

# Dove Connections

Bridging the digital divide would be a testament to his life

**A** brilliant inventor and scientist lived in our midst, yet most people would not have known John Dove if he passed them on the street. The Rome resident and inventor of the technology used in CD-ROMs, who died two weeks ago, was humble, unassuming and truly unsung for his contribution to this technological age.

The Dove legacy should be nurtured and promoted this Black History month, which begins today, and always — here at home and beyond our borders. Every child and adult should know about the African-American man

whose superiors were shocked by his skin color when he showed up in 1955 to work as a researcher at the Rome Air Development Center. It was his military background as an X-ray technician that helped him begin developing the technology used in CDs in the 1950s.

"I was told it would not work, and that anybody who reveals this idea reveals their lack of scientific knowledge," Dove told the Utica Observer-Dispatch last year. "The (Army) division chief came to me and said, 'I've heard your idea and you know better. You've shown your ignorance of science.'" Dove proved them wrong.

There are other ways to honor the man, who "retired" in 1983 and then started Dove Electronics Inc. and Dove Photonics Inc.. He worked up until his death at 79.

In 1999, the Urban League of Syracuse



File photo / Frank Ordonez, 1999

**JOHN DOVE**, who patented the technology behind the CD-ROM, in a Syracuse University lab.

and Onondaga County opened three computer centers named in his honor. The intent was to close the "digital divide" between those who had access to the Internet and technology and those who did not. When the League ceased to exist, the centers closed in 2000. (The Syracuse Housing Authority opened a computer center in the former Dove III building on McBride Street).

It would be a true testament to his life if Dove centers were re-established in the technologically neediest areas — perhaps with the assistance of an institution like

Syracuse University, with which Dove worked on a fiber optic amplifier. (He was brought in to solve a problem — and he did).

A John Dove scholarship or program could encourage students, especially African-American students, to pursue science, engineering and technological careers. (The National Science Foundation has made it part of its mission to bridge the science gap among certain groups.) And the Syracuse City School District should consider creating a Dove namesake that would encourage research, study and competition.

One day soon, the scientist/inventor/engineer will be "discovered" and celebrated nationally as a pioneer. In the meantime, the people in his own backyard can honor his memory by making Dove connections all over the community.