

SPEAK UP!

The Editorial Collection

Andy Smith

Dedicated to

Caesar V. Doleman, my grandfather

&

Noah E. Horst, my *Godfather*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank God and some of those who helped to make this book possible. I asked God to help me write to make life better for others. So, I thank God for helping me through life and giving me the ability to write.

I thank my wife who reads almost everything I write.

I want to thank my role model and mentor Dr. Richard Williams. The two books written by Dr. Williams have inspired me to write my own.

I thank my children and other contributing writers for their stories and letters included in this book.

I give special thanks to Mwamba Raheem for showing me the newsletter that led me to start the *Speak Up* community newsletter.

I thank Minister Ahmed Assalaam and Face, both from Washington D.C., whose books convinced me that writing a book is not about how many pages, but what is in the pages. Brother Assalaam and Face, please keep writing, it encourages others to write.

Tina Cherry deserves my thanks for having the courage to tell me how she feels about the “issues” I have. Plus, Tina helps out as one of my proofreaders. Thanks Tina.

I owe thanks to Michael Nigh, a Hagerstown business owner, who printed the first issues of the *Speak Up* monthly newsletters free of charge and helped to increase the newsletter’s readership. I thank Mike for getting us started and all the pep talks. I still use the bags that he gave to deliver the newsletters door to door.

Thanks to all the readers of the *Speak Up* community news publication. Enjoy the book.

INTRODUCTION

This book is a collection of newsletter editorials, letters to the editor and key articles that have been published in the *Speak Up* community newsletter. Dedicated to reporting and examining current events in the black community, *Speak Up* is a black news publication distributed by Brothers United Who Dare To Care (BUWDTC) of Hagerstown, Maryland. *Speak Up* was started after I read an article in a Washington D.C. newsletter.

In the early months of my term as president of BUWDTC, I was looking to find a way to offer a voice to blacks living in Hagerstown. Mwamba Raheem, BUWDTC secretary, gave me a copy of the *Written Word*, a newsletter published in Washington D.C. I was pretty impressed. So, using my experience and skills as a photojournalist I decided to create a Brothers United Who Dare To Care newsletter for public circulation. And while we did not have a means to distribute a newsletter, we did have a computer, a printer and a copy of Microsoft Works.

I pulled a design for the newsletter from Microsoft Works and by the grace of God, came up with a name for the newsletter: Speak Up! The header for the newsletter still reads, “If you have something to say, SPEAK UP!”

I put together a mock copy of the newsletter and showed it to Mwamba, who wasn't surprised that I had moved ahead so quickly with the idea. Mwamba, by the way, has been very resourceful informing me on the issues and history of black people. So, with Mwamba's support, I presented the newsletter to members of Brothers United Who Dare To Care as a neighborhood newsletter that would be an outreach tool to help the black community. I proposed a newsletter that would get the word out to the community about what we were trying to do to help the neighborhood and allow readers to contribute information and voice their concerns. The draft of the newsletter sparked a heated debate. One

member, a black man, had problems with the newsletter being called a “black” publication.

I agreed to make moderate changes to the abstract of the newsletter to reduce conflict among the members. I took out the references that the newsletter was a black publication and I changed the section titled “*Power To The People*” with the headings “*Empower The People*”. The changes were reversed after my convictions to be true over rode my desire to please others.

Thank God that I held my ground on the name for the newsletter, “*Speak Up*”! I later received confirmation for the purpose of the newsletter during one of my Bible studies when I came across the scripture below:

Proverbs 31: 8 – 9 (New International Version).
“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the
rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and
needy.”

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These are the editorials and articles that were published in the Speak Up newsletter from the first issue May 2001 to the December 2006 issue. I have included my commentaries to give additional insight whenever you see the *Andy icon* below.



Included in this collection are some of the compelling stories and articles submitted by our newsletter staff, our readers and award winning essays submitted to Speak Up.