

PEORIA JOURNAL STAR

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MORNING

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The Peoria Transcript
Established 1855

Continuing
The Peoria Journal
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The Peoria Star
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Negro Heroes In Peoria

There is an event scheduled Thursday night at Carver Center which few people would have dreamed possible a couple of years ago.

All of Peoria's Negro high school children have been invited to come to the center at 7:30 to meet and talk with more than a hundred men and women who hold pretty good jobs in this town.

These people with the good jobs are going to do their best to sell the Negro youngsters on the importance of staying in school and tackling the hard courses not just the snaps.

IT IS LIKELY that a lot of the youngsters will be encouraged — because these hundred or so adults are living proof that a Negro can get ahead in this town if he has a good education.

The adults who are coming are all Negroes, and the fact that they aren't handymen, janitors, garbage men or window washers ought to impress the kids.

It certainly impresses us. It even impresses Mrs. Valeska Hinton of the Peoria Commission of Human Relations and she is hard lady to impress.

There has been an important change in this community in regard to job opportunities for Negroes, according to Mrs. Hinton, and it is vitally important for Negro youngsters to realize what has happened.

"If you've got it, somebody wants

it," she would tell the Negro youngster who despairs of his opportunity.

THE IMPORTANT THING now for the person in school is to "get it" — the education that it is going to take to hold the better jobs which are now available no matter the color of your skin.

"There are job opportunities clear across the board now and it is important that Negro youngsters realize this," Mrs. Hinton said.

It has not always been so. Mrs. Hinton said that if she had left Peoria a year ago and came back now she would have sworn she was in another city.

A lot of things have happened since the 1963 demonstrations and nothing is more encouraging than the changes which have been made in the attitudes of employers in general in our community.

There has been an earnest effort, led by business and industrial leaders themselves, to open up job opportunities for Negroes and it has succeeded beyond all expectation.

This is important, and we hope that every Negro high school student responds to the invitation Thursday night.

Those who do will meet some real heroes — the Negro men and women who proved that the mold of limited opportunity could be broken.