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INSTITUTIONAL RACISM SHOULD CONCERN BLACKS, ACTIVISTS SAYS
BY BARBARA EVANS

One of the biggest concerns facing black Americans is not white racism but institutionalized racism, human rights activist Dick Gregory says.

Gregory delivered a lecture titled "An Exploration of Hope and Hopelessness -- Institutional Racism and Its Impact on the University," at the University of Pittsburgh Tuesday night. He was a guest of Pitt's Chaplains Association.

He said institutionalized racism comes in the form of laws and regulations that force blacks to miss out on educational opportunities. He gave as an example cuts in education funding and student loans, and other programs that have a disproportionate effect on the black community.

"This is a system that has no conscience ... no God, no feeling," said Gregory, who is also an author and political activist.

Another form of institutionalized racism is the media, he said. He did not accuse the media of being racist, but said people are not educated to question anything the media reports, and rarely try to find out more about the news. This leaves them with a false impression of many events, especially those involving blacks.

"I don't care what you think about me, truth never needs to be validated," he said.

Gregory also criticized government policies toward farmers. He said it's ironic that at a time where millions of people are starving in Africa, it is one of the worst times in America to be a farmer.

"One third of all farmers are on the brink of bankruptcy and another third is having trouble, while they have to watch white women being glamorized on TV receiving (Academy) awards about farm movies."

He said in 1983, 60 farmers committed suicide.

"How can Ethiopia have 8 million people that are affected by drought... but farmers in America, the ones who can compassionately plant food that is so desperately needed, cannot pay their (mortgage) notes."

He said that many Americans criticize the Soviet secret police, the KGB, but should be more aware of the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency.

"One day you'll find out that this government has stuff happening in this country that would make (Adolf) Hitler blush," Gregory said.