. SPIRES**
Times Staff Writer

VALDOSTA — When Lowndes County Commissioner Joyce Evans was a teen-ager she wanted to help people in the world. She wanted to be a nun.

"Ever since I was very young, I've always wanted to help people in the community and I felt that was one way to accomplish that goal," Evans said. "I had an uncle tell me that I needed to live my life before making a decision like that."

Evans decided the way for her to help people was through social work. About 40 years ago she moved to Lowndes County, and in 1965 she worked on the ground floor of one of America's most successful education programs — Head Start.

"I have been involved with that program from the very beginning," she said.

Evans walked through Lowndes County neighborhoods, knocking on doors and asking people if they were interested in bringing a program that would help prepare young children for school. There was interest and Evans helped to collect the data that brought Head Start to Lowndes County.

Evans has been involved with education of young people most of her adult life. She owns and operates two day care centers, named Kiddie Kollege, in Valdosta and Tifton. Evans was elected to the county commission from District 1 in November 1996.

Currently, Evans is using her position as an elected official to

help others less fortunate. A driving force in organizing a local welfare reform committee, Evans has helped to pull together local aid agencies, governments and churches in an effort to help smooth the transition for people moving off government assistance.

"What needs to be done and what we are trying to do through the welfare reform committee, is to set up an initiative that will find jobs or training for people as they come off welfare. If it is not taken care of thoughtfully and gradually, then in four years when we have thousands of people coming off welfare, then we will not be able to deal with that many at one time."

Recent changes in the welfare system have placed a life-

time cap of four years on assistance. Evans feels the changes are needed.

"It has to be changed — it's a must — for the program to survive," Evans said. "And it's needed. I feel at some point people need to realize that they have to work, have to find a job and have to take care of themselves."

To that end, Evans also feels people cannot be abandoned. Evans maintains the reason people are on welfare is because they cannot find a job because they are lacking in skills and they are lacking in skills because they are in need of an education.

"We have to find a way to get people to school and to work," she said. "That's why we need public

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JOYCE EVANS

Evans

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transportation in Lowndes County."

A project of Evans' and an outgrowth of her county commission office, is public transportation. Evans has been working with representatives of the Georgia Department of Transportation and the federal government to bring low-cost public transportation to Lowndes County.

"There is a lot of federal grant money there, right now, for communities to establish some sort of public transportation," she said. "How long that will be there, we don't know, but Lowndes County should take advantage of it and use it to help build a public transportation system here."

Another initiative Evans is hopeful about is an effort to pull together ministers and encourage

clergy and congregations alike to find ways to help the disadvantaged.

"The local church can do so much in a neighborhood," she said. "That is the way it used to be and it would be a case of history repeating itself if we could pull together those resources and help those families and individuals in churches. It would be an alternative to using government assistance."

Even though Evans chose not to become a nun, a decision she has mixed feelings about, the 56-year-old county commissioner feels there is a lot that can be done in the community if people would try.

"There are so many things that you can do for people," she said. "I'm not looking for any type of prestige, but I want people to be able to help themselves."