

Letter To The Editor

CHARTER AND DR. CLARKE

To the Editor:

Your leading editorial on the eve of the tercentenary of the singing of the King Charles Charter for Rhode Island was a noble tribute to John Clarke, its negotiator and in great part its author.

I believe other readers of the editorial were as interested as I was in your suggestion that this tercentenary year of the charter be used as the occasion for the state to offer Dr. Clarke's name to the 14th quinquennial election to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans in which his friend and colleague, Roger Williams, is already included. Our fellow New-Englander of 300 years ago was not only a great Rhode Islander and American, but a world citizen, for the charter he obtained for us is universally recognized as one of the beacon lights of human liberty.

We who are interested in getting his name into the Hall of Fame would be grateful if the Daily News would point out how this could be done; what steps should be taken.

"Full liberty of religious con-cernments" guaranteed to the colonists under the charter has been extended in our Constitution to matters of race and other conditions, and I would like to take this opportunity to share with you and your readers an experience I had in seeing how beautifully in gear we are in this respect in our state. I was privileged to be one of those attending Governor Chafee's reading of his proclamation declaring July 8-14 Charter Week. The ceremony was held in the executive chamber followed immediately after by the dedication of the John Clarke Science Building at Rhode Island College. I realize these two occasions were recorded in the press, but a significant factor was omitted in the reports, which I believe will be of interest to you. I refer to the fact that the dedication was held in the Robert T. Amos Room, named as a memorial to the brilliant young professor of psychology on the faculty of the college, who died within the past year. He was an Afro-American and had previously taught at Howard University. Dr. William Gaige, president of Rhode Island College paid

special tribute to him in his address. His remarks were simple, sincere and very moving. Dr. Gaige made one conscious of the high regard and warm affection in which his colleagues held the young Negro professor.

There are moments that lift up the heart and renew our vision of what life can be. Charter Day in Providence, both in the executive chamber and later at Rhode Island College, held many such moments. The destiny of our country is intended to be a glorious and beautiful one, but how difficult for our leaders to achieve this if only the ugly situations are stressed, and so seldom what is good and right and true. There are better ways of steering a boat than by rocking it.

I believe this account will be of interest to you, for it is the very opposite of that bias which is doing us so much harm both at home and abroad.

Ruth Thomas

Newport

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