

## PREFACE

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, under the aegis of W.E.B. Du Bois, the Atlanta University conducted a ten-year cycle of conferences to study the African-American community in terms of physical conditions of life, social organization, economic activity, education, religion, and the important matter of Negro crime. The proceedings of these conferences were published as *The Atlanta University Publications*. A century later the Du Bois Institute of Clark Atlanta University began the Du Bois Annual Spring Conferences on various topics—starting with Health (2002), Housing (2003), Education (2004) and the present focus is on Criminal Justice Issues (2005). Keeping with the tradition, these issues aim at the betterment of the African-American community.

This monograph contains 17 articles organized under six categories: felon disfranchisement; death penalty; domestic violence; community policing; impact of incarceration, imprisonment, and police contact; and, criminal justice reforms. Experts in the chosen areas including academicians, law enforcement officials, and judges wrote these articles. The discussant reports are included at the end under the category of discussions.

The monograph opens with a background article entitled *The African-American Perspective: W.E.B. Du Bois and the American Criminal Justice System*. This paper delves into Du Bois' contributions in revealing the issue of crime and African Americans. The authors provide detailed descriptions of the methodology he used in his Negro crime studies, his view on the

causes and effects of African-American crime and the reasons for the disproportionate number of black Americans in prisons.

Two articles are included in the first category of felon disfranchisement. The first one, Sampson Ike Oli's *Felon Disfranchisement is Unconstitutional and Unjustified* supports the belief that the disfranchisement of felons is unconstitutional. The author maintains his position that the principle behind rehabilitation is to reform. This reformation includes allowing ex-convicts to vote. The second article, written by Ryan Scott King, *Felony Disfranchisement: The Political and Social Impact of an Exclusionary Policy* calls attention to the problems of the disfranchisement of felons in the United States. The author points out "the act of voting is a shared experience and is an opportunity for a community to come together publicly and express their political will."

The second category is death penalty. There are two articles addressing this issue. Michael Mears in *A Strategy for Confronting Racial Discrimination in the Use of the Death Penalty in Georgia* elaborates on the unjust application of the death penalty in the case of African-Americans. He draws on previous research findings of racial discrimination and the disproportionate number of black executions. The second article, written by Komanduri Murty and Vandana Murty is entitled *Capital Punishment: Helping or Hurting?* The paper addresses the ever-present national dilemma.

The third category is domestic violence. *Domestic Violence, Law Enforcement and African Americans*, written by Joanne Rhone, is a comprehensive work displaying the cause and effects of domestic violence in African-American families along with illustrating the role of law enforcement in these matters.

The fourth category included in this monograph is community policing. The first article in this category is *Community Policing in the African-American Community: A Perspective by Chief Thetus A. Knox*. This piece is a view on the effects of community policing as an effective measure to control crime in the community. The author draws from her personal experience as the Chief of the Zone Four precinct. Alan J. Dreher in *Successful Community*

*Policing Strategies within the Atlanta Police Department* provides another view of community policing and its effects. The author recognizes the important role the community has in controlling crime. He expresses the philosophy behind this proposed method of control and lays out its principles and goals.

The fifth category, impact on incarceration, imprisonment and police contact, contains three articles. *The Effects of Crime and Imprisonment on Family Formation*, written by Obie Clayton and Joan Moore, expands on the effect of imprisonment of family members on the family itself. It reveals the perpetual damage to family life that unintervened imprisonment may cause. It is important to try to help those African Americans that are misguided as a result of media and members of the criminal justice system unwilling to provide aid. The second article, *The Impact of Race, Police Experience, and Feeling of Safety on Attitudes Towards the Police*, written by Sutham Cheurprakobkit, reflects on research indicating that positive police-citizen interaction and feeling safe in the neighborhood produce positive ratings of police performance. The author states the need for increased efforts and resources to be spent to create safe and friendly neighborhoods, especially in the black community. The last article, *The Impact of Massive Incarceration on the African-American Woman, Her Family, and the Community*, is written by Gale “Sky” Edeawo. Edeawo discusses the difficulties of discrimination the African-American woman faces in the criminal justice system. The paper explores the impact massive incarceration has on the women’s families and well-being and cites specific examples to illustrate the troubles that an African-American woman undergoes.

The largest category, criminal justice reforms, contains six articles. Michael Blain, in *Sentencing Reform and the African-American Community*, raises the question of whether the war on drugs has been effective. Blain further investigates the success of the U.S. policies implemented to stop the drug problem and also questions the unbalanced number of minority (namely African-American) users imprisoned as a result of these policies. The next article written by Helen Brantley, Lucinda Barron and George E.

Hicks, is *Training Pre-service Teachers to Work with Juvenile Delinquents: from Theoretical Implications to Practical Applications*. In this paper, the authors provide a four-strand model to training pre-service teachers. The paper emphasizes the need for professional development and training programs of pre-service teachers to recognize and rectify the incongruence and inconsistencies of serving a diverse student population including those at-risk for violence and juveniles in other settings. Amy Howell, in her paper entitled *Trying Children and Adults in Georgia: Can the Seven Deadly Sins be Forgiven?*, questions the competence of the juvenile court judge to determine whether to children cases should be, under the rule of SB440, automatically pushed into the adult system. She presents several juvenile cases in the context of some criminal justice policies of trying juveniles as adults. The remaining three articles in this category are written, respectively, by the Honorable Judges M. Yvette Miller, Thelma Wyatt Cummings Moore, and Lynn Sherrod. Judge Miller, in *The Criminal Justice System in Georgia: Issues in the African-American Community*, states the issues in the criminal justice system as a result of keeping recidivists in contact with one another for long periods of time. She provides an overview of the Georgia Criminal Justice system and accentuates the importance of instilling values in youth as they grow to become productive citizens. Judge Moore's article, *Creation of an Urban Family Court*, expounds on the need for a family court that can adapt to the unique needs of families in trouble. The prolongation of child custody, support, and visitation disputes could be resolved by the creation of the family court. She continues to state the family court offers therapeutic justice where it is most needed. Judge Sherrod draws on her experiences to reveal the effects of drugs, alcohol, and violence on whole families in her article, *Treatment Courts of Madison County, Alabama*. She reveals the seeming indifferent attitude of youth about to be incarcerated and their preference to go to jail than home due to the dysfunctional and disorganized family structures.

The last section, discussions, includes the remarks and comments made by three discussants namely, Saliba Mukoro, Ali

Al-Taie, and Dianne A. Williams. The purpose of these reports is to provide first-hand accounts of the scholars in the audience.

I express my deep appreciation to Dr. Ron Finnell, the Director of WEB Du Bois Institute, for choosing me to edit this monograph; and, to Mr. Jeffrey Williams, Research Associate of WEB Du Bois Institute, for his efforts in coordinating between me and the contributing authors by securing manuscripts, following up on updates and requirements, and always being available when needed. It is a pleasure for me to acknowledge the contributing authors for their scholarly and original work included in this monograph. I love to acknowledge the assistance provided by my daughter, Vandana Murty. Her enthusiasm, despite her college studies, especially meticulous attention to all the facets of preparing the manuscript for publication, was an enormous benefit to the successful completion of this monograph. Finally, thanks to Ms. Toni Fanning for introducing me to the publisher, Beckham Publishing Group, Inc.

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