

Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA)

November 17, 2005

Section: Letters to the Editor

From Morgan to Weinstein

Letters

Thursday, November 17 To the Editor of THE EAGLE: During the latter 1800s, a boy called Willy spent his earliest of 96 years growing, playing, learning and working in the shops, schools and streets of Great Barrington. Of African-American lineage, Willy must have been distinctive among his childhood peers. He would become distinctive among all men.

Certainly something here contributed to the development of a local child who would become an icon as a civil rights pioneer in the United States and across the continent of Africa. Willy was to become more widely known as W.E.B. Du Bois.

A book merchant, Johnny Morgan, was Willy's employer and mentor. He supplied Willy with books, encouraged a college education and assisted in securing a position for him as a writer with a Springfield newspaper. He played a quiet role in recognizing and promoting greatness.

Today, another Great Barrington bookseller, **Randy Weinstein**, is quietly striving to create a nonprofit educational center to honor W.E.B. Du Bois. He is contributing his time, money and considerable expertise, trusting that others will assist.

There isn't any cause to muddy the waters regarding his effort or motivation. Only one question nags, Why has this recognition taken so long? Haven't there been any book merchants since Johnny?

JIM BRACKEN

Monterey, Nov. 13, 2005