

Preface

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This is the second issue of the Occasional Report African American Research Perspectives. It is provided as a service of the Program for Research on Black Americans at the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan. We were pleased by the strong reception of the first issue and we believe that the current issue will be of interest to our readership. The goal of African American Research Perspectives is to assist the development of interdisciplinary research on Black American life. Please feel free to share this material with your colleagues; there are no restrictions on photocopying. If you would like to be on the Program for Research on Black American's (PRBA) mailing list, please see the "Contact PRBA" section of this website.

Since the publication of the first issue, there have been several developments that are of interest to those who conduct research on Black Americans. First, three of our dear colleagues, Kenneth Christmon, John McAdoo, and A. Wade Smith passed in 1994. Each of these scholars made important contributions to our understanding of the strength and resilience of African Americans. Individual tributes are included in this issue.

In the last year there has been a renewed discussion of race and genetics. A disturbing trend in this most recent spate of writings has been the explicit discussion of public policy implications. Although most scholars are familiar with the book *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, by Herrnstein and Murray, many scholars may be unaware of various critiques of this book. Among these are: 1) Leon J. Kamin in *Scientific American*, February, 1995 "Bad science under *The Bell Curve*: What it doesn't prove about IQ," 2) Steven J. Gould in *Natural History*, February, 1995 "Ghosts of Bell Curves Pasts," and in *The New Yorker*, November, 28, 1994, 3) Gerald Horne in *Black Issues in Higher Education* January 12, 1995, "Bell Curves, Racism and Notions of Inferiority," 4) Harriette A. Washington in *Emerge*, December/January 1995, and 5) "Charles Murray: White America's Deadly Seducer" in the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Winter 1994/1995.

Finally, the national debate on welfare reform and health care reform has focused critical attention on the extent and nature of government health and social policy. In this issue of *Perspectives*, Drs. Sandra Danziger and Sherry Kossoudji present findings from their study on the elimination of the welfare program, General Assistance, in Michigan. Dr. Danziger has presented the findings of her study to *Nightline* (February, 22, 1995), *CNN*, and the *New York Times*. Several articles on health care and Black Americans are planned for future issues of *Perspectives*.