



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Ann Young have lived in Rochester since 1964. The two met as children in Newport News, Va., and were married Dec. 26, 1964.

her being told that there were no parts available for her in a play. I invited and encouraged to work scenes in a supporting way. She was once told that a certain play be realistic enough with a blacker.

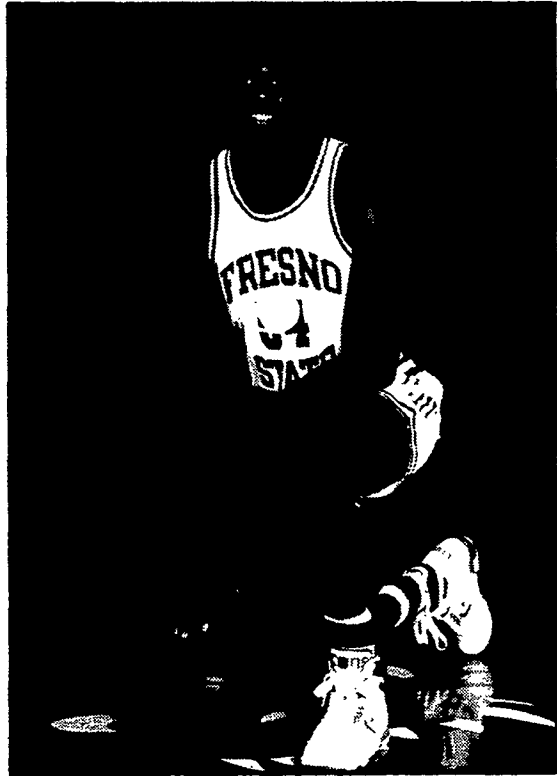
is extremely confusing, since she is remarkably intelligent and talented. She played the piano at age three and - had for positive reinforcement from her parents, her African-American adult children and her participation in activities - she would have been invited in exercising her talent and things always fell apart when she was in school. As a result, she performed her capabilities. This pattern continued until she graduated. She told us that throughout her entire high-school career, she had a "boyfriend" because the boy was never there.

When she felt she had been caught outside the circle of acceptance by some male standards because she did not measure up to anyone else. She was just out of school and was not a happy time for her and, she does not have pleasant memories of her high-school experience. But she managed to pull it together and is on her promising career. Someday she will dream to be a lawyer.

Her experience was not unlike that of a fighter, although he could be persevering an easier time socially because he was an athlete. He may not have been the most talented, but at 6'10", his stature made him a force to be reckoned with.

He, too, suffered through the conundrum of trying to understand what was wrong with him. He could not get playing time on the basketball court, even though he was playing against teammates of only equal or less talent than his own.

He was highly frustrated because when he played basketball in the city, people would



Courtesy of the Young Family
The Youngs' daughter, Allcia (above) is a student at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia. Their son Robert (left) attends LaVerne University in California.

tell him about his potential and the fact that he was not getting enough court time to develop his skills. This frustration led to an unwillingness to try - not only in sports, but academically as well.

To salvage the child, we made a decision to send him to a preparatory school in Connecticut that was able to restore his self-esteem and confidence and the will to "go for it." He, too, is now well on his way to becoming a professional in the sports industry with the help of an athletic scholarship. But even today, as a young African-American male, he faces hostility from people who do not know him because of his color.

With the recent events in Los Angeles, Brooklyn Heights, Miami, etc., we are asking ourselves, "Is there any hope? Can we, as Rodney King asked, actually get it together?"

Our answer is yes. As long as there is life, there is hope. As long as there is hope, there is possibility. As long as there is possibility, there is opportunity. And where there is opportunity, there is action.

This action begins with all of us, personally and privately, as individuals, people of color and whites alike. We must take time to understand our differences, value our differences and honor our differences. When we do, we can sing one song with many voices.

For many of us - people of color and whites alike - we stand at another crossroad as we face the year 2,000. For all of us who are looking for a word of hope, we offer this poem by our African-American brother William D. Allbright Jr. May it give you, as it has given us and our children, the courage to keep hope alive. In the meantime, let's all work to build a world that respects and celebrates the beauty of diversity.

At the Crossroads

I stand at the crossroad
Not certain of which way
Many forces tempt me
Don't want to go astray

I look to the east
My friends are there
They beckon me to come
But they've gone nowhere

I look to the west
Where others have gone
They're dead or in jail
Their lives have been pawned

I turn to the south
To view the terrain
I've traveled it before
There's little to be gained

So I give my attention
To the path that remains
It faces a northern star
But the view is not plain

The footprints are so few
Though they lie straight ahead
This path is barely touched
The others are trodden instead

I know not what lies ahead
I know what my choices are
It's easy to follow the crowd
I'll follow this northern star

My choice may not be popular
But the one I must dictate
When all is said and done
I am the master of my fate.

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