[MS-0436.003.006.014]

June 21, 1979

The Honorable Louis M. Welsh
Superior Court - Department 21
220 West Broadway
San Diego, California 92101

Dear Judge Welsh:

I am taking this opportunity to express my personal and private summary of my experience as a member of the San Diego School Integration Task Force. I feel it is important for you to receive the same from each member of the Task Force if they are willing. I feel this way because I am afraid that much gets lost in the process of "collective thought," the individual parts seem to blend into a picture that cannot be fully understood because the individual parts themselves are not understood. The "parts" in this case are the twenty-one individual task force members and the "collective thought" is contained in our final report to you. This paper contains only one twenty-first of that collective thought, but I feel a strong need for you to hear it. Your task is one that the strongest and wisest person would rather avoid, and the task is made more difficult by the honesty and sincerity of commitment that I feel you possess. However, my hope is that this writing will not contribute to the confusion and complexity, but will serve to help you in the formulation of your future decisions.

It has been a longstanding practice of mine to preface my remarks with an introduction of myself. Therefore, before I offer the remarks of my summary I want you to know something about the person making these remarks.

The business of this task force means more to me than my writing capabilities permit me to express. I began participating in attempts to relieve the suffering of Black people in 1958 as a college student. I spoke to church groups throughout San Diego on the subject of race relations. I progressed (or regressed--I'm not sure) to the point where it became necessary for me to join a civil rights organization that expressed itself through what was called non-violent direct action, attempting to relieve my suffering and the suffering

of all Black Americans. The gains we made are the subject of much debate by both Black and White leaders. During my forty-five years of life, I have been through many phases relating to the racial issue. I have been a racially naive child, race not being an issue; I have been a strong integrationist; a strong Black nationalist, as well as being an educator and a businessman. My experience in the racial issue as well as in education and business has been local, regional, national, and international (Africa). As a victim of America's racism, I find that I, through twenty-two years of deep involvement, acquired much insight in regards to this issue. The pain began when that naive child was exposed to verbal racial insults and discriminatory practices during an early age. The pain continued as a result of many subsequent incidents and still exists to this day. Fortunately, there have been enough positive racial experiences in my life to prevent the rage from exploding. (Incidentally, I am convinced that this rage lives inside every Black American to varying degrees. I believe we just handle it differently.) This rage, this pain and the insight was part of me when I accepted the invitation to participate on the task force. I have attempted to fulfill my responsibility to the task force in the most objective and professional manner that I could. I hope I was reasonably successful.

Now let me begin my critique of this year's activities of the task force.

1. Overall, I am very pleased with the efforts of the members of the task force. There were some strong and some weak members, but overall the efforts of the strong members more than compensated for the others. The workload was heavy, tedious and frustrating. The demands placed on the task force members were overwhelming, yet they responded and objectives were met. The amount of effort expended should be admired.

   However, there are some suggestions I would like to offer for the future. In spite of the commendable efforts, there were many things that were not done that should have been done much better. But unless people are selected who have a great deal of time to put into this effort, I feel the task force will produce very little of any consequence. I cannot emphasize this point strongly enough. No matter how good a

person's skills are, if there is not enough time to put those skills to work, the results are few and we again short change those we are attempting to help. Therefore, a critical criterion for the selection of task force members is the amount of time available to spend on task force business. Another criterion should be the amount of exposure in the area of Race/Human Relations. It is my feeling that those who are selected to serve on the task force should have some depth of understanding of the racial issue in America, otherwise much of the time is spent educating toward understanding rather than educating toward the issues. The amount of available time is especially crucial for those charged with the responsibility to lead the task force. If this is not accomplished, I feel we will fall far short of the commitment to alleviate the historical wrongs of a society that has cheated non-whites of an equal education. I think these criteria are essential. Maybe the task force should go through training sessions in race relations to become better equipped themselves.

2. The task force has not been able to give nearly enough time and effort to the racially isolated schools. Considerable attention must be given to this matter in the future because there is much to do in identifying and resolving the issues in that area.

3. If the monitor system is retained, monetary compensation should be given to them for miles travelled in conducting the business of monitoring the schools. The incentive should be there to visit schools as often as necessary, as well as to visit parents and other interested persons.

4. If there is any one thing that will bring about integration in the schools it is removing the perception that "minority schools" are "bad schools." The connotation of "bad" ranges from economically poor to violence to low achievement scores. I feel the Court can attack this problem and make considerable progress toward integration by focusing on programs for the isolated schools. The magnet concept is a good one but it is not being implemented correctly.

I recommend that someone be appointed by you to head up a team that develops and implements a program that addresses itself to the above.

5. The next phase for whatever group that you should establish should focus on the development of recommendations to improve the district's efforts toward integration and quality education.

6. The Court should watch carefully the activities of the school district that may hamper the city's integration progress through such things as misleading advertisements and white flight scare tactics.

This concludes my remarks which only scratch the surface of what I believe to be some major issues. I would be happy to pursue any of the contents of this letter if you should so desire.

Respectfully,

HAROLD K. BROWN

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