

## A Brother of Mine

Death is the ultimate fate of all mortals, but many live in afterdeath, through their dreams and goals, that they sought to establish in life, and in the hearts of those who hail them dear.

This is not an attempt to immortalize Leslie, so his name can long be remembered. Surely he was a brother, who can not be replaced in the hearts of my family, because we loved him dearly. There is no need to put emphasis on his past achievements, but there is a need to look at his attitudes toward life, especially here in America. His beliefs will yield greater value to us, through the recognition of his achievements.

Leslie believed in America, not as it exists today, with its racial injustice, but as a place where every man could obtain his fullest freedom and be truly liberated. He saw hope for a country torn by racial strife; where freedom is genocide, and war is honor. He wanted peace and harmony to prevail, so that every man could be called a friend, whether he be Black or White. He did not let the racial discrimination that he experienced in the peanut fields of "Mr. Charley" as a child influence him with hatred. Nor did he complain about the fact that he was "bused" over fifteen miles away from home to an all Black high school, while he only lived fifteen yards from another school, but that school was all White. No one screamed about "busing" Leslie, and other Black children at that time, because it was for segregation.

The system provides unequal education for Blacks. Today let me mention "busing" and the outcries against it could almost shatter eardrums. Why, because it means providing an equal and top quality education for Blacks. An education that Leslie was denied, but fortunately he overcame his systematically imposed handicap! Leslie believed that true freedom for Blacks could not exist until they were provided with the highest quality of education possible. He believed that this could not come about until the laws of the land be enforced to the fullest extent. The laws that are based on the belief "that all men are created equal."

Leslie believed that this country had the potential to become the greatest nation ever, if only the racial prejudices that are now institutionalized could be overcome. He worked within the system, the very same system that discriminated against him. He saw hope that the system could be reformed. Many of us Blacks see differently.

Leslie's death was not only a loss to my family, or the Black's, but a loss to the country as a whole. His thoughts, beliefs, and dreams were shared by many other young extinguished Black men who were struck down before they could reach the glory of their life. Let me say again that there are many other Blacks who believe differently. Let us pray for America's sake, that his thoughts, his belief and his dreams did not die with him.