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A new meaning of the word – grateful

March 17, 2016 in [Opinion](#)

By **Flonzie Brown-Wright**

Special to *The Mississippi Link*

On March 1, I was privileged to have the opportunity to speak at the Annual Black History Program for the Mississippi School for the Deaf.

Even though I am always a bit anxious prior to actually speaking, this invitation was different – much different. I had never spoken to this group before.

My anxiety level was higher and centered on the following: Will I say the right thing, will I be able to let the hearing impaired students and staff know that I am grateful to share that time with them, how will they receive me? As I thought about my grandfather, I experienced a multitude of emotions, and yes, even tears.

I was recommended by Dr. Evelyn Garner, the daughter of civil rights veteran John Garner, whom I had never met. In her research of me, she learned that my grandfather, Papa Robert Brown, lost his hearing as a teenager. Because for the first 16 years of his life, he was able to hear, he possessed the awesome ability to read lips. Consequently, as a child, communicating with him was not that difficult. In jest, I remarked that the only time Papa Rob became “real” deaf was when as a child, I would ask him for a nickel. But to be in a setting where the vast majority of the audience, including many staff persons, ranged from moderately impaired to being totally hearing impaired, was a different experience.

While waiting for my time to speak, I was absorbed as I experienced a wide array of such beautiful talent, including the preschool class presenting, “Living The Dream.” Each class from kindergarten to the high school shared in this celebration. Some presented skits; there was a tribute to B.B. King, with two students in character playing the guitar while one of King’s songs was playing in the background.

Two thoughts came to mind:

1. What if my grandfather would have had the benefit of going to school. Would his life have been better? Would he have been able to communicate and understand issues of life in order to better instruct his children? Because he was the son of a slave in the 1800s, black children could not have any education. And just think, we have such great opportunities today and too often, they are misspent.

2. The challenges that these young people face each day of their lives are normal to them, because this is all they have ever known.

These beautiful white, brown and black children were full of smiles and hugs for John and me, thus creating for me a new definition of being grateful. For I realized in a more significant way, “but for the grace of God, there go I.” I was invited to have lunch, what an honor – grateful.

After the program was over, one young man who was slightly hearing impaired commented that I inspired him to continue his education and return to the school to help other students.

He shared that his brother had killed their mother and how difficult that had been for him, but after listening to my encouraging words, he was more convinced than ever that he could make it and he would be successful.



Papa Rob

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REGISTER TO VOTE

BALLOT BOX

The Mississippi Link encourages everyone to get registered by Monday, Oct. 8, in order to participate in the upcoming November mid-term election.

Mississippi State Conference NAACP statement in response to the Mississippi Department of Public Safety announcement regarding recent national protests of police brutality

The Mississippi State Conference NAACP, in a statement released on Monday, Oct. 22, 2018, expressed its deep concern and outrage over the recent announcement by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety regarding the national protests of police brutality. The statement, which was signed by the NAACP President & CEO, Dr. Charles E. Cobb, Jr., and the NAACP Vice President, Dr. James M. Bevel, Jr., called for the state to take immediate action to address the systemic issues that have led to the deaths and injuries of Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement. The statement also urged the state to support the efforts of the NAACP and other organizations that are working to bring about meaningful change in the criminal justice system.

NAACP ramps up Voter Outreach Campaign on National Voter Registration Day

Power of 5 campaign looks to translate personal networks into votes during midterm elections

The Mississippi State Conference NAACP is ramping up its voter outreach efforts in preparation for National Voter Registration Day on Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2018. The organization is launching a "Power of 5" campaign, which encourages individuals to register and vote with five family members or friends. The campaign is a key component of the NAACP's broader voter registration drive, which aims to increase voter participation in the upcoming November mid-term elections. The NAACP is also providing resources and support to individuals who are looking to register and vote, including information on how to find their polling location and how to request a absentee ballot.



Bill Cosby sentenced to 3 to 10 years in prison, files notice of appeal

Dr. Bill Cosby, 70, was sentenced to three to 10 years in prison for sexual assault on Monday, Oct. 22, 2018. The judge sentenced Cosby to the minimum term of three years, but the state prosecutor has the right to appeal the sentence. Cosby's attorney has filed a notice of appeal, and the case is expected to be heard by the Pennsylvania State Appellate Court in the coming weeks. Cosby's conviction is the result of a trial that lasted several weeks and involved testimony from multiple witnesses. The judge's decision was based on the evidence presented at trial and the applicable law.

Cosby/Kavanaugh: The story yet to be told in front of our eyes

The case of Bill Cosby and Brett Kavanaugh is a complex one, and the full story is yet to be told. Both men have been accused of sexual assault, and the legal process is ongoing. The case has raised important questions about the justice system, the role of the media, and the impact of public opinion on the legal process. It is important to continue to follow the case closely and to hold both men accountable for their actions. The legal system is a slow and complex one, and it may take some time for the full story to be told.

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So Tall Within

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