

April 13, 2007

Chicago Sun-Times
Letters to the Editors

Finally!! Someone in the media gets it!! Three cheers for Jay Mariotti. His article of April 12, 2007 could not have been more welcomed by the multitude of racial, ethnic and minority communities that make up the great country called America. He has echoed our thoughts and words, which have fallen upon deaf ears for years. For the last two generations, corporate America along with the news media and the advertising industry has allowed defamation, negative stereotyping and felony as socially acceptable depending on the offender and who was offended. It's okay to make a "joke" or refer to a negative stereotype or ignore the infraction of a law as long as the deed made them a profit. The wink of an eye or slight grin from across the corporate table, over a radio microphone, or in the creative ad room changes insult to clever, to humor, to freedom of speech, all done over the hard work and brilliant thoughts contributed by a particular ethnic or racial group. Last week it was a wonderful talented group of black female basketball players, next week, who knows, could be a Asian baseball player, a Jewish businessman, an Italian, a Hispanic, you name it, its been fodder for the small minds who initiate "it", speak "it", print "it", film "it", disseminate "it" and those who, hear "it", read "it" and watch "it" in the name of entertainment. The "it" of course is ignorance, meanness and insensitivity all rolled up into one. This time it was Don Imus, culminating a career of spewing stupidity. He sits at the same table with the Mike Norths, the Howard Sterns, and Jonathan Brandmeiers

of the world. All who have managed to go beyond humor to offensive and insulting conduct, along with such corporate giants as Budweiser, Taco Bell and DDB Chicago.

Instead of celebrating the positive contributions of so many, those folks and companies choose to dwell on negative stereotypical images. So we agree with Jay Mariotti, this should have been a “no brainier” for CBS. Don Imus should have gone, go he went and good riddance. Ethnic and racial bashing have no place in our society and should not be tolerated even though uttered by someone of celebrity. There should be no gray areas in matters of responsible behavior, speech or integrity, whether on the airwaves, in board rooms or in print. Mr. Mariotti’s column was so long overdue for printing in a major publication. We welcome him and Roger Goodell to our table to share the few fruits of success we have had in gaining the conscience of corporate America. We are all richer for their presence and public statements. Yes, we welcome them to our table; we pray they are not discouraged by the vast number of empty seats.

Louis H. Rago

President

ITALIAN AMERICAN HUMAN RELATIONS FOUNDATION
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