

Cleaver Delivers Unusual Address To Kumpf School Sixth Graders

"Happiness is activity." Aristotle

By R. W. Ragland

United Methodist Minister and City Councilman Rev. Emanuel Cleaver delivered a cautious but encouraging message recently at the promotional exercises of Henry C. Kumpf School, 4423 Olive.

Rev. Cleaver accepted the invitation to speak to the 60 sixth grade promotees under the condition that he was not interested in issuing the typical, congratulatory message.

Opening his speech to the audience of about 600, including the school's kindergarten to sixth grade student body, guests, parents and relatives, the pastor of St. James Paseo United Methodist Church and fifth district councilman said, "I told Dr. (Walter) Gill (principal) and Mrs. (Everlyn) Williams (school instructional assistant) that I didn't want to congratulate you on completing the sixth grade, and that I wasn't going to tell you how good a job you've done yet," he explained. "I'd much rather wait another six years to do that."

Instead, Cleaver used a different approach in challenging and forewarning the pre-teens that their formal education was, at the most, only half completed and their ability to handle the real struggles that lie ahead depended upon them, individually.

"You've only come halfway. Now, where are you going from here? What are you going to do next?" Cleaver said. "Education is purposeful only if you finish high school. Can you hang in?"

The directness and style of Cleaver's message kept the promotees attention for the most part of its approximate 20 minute length.

Emphasizing the point that the real struggles lie ahead, the pastor-civic leader related the grim statistics of black youth genocide stemming primarily from illiteracy, unemployment, crime and

look out at you and tell you life is about winning. But, that some of you will not it's all up to you." And complete your high school although he indicated at education," he said, citing the beginning of his speech that one in every 400 black that he did not want to be children will be murdered overly congratulatory to before age 25 and one in their academic gains thus every 900 murdered before far, he swayed slightly graduation.

Cleaver said that there is nothing remarkable in learning how to fight one another. But what is remarkable, Cleaver stated, was learning about self worth and achievement.

"How you make it in life depends on how you view yourself," he said in a pastoral pitch. "Point yourself in the direction of being a 'somebody,'" adding that now is the time to get it together and that waiting until twelfth grade may be too late.

"You don't have the right to be a 'no-body,'" he said. "I can show you a junk pile of former sixth graders who are now 'no-bodies,'" speaking of blacks who congregate aimlessly on street corners, who are unemployed and who are holed up in the county's prison system.

Exclaiming that there are enough "no-bodies" on the streets and there are no "vacancies" in the jails, he added, "You don't need to join them. Hitch your wagon to a star. Now is the time to make an appointment with yourself that you will be a some-body."

Adding a dash of humor to an already spicy lecture, Cleaver related his turning point as a youth growing up in the poverty-stricken conditions of Wichita Falls, Tx. in the 1950s.

"I had just made a salad dressing sandwich and I stopped and said to myself at that time 'I will be significant.' It was not enough just to have lived and died. I want to be 'significant'—to be a winner."

Ending his speech, he challenged the students further, "Take advantage of the opportunity to learn all there is to possibly learn. The insatiable desire

from that stance as he concluded, pointing an index finger warily to the group of graduating sixth graders, he said, "Congratulations...almost."

List of Kumpf 1984 sixth grade promotees; (Teachers, Mrs. Sharon Authorlee and Ms. Terita Guzby).

Derrick Ray Amos, Keith Austin, Marcus T. Barnes, Demitra K. Blincoe, Charles Albert Booker, Kenny Ray Borders, Freddie Brown, Danita M. Buford, David P. Butler, Bruce F. Calhoun, Glenn Cooper, Frederick L. Curtis, Yolanda Dennis, Pauline S. Dunlap, Kent H. Fry, Brian K. Gaddy, Camilla R. Garth, Marva L. Harris, LaTanya Johnson, Raymond E. Johnson, Andre' L. Jones, Antonio E. Jones, Leon C. Jones, Jr., Raymond K. Jones, Amie Littlejohn, Michael C. Lofton, Lee Maiden, Shantel Mathews, Corrie E. Magee, Harlene M. Maxwell.

Tashoon D. McCollum, Robin McDonald, Billy R. McGill, Adrian M. McGuire, Marvin A. McKinzy, Deloise McMurray, Leo Miner, Newton, III, Terry Nabors, Jalonda O. Diallo C. Pruitt, Racy, Leo N. Jawan L. Robins Ruff, Nichel Patricia A. Str

D. Tatum, LeShaun A. Thomas, Stacy L. Thomas, Ronda Vieger, Michelle T. Walker, Anthony Webb, Maurice Webber, Denova L. Wells, Twila Wilson, Terri L. Wilson, Christena Wolf, James E. Woods, Junno Wright.

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