

Book Review

The Cultural Diversity Fieldbook

By Monica Lee

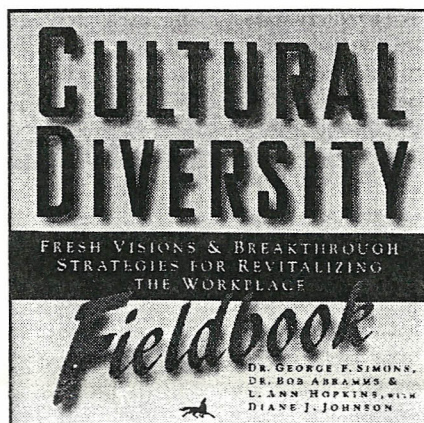
The Cultural Diversity Fieldbook

edited by Dr. George F. Simons, Dr. Bob Abramms & L. Ann Hopkins, with Diane J. Johnson
1996, Peterson's/Pacesetter Books, 271 p.

On the brink of the twenty-first century, the widely-felt passion and far-reaching momentum which marked the civil rights and feminist movements of past decades are absent from the current movement for cultural diversity. In today's world, people are far too concerned with economic issues to remain aware of or involved in the continuing struggles for cultural diversity.

In the midst of this apathy and ignorance, four editors have emerged to produce a literary composition that aims to re-awaken our interest in this struggle. The newly-released *Cultural Diversity Fieldbook* successfully rekindles the long-dormant passions and momentum with which we Americans have addressed the issue of cultural diversity in the past and offers new approaches to solving an enduring problem.

Unlike similar books, the *Cultural Diversity Fieldbook* incorporates both liberal and conservative viewpoints from a number of sources. Readers will find excerpts from *The Disuniting of America*, the text by Pulitzer Prize winner Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. First-hand ac-



counts that are honest and fresh in perspective are spread throughout the book, including a riveting account of Rita Henley Jensen's struggle to succeed within the confines of the welfare system.

Furthermore, the book is rich with stories and issues concerning not only standard subjects such as affirmative action, race and feminism, but less conventional topics such as class, gender orientation and discrimination in the judicial system as well. In this book, the editors "introduce [you] to other groups...[which are] rarely spoken about in diversity contexts." It asserts that race and gender are not the only factors of diversity;

class and other factors are also key to defining the cultural divide. This collection of essays creates a renewed interest in diversity precisely because it adds a fresh and innovative twist to a frequently-discussed topic.

Readers will notice that this book's most apparent uniqueness is the editors' organization of the many different types of articles and works. At a basic level, this book is a guide with "guideposts" and over forty hands-on activities to illustrate the major issues found in the readings. It is largely thanks to these "guideposts" (as well as the eclectic collection of fabulous works) that this book is a success as a fieldbook. The format allows readers to learn and get excited about the issues and then funnel that excitement and enthusiasm into the various activities presented in the book.

America is still fumbling for an answer to its problems of cultural diversity. The need for a true understanding of the issues and a clear method of fighting the prejudices in America is increasing each day. The *Cultural Diversity Fieldbook* provides an excellent means to start the process of rekindling American interest and passions regarding problems of cultural diversity.

Monica Lee is a member of the class of '00 and Layout Editor of *The Indicator*.