

### **Watch Your Mouth!-Barbara D. Parks-Lee-District of Columbia (DCSO)**

She is a statuesque Black woman, the only female and the only Black woman in a room full of White males with a need to be certified as potential school principals or superintendents.

When she first entered the room, she wore a suit, high heels, stockings in the 104-degree Texas heat. An African print scarf was meticulously draped over her left shoulder, and a simple post-it nametag identified her, her first name in larger letters than her last.

No one had titles attached to their nametags. When she entered the room, she heard one of the men hiss to his seatmate, "What's that nigger bitch doing in here?" The other guy responded, "I don't know, but I'm sure she ain't gonna last long once she finds out what this class is about."

The A/C went out, but there was enough outside light to allow the class to continue. Electricity was responding to a brown-out, but class members decided to continue. Finely tooled cowboy boots seemed the normal foot attire. Casual trousers and short-sleeved, open-collared shirts were the norm.

Everyone sat in a squared table room arrangement. Soft chairs ergonomically seated the class.

Sistah Girl never loosened anything but took her seat at one of the tables. Her seating herself really ruffled some feathers, and one of the earlier men took it upon himself to say, "Let's get this class started. I don't want to sit here all day waiting for some late values professor to arrive. It's too hot anyway. I'll start the introduction. My name is George Tilghman. I'm from Natchitoches, and I intend to run for superintendent."

The other men followed suit, but everyone ignored the statuesque Black woman who sat listening and jotting down their names on a seating chart, along with their other data. No one acknowledged her, and George took it upon himself to say, "We've waited long enough. Why don't we just sign the sign-in sheet and leave?" A few of the ergonomic chairs began to push back.

It was then Sistah Girl stood up to her full six feet one inches, and said, "Good afternoon. I am Dr. Eloise Stringfellow. I am the developer of a values program that I have implemented and workshopped all over the USA and internationally. I am *not* the child of a female dog, but *I am* the person who has been assigned to certify each of you. Now that I know your specifics, let me share a little bit about me. I have PhD's in psychology and in curriculum and instruction. I do not brag about my titles, but I do not like being referred to in such a derogatory, racist manner."

Silence. Red faces. Cleared throats. Averted eyes.

"Now, gentlemen, let's get started. You will need to present what you know and would like to know about values education in diverse educational venues. Please take the few minutes to write what you'd like to share in the next fifteen or twenty minutes."