

**(Dynamic Duo, from page 1)**

ahead of personal rewards pervades the entire operation. The selflessness exacts a price, in terms of personal time. The Joneses have discovered that running this 250-member organization is a 24-7 job.

**'The Voice at the Other End of the Line'**

The phone calls can come in at any time of any day of the week. Somebody's rights are being trampled. Or a person needs to find a resource for a problem. Or maybe just needs to have a sympathetic ear. And the ear is there. Not just any ear. It may take a few hours for Darrell to get back to the person, but eventually it will be the President they're talking to.

"We're the voice at the other end of the line," say Karen. That can be super important in this distant, often unfeeling world. At the start of the conversation, the person may be in tears. By the time he or she has had a chance to unload to a sympathetic listener, and Darrell has helped them see they're not alone, calm has been restored. The callers know NAACP is there for them and won't abandon them.

That applies to anybody. Racial justice and the plight of African Americans has been the historic priority of NAACP, but its mission has always been broader than that. Last year a Caucasian family living in Highland Gardens was being harassed by its neighbors. As far as Darrell was concerned, they had just as much right to be heard as anybody else.

The Joneses both grew up in this area, so escaped the most virulent forms of racism in this country. Karen knew about it mainly from stories her parents and grandparents told her. "I never heard a derogatory word about any race," she says. And she felt accepted. Darrell's mother made sure he and his siblings understood what racism was all about. She would take the family on yearly trips back to Virginia, where she had come from, to experience segregation first-hand.

But openness should not be misinterpreted as complacency about racial injustice. The Joneses are fiercely committed to righting the wrongs that have been with us since the days of slavery. That leads Darrell into a seemingly endless round of meetings, as he and NAACP grapple with problems of a broken school system, housing and health care needs of low-income Chesterites, abuses of police power, and the problems facing veterans.

While much of this work is on a policy level, the hands-on, personal dimension is always there. Take schools, for instance. Darrell has spent many hours working within the schools, helping children learn to read. When he addresses the Chester-Upland School District Board of Control on problems in the District schools, he can speak from first-hand experience. As any lobbyist will tell you, that is the most compelling kind of evidence one can offer in the policy arena.

**Meanwhile, on the Personal Side....**

Just how this dynamic duo finds time for a personal life remains a mystery. It began in 1975, when Karen's god-sister talked her into spending an evening at a club owned by some guy named Darrell Jones. Nice man, she thought, but that was as far as it went. Six months later they started dating, and the rest is history. Twenty-two years, two children, five grandchildren (with another on the way) later, the Joneses are one of those couples you thought only existed on TV.

Their backgrounds were similar but also different. Darrell was born and has remained a Chesterite all his life. Karen was

born here, but then the family moved around, to Philadelphia and New Jersey. Darrell worked his way up from the bottom rung as a labor gang member at BP Refineries to being an operating engineer, handling heavy cranes, before his retirement in 1995. "Retirement" is a word that has to be used advisedly. As far as anybody can tell, Darrell never has stopped working.

Karen was a top student in high school, but college was "out of the question," as it was for so many promising young people of color in those days. Yet she managed to become an assistant to the provost, then assistant to the president, at Swarthmore College. She eventually wound up in a responsible position with the firm that handles patent violation cases for the Home Depot Corporation, where she remains today. With the company's encouragement, she's planning to enroll in training to become a paralegal.

**Where Do We Go From Here?**

When asked about their vision for NAACP's future, the Joneses talk mainly about growth of the organization. Plans are already underway for a college unit. And they hope to see a youth chapter come to fruition in the near future.

But growth is not for its own sake. Darrell says it's a means to help Chester realize its potential. That means everything from having a genuine two-party political system to availing itself of the talents and resources that have gone untapped so often in the past. It's a large order, but talking to the Joneses, you get the feeling that it really can happen.

**Calendar of Events**

- March 22. Thursday, 7:30 PM. General membership meeting.
- April 12. Thursday, 7:30 PM. Executive Committee meeting.
- April 20. Friday, 6:00 PM. Annual Awards Dinner.  
(See story, page 1.)
- April 26. Thursday, 7:30 PM. General membership meeting.
- May 5-6. Saturday-Sunday. Pennsylvania State Quarterly Meeting. Best Western-Lehigh Valley Hotel Conference Center, 300 Gateway Drive, Bethlehem, PA. For details, call Chester Unit Office or (610) 866-5800 or (800) 433-5663.
- May 10. Thursday, 7:30 PM. Executive Committee meeting.
- May 24. Thursday, 7:30 P.M. General membership meeting.

**Branch? Unit? What's in a Name?**

Local NAACP members may not realize it, but they are now members of the Chester *Unit*, not *Branch*, of the organization. For some reason we don't understand, the powers that be have decided that we are no longer branches.

That earthshaking news appears not to have impressed some officials of NAACP. For example, at the recent training session in King of Prussia, some of the leaders kept slipping back into the familiar language and referred to "branches," even as they explained the new terminology. And according to a recent communication from the state level, we are still part of the Pennsylvania State Conference of NAACP Branches.

So for the time being, we'll still say "branch." But if you say "unit," we'll know what you're talking about.

-Ed.