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Voices of Color: The Presence of Minority Broadcast Media Professionals

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**VOICES OF COLOR: THE PRESENCE OF
MINORITY BROADCAST MEDIA
PROFESSIONALS**

A Thesis For the Honors Program

Kristi M. Runyon

Western Kentucky University

Fall 1998

Approved By

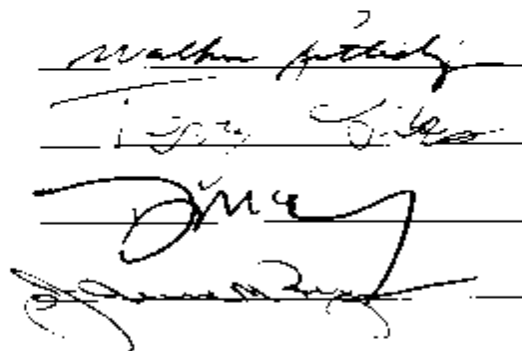
Four handwritten signatures are written on four horizontal lines. The signatures are: 1. A signature that appears to be 'Walter P. ...' 2. A signature that appears to be 'L. ...' 3. A signature that appears to be 'D. ...' 4. A signature that appears to be 'J. ...'

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Abstract

"Workplace diversity" is becoming something of a catch phrase in the business world. As the United States population diversifies, so must the United States workforce, or so the theory goes. In the broadcasting industry, organizations have issued mandatory minority-hiring regulations. However, a large number of minorities argue that there is much room for improvement when it comes to newsroom diversity. Studies show not only that there is an insufficient number of minorities in front of the camera, but also that there are few minorities in the executive and management offices. Minorities do have a presence in the broadcasting industry, but some of these voices of color say they are struggling to be heard.

Voices of Color: The Presence of Minority Broadcast Media Professionals

Minorities are reaching landmark achievements, making their presence known in fields and positions that previously excluded them. Broadcast news is an ever-growing field that has experienced a recent surge of interest in minority representation. Numerous studies show medium-market radio and television stations have shown growth in minority recruitment at various levels, but further examination of the status of minorities in the broadcasting industry suggests there is plenty of room for improvement. Critics of the current state of minorities in the media have three fundamental arguments: 1) there is not sufficient representation of minorities in on-air positions, 2) coverage of minority issues and events is inadequate and frequently stereotypical, and 3) management and executive positions are still held by the white-male majority. These dilemmas are not lacking acknowledgment: in fact, the issues of race and the news are frequent topics of discussion at industry conventions and seminars, as well as in Internet news groups and trade publications. The question remains, is anything changing? If so, are the changes substantial, and if not, what must be done to diversify the broadcast media both in the areas of its personnel and its programming?

The Federal Communications Commission is the watchdog of the broadcasting industry, and the organization has a long record of supporting Equal Employment Opportunities. The FCC passed a Fairness Doctrine in 1949 designed to protect and encourage participation from minorities on the airwaves. In 1978, the FCC adopted a policy making it easier for minorities to become licensees of broadcast stations, and minority applicants were given preference in obtaining licenses and buying stations. Several attempts to abolish this action as unconstitutional failed. The FCC has continued to monitor minority employment in the industry and has even fined stations that were found to have violated EEO requirements. With this type of defense against discrimination, many observers have a false sense of optimism when it comes to media diversity.

Recently the FCC and the broadcasting industry received a resounding wake-up call, alerting people to the misconceptions that plague the broadcast news industry in terms of race. On Tuesday, April 21, 1998, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled the FCC had not shown its Equal Employment Opportunities requirements had proven to serve the public interest. The requirements at the center of the debate were implemented in 1968 and stipulated that stations must meet minority-hiring requirements before stations could receive or renew their licenses. A study by the *Wall Street Journal* showed that, in 1971, nine percent of full-time broadcast employees were minorities. Today an estimated 20% of employees are minorities. The problem seems to be fixed. However, industry analysts are observing the contrary.

Fred McDonald calls this false sense of diversity the "Cosby effect" in his book, *Blacks and White TV*. When the popular sitcom *The Cosby Show* debuted, both white and black America embraced the Huxtables. Families who had never entertained guests of different ethnic backgrounds invited an African-American family into their homes once a week, via a television screen. As long as white America witnessed a successful black family surrounded by a rainbow of ethnicity in friends and colleagues, race relations in the U.S. were good. Blacks could make it in this world, and Cliff, Claire, Theo, Rudy, and Vanessa were living proof. Campbell describes a similar trend in the news industry. So long as viewers see one Black reporter or one Hispanic anchorperson, the media must be diverse. Then if a station throws in an Asian correspondent, the broadcast media is a virtual melting pot to the uninformed observer (McDonald 90).

Take the 20% figure touted by the appeals court into consideration:

- Full-time employees could include a conglomeration of positions varying from receptionists to anchors to production assistants.
- Having 20% of the broadcast industry positions filled by minorities still does not reflect the U.S. population.
- Of those minorities already employed, the majority of them are found within certain markets or network affiliates, thus leaving other areas greatly lacking minority presence.

The majority of the criticism stemming from the 20% figure centers on the notion that having full-time janitors or desk assistants in a news operation does

not insure diversity in the workplace. While it is undoubtedly just as important for minorities to hold production, executive, and other "behind-the-scenes" positions, the general public will never know that a station has a Hispanic producer, a Native American Director, and an African-American Camera Operator--the position a large percentage of African-Americans hold in the industry (Campbell 36). Radio is unique in that racial identities are not seen but are often assumed on the airwaves. Trends in racial identification by radio audiences indicate that if a station is known as an urban or Spanish station, it is generally deduced that the employees of that station are of African-American and Hispanic background, respectively. In either medium, it is the on-air talent that subdues public cries of discrimination. One again returns to the "Cosby effect": as long as viewers see someone of color on the screen, many naturally assume there is similar representation behind the scenes. Quite ironically, most minorities do hold positions where they are seldom seen, and if improvement is needed, it is in the composition of on-air employees.

Christopher P. Campbell, author of *Race, Myth, and the News*, conducted an independent study of 28 television stations across the U.S. He observed 40 hours of news programming on Martin Luther King Day in 1994. Markets observed varied from the number-one market of New York to market 195, Cheyenne, Wyoming. Campbell compiled the following data of the races of journalists that appeared on camera (140):

Race of Journalists on Camera

<u>Position</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Native Amer.</u>
Anchors	64	56 (88%)	7 (10%)	1 (2%)	0
Reporters	238	201 (85%)	27 (11%)	8 (3%)	0
Weather	34	31 (91%)	2 (6%)	0	0
Sports	37	34 (92%)	2 (5%)	0	0

The study shows an overwhelming majority of white talent positions and a notable presence of blacks, but a staggeringly low representation of other minorities.

The number of minorities seen during regularly scheduled news broadcasts certainly does not reflect the face of the American population. But in all fairness, image is not everything. The faces behind the cameras could provide a more accurate representation of the general public, but studies show even combining the entire news workforce still reflects an insufficient number of minority employees. In 1996, Vernon Stone of the University of Missouri surveyed stations with news operations and estimated the distribution of races among employees. Comparison with population reports from the U.S. Bureau of the Census showed the numbers of minority media employees were consistently below the numbers of minorities in the general population.

1994 Television News Work Force

	Share	Estimated Number	1994 U.S. Population (numbers in thousands)	
White	82.0%	20,500	73.9%	(192,426)
Black	10.2%	2,250	12.5%	(32,653)
Hispanic	5.0%	1,250	10.1%	(26,302)
Asian	2.1%	525	3.5%	(9,008)
Native Amer.	0.7%	175	0.9%	(2,219)

Minorities are undeniably under represented in the news workforce, holding 18% of the jobs and being 26% of the population. The biggest concern, however, is not the current state of media diversity, but the future. If population trends continue, news operations will face challenges of providing racially proportional newsrooms. The census bureau estimates that, by the year 2050, the population will be 47% minority, and if newsrooms maintain their current annual rate of increase in minority employment in 2050, only 26% of television news employees would be minorities. Radio news operations report having 11% minority employees; if current increase rates continue, by 2050 the number will be up 15%, still well below the percentage of minority population (Stone 7).

An important note is that even though minorities are represented in some markets, they are not represented in all markets. Countless stations that have minority viewers have no minorities in their regular newscasts. A Radio and Television News Director's Association (RTNDA) study shows of all television

newsstaffs only 86% of them include minorities (Papper 31). Vernon Stone found minorities are concentrated in the top 25 markets, including cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Tampa, and St. Louis. Nearly one-fourth of employees in these markets are minorities. In comparison, only a tenth of employees in the 60 smallest of the 210 television markets are minorities. Certain networks also show more diversity in the workplace. Of all networks airing news, Fox accounted for 30.4% of minorities in broadcast news, and the stations that are "big three" affiliates ABC, NBC, and CBS had a combined total of 16.5% of the minority work force, leaving an average of 5.5% of minorities at each network (Stone 3).

Numbers are definitely powerful persuaders, but they certainly do not tell the whole story. Campbell states, "By increasing the number of minority journalists, so the thinking goes, news organizations would more fairly and accurately cover minority life. But that might not be the case, especially considering the possibility that the presence of journalists of color might not dramatically affect news coverage" (92). For years, minority groups have expressed dissatisfaction with their portrayal in the media. Historically, in the 1960's black organizations filed petitions to deny stations license renewals if stations failed to provide equal employment opportunities and fair programming (Macdonald 501). Hispanic groups protested negative images, and Asian-American groups also expressed their concerns. Generally, news directors are concerned with meeting the needs of their viewers, and they admittedly see the

need for more minority-related issues and stories. The most common reason cited for the lack of coverage is the paucity of minorities in newsrooms. Yet, minority journalists currently in newsrooms maintain having soldiers in the battle does not mean that the war is won. Campbell explains, "news organizations hire newsmen who hold or accept values that are consistent with organizational needs, and reject others. Research has also indicated that journalists, once hired, tend to conform to the values of their news organizations as a means of socialization" (28). Minority journalists face challenges of frequently being the odd-ones-out in the newsroom, having the only voices for minorities, and being the only ones who care what occurs in the minority community. Unless stories involve crime or athletics, minorities are seldom included in regular newscasts. Campbell's study of news programming found, even in newscasts held on a day promoting racial equality, Martin Luther King Day, the news industry still seemed exclusive. Of a hundred feature stories aired on the 28 stations, Campbell observed only one highlighted a person of color. KCCI-TV of Des Moines, Iowa, aired a piece on an African-American prison warden who was retiring after restoring order to a notoriously disruptive prison (38). Minority reporters must often fight to gain recognition for stories and depend on groups of white males to deem these events or issues of importance. In addition to this problem, many minority journalists report that they are overlooked for big stories when there is not a glaring minority issue. Campbell illustrates the pigeon-holing of reporters in a breakdown of press covering President Clinton's inauguration. Local stations

sent 25 reporters, all but one white, and of the 28 stories that these reporters produced, only two featured minority groups. Industry experts maintain that while increasing the numbers of minorities in the newsroom would be a step in the right direction, coverage must be diversified to accurately reflect the minority population. Reporters do have a say in the news of the day, but reporters are hired by news directors, and the final word on coverage comes from the news directors assignment editors, and executive producers.

Many observers feel coverage of minority issues will not expand until minorities hold more positions in management. If newsrooms are hungry for more minority reporters and producers, they are starving for news directors, executives, and management positions. Employment of minorities in news organizations is typically on the rise, but the number of minority news directors is consistently declining. In 1990, 10% of news directors were minorities; in 1993, the number dropped to 8.5%; and in 1994 only 7.7% of news directors were people of color (Stone 2). Studies show that African-Americans are twice as likely as whites to aspire to be news directors, but only half as likely to obtain the position. Of the 740 news directors in Stone's research, 92.3% were white, 2.5% black, 3.9% Hispanic, .5% Asian, and .8% Native American (5). The representation is perplexing when one considers African-Americans hold more media positions than other minorities, but their numbers are considerably smaller than those of Hispanics in news-director positions. The inverse relationship between minority representation in general news positions and

management stems from a growing number of Spanish-speaking stations that must operate under supervision of Hispanic news directors and executives. In management positions, minorities are equally under-represented, but the largest deficit is found in station ownership.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) annually surveys minority media ownership. What is alarming is that the 1997 NTIA report shows minority ownership is declining. Minorities own 322 of the 11,475 commercial broadcast stations, down from 350 in 1996. This represents a decline to 2.8% of total ownership from 3.1% in the previous year. The specific racial breakdown is as follows: Blacks 1.7%, Hispanics 1.05%, Asian .03%, and Native Americans .04%. Minorities are also found to buy more AM radio stations: rather than the more visible FM stations.

All of the statistics presented reveal a less than positive outlook for minorities in the media industry. Yet again, numbers do not show everything, and even when there were far fewer numbers of minorities in the media, great strides were still being made. One must turn these figures into actual faces, the statistics into voices, and the observations into personal accounts. The following production examines minorities in the media of the past, present, and future, individuals who can reveal far more than any survey or pie chart. They are real people with real experiences, real ideas, and real feelings from the pain of discrimination and exclusion in their field of choice. They are the voices of color demanding to be heard.

MINORITY MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

RUNYON

10/5/98

(RUNYON)

<<MUSIC>> THE YEAR IS 19-64. LYNDON B. JOHNSON IS PRESIDENT. "I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND IS THE SONG ON THE RADIO. GAS IS 30-CENTS AND A LOAF OF BREAD WILL SET YOU BACK 21-PENNIES. IN 19-64 THERE WERE THREE MAJOR TELEVISION NETWORKS...EACH WITH A LEADING ANCHOR. PETER JENNINGS WAS JUST STARTING AS THE TOP ANCHOR FOR A-B-C. <<NAT: "and that's the way it is">> WALTER CRONKITE WAS FINISHING HIS FIRST YEAR WITH C-B-S...<<NAT: "this is Walter Cronkite...Good night.">> AND CHET HUNTLEY AND DAVID BRINKLEY WERE ENJOYING A SUCCESSFUL STINT AS N-B-C'S LEADING ANCHOR TEAM. <<NAT: "Chet Huntley...NBC news.. New York..and David Brinkley...NBC news..Washington.">>

THEY COULD BE CALLED THE BIG FOUR AND THEIR EXPERIENCE VARIED BUT THEY DID SHARE A COMMON BOND. THEY WERE ALL MALE...AND THEY WERE ALL WHITE.

BUT IN 1964 THERE WAS ANOTHER MAN READING THE EVENING NEWS...MAX ROBINSON. AT A STATION IN PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA, ROBINSON WOULD DO PRECISELY THAT...READ THE NEWS. HIS VOICE WAS HEARD BUT INSTEAD OF HIS FACE VIEWERS SAW THE WORD NEWS IN BOLD LETTERS ACROSS THEIR TELEVISION SCREENS. ONE DAY THE REBELLIOUS BLACK TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD PERSUADED A CAMERA OPERATOR TO SHOW HIS FACE ON THE AIR. THE ACT VIOLATED THE STATION RULES AND THE NEXT DAY ROBINSON WAS FIRED.

IN THE YEARS TO COME AMERICA EXPERIENCED FIGHTS FOR DESEGREGATION AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT...AND MINORITIES MADE GREAT STRIDES IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY. MAX ROBINSON WENT ON TO BECOME THE FIRST BLACK NETWORK ANCHOR WHEN HE JOINED PETER JENNINGS AND FRANK REYNOLDS AT A-B-C IN 1978.

BUT NOW...34-YEARS LATER.....<<NAT : RATHER INTRO >> TUNE IN TO THE NETWORK EVENING NEWS <<NAT: BROKAW INTRO>> AND THE ANCHORS ARE STILL MALE <<NAT: JENNINGS INTRO>> AND THEY ARE STILL WHITE. MINORITIES HAVE MANAGED TO BREAK INTO THE BROADCAST NEWS INDUSTRY AND LOCAL NETWORKS ARE INCREASINGLY SHOWING MORE DIVERSITY. BUT SOME BARRIERS ARE YET TO BE BROKEN...SOME

STEREOTYPES LEFT TO OVERCOME...AND SOME RACES STILL SEEKING REPRESENTATION AND RECOGNITION. THEY ARE THE VOICES OF COLOR...STRUGGLING TO BE HEARD OVER A WHITE MAJORITY... I'M KRISTI RUNYON... AND THESE ARE THEIR STORIES.

<<MUSIC>>

(KENDALL)

076 "I face a lot of challenges being young...a woman...and black...I struggle with that everyday."

(SMITH)

363 "I think far too often stations try and hire minority women because they kill two birds with one stone: they get a black face on the air and they also get a woman so it's very difficult for black males at times."

(MICHIOKU)

031 "we're not only fighting to produce a product but also fighting stereotypes."

(WORDLAW)

123 "if they rejected me as a person that's ok I can live with that but don't reject me because my skin happens to be a different color."

(ALVEAR)

301 "the employment of Latinos in the media does not approximate their numbers in the population so there's a lot that remains to be done."

(CHUNTEL)

211 "I do think there needs to be more minorities out there so people know we are there and we're not going anywhere."

(RUNYON)

ALL OF THE VOICES YOU HAVE JUST HEARD BELONG TO MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA. PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE CAREERS OUT OF SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION. YET QUITE IRONICALLY THEY ALL SAY AT TIMES THEY ARE NOT HEARD...AND IF THEY ARE...STILL THEY ARE OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD.

THESE PROFESSIONALS ALL COME FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, THEY ARE OF DIFFERENT RACES AND AGES, FROM DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS. BUT THEY ARE ALL MINORITIES...AND IN WHAT IS MORE THAN MERE COINCIDENCE...THEY ALL HAVE OBSERVED SOME OF THE SAME PROBLEMS FACING MINORITIES IN THE MEDIA. THEY MAY THINK THE PROBLEMS HAVE DIFFERENT CAUSES AND REQUIRE VARYING SOLUTIONS. ALL OF THESE MEMBERS OF THE MASS MEDIA... INCLUDING A YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN JOURNALIST JUST STARTING OUT...A HISPANIC PRODUCER FOR THE LEADING NEWS NETWORK... AND A SEASONED ASIAN JOURNALIST DIRECTING AN ORGANIZATION TO HELP OTHERS WHO SHARE HER RACE AND PROFESSION... THEY ALL ARE A SMALL SLICE OF OUR AMERICAN PIE REPRESENTING THE MASS MEDIA....AND WHEN WE COME BACK THEIR FIGHTS TO INCLUDE SOME DIFFERENT FLAVORS.

(END OF SEGMENT ONE)

(RUNYON)

ACCORDING TO CENSUS REPORTS AND SEVERAL INDUSTRY STUDIES...MINORITIES ACCOUNT FOR ROUGHLY 30-PERCENT OF THE UNITED STATES POPULATION BUT ARE LESS THAN 20-PERCENT OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY. THOSE JUST STARTING OUT IN THE BUSINESS HAVE ALREADY OBSERVED THE VOID. MEOSHIE CHUNTEL IS A 1998 COLLEGE GRADUATE...JUST BEGINNING HER CAREER AS A TELEVISION NEWS PRODUCER.

(CHUNTEL)

204 "Now I've realized that there's not too many of us out here!"

249 "you're going up against a lot of talented people and a lot of those people are white."

(RUNYON)

TWANNA KENDALL HAS SEVERAL YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A PRODUCER AT A NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. STATION. SHE DOESN'T KNOW IF BEING A MINORITY PLAYED A ROLE IN HER HIRING. BUT SHE SAYS MEDIA OPERATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER MINORITY JOB APPLICANTS AS VALUABLE ASSETS.

(KENDALL)

017 "at the time they were hiring maybe they were looking for minorities.. a lot of people are..they are realizing there aren't enough of us in the workplace and it only benefits them... because we are in a business where

you need to know about a lot of different things...and minorities can bring the flavor and diversity stations need."

(RUNYON)

KENDALL SAYS ALTHOUGH HER STATION DOES EMPLOY A FAIR NUMBER OF MINORITIES THE NUMBERS ALONE DO NOT INDICATE A COMMITMENT TO A DIVERSE NEWS PRODUCT.

(KENDALL)

137 "we have one black anchor, one black weatherman, one black host of our town (a specialty show), one black producer, and several black janitors."

(RUNYON)

MANY OF THOSE IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY WILL SAY THE NUMBERS OF MINORITY EMPLOYEES DO NOT GUARANTEE A WELL-ROUNDED NEWS PRODUCT. YET THEY CONCEDE A GOAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MINORITY EMPLOYEES COULDN'T HURT. BUT A UNITED STATES COURT DECISION HAS SENT A MESSAGE TO THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION THAT SETTING A REQUIREMENT ON MINORITY HIRING IS NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC. FOR 30-YEARS THE F.C.C HAD MONITORED THE NUMBER OF MINORITIES EMPLOYED BY STATIONS...AND REFUSED LICENSE RENEWALS OR FINED OPERATIONS THAT SHOWED A LACK OF MINORITY EMPLOYEES. THESE REGULATIONS CAME TO A HALT IN APRIL OF 19-98 WHEN A COURT OF APPEALS DECLARED THE PRACTICE

UNNECESSARY. BUT MANY MINORITY MEDIA PROFESSIONALS STRONGLY DISAGREE. CECILIA ALVEAR IS A PRODUCER FOR THE N-B-C NETWORK AND SHE SAYS HER START IN THE BUSINESS CAME FROM THESE REQUIREMENTS.

(ALVEAR)

218 "I learned that KNBC was looking for a production assistant so I went over and applied and I was hired. Later I found out that they were under pressure from the FCC to diversify their staff so I can say that I was an affirmative action hire."

(RUNYON)

WHILE ALVEAR ADMITS THE F-C-C REGULATIONS HELPED GET HER FOOT IN THE DOOR...SHE HAS A SENSE OF RELUCTANT OPTIMISM THAT UP AND COMING MINORITIES WON'T NEED THE SAME HELP SHE RECEIVED.

(ALVEAR)

269 "I would hope that it would not affect them because I think that by now the news directors and station managers have seen the light and they have realized that they cannot operate in 1999 and in the 21st century if they are not going to have a diversified staff."

(RUNYON)

GARY WORDLAW IS A GENERAL MANAGER OF THE C-B-S AFFILIATE IN SYRACUSE, NEW YORK. ALTHOUGH HE WOULD LIKE TO AGREE WITH ALVEAR'S PREDICTION...FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE HE SAYS THE OUTLOOK IS NOT SO GOOD.

(WORDLAW)

173 "I think it's gonna be a real challenge for some minorities. I think there will be those individuals who feel it is no longer 'en vogue' to bring minorities on board and they can hide behind the law that says they don't have to."

(RUNYON)

THIS POSSIBILITY DISTURBS THOSE YOUNG MINORITY JOURNALISTS SEARCHING FOR THAT FIRST BREAK....LIKE MEOSHIE CHUNTEL.

(CHUNTEL)

231 "I'm afraid now that there are no stipulations to hire minorities the people who discriminate won't hire minorities anymore...and they will dwindle out."

(RUNYON)

LAWRENCE SMITH HAS BEEN IN THE BUSINESS FOR 22 YEARS. HE'S HELD POSITIONS RANGING FROM REPORTER TO ANCHOR TO ASSISTANT NEWS DIRECTOR. HE THINKS DISCRIMINATION. OR AT LEAST RACIAL SELECTION, PLAYED A ROLE IN A PREVIOUS JOB SEARCH.

(SMITH)

342 "there have been times when I felt like I didn't get a particular position there was one time in Tennessee, and I could never prove it, but I always felt like I didn't get the position because they wanted a white woman there and I didn't fit that mold."

(RUNYON)

SMITH SAYS THE REJECTION OF THE F-C-C REGULATIONS WILL ONLY ENCOURAGE THESE TYPES OF PRACTICES.

(SMITH)

354 "I think it's a bad idea. I think it will only hurt the number of minorities on the air. There are some companies that will do the right thing no matter what....but there are stations and companies out there will not do the right thing unless they are told to, so I think it will have an impact."

(RUNYON)

OTHERS IN THE INDUSTRY MAINTAIN THAT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EFFORTS CONSISTENT WITH THOSE OF THE F-C-C HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED INACCURATELY. A MISUNDERSTANDING EXISTS THAT THE F-C-C WAS CALLING FOR NEWS DIRECTORS TO HIRE INEXPERIENCED, UNQUALIFIED JOURNALISTS OF COLOR IN ORDER TO MEET QUOTAS. SANDRA MICHIOKU IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ASIAN AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION AND SHE FEELS THE COMMISSION'S EFFORTS DO NOT PROMOTE HIRING BASED ON COLOR BUT HIRING THAT IS BLIND TO COLOR.

(MICHIOKU)

044 "for a long time the struggle has been to get the job. to interview and be taken seriously. to be offered the job and show that we can do the work, it's not asking that we get in the door and be treated with lower standards."

(RUNYON)

WORDLAW AGREES THAT RACE CAN BE A PREREQUISITE FOR AN INDUSTRY THRIVING ON APPEARANCE IN A WORLD THAT TENDS TO SEPARATE.

(WORDLAW)

130 "we live in a world that defines itself by status, by class, by color, whatever the separators happen to be. I think that many people have been excluded from the process because they are of different colors or racial groups or cultural backgrounds. It doesn't mean you cannot be successful, it means your trek is going to be very difficult."

(RUNYON)

SEVERAL MINORITIES SAY GETTING THAT FIRST FOOT IN THE DOOR IS ONE OF THE CHALLENGES MINORITY MEDIA PROFESSIONALS MUST FACE. SOME FEEL THE HIGHLY SELECTIVE HIRING PROCESS TAKES THEM OUT OF THE RUNNING EARLY ON....COMING UP...WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS ON LETTING PEOPLE IN AND WHY THE ANSWER COULD BE A DISADVANTAGE FOR MINORITIES.

<<MUSIC>>

(END OF SEGMENT TWO)

(RUNYON)

WHILE THERE IS SOME DISAGREEMENT AMONG THE MEDIA INDUSTRY ON WHETHER OR NOT RACE PLAYS A ROLE IN THE HIRING PROCESS THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT FROM INDUSTRY EXPERTS THAT THE PEOPLE MAKING THE HIRING DECISIONS ARE TYPICALLY WHITE MALES. ONLY RECENTLY HAVE WHITE FEMALES SHOWN ANY STRIDES IN NEWS DIRECTOR AND MANAGEMENT POSITIONS. A 19-96 STUDY BY VERNON STONE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI SHOWED THE NUMBER OF FEMALE NEWS DIRECTORS INCREASED BY EIGHT-PERCENT BETWEEN 19-90 AND 19-96... LEADING TO ONE FEMALE OUT OF EVERY FOUR NEWS DIRECTORS. HOWEVER IN THE SAME STUDY THE NUMBER OF MINORITIES SERVING AS NEWS DIRECTORS DECREASED FROM TEN-PERCENT TO 7.7-PERCENT.

WHILE MANY CONSIDER THE LACK OF MINORITIES IN MANAGEMENT A PROBLEM WITHIN ITSELF...A LARGE NUMBER OF MEDIA PROFESSIONALS LIKE SANDRA MICHIOKU AND TWANNA KENDALL, ALSO BELIEVE IT ADDS TO AN EVEN GREATER PROBLEM IN TERMS OF MINORITY HIRING.

(MICHIOKU)

087 "we unfortunately still do not have enough journalists of color in positions of management and power to give us really the equal footing to make us able to compete."

(KENDALL)

097 "there are a lot of qualified minorities out there...people are just comfortable with people like them when you have a lot of non-minorities in positions of power...hiring people like them...that's where you find the problem of people not getting the opportunity they deserve."

(RUNYON)

THERE IS NO ANSWER ON HOW TO ENSURE WHITE EMPLOYERS WILL HIRE MINORITY EMPLOYEES AND MANY OF THE PEOPLE MAKING EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS WILL REJECT THE IDEA THAT RACE IS A FACTOR. WITH THIS IN MIND MANY MINORITIES IN THE BROADCASTING FIELD HOPE TO FIGHT FOR MINORITY PRESENCE IN GENERAL BY PLACING MORE MINORITIES IN MANAGEMENT AND NEWS DIRECTOR POSITIONS. THE EFFORT IS THERE BUT THE NUMBERS ARE STILL LOW...AND THERE IS DIVISION ON THE TRUE REASON WHY THE NUMBER OF MINORITIES IN HIGHER LEVEL POSITIONS IS SO FEW. GARY WORDLAW IS ONE OF THE FEW MINORITIES SERVING AS A GENERAL MANAGER. HE'S PROUD OF WHERE HE IS NOW BUT HE ADMITS HE HAD A HUMBLE START.

(WORDLAW)

106 "I am an overnight success 30 years later. When I was 16 years old I was sweeping the floors of a tv station in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and 10 years later I was the assistant news director....10 years later I became a

news director in Baltimore, Maryland, and 10 years later I became the president and general manager of my own tv station."

(RUNYON)

WORDLAW SAYS IT HAS BEEN A LONG ROAD TO HIS CURRENT POSITION...AND HE THINKS A LACK OF PERSEVERANCE CAN ACCOUNT FOR THE LOW NUMBER OF MINORITIES IN MANAGEMENT.

(WORDLAW)

142 "I think that people have become frustrated. You start off as a reporter, producer, photographer, or whatever the job might be and you don't feel the ceiling is glass you feel the ceiling becomes brick or steel or iron because you never get through it."

(RUNYON)

THE TERM GLASS CEILING IS OFTEN USED TO DESCRIBE THE PLIGHT OF MINORITIES SEEKING THE HIGHER POSITIONS THEY KNOW EXIST BUT CAN'T SEEM TO OBTAIN. BUT SOME MINORITIES FEEL THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE AND READILY AVAILABLE ONCE PURSUED. SENIOR REPORTER LAWRENCE SMITH DISAGREES WITH THE GLASS CEILING MENTALITY...SAYING THE LOW NUMBERS HAVE A DIFFERENT CAUSE.

385 "I think that's because when you have fewer minorities in the business to begin with fewer of them will work their way up to those top management positions. so I think it's just a numbers game you have fewer starting out so you have fewer ending up."

(RUNYON)

REGARDLESS OF HOW THE PROBLEM STARTED THE INDUSTRY IS STILL IN SEARCH OF A SOLUTION. WORDLAW WOULD LIKE TO SEE A PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH TO MINORITIES THAT ARE ALREADY IN THE BUSINESS.

(WORDLAW)

150 "I also think that companies have a responsibility to reach down early on and identify those people they feel can grow and help them do it. It's gonna take a mutual kind of growth pattern. a mutual respect, to pull people up or we're gonna be in real trouble in terms of getting minorities in top level jobs in management."

(RUNYON)

IN MANY DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES THE KEY TO MOVING UP IN THE BUSINESS IS NETWORKING. MINORITIES ONCE FRUSTRATED WITH WHAT SOME CALLED "THE GOOD OLE BOY SYSTEM" HAVE BRANCHED OUT TO FORM THEIR OWN NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES. SEVERAL MINORITY ASSOCIATIONS HAVE BEEN FORMED TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE MINORITY JOURNALISTS. CECILIA ALVEAR IS THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC JOURNALISTS AND SAYS THESE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR MINORITIES.

(ALVEAR)

395 "it's good for our members to have a place where they can come and network with people like themselves, and compare stories, and where they

can share ideas, and we can help each other and help the world out there to understand who we are."

(RUNYON)

AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ASIAN AMERICAN JOURNALIST ASSOCIATION SANDRA MICHIOKU HOPES THE ORGANIZATION CAN ALSO PROVIDE SEVERAL MEANS OF SUPPORT TO MINORITIES JUST ENTERING THE MEDIA INDUSTRY.

(MICHIOKU)

054 "one is role models...for a long time we have not had role models and people to look up to and be inspired by to let people think yeah I can do the job or this is something I want to do."

(RUNYON)

MICHIOKU ALSO ADDS THAT ASIAN JOURNALISTS FACE A UNIQUE SET OF CHALLENGES...NOT FROM THE INDUSTRY BUT FROM THEIR FAMILIES.

(MICHIOKU)

059 "for Asian American journalists in particular journalism is not a career that is thought of highly. Most Asian American parents want their children to be doctors, lawyers, and professionals so to tell your parents you want to be a reporter means in effect breaking their hearts."

(RUNYON)

MICHIOKU HOPES HER ORGANIZATION CAN PROVIDE ROLE MODELS THAT SET AN HONORABLE EXAMPLE OF JOURNALISM, AND ALVEAR HOPES

THAT ORGANIZATIONS CELEBRATING DIVERSITY WILL LEAD TO STATIONS ACCEPTING IT AS A REQUIREMENT FOR JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY.

(ALVEAR)

388 "I think it is important to have an organization that advocates good journalism as I believe that it is good journalism to have a diverse news staff and diverse coverage."

(RUNYON)

ALVEAR RAISES THE POINT OF COVERAGE PRACTICES. A STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC JOURNALISTS SHOWED SOME ALARMING RESULTS.

(ALVEAR)

398 "we found out that out of 12,000 stories done last year, only 112 referred to Latinos, that's only one-percent. In reality Latinos are over 10% of the United States population, and at the rate we're growing we're expected to be 13% and reach 66 million by the year 2030...I don't want to play a numbers game here, but I think if you only devote one-percent of your news to that large part of the population, you are not practicing good journalism."

ANOTHER DEFICIENCY SEVERAL MINORITIES REPORT IN THE MEDIA IS THE LACK OF POSITIVE PORTRAYALS OF MINORITIES IN NEWS REPORTS. STATISTICALLY BLACKS AND LATINOS ARE PORTRAYED MORE OFTEN AS CRIMINALS OR SOCIAL BURDENS THAN AS POSITIVE FORCES. SOME

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA LIKE MEOSHIE CHUNTEL AND LAWRENCE SMITH
CONTEND THAT THE NUMBER OF GOOD NEWS STORIES ON MINORITIES
DEPENDS ON THE NUMBER OF MINORITY REPORTERS, PRODUCERS, AND
ASSIGNMENT EDITORS.

(CHUNTEL)

265 "I think primarily white stations do primarily white stories...as a
minority I need to show the other side..by doing features..take up the
cause and show that because that too is news."

(SMITH)

429 "there are certain individuals in the newsroom that will always push to
make sure these kinds of stories are covered and try and make sure that
all our experts aren't just white faces: we try to get diverse opinions from
people."

(RUNYON)

MANY INDUSTRY EXPERTS FEEL ULTIMATELY THE AUDIENCES OF
STATIONS WILL DEMAND MORE MINORITY PRESENCE ON THE AIR BOTH IN
COVERAGE AND HIRING. AS MINORITY POPULATIONS CONTINUE TO
INCREASE, THE AUDIENCES WILL EXPECT TO SEE MORE PEOPLE LIKE
THEMSELVES COMING ACROSS THE AIRWAVES.

AS FOR THOSE ON THE SENDING SIDE OF THE SIGNAL, WHAT
EXPECTATIONS DO THEY HOLD FOR THE BROADCAST MEDIA INDUSTRY?

(ALVEAR)

291 "if people want to cover the community as it is they better reflect it in their hiring practices and in their coverage practices"

(SMITH)

492 "more faces in management more blacks interested in management."

(KENDALL)

123 "we need more minorities behind the scenes so we can get fair diverse news out..we represent all kinds of people and that's what our newsroom should reflect."

(RUNYON)

BUT MANY ARE RELUCTANT TO POINT FINGERS AT THE INDUSTRY WITHOUT FIRST LOOKING IN THE MIRROR AND EVALUATING WHAT MINORITIES CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES.

<<MUSIC>>

(SMITH)

462 "we do need to make conscious decisions to look for those opportunities to go into the minority communities and do positive stories."

(KENDALL)

057 "by getting more minorities in the workplace to stand up and say this is important we need to cover this. We need people to be there to say it in an intelligent way...so that they are understood."

(WORDLAW)

181 "we should never give up our voice to fight to call for change, to work very hard in the jobs that we do have to demonstrate that if you give us a chance we can do anything."

<<MUSIC>>

(RUNYON)

AND PERHAPS THAT IS ALL THESE VOICES OF COLOR ARE DEMANDING...A CHANCE TO BE HEARD.....AND A CHANCE TO SUCCEED.

I'M KRISTI RUNYON REPORTING.

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<<MUSIC...FADE OUT TO END>>

Conclusion

Statistics show the broadcast news industry has a minority workforce that is less than representative of the minority population. While the numbers have gained recognition from professional news organizations and industry analysts, average television viewers have also noticed a void by flipping through the channels of their television sets. However, the strongest call for more minorities in the business comes from minority media professionals searching for colleagues who share their race and profession. If news organizations hope to be mirrors of society, perhaps the industry should take a closer look at the variety of colors that are part of the reflection.

APPENDIX: "Voices Of Color" Biographies

Cecilia Alvear is a Producer for the NBC Burbank Bureau, which covers the entire western half of the United States. Cecilia got her start in the broadcasting industry as a production assistant for KNBC in California. She has also worked as a desk assistant at the CBS station in California, a magazine show producer, and as a planning editor for KABC. In 1982 she became an NBC network news bureau chief for Mexico City. Cecilia studied for a year in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is also the Vice-President of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

Meoshie Chuntel is a 1998 graduate of Western Kentucky University. She received a Broadcast News degree. Meoshie worked as a weekend producer for WBKO-TV in Bowling Green, Kentucky, prior to graduation. After graduation, she received a position as the producer for the midday and five o'clock newscasts. In September of 1998, she accepted a job as a morning show producer for the FOX affiliate in Louisville, Kentucky.

Twanna Kendall graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1995. She worked at WSM radio news in Nashville, Tennessee, upon graduation. For the next two and a half years she worked as an associate producer for Newschannel 5 (WTVF) in Nashville. She then moved on to produce the weekend morning show at the station. Twanna has since left the business to work at Middle Tennessee State University.

Sandra Michioku reported for ten years before becoming the Executive Director of the Asian-American Journalists Association. Sandra has been a reporter for UPI in Sacramento, California. She also worked on public policy with state legislators in California.

Lawrence Smith says he was inspired by Walter Cronkite to enter the business, after seeing him on a news program years ago. He got his start in the broadcasting industry as a radio D.J. His news experience began at WTVQ-TV in Lexington, Kentucky, where he interned and went on to work as a reporter. He has also reported in Knoxville and Houston. In 1990 he came to WHAS-TV in Louisville, Kentucky, where he has worked as a reporter, anchor, and assistant news director.

Gary Wordlaw has 30 years of experience with television broadcasting. It all began when he was sweeping floors for a Chattanooga television station; ten years later he was that station's assistant news director. He went on to become a news director in Baltimore, Maryland. He is currently the President and General Manager of the

CBS affiliate in Syracuse, New York. Gary is also on the Planning Board for the Radio and Television News Directors Association.

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