



The Black Goddess of Liberty

Nannie Helen Burroughs, Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Mary McLeod Bethune were known as "The 3 B's of Education". Burroughs was honored by AAA, joining Gamma Pi (opposite page) to create "A Fusion of 3 Forces" to support our Project Enrich Program. However, her life's work was much broader than education. She wrote and spoke about: "Class, Race, Gender and Politics – On the Way to an Improved America". Dr. Sharon Harley of the University of Maryland referred to her as above, and compared Burroughs to James Baldwin because of her militant defense of the Black race, particularly women, committed to "telling the truth" about the "wrong doings" of Whites. She believed in capitalism and fought for Black women to be trained to support themselves, earning better wages. In articulating her militant positions, she predated some of the Black Power activists of the 60's and 70's. Some of the tensions she addressed in the

early twentieth century continue to haunt us today. "Today terrible conditions and serious race tensions and conflicts are tormenting the lives of the people in both races in every section of the country". – Nannie Helen Burroughs - (date unknown)

While fighting discrimination and inequality, Burroughs was balanced, writing: "12 Things The Negro Must Do For Himself" and "12 Things White Folks Must Stop Doing". However, she concentrated on our people "taking the high road/doing the superior thing". She believed that Blacks had the moral and spiritual character to uplift the race, thus uplifting America.

The Negro must: 1. Learn To Put First Things First. 2. Stop Expecting God and White Folks To Do For Him What He Can Do For Himself. 3. Keep Himself And His Children And His Home Clean And Make The Surroundings In Which He Lives Comfortable And Attractive. 4. Learn To Dress More Appropriately For Work And For Pleasure. 5. Make His Religion An Everyday Practice And Not Just A Sunday Go-To-Meeting Emotional Experience. 6. Highly Resolve To Wipe Out Mass Ignorance. 7. Stop Charging His failures Up To His "Color" And To White People's Attitudes. 8. Overcome His Bad Work Habits. 9. Improve His Conduct In Public Places. 10. Learn To Operate Business For People – Not Just For Negro People. 11. The Average So-called Educated Negro Will Have To Come Down Out Of The Air. He is Too Inflated Over Nothing. 12. Stop Forgetting His friends.

Nannie Helen Burroughs takes us out of our comfort-zone, with her commitment to "telling the truth". Let's consider "addressing the message", as opposed to "shooting the messenger".

The Nannie Helen Burroughs Project
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